

Dominican Republic

Executive Summary

UNICEF Dominican Republic continued to advocate for the fulfilment of children's rights during 2015. In February, the CRC Committee reviewed the combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Dominican Republic. UNICEF worked tirelessly to protect the rights of children who are at risk of becoming stateless due to a 2013 Constitutional Court ruling that denies nationality to children of foreign parents, mostly of Haitian origin. Thanks to the joint advocacy by UN agencies and other key donors, the Government established a formal process to avoid erroneous deportations, respecting human rights. Serious challenges remain, and delicate but persistent coordination continues.

The Government launched the region's first national roadmap for the prevention and elimination of violence against children. UNICEF supported the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) to develop a tool to monitor sectoral action plans. The Ministry of Health (MOH) was the first to finalise a protocol to guide their work, which will obligate hospitals to report suspected cases of child abuse.

Under the leadership of the First Lady's Office and with UNICEF technical assistance, various ministries jointly identified the service needs and gaps for children with disabilities, as well as creating a national network for reference and referrals for required services.

UNICEF contributed to increasing the efficiency of Government services. An important 59 per cent reduction in preventable neonatal mortality due to sepsis was observed in 12 baby-friendly hospitals. Sixty-four per cent of children born in targeted hospitals were registered in a timely manner in 2015, compared to 41 per cent in 2013.

Decentralisation of the education system has begun, with the development of the Ministry of Education (MOE) quality management model. Current processes and procedures of regional and district MOE offices were documented and challenges identified.

The inter-sectoral project "Improving Human Security in the Bateyes (marginalized Haitian-Dominican communities)" with the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) was finalised, with evidence of positive impact. Families received information on maternal-child health and improved hygiene practices, and the prevalence of diarrhoea decreased by 39 per cent. UNICEF supported the MOE's strategy for reducing high primary school repetition rates, with 97 per cent of participating children passing to the next grade.

The country's first study on "Public Investment for Children and Adolescents in the Dominican Republic" identified a significant increase in public investment for children over the last four years: from 1.9 per cent of GDP in 2010 to 3.6 per cent in 2013.

UNICEF launched an innovative digital platform 'Alguien.do' (Someone) to eliminate violence against children (VAC). The initiative is starting to amplify adolescents' voices. Since July, Alguiendo achieved 1.4 million views and engaged over 83,000 individuals.

Some key challenges faced during 2015 that slowed down UNICEF's achievements were continuing outbreaks of dengue and cholera. The number of dengue cases tripled compared to 2014, with nearly 15,000 cases, and 464 cholera cases were reported, a 95 per cent increase from 2014. UNICEF supported the MOH to re-mobilise 14 local water, sanitation and hygiene groups (GASH), and to develop a unified monitoring form for the quality of drinking water.

In December, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the new Penal Code adopted in 2014. This sets back the country's recent progress in human rights, as the previous Code dates back to 1884.

During the last quarter of 2015, the Office received a remote audit. The final audit report included recommendations in 11 areas, with one high-risk area (implementation of the harmonised approach to cash transactions (HACT)).

During 2015 100 per cent of the institutional budget was implemented. The implementation rate for programme resources was 87.47 per cent, with 77.85 per cent for regular resources (RR) and 94.67 per cent for other resources (OR). All grants were utilised on time, and all seven donor reports were sent on time.

More than 100 percent (112 per cent) of OR planned in the Country Programme document (CPD) was mobilised in 2015, of which 29 per cent was thematic OR. Lack of allocation of thematic funds for health and social policy jeopardises the achievements made so far.

Progress continues in the implementation of HACT; 24 programmatic visits were carried out through the year. An external audit company was contracted to perform spot-checks, micro-evaluations and audits.

Electronic payments directly from VISION started in July, and UNICEF migrated to the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) in November. The Office saved up to 30 per cent of costs through the inter-agency hiring of a company for maintenance and cleaning.

Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan

The Country Programme continued to fulfil the 'core business of UNICEF in LAC', aimed at monitoring all aspects of the situation of children, as well as monitoring the implementation of recommendations from the CRC and the CEDAW committees. This role is crucial in all countries, including upper-middle-income countries, and re-confirms the universal mandate of UNICEF. Moreover, a substantive part of UNICEF-supported actions aim at influencing (sub-) national policies and programmes. Where needed, this work is complemented with the implementation of model projects at the sub-national level, particularly in selected areas where the most disadvantaged populations often live. Further emphasis on the combination of 'upstream' policy work with sub-national level modelling allows for a continuous learning and obtaining evidence from local experiences that could be used in designing and strengthening national policies and programmes.

Increasingly, the programmatic role of UNICEF is evolving and addressing emerging issues that affect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents. Such emerging issues, which are currently not fully mentioned in the Strategic Plan include: a) emerging health agenda - health systems strengthening, non-communicable diseases, obesity, adolescent health; b) integrated early childhood development (IECD); c) secondary education with, in LAC, particular attention to boys' education given their high drop-out rates in secondary education, as well as sustained

attention to enhancing inter-cultural (bilingual) education; and d) prevention of adolescent pregnancy and linking such efforts with addressing (sexual) violence against girls. It is suggested that these areas be better reflected in the strategic plan, through specific results and indicators. Moreover, it is suggested to review the PIDB coding so that such emerging programme issues are adequately reflected. This will also allow for better reporting on results and funding spent.

Several programmes have identified, as part of the analysis of barriers and bottlenecks, the need to address social norms, and therefore include a communication for development (C4D) component. This is currently not a specific strategy of the Strategic Plan and it is suggested to re-consider re-introducing this strategy as one of UNICEF's corporate strategies. This will also allow better reflection and reporting on the type of work ongoing using C4D approaches. At the same time, much South-South cooperation (SSC) is ongoing with other countries in the region, and beyond. Based on the 2030 Agenda and the evolving changes in the aid environment, it is expected that the application of this strategy will only continue to increase. However, so far it has been difficult to demonstrate UNICEF's added value in obtaining specific results for children through SSC. Therefore, it is recommended to continue with efforts, also as part of the MTR of the Strategic Plan, to provide global tools for measuring SSC results. Linked to SSC is also the need to strengthen UNICEF's knowledge management function. Although efforts are made by country offices, it is also recommended to increase global efforts to strengthen the knowledge management function. This could also include increased emphasis on supporting the evaluation of (sub-) national policies and programmes rather than focusing only on UNICEF programmes. With limited resources available, a shift in attention to this type of evaluations is suggested.

Finally, many country programmes in LAC are facing resource constraints, and while income from UNICEF's private fundraising and partnerships unit has been growing, and increasingly such resources are re-distributed in the region through the Regional Thematic Fund, many country offices remain highly dependent on income from the Regional Thematic Fund, Global Thematic Funds and Global Set-Aside funding (in addition to Regular Resource allocation). With such income, UNICEF is still in a position to deliver on substantive results, exercise its mandate and address persisting inequities in LAC countries. Therefore, as part of discussions of a potential new resource allocation system for UNICEF, it is strongly suggested to ensure that the current minimum levels of RR be maintained, while at the same time adjustments could be made to criteria for allocation of global set-aside and thematic funds, re-orienting more of such resources to 'donor-orphan' regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

AJI - Youth and Child Municipalities
AMP - Annual management plan
ART – Anti-retroviral treatment
BFHI - Baby-friendly hospital initiative
BCP - Business continuity plan
CEJNNA - Commission for the Execution of Justice for Children and Adolescents
CESFRONT - Specialised Land Border Security
CMT - Country management team
CONADIS - National Disability Council
CONANI - National Council for Children and Adolescents
CPD - Country Programme document
CSE - Commercial sexual exploitation
CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

DCT - Direct cash transfers
DIGEPEP - General Directorate of Special Programmes
DPS - Provincial Health Directorates
EMTCT – Eliminate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV
ENHOGAR - National household survey
ERM - Emergency risk management
EWEA - Early warning/early action
GASH - Water, sanitation and hygiene group
GDP - Gross domestic product
GSSC - Global shared service centre
HACT - Harmonised approach to cash transfers
IDEC - Dominican Initiative for a Quality Education
IECD - Integrated early childhood development
IMEP - Integrated monitoring & evaluation plan
INAIFI - National Institute for Early Childhood
INAFOCAM - National Teacher Training Institute
ISFODOSU - “Salomé Ureña” Higher Teacher Training Institute
JCE - Electoral Board (Junta Central Electoral)
JLP – Local judicial protection board
MDG - Millennium Development Goals
MEPyD - Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development
MICS - Multiple indicator cluster survey
MOE - Ministry of Education
MOH - Ministry of Public Health
MoRES - Monitoring results for equity system
MOSS - Minimum operating security standards
NGO - Non-governmental organisation
ONE - National Statistics Office
PAHO - Pan American Health Organisation
PBR - Programme and budget review
SRA- Security risk assessment
UNAP - Primary Healthcare Unit
UNCT - United Nations Country Team
UNDSS United Nations Department of Safety & Security
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
UNTFHS - United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Fund
VAC – Violence against children
WHO - World Health Organisation

Capacity Development

UNICEF is in the process of transferring the capacity to the MOH to improve the quality of maternal and neonatal care services. Since 2013, the monitoring results for equity system (MoRES) helped the MOH to identify the bottlenecks that cause maternal and neonatal deaths in hospitals. The Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) action plans at different levels of the MOH included training of doctors, nurses, epidemiologists and health promoters to improve the management of services, prenatal control, clean birth, infection prevention and breastfeeding. Twelve hospitals are improving data collection and information management of maternal and neonatal death, which will guide them to make necessary changes in managerial and day-to-day practices that improve the quality of health services. The MOH expects to improve overall

indicators by 80 per cent and reduce maternal deaths by 15 per cent and neonatal deaths by 30 per cent within a year.

Action plans also include practical components to transform staff's attitudes and behaviours for a more "humane" health services. With UNICEF's support for the development of monitoring tools, the MOH developed baselines, oversaw the results, and analysed the data. It found that in 12 prioritised hospitals, neonatal mortality due to sepsis was reduced by 59 per cent between 2011 and 2014. Contributing factors included the creation of special monitoring teams composed of the hospital management and clinical teams, that met weekly to review the progress of the action plan, identify challenges and propose solutions. One example of a solution was the creation of mobile phone chat groups composed of clinical staff, hospital management and the regional MOH to provide immediate attention to cases of severe maternal illnesses. They shared critical information on patients for urgent interventions, such as needs for emergency medical attention, transport, blood, etc. This significantly improved timely response and contributed to reduced mortality.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

UNICEF supported the development of the country's first study on "Public Investment for Children and Adolescents in the Dominican Republic," by the Ministry of Planning, Economics and Development (MEPyD). The study started in 2014 with two agreed objectives: to estimate the public expenditure for children and adolescents and to propose a methodology for future periodic estimates. It was officially launched in February at the Presidential Palace.

The study revealed a significant increase in public investment in children over the last four years. In 2013, US\$2 billion (3.6 per cent of GDP) were invested in children, in comparison with US\$0.8 Billion (1.9 per cent of GDP) in 2010. Eighty-six per cent of social investment for children in 2013 was for education, 8.1 per cent for health, and 5.3 per cent for the Social Cabinet. Other duty-bearer institutions received less than 1 per cent of total social investment.

Public investment for children grew by 3 per cent in 2011 compared to 2010, then by 31 per cent in 2012, and 59 per cent in 2013, with the allocation of 4 per cent of GDP in education, which complies with the law for the first time in the country's history. During the period 2010-2013, public investment for children increased by US\$1.2 billion, of which 91 per cent was for education. Yet, investment for children in the Dominican Republic remains below the average of the Latin American region, which is around 6 per cent of GDP.

Realising the importance of regular monitoring of investment in children, the MEPyD is developing a tool for permanent monitoring of the public investment for children, with technical support from UNICEF.

Partnerships

The convening capacity of the First Lady's Office and UNICEF's technical knowledge and experience facilitated reaching key actors in all essential sectors to provide a coordinated response to fulfil the rights of children with disabilities in the Dominican Republic. In March, a Roundtable for Children with Disabilities was launched at the Presidential Palace, under joint leadership by UNICEF and the First Lady's Office, in coordination with CONANI, the National Disability Council (CONADIS) and the MOE. The Round-table built on the country's previous successful experience in the area of ECD. It contributed toward a shared vision among involved actors, who shared knowledge, information and experience, and provided a platform for coordination among over 80 actors to implement inclusive policies and provide necessary

programmes and services.

The Roundtable's first five-year operational plan was developed with three main lines of work: i) knowledge management, ii) advice on public policies and iii) strengthening of the coordination platform. Working groups were established with participation by the Government, international organisations, NGOs, representatives of the families of children with disabilities, the private sector and the UN (UNICEF, PAHO).

In support of this work the UNDP, PAHO and UNICEF developed a joint proposal for submission to the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is currently waiting for the Call for Proposals in early 2016.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

An innovative digital platform Alguien.do (Someone) for adolescents' participation with the goal of eliminating VAC was launched in July. It gained media attention and contributed to increasing UNICEF's engagement with millennials through the publication of 12 articles in the national media and 16 in-depth interviews, including a debate with a group of adolescents featured in one of the most widely read newspapers.

The initiative is starting to amplify adolescents' voices. In four months, the Alguien.do webpage received 26,000 visits, with an average length of 03:02 minutes per visit. This indicates that the content is attractive for the audience, and that visitors read at least one article. Alguien.do engaged more than 100 adolescents as volunteer content contributors.

Alguien.do's communication campaign was supported by 17 influential voices, who boosted outreach through key messages in social media. The country's two most popular You-Tubers produced videos about Alguien.do, resulting in more than 56,000 views and engaging people to act by commenting, sharing information through their social networks, and motivating others to join.

A wide range of actors participated in the development of Alguien.do, including: MOE, MOH, CONANI, NGOs, research centres and the private sector. The platform itself was developed free by an advertising agency, Ogilvy & Mather, and for its campaign, six media agencies donated more than 50 billboards for 60 days in the country's two largest cities. One of the most respected digital newspapers in the country, Acento.do, also donated a space on their website where key content of Alguien.do is updated regularly.

Alguien.do's social networks gained 10,500 followers, and 1.1 million people were reached through social media in four months. With Alguien.do, UNICEF contributes directly to the implementation of the national roadmap for the prevention and elimination of VAC.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

In May 2015, an evaluation of efforts to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV (eMTCT) was undertaken in Guatemala under the leadership of PAHO/WHO. With the support of UNICEF's Regional Advisor for HIV/AIDS, UNICEF and three experts from the MOH gained first-hand experience to better prepare the country for the evaluation. The experience enabled the national team to identify critical points to consider, such as site selection, review of data collection instruments to adapt to the language and the organisational structure of the health system, preparation of logistics and forming the groups of field evaluators.

The eMTCT evaluation was conducted in the Dominican Republic from 29 November to 4 December. UNICEF collaborated in its preparation in alliance with the MOH's general directorate for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS and PAHO/WHO. The preliminary report identified challenges related to lack of compliance with norms, low HIV and syphilis testing coverage, pending expansion of the ENETMI protocol for primary health care services, lack of quality information system, need to reinforcing counselling and education and strengthening of monitoring. The next step is to prepare action plans for needed changes. The MOH expects to reach the elimination goals in three years and to undertake another evaluation.

Identification and Promotion of Innovation

An inter-sectoral response is indispensable to fulfil the rights of children with disabilities. In 2015, under the First Lady's Office leadership, with UNICEF support, the country was finalising its first coordinated response mechanism for children with disabilities. The "Roadmap for Early Detection and Comprehensive Care for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities in the Dominican Republic" guides inter-institutional coordination and response for early detection, comprehensive care and social inclusion of children with disabilities, who are often the most excluded.

The Office of the First Lady, with UNICEF's technical support, facilitated dialogue among the MOH, MOE, and the Ministry of the Presidency's Special Programmes (lead institution for the national early childhood protection and care plan), CONANI, CONADIS and NGOs in identifying needs, existing services and programmes and gaps. The process improved coordination among different ministries and inspired efforts to identify the needs to improve access to and quality of existing services for children with disabilities. Based on this analysis, the roadmap was developed. In line with children's five development phases, it outlines existing and non-existing but essential services. It also proposes the creation of a national services network for reference and referrals for required services, which is outlined in practical and detailed flow-charts.

The Office of First Lady, in coordination with UNICEF, plans a high-level meeting in early 2016 to ensure the commitment and actions of each of the ministries involved.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

Since 2011 the Dominican Government has received UNICEF support to respond to the Secretary General's study on VAC. In 2015 the Government registered important progress. In April, the "National Roadmap for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Children" was officially launched with the presence of Marta Santos Pais, the Secretary-General's Special Representative on VAC. The roadmap is the first of its kind in the Caribbean and Central America region.

Sectoral action plans are under development to operationalise the roadmap, with the participation of 19 governmental institutions and NGOs. UNICEF and CONANI coordinated the development of a system to monitor the progress of planned activities. (See Child Protection RAM).

The health sector was the first to show a way forward. The MOH was the first to finalise a protocol to guide their work that will obligate hospitals to report suspected cases of child abuse. Under this general guideline, detailed actions plans will be developed in early 2016.

The education sector's contribution began with the implementation of "standards for harmonious coexistence in public and private schools" in 25 schools. The standards aim to reduce violence

against and among children by promoting mediation, dialogue and a culture of peace.

To strengthen local level response mechanisms, UNICEF supported CONANI to establish 55 new local judicial protection boards (JLPs) and to strengthen existing 32 JLPs. Some 385 officers from 87 municipalities were trained. The NGO Coalition for Children, together with other institutions that are part of the Roadmap, is developing a draft bill to ban corporal punishment. It should be presented to the Congress after presidential and general elections in May 2016.

Service Delivery

UNICEF continued its support for improving the quality of services in the provision of timely birth registration at public hospitals, with the MOH and the Central Electoral Board. As a result of strengthened monitoring capacity, 64 per cent of children born in target public hospitals were registered before leaving the hospitals in 2015, compared to 41 per cent in 2013. During 2015, UNICEF's support expanded from four to 11 hospitals, including all facilities participating in the BFHI.

UNICEF contributed to the removal of three key bottlenecks for quality service delivery by the Government in the area of timely birth registration. First, the capacity of hospital managers and medical staff, as well as officers of the Central Electoral Board, was strengthened through training. Facilities and registration procedures were improved, and the number of birth registrations at civil registry offices within the hospitals is monitored monthly. This information is then shared with the president of the Central Electoral Board, the Minister of Health and the directors of participating hospitals.

Second, UNICEF supported a communication campaign for pregnant women and adolescents during their prenatal visits at primary health care units and hospitals. They are informed about the importance and benefit of timely birth registration of their new-born babies, as well as practical information, such as required documents for birth registration and location of civil registry offices.

Third, with UNICEF's support, the Central Electoral Board promoted the existing special procedure for pregnant adolescents to obtain an identity card (*cédula*). Special efforts were made to strengthen this procedure, because while 25-to-30 per cent of babies are born to adolescent mothers in the Dominican Republic, many of them are not registered due to the mothers' lack of a *cédula*, which is normally issued when the person turns 18 years old.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

UNICEF worked tirelessly to protect the rights of children who are at risk of becoming stateless due to the 2013 Constitutional Court ruling 168-13, which denies nationality to children of foreign parents, mostly of Haitian origin. In February the CRC reviewed the combined third-to-fifth periodic reports of the Dominican Republic, and urged the Government to ensure that no children will be deported due to the Constitutional Court's ruling in 2013.

By June, 63,000 people were registered to regularise their migratory status, in accordance with law 169-14, and the registration period for regularisation for foreign illegal residents was closed. The Ministry of Presidency led the Government's response, which respected human rights of affected people during the deportation process, thanks to joint advocacy by UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, IOM, EU, OAS and the US Embassy. The response resulted in the establishment, by the migration authorities, of a formal process to avoid erroneous deportations of people who have applied to the Regularisation Plan, including children, pregnant women and

elderly persons. However, serious challenges remain: 1) delays in delivering identification documents to those affected; and 2) lack of coordination between the Government and Dominican Army deportations undertaken outside the established procedures.

UNICEF supported the Government to identify the number of institutionalised foreign children to provide them with the temporary resident status, as stated in the law. A delicate but persistent coordination continues.

Since the process started on 1 August, 7,351 people, including 15 adolescents aged 17 years, were deported. At UNICEF's request, the migration authority re-issued a clear instruction for non-deportation of children. UNICEF participates in the Statelessness and Migration Inter-agency Group, and played a key role in its 16 monitoring missions, in addition to independent and bi-national monitoring missions with UNICEF Haiti.

In December 2015, the Constitutional Court declared the new Penal Code adopted in 2014 unconstitutional. The main point of disagreement was abortion, setting back the country's recent progress in human rights, as the previous Penal Code dates back to 1884. This ruling will hamper efforts to end child sexual exploitation and abuse that were established in the 2014 Code.

Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

The MOE's baseline study on students' perceptions and behaviours regarding gender violence revealed a need to increase efforts to eliminate gender violence in the country. The baseline study "Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices concerning Gender Violence among Secondary School Students in Public and Private Schools in the Dominican Republic," was carried out with the support of UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP.

The study was based on a sample of 7,768 students (58 per cent girls). Fifty-nine per cent of the students reported that they had received information about gender violence at school, and 73 per cent said they knew what gender violence was. However, 72 per cent recognised only physical abuse (such as beating) and murder of women as gender violence, but did not include insults, humiliation, discrimination or exclusion.

Reflecting this, 52 per cent agreed that pregnant girls should be forced to leave day classes and switch to evening classes, and 29 per cent would exclude a homosexual or lesbian friend from their social circles to avoid being considered to have the same sexual orientation. The study also illustrated the social pressure of typical gender stereotypes on children during their free time: 43.8 per cent girls help domestic chores, compared to 16.2 per cent of boys, and only 25.2 per cent of girls play sports, while 59 per cent of boys do.

During 2016, UNICEF will continue to advocate for wide dissemination of the results of this study. Working with decision-makers and specialists from government institutions, international organisations and NGOs, UNICEF will promote integrated sexuality education programmes at schools and training for teachers on gender issues to reduce gender violence and contribute to full implementation of the MOE's standards on harmonious coexistence in public and private schools.

Environmental Sustainability

Frequent flooding and drought, two of the repercussions of climate change, is on the increase in the Dominican Republic. Capacity building among teachers, to enable them to teach children

about environmental sustainability, is urgently needed.

In collaboration with Salomé Ureña” Higher Teacher Training Institute (ISFODOSU) and the MOE risk management programme, UNICEF supported the development of a course on integrated risk management for teachers, with the participation of 140 persons, including teachers, school principals and MOE district specialists from disaster-prone educational region areas of San Juan, Santiago, and Santo Domingo. Environmental education and climate change were included in the sustainable development module of the course, with details on environment conservation, use of natural resources and recycling. The MOE plans to train their personnel in these subjects to create a culture of conservation and care of the environment.

UNICEF carried out its first environmental footprint assessment in August. The Office learned that electricity consumption in 2014 was 105,970 kwh, generating expenses of \$26,670 a year (54.2 tonnes CO₂). The biggest source of electricity consumption was the air conditioners procured in 2003. Also, for the use of official vehicles 113 litres of gasoline for US\$532 and 9,582 litres of diesel for US\$9,968 a year (25.4 tonnes CO₂) were consumed. Air travel totalled 145,659 km (13.7 tonnes of CO₂). Based on this assessment, and taking into consideration that the most energy consumption came from electricity, the Office is in the process of acquiring new, low-energy consumption air conditioners using inverter technology that will reduce the annual use of electricity within the office by 30-to-50 per cent.

Effective Leadership

In 2015 the Office underwent two key personnel changes: the Representative and operations officer. The Office coped well with the transition by distributing the responsibilities among the team and hiring consultants when necessary.

The Office received a remote audit with 10-days notice in September. The final audit report included recommendations in 11 areas of governance, programme management and operations support. HACT implementation was marked as high-risk. Despite the delay in receiving the draft report, with the support of LACRO, the response to the draft report and recommendations was submitted on time, and the final audit report was issued before year-end.

The country management team (CMT) met four times during the year, and monitored the progress of priorities and results established in the annual management plan (AMP) and bi-annual plan, as well as the correct application of the standards, policies and procedures. Meeting minutes were prepared. The management indicators were carefully monitored using InSight, specifically the management dashboard and the management reports. Bi-annual work plans for 2015-2016 were signed by UNICEF and corresponding sectoral counterparts during the first quarter of the year, which will facilitate the early start of the programme implementation in 2016, which is an electoral year in the Dominican Republic.

Emergency risk management (ERM) was implemented. The Office identified the risks applying to ERM in all areas. The risk control self-assessment was updated in May, and uploaded on InSight. One high-risk area was identified (natural disasters and epidemics). The business continuity plan (BCP) was updated in September 2015, and an interagency BCP exercise was conducted soon afterwards. Early warning/early action plans were updated. A proper segregation of duties is reflected in the table of authority (ToA) and in VISION, to guide procedures.

Particular attention was paid to the analysis of current and future measures for the reduction of risks associated with the HACT.

Financial Resources Management

The CMT monitored compliance with financial controls, ToA, and outstanding direct cash transfers (DCTs). The outstanding DCT at year's-end was 8.55 per cent. The CMT also monitored the increase in local contributions. The main donor was Melia Hotels International, through the 'Guest with Heart' programme. Programme coordination meetings monitored financial implementation each month.

In terms of efficiency, the number of low-amount transactions was reduced and all payments were made through bank transfers. The implementation of electronic payments directly from VISION (BCM payment process) started in July, and proved beneficial by avoiding potential manual errors during the process.

The migration to GSSC was completed in November. All transactions at the Country Office level are now carried out by the finance assistant (local focal point). The migration increased the efficiency of the payment process for local signatory panel members by removing their functions; however, staff in the operations section continued to invest the same amount of time as prior to the GSSC. In terms of time to process the payment, efficiency is yet to be improved through the GSSC. All bank reconciliations were completed on time.

One hundred per cent of the institutional budget was implemented. The implementation rate for programme resources was 87.47 per cent; 77.85 per cent for RR and 94.67 per cent for OR. All grants were fully utilised before their expiration dates.

Over 100 per cent (112 per cent) of OR planned in the CPD was mobilised in 2015. Among the funds, 29 per cent was thematic OR. Lack of allocation of thematic funds in health and social policy jeopardises the achievements made so far. Among the OR raised, 7 per cent was raised locally.

Progress continues in the implementation of HACT. Twenty-four programmatic visits were carried out in 2015. An external audit company was contracted to perform spot-checks, micro-evaluations and audits.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

The Office mobilised \$1,740,565 (112.46 per cent) of OR planned in the CPD for 2015, of which 29.03 per cent (\$505,291.29) was thematic OR. No allocation was received for health or social policy in 2015, jeopardising the achievements made so far in these areas.

Of the OR raised, 7.8 per cent (\$136,387) was raised locally. The majority of the locally raised OR was from "Guest with Heart" programme with hotels operating in the country, and it was closely monitored and followed-up by the child protection programme. One hotel group, Royalton, signed a contribution agreement to support all programmes with \$20,000/annually, and 193 employees were sensitised on the Code of Conduct relating to sexual exploitation of children developed by ECPAT International. Grupo Ramos, the owner of supermarket and department store chains, signed an agreement to donate \$50,000/year for three years to support the BGHI, of which the first \$23,000 had been received by late 2015. Two advertising firms, Ogilvy and Mathers and Young and Rubicam Damaris, contributed their creative work through a pro-bono agreement to develop a communication campaign against child sexual

exploitation and the digital platform for adolescents Alguien.do. (See Protection and Communication sections.)

The Office was actively involved in fundraising events with the private sector, such as the first annual charity golf tournament for UNICEF by Hotel Melia International in Punta Cana, and a campaign at 31 nationwide supermarkets of Grupo Ramos during the holiday season, which is expected to raise \$13,000.

All seven donor reports due in 2015 were prepared and uploaded on time. The Office successfully organised a donor visit for the Spanish Committee with 10 visitors.

UNICEF actively participated in various donor groups, such as leading the education donor group and monthly donor meeting organised by the World Bank.

Evaluation

The Office developed an integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP) through a dialogue with the programme area, which details the monitoring activities that contribute to achievement of Country Programme results. It was composed of seven activities, of which four were in the programmatic component of health, two were cross-cutting programme areas, and one was on social inclusion. Of the planned activities, four were completed, two were in process, and one (Child Rights Fulfilment Index with Observatory on the Rights of Children and Adolescents) was postponed until 2016 due to the delays in the availability of data from the national household survey (ENHOGAR/MICS) of 2014, which should be complete during the first quarter of 2016. IMEP progress was monitored during programme coordination meetings and the mid-year review.

Regarding the evaluation of primary health care level interventions that contribute to infant survival, finalised in 2014, the Office is analysing the report's compliance with evaluation criteria and discussing LACRO's informal assessment to determine whether to upload it to the UNICEF assessment portal. In the meantime, the MOH found the study's conclusions and recommendations highly useful and practical for defining their programmatic interventions to reduce infant and maternal mortality, and expressed a strong interest in publishing it within the country.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

UNICEF shares common premises with five other UN agencies. As a result of an inter-agency effort in 2014, the operations management team concluded that it was more cost-efficient to hire employees directly through the UNDP rather than hire a company for maintenance and cleaning services. Through this modality, UNICEF saved up to 30 per cent on maintenance costs in 2015. UNICEF also renewed agreements for a year with WFP and UNESCO, and for eight months with ILO, for the use of office space in UNICEF premises. This also contributes to the cost reduction.

The Office is re-negotiating an increase of the bandwidth from 5mpbs to 10mpbs with local internet service providers TRICOM and COLUMBUS, without a price increase. A series of inter-agency long-term agreements for the acquisition of paper and office materials remain active. UNDP was seeking to identify new providers for air tickets and events, and a new long-term agreement is expected for early 2016.

UNICEF is procuring new low-energy consumption air conditioners using inverter technology,

which is expected to reduce the use of electricity by 30-to 50 per cent each year. (See Environmental Sustainability section.)

Supply Management

The procurement of goods and services with programme funds represented 12.95 per cent of implementation in 2015. Of a total of US\$397,806, 88 per cent was funded with programme funds and 11.95 per cent with operations funds. Sixty-two per cent of the total corresponds to goods and services and 37.89 per cent to supplies, mainly printing, IT & office supplies. Services procured for counterparts totalled US\$105,211. All the requirements for SAP/Vision were met for the procurement of goods and services. No procurement was undertaken on behalf of other UNICEF offices.

The country offers local providers for most kinds of supplies, and local purchase is fast as most accept credit. The Office does not have a warehouse; procured items are delivered directly to counterparts, as indicated by the responsible programme staff. Programme supply items are monitored by programme staff during the field visits.

Although the basic cooperation agreement with the Government signed in 2004 stipulates that UNICEF is exempt from the payment of taxes, the Government has not provided UNICEF or other UN agencies with a legal document to this effect, and UNICEF appears as an active contributor on the General Tax Office's web site. This requires the Office to request the tax exemption for each purchase, and the reimbursement process is slow. The issue has been raised with the authorities by UN agency heads and the Resident Coordinator since 2013, but has not yet been resolved.

UNICEF Dominican Republic 2015	Supply (US\$)	Services (US\$)	Value in US\$
Programme	119,110	231,157	350,267
Operations	31,622	15,917	47,539
Total	150,732	247,074	397,806

Security for Staff and Premises

Both the UNICEF and UN House premises comply with MOSS, approved by the senior management team in October. Additional security funds of US \$6,000 were received in 2015, and utilised as planned through an inter-agency project to install a lighting protection system at the UN House.

According to the 2014 security risk assessment, the Dominican Republic is classified as level 2 - "low risk." Although there have been a number of staff victims of petty crimes, no major security issues were experienced in 2015, and no significant incident was reported. Training sessions were coordinated by the UNDSS for new staff, security guards, reception personnel and the police officers assigned to guard UN House. All staff completed the mandatory security courses.

The inter-agency security plan is updated for activation when required. An interagency business continuity plan exercise and security drills by UNDSS for all UN agencies, were held in September 2015. The UN Country Team (UNCT) determined in October that the simulation of security drills was a failure due to the exaggerated complexity of the procedures proposed by DSS. The UNCT agreed to form a working group to simplify the procedures to adapt the security drills to the reality of the country to make it functional and manageable. The five radio repeaters installed in 2014 are properly functioning after corrections made in 2015.

Human Resources

The Office experienced two major human resource changes in 2015 – the Representative and operations officer—and completed competitive selection processes for two posts: operations officer (NOA) and finance assistant (GS5). As agreed in the 2014 programme budget review (PBR), the post of senior ICT assistant (GS-7) was abolished at the end of 2015. The staff member had a permanent contract and requested an early separation at the end of September. With the support of LACRO, and as planned, UNICEF started to outsource ICT services in October, hiring an external provider.

Ninety-five per cent of personnel assessments from 2014 were completed by end-February, and the objectives for 2015 were defined. Most activities described in the 2015 training plan were carried out. The Office actively participated in the UN Cares initiative, and HIV/AIDS standards are complied with in the workplace.

In 2016 on-line HACT courses will be added to the training plan to ensure that all relevant staff members are certified.

The Office participated in three stretch assignments in 2015. First, the Deputy Representative was deployed on an emergency mission with WCARO for 5.5 months to lead the education response during the Ebola outbreak. Second, an education officer (NOB) was with the LACRO Education team for two months, and third, the Office received an education officer (NOB) from UNICEF El Salvador to cover the needs during this period. Overall, the experience was positive. However, given the impact that staff absence on a stretch assignment causes for a team of a small office, the CMT agreed in April that no more than two stretch assignments should be allowed per year. For 2016, the Office plans to include in the learning plan the assessment of the needs of the office and individual staff for the professional development, and participate in the staff exchange.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

Based on the recommendation of LACRO and agreement in PBR 2014, the office started to outsource ICT services in October. The regional chief of ICT visited the office in July to provide support in assessing the service providers in the country, and to define the technical terms for the outsourcing. A procurement process was concluded with technical support from LACRO, and the company, Soluciones GBH SRL, was hired with an initial contract of six months.

In July, the Office launched a website (Alguien.do) to amplify the voices and opinions of adolescents on the issue of eliminating VAC. ICT provided much-needed support for the creation of this digital platform and social networks. Adolescents' participation in Alguien.do on Facebook and Twitter has been active and consistent. Users interact on a daily basis with the contents published on these platforms. The Office also provides a YouTube channel to publish videos of the communication campaigns. (See External Communication section).

Programme Components from Results Assessment Module

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 UNICEF will have contributed to reduce the average and the gaps in maternal and infant mortality and the vertical transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis, to improve access

to inclusive and quality health services, strengthening the early detection of disabilities, and to increase the coverage of health and nutrition programmes for children 0 to 5 years of age.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

During 2015 progress in the reduction of preventable deaths in maternal and neonatal mortality was observed in 12 prioritised hospitals, in particular, the 59 per cent reduction in neonatal mortality due to sepsis between 2011 and 2014 (from 1,120 to 456 deaths).

UNICEF contributed to this progress with the new “extended” Baby and Mother Friendly Hospital Initiative (Baby Friendly Hospital-BFH), which was officially adopted by the MOH via resolution 000015. Four critical components for the reduction of maternal and infant mortality were added to existing global criteria for successful breastfeeding: 1) quality pre-natal care, 2) clean birth, 3) neonatal care for sepsis reduction, and 4) timely birth registration. The results provide positive evidence that the BFHI will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 5.

The MoRES approach now forms a part of the official monitoring tool of MOH’s provincial and area health directorates (DPS/DAS) to identify the bottlenecks in maternal-child health service networks. A data collection tool was simplified, and 65 health personnel from seven DPS were trained. For 2016, eight additional DPS/DAS will join, a database will be designed and a first report will be produced.

Social surveillance for the “humane” care with dignity for pregnant women was strengthened in five hospitals. In coordination with the NGO Maternal Mortality Observatory, 600 pregnant women received information about their rights during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-natal stage.

UNICEF finalised the study “Evaluation of primary health care actions that contribute to child survival in the target areas”. Its findings and practical recommendations contributed to the development of an MOH project to bridge service gaps at primary health care centres.

With UNICEF’s continuous advocacy, seven municipal hospitals in the poorest areas of the country started to distribute ARVs to HIV-positive pregnant women and improved the access to treatment. For HIV prevention, in the municipalities near the border with Haiti 175 adolescent peer educators continued awareness-raising among their peers, an indicator of their success is that only 1 per cent of the adolescents involved in the programme became pregnant in 2015.

Under the leadership of PAHO, UNICEF contributed to the EMTCT evaluation in December. A dengue outbreak was recorded, with the number of cases tripled compared to 2014. As of November, 14,658, cases had been reported. Mortality in 2015 was higher (0.6 per cent) than 2014 (0.4 per cent). The outbreak was present throughout the country, with the highest death rate in the National District (2.7 per cent), where Santo Domingo is located, despite the concentration of specialised health centres and health personnel compared to the rest of the country. The outbreak continues to affect all provinces; 14 have more cases than the national average (162.49/100,000). In November, the President requested the ministries, municipalities, national police and the army carry out a ‘Day of National Mobilisation Against Dengue’ to control mosquitos.

OUTPUT 1 the continuing care for mothers, new-borns and children, including the steps of the “Child Friendly Hospital Initiative,” are implemented by the network of public health services and communities of 10 prioritised provinces

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Important progress was observed during the second year of BFHI implementation in 12 target hospitals with the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality in the country. In particular, records at Dr. Alejandro Cabral Hospital in San Juan de la Maguana showed an 80 per cent reduction in neonatal mortality for sepsis and 13 per cent reduction in maternal deaths caused by haemorrhage.

The BFHI conducted baseline studies. Action plans for improvement were completed in two hospitals, and more than 870 doctors, nurses, and health promoters were trained, as well as 292 medical personnel and health promoters from 46 primary health care units (UNAP) under the BFHI.

In the context where 54 per cent of all births each year are by Caesarean section, and to avoid the excessive use of analgesics, traditional birth attendants (doulas) were re-introduced in the BFHI. Doulas accompany women during labour and provide emotional and physical support. Sixty health personnel from three hospitals and community volunteers were trained as doulas.

The inter-sectoral project “Improving Human Security in the Bateyes of the Dominican Republic,” implemented through the UN Human Security Trust Fund, was finalised. A total of 869 pregnant women and children under six were accompanied by 106 volunteer health promoters who received training in maternal health and the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness. In addition, 2,113 families received information about improved hygiene practices, resulting in a decrease of the prevalence of diarrhoea by 39 per cent. Evaluation of the project is ongoing.

Social surveillance to improve the treatment of pregnant women at health centres continued. UNICEF and UNFPA support the local NGO Maternal Mortality Observatory to amplify public voices through social networks. Twenty-five “*social watchers*” in five provinces were formed and disseminated information to 600 pregnant women about their rights to quality care during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-natal stage. Research is being undertaken about the delays in maternal healthcare that could explain the main causes of maternal deaths; the results will be available in 2016.

In 2015, 464 cholera cases (2.8 per cent lethality) were reported, a 95 per cent increase from 2014. UNICEF supported the MOH to remobilise 14 local water, sanitation and hygiene groups established during the cholera outbreak in 2010-2011, and to develop a unified monitoring form for the quality of drinking water. Some 110 MOH staff in charge of GASH coordination were trained at district/area level. The GASH experience – establishing one coordination platform to include all concerned actors at a local, provincial, and national level, from the government, international development actors, Red Cross, NGOs, private sector, and others – was being replicated for the creation of an integrated nutrition resilience group for emergencies by MOH’s Nutrition Directorate.

As a part of 2018 global polio eradication initiative, the Expanded Programme on Immunization began to replace the first dose of trivalent oral polio with the injectable bivalent, and trained 250 local multipliers who will reach 2,920 health personnel at the vaccination posts.

OUTPUT 2 At least 80 per cent of the hospitals and health centres in the 10 prioritised provinces will have counselling, diagnosis and treatment services for HIV and STIs for pregnant women, children and adolescents.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Within the framework of the national strategy to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis, UNICEF supported 21 municipal hospitals in three regional health services by providing technical assistance on eMTCT protocol to doctors and nurses. With UNICEF's continuous advocacy, seven municipal hospitals in the poorest areas of the country started the distribution of ARVs to HIV-positive pregnant women and improved their access to treatment. In addition, 40 UNAP staff were trained to administer HIV tests, implement the care package and follow up on pregnant women with HIV or syphilis, as well as and their children who are HIV-exposed. However, the progress achieved was jeopardised during five months when no tests kits were available due to lack of stock. To anticipate such possible shortages in the future, reactivation of the eMTCT group is necessary to reinforce the follow-up.

Under PAHO's leadership, the mid-term evaluation of the eMTCT of HIV and congenital syphilis effort took place in December. The major findings included challenges such as non-compliance with norms, low test coverage, lack of expansion of the ENETMI protocol to primary health care centres, weak information system and the need to reinforce counselling and educational strategy and strengthen monitoring. The rate of MTCT was stagnant at 4.6 per cent (DIGECITSS, 2014). Fewer than 50 per cent of pregnant women were tested for HIV, and 29.8 per cent for syphilis. Of 866 pregnant women diagnosed HIV positive, 87.7 per cent were receiving ARV therapy, but 23 per cent did not have birth via Caesarean section, as established in national norms. The MOH will develop the action plans in early 2016.

A qualitative study "Characteristics of Adolescence and HIV: an analysis of resilience, risks and vulnerability of adolescents" was concluded. The results highlighted the gap between the reality of adolescents' lives and existing laws and health services. For example, a law requires parental consent for adolescents under 15 to take an HIV test, while sexual initiation starts at an increasingly early age. The study also revealed that adolescents' access to condoms and contraceptive methods is limited due to religious influence, stigma and lack of information about where to obtain them. A more strategic HIV prevention approach to actively reach out for adolescents, especially high-risk groups, is urgently needed.

Under the project "Improving Human Security in the Bateyes," 2,250 adolescents from the *bateyes* learned about prevention of HIV and early pregnancy.

In the municipalities of Las Matas de Farfan and San Juan de la Maguana, near the border with Haiti, adolescent peer educators continued to sensitise their peers to prevent HIV and early pregnancy. Some 175 adolescent peer educators were trained in ICT and the use of social networks for these purposes. In 2015, only 1 per cent of the adolescents involved in the programme became pregnant. The adolescents reported that self-esteem is the most valuable lesson learned during the programme, solidarity with their peers, their firm commitment to stay in school and to obtain a university degree to follow their life projects.

OUTCOME 2 UNICEF will have contributed in building the capacity of the education system and social security system to implement integrated, inclusive, and quality programmes for early childhood development (0 to 5 years), pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, integrating out-of-school children and adolescents, and ensuring their retention.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF continued to advocate for the improved quality of education. As co-lead of the Dominican Initiative for a Quality Education (IDEC), UNICEF contributed to the publication of its

fifth monitoring report on MOE progress toward planned education goals for 2016, which include the allocation of 4 per cent of GDP for pre-university education. The report noted that by mid-2015, 72 per cent of planned actions had been started or completed. Delays were found in the areas of early childhood development, school construction and extended school day – due to ambitious and unrealistic goals with limited time and management capacities.

Despite efforts by the MOE and numerous development partners, 2015 statistics on average scores on national exams for 8th grade primary level in public schools showed a slight decrease in three out of four areas. Compared to 2011, out of a possible 30, scores in mathematics decreased from 16.54 to 15.29, social science from 16.61 to 15.68, and natural science from 16.60 to 15.63. A slight increase was observed with Spanish, from 16.42 to 17.86.

2015 was declared by the President to be the year of IECD. The government's "Quisqueya Starts with You" ECD programme for children under five received a significant boost with the approval of the annual operational plan defining priorities and targets for duty-bearers for integrated ECD services in the areas of: policy on health, nutrition, and early stimulation; social inclusion of children with disabilities; birth registration; early education; and protection from violence. UNICEF continued to support the National Institute for Early Childhood (INAUPI) to strengthen its technical capabilities to increase coverage and quality of care. In 2015, 40,000 young children benefitted from family- and community-based IECD programmes.

UNICEF continued to support MOE implementation of the integrated sexuality education programme. A basic training course for the thematic specialists, teachers, and school counsellors was developed. In July, the Chamber of Deputies submitted a draft bill on sexual and reproductive health education that would have allowed all school children from primary education onward to receive much-needed sexual education. However, it was rejected by the opposition, led by conservative churches, in November.

When the national roadmap for the prevention and elimination of violence against children and adolescents was launched in May, the MOE responded by accelerating its implementation of 'Standards for Harmonious Coexistence in Public and Private Schools' to prevent violence and establish a culture of peace and respect. With technical assistance from UNICEF, the MOE completed four protocols/guides to facilitate implementation of the new standards at schools. During the pilot phase, 190 teachers and school counsellors were trained and 12,000 children experienced changes in classrooms without violence, with positive discipline and peaceful conflict resolution. With these protocols, the MOE continued to train teachers to scale up implementation nationwide.

UNICEF supported the MOE with its current curriculum review that includes a significant breakthrough for children with disabilities and special needs by mainstreaming their inclusion in regular schools and providing them with tailor-made education programmes.

OUTPUT 1 The Ministry of Education has agreed upon, validated, and is in the process of implementing a management model for quality education in at least three prioritised educational regions and their districts to support its implementation in schools.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Decentralisation of the education system is a critical step to improve the efficiency and transparent implementation of the MOE's annual operational plan at the regional and district levels. During 2015 UNICEF continued to support the MOE in the development of a quality-management model to improve decentralised management at regional and district levels; a pilot

phase started in educational regions of Bahoruco, Santo Domingo East and La Vega. The first step was to document current processes and procedures of regional and district MOE offices in the following areas: 1) work flow for administration, finance, and pedagogy; 2) management procedures; 3) human resources; and 4) risk management. The most important findings were: 1) inefficiency caused by the lack of structured and formal procedures to ensure consistency of actions and measures among district and regional offices; 2) lack of a structured process for the recruitment of qualified staff; 3) lack of mechanisms to ensure the continuous improvement of teachers' pedagogical skills in the classrooms; and 4) poor coordination between MOE officials at the central, regional and district levels.

During this process UNICEF provided technical assistance for identifying the root causes of difficulties found in each reviewed area, and sharpening the recommendations to allow concrete and immediate actions. To address the identified challenges, training for the administrative, financial and pedagogical management of regional and district offices is planned in early 2016. The process experienced major delays due to non-compliance with deadlines by the consultants hired by the MOE, which caused UNICEF a large amount of outstanding DCT.

UNICEF and the EU continued to co-lead IDEC; others involved included US Agency for International Development, Organization of American States, AFD, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. IDEC completed its fifth monitoring report on the MOE's progress against their plan, which demonstrated important progress, with 72 per cent of actions implemented or ongoing. Twenty-one per cent of activities are in progress with delays, 3.4 per cent were found to be far behind schedule and 2.3 per cent in progress with late start. The MOE historically has had limited capacity for budget implementation. During the first half of 2015 it showed improved performance: 47.3 per cent compared with 38.75 per cent for the same period in 2014. One of the factors that contributed to this improvement was monitoring and follow-up by IDEC. The international organisations that are members of IDEC are documenting the initiative so that it can facilitate development of a national and regional model for monitoring educational policies.

UNICEF also supports the economic and social council by monitoring the education pact, as lead of the education donor group.

OUTPUT 2 In four prioritised educational regions, the completion of basic and secondary education is improved with a gender focus, through the implementation of inclusive quality education programmes for students, including children with different capacities, and the reduction of the risk factors which impede their integration and retention.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

To improve teachers' continuous development, UNICEF provided technical support to the MOE's National Institute for Teacher Training and Skills Development to develop new training modules in reading, writing and mathematics for the first cycle of primary education. The proposal aims to merge two existing teacher-training modules (Central American Educational and Cultural Coordination UNICEF), adapting them to the new national curriculum. In 2016 as part of an agreement between the Institute, the Argentine NGO Educación para Todos (Education for All) and UNICEF, a training of trainers from the universities will be conducted, trainers will then train 500 primary school teachers with basic skills to improve the teaching-learning process in the classrooms.

More children with disabilities are included in regular schools. UNICEF supports the MOE to define the essential adjustments needed in the curriculum and to provide guidance for teachers,

a guide for teaching children with an intellectual disability was also developed. In 2015, 400 children with disabilities were enrolled in regular schools, and 180 teachers and specialists from nine Diversity Care Centres received training in inclusive pedagogy in the classrooms.

In response to the high repetition rate in the third and fourth grades of primary school, 40 learning support spaces were established in regular schools. It is an MOE strategy to provide academic support for children with learning delays, special educational needs and/or disability. With the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, and in partnership with a local NGO ASCALA, UNICEF supported 250 primary school children with 10 learning support spaces in the most excluded communities of *bateyes* in the eastern region. Of the 1,071 children participating in learning support spaces in 2013 and 2014, 97 per cent passed to the next grade and stayed in school.

Despite the rejection of a draft bill on sexual and reproductive health education by the Chamber of Deputies in November, life skills and sexual education is taking place in classrooms in selected provinces. UNICEF supported the training of 676 school counsellors in the regional education districts of Barahona, San Juan and San Cristóbal in the use of a teaching aid (flipchart) for sexual education (“Get to Know Yourself and Learn”) developed in coordination with the MOH. It will benefit 20,000 students in 100 schools from elementary to high school.

Schools will start to implement the MOE standards on harmonious coexistence in public and private schools in early 2016. Three key teaching aids for identifying violence in and out of schools, conflict resolution and mediation were finalised: ‘Application of Educational and Disciplinary Measures’ to respond to student aggression, ‘Bullying Prevention and Response,’ and ‘Suspicion of Physical or Sexual Abuse of a Student.’ Training of district and regional education specialists, as well as students, in conflict resolution and mediation will take place in early 2016.

With ISFODOSU and the MOE’s risk management programme, UNICEF supported the development of an integrated risk management course, with the participation of 140 teachers, school principals and MOE district specialists from disaster-prone educational regional areas of San Juan, Santiago and Santo Domingo. (See Environmental Sustainability section.)

OUTPUT 3 In six prioritised provinces, early childhood development programmes are established for children 0 to 5 years of age at home, communities, day care centres, and schools.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Under the leadership of the First Lady’s Office, the first national framework for detection and attention to children with disabilities is in its final preparation phase, in close collaboration with UNICEF. The framework identifies existing and essential, but non-existent, services of different government institutions, from the identification of disability in young children, evaluation, to attention. Once the technical review of the document is completed, the First Lady will convene a high-level meeting with ministers of the presidency, education and health to ensure budget allocation and implementation.

UNICEF also supported establishing the Roundtable on children with disability in March. Over 80 actors from Government, international organisations, NGOs, representatives of the families of children with disabilities, private sector and UN agencies (UNICEF and PAHO) participated to develop inclusive public policies for children with disabilities. UNICEF represents international organisations in the coordination committee.

UNICEF continued to support the directorate of special programmes (DIGEPEP) and INAIPI. To support implementation of the national plan for protection and integrated care in early childhood, 11 community networks, comprised of members of family and community-based integrated ECD care programmes, were established in marginalised urban areas in the provinces of San Juan, Asua, Santo Domingo (east, north and national district) and San Cristóbal. This benefitted 21,344 children under five from 20,800 families by promoting good practices in young child health, nutrition, positive discipline, early stimulation and early learning. The programme is supported by INAIPI's 303 community agents and specialists, who were trained by the Latin American Faculty for Economic and Social Sciences, with UNICEF financial support. INAIPI also trained NGOs to support 35 community networks, and to put in practice child care guided by the integrated care for early childhood programme implementation guides developed with UNICEF's support in 2014.

OUTCOME 3 UNICEF will have contributed to building the institutional capacity of local and national Child Protection Systems, through administrative and judicial channels, to ensure the protection of children and adolescents from violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking, and to guarantee their right to an identity, to live in a family, and to due-process in cases of conflict with the law.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF tirelessly advocated against the deportation of children at risk of becoming stateless due to the 2013 Constitutional Court ruling 168-13, or as result of implementation of the regularisation plan for foreigners living illegally in the country. UNICEF actively participated in the inter-agency UN working group for migration and statelessness.

The Dominican Republic became the first country in the region to have a national framework to fight VAC. In April, the national roadmap for the prevention and treatment of violence against children was launched with the presence of Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children. The roadmap is an action framework that responds to the recommendations made by independent experts in the Secretary-General's Global Report on Violence against Children in 2006.

The judicial system was strengthened to prevent commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children. The office of the specialised anti-trafficking prosecutor organised six coordination roundtables to investigate and prosecute the crime of CSE, and 51 criminal proceedings against exploiters were initiated, compared to three in the 10 years between 2003 and 2013. In alliance with the Ministry of Tourism and National Association of Hotels and Restaurants, members of the most vulnerable communities were sensitised about CSE prevention. Partnerships were expanded to implement the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.

More new-born babies left the hospitals with timely birth registration. Coordination between the Central Electoral Board and the MOH was strengthened to improve timely registration of children born in public hospitals as part of the BFHI, which was expanded from four to 11 hospitals. As a result, children who left these hospitals with birth registration increased from 40 per cent to 64 per cent.

With UNICEF's support, the Office of the Attorney General started a project on alternative measures to the deprivation of liberty for adolescents in conflict with law. Twenty-five judges and 25 prosecutors were sensitised, and a procedures manual was developed. After a six-

month break requested by the Office of Attorney General, monitoring of the conditions in detention centres of adolescents was resumed with three visits. It is expected that an updated status report will be presented to the Attorney General in February 2016.

In December the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the new Penal Code adopted in 2014. This sets back the country's recent progress in human rights and a number of child protection issues, as the previous Code dates back to 1884.

OUTPUT 1 The Dominican Republic has an established national policy for the prevention of violence against children in accordance with international human rights treaties and the recommendations of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF played a key role in convening 19 partners to join the implementation of the national roadmap for the prevention and elimination of violence against children and adolescents 2015-2018. The health sector was the first to finalise the protocol, which will then be translated into detailed work plans, to identify mechanisms for hospitals to detect, report, care for and rehabilitate child victims of violence. UNICEF also supported CONANI with the development of a monitoring tool to follow up on institutions' implementation plans to achieve the roadmap goals.

Additionally, to effectively implement plans and policies at the local level, UNICEF assisted CONANI to create 55 new JLPs and strengthen another 32 JLPs. A total of 385 JLP members were trained on local child protection mechanisms to provide response to cases of violence against children in 87 of 159 municipalities of the country. In 2015, JLPs contributed to identifying and solving 1,065 child protection cases.

CSE in the tourism sector poses a threat to children if not prevented or responded to, as the country receives 4.5 million tourists each year. Through partnership with the NGOs Caminante, MAIS, and Plan International, eight hotels and tourism service providers and nine informal tourism service providers (streets vendors, informal tourist guides etc.) signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, and their 2,016 employees were sensitised on the prevention of and response to CSE. Some 6,934 children and adolescents, 1,097 families and 508 community leaders were also sensitised, in six touristic provinces of the country (Boca Chica, Puerto Plata, Samaná, Higüey, La Romana and San Pedro de Macoris).

The judicial system for children was strengthened to prosecute CSE offenders. Nearly 400 (380) judges were trained on the new Penal Code and juvenile justice mechanisms for crimes committed against children – such as CSE, trafficking and child labour – enriching their knowledge on specific issues around child protection. Twenty-eight psychologists were trained in forensic child interviewing techniques. The Specialised Anti-Trafficking Prosecutor's Office started six roundtables for judicial investigation of CSE in six provinces. The specialised tourism security corps trained 40 tourism operators in Boca Chica to carry out effective surveillance.

With funding from the UK Government, UNICEF provided technical support to the Online Crime Prosecutor's Office to improve its technological capacity to prosecute on-line child pornography. In early 2016, training is planned for 150 authorities from the prosecutor's office and national police to strengthen their capacity to identify this crime on-line.

OUTPUT 2 In 6 prioritised territories the Registrar's Office delivers birth certificates to undocumented children and pregnant adolescents.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The initiative for timely birth registration at public hospitals was expanded from four to 11 in 2015. The MOH's decree 15/15, included timely birth registration at public hospitals as a part of BFHI. After the first three months of implementation, in October 2015, the timely birth registration rate in 11 targeted hospitals increased to 64 per cent of all new-borns from 40 per cent in 2012. If the target of 80 per cent is achieved before September 2016, 19,271 additional children will have been registered each year in baby-friendly hospitals. With a small financial investment and technical assistance to the central electoral board (JCE) and MOH, the initiative showed quick impact that will result in a long-term social change. The lack of legal documentation among mothers, particularly adolescent mothers, remained a challenge and requires additional efforts.

In parallel, UNICEF continued supporting the late registration of children through the support to JCE's operations in schools in marginal urban areas of Santo Domingo East. Through 18 operations, 710 cases of late birth registration were identified and 533 children obtained birth certificates, without which it would have been impossible to continue their education to the 8th grade.

OUTPUT 3 Mechanisms exist for the prevention, control and care of children victims of trafficking and smuggling in border regions and prioritised territories.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF made continuous efforts to avoid the deportation of children at risk of becoming stateless due to the Constitutional Court's ruling 168-13 in 2013, or as result of the implementation of the regularisation plan for foreigners living illegally in the country. UNICEF provided the Government with a draft document "Protocol for the protection of unaccompanied migrant children and children belonging to Groups A and B who are separated from their parents", which defines step-by-step procedures when an unaccompanied child is identified during the deportation process. Although the protocol was not formally published by the Government, the proposed processes were followed by all immigration authorities. UNICEF continued to play an active role in the statelessness and migration UN inter-agency group, and participated in all 15 inter-agency missions to monitor the deportation process.

UNICEF was given access to the deportation records of the Migration office, and confirmed that 15 children were deported. They were all 17 years old, short by from one day to four months of completing their 18th birthday. At UNICEF's request, migration authorities issued clearer guidance to avoid the deportation of children under 18.

UNICEF also supported Government efforts to identify about 210 foreign children under institutional care, and followed-up on their migratory status to obtain temporary resident status, as stated in the law. However, this has not been completed as CONANI has not complied with the regularisation plan.

To strengthen the capacity of officers' in the Specialised Land Border Security Corps to protect *Children on the Move*, 21 specialised trainers received training on the military's specific roles in child protection in border areas and received information booklets that guide their day-to-day work in the field. A total of 62 officials of the General Directorate of Migration were trained by the UN inter-agency team on how to protect children during migration. In coordination with CONANI,

61 civil servants and civil society representatives were also trained, in Elías Piña and Pedernales.

UNICEF strengthened the capacities of local communities in border provinces with Haiti to prevent child trafficking and provide protection to children on the move between two countries. UNICEF supported the creation and strengthening of local protection networks in 35 border communities in San Juan de la Maguana, Elías Piña, Dajabon, Bahoruco, Independencia and Pedernales, in coordination with World Vision and Plan International. In Dajabon and Independencia, a mapping of child protection organisations/institutions was carried out, the creation of child protection regional networks was promoted to 50 community leaders and monthly meetings were held to enhance knowledge of 30 local protection network leaders. In Pedernales, Elías Piña and San Juan de la Maguana 365 children and 300 parents/caregivers participated in sensitisation activities to prevent and respond to violence against children, with emphasis on preventing trafficking, and 438 children and 135 parents/caregivers were trained to identify different kinds of violence against children.

A bi-national coordination meeting to define common child protection strategies took place, with the participation of Plan International, World Vision and UNICEF representatives from both countries.

OUTPUT 4 Policies to care for abandoned children meet international standards on the rights of children.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF continued to support the Commission for the Implementation of the Justice System for Children and Adolescents (CEJNNA) to review the recommendations of the report on Law 136/03 implementation and to prepare its biannual work plan for 2015-2017. UNICEF promoted and facilitated the resumption of monitoring visits to assess the conditions of detention centres for adolescents in conflict with law, which were suspended in early 2015 at the request of the Attorney General's Office. In 2015, three visits were organised and recommendations for improving conditions were identified. At the end of visits to all eight detention centres, a consolidated report will be prepared and submitted to the authorities with specific recommendations to improve the conditions of detention centres.

With UNICEF's support, the Office of the Attorney General started to implement alternative measures to the deprivation of liberty for adolescents in conflict with law. Five technical teams from juvenile courts were established and trained. Starting in February 2016, they will support judges in determining and applying alternative sanctions. A manual on procedures to implement these measures was developed, and 25 judges and 25 prosecutors were trained in its implementation.

To strengthen the capacity of justice system operators, UNICEF facilitated the participation of two Dominican officials in the 18th International Course on Jurisdictional Protection of Child Rights, which took place in Uruguay in October, organised by UNICEF and Chile's Diego Portales University.

OUTCOME 4 UNICEF will have contributed to knowledge generation and management on the situation of children, with an emphasis on the most excluded groups, advocating for improvements in the coordination of national and local public policies, with a special attention to health, education and child protection. UNICEF will strengthen the capacities for social surveillance and participation to improve social investments to overcome existing inequities.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF contributed to generating new knowledge on two important children's issues, to visualise them and to advocate for making them a part of the public agenda. First, UNICEF facilitated the country's first situation analysis of children with disabilities. The National Statistics Office (ONE) concluded its analysis of the situation of children with disabilities, which showed for the first time the reality of this most excluded group of children. It generated strong public reaction and resulted in the creation of Roundtable for Children with Disabilities, headed by the First Lady's Office. (See Partnership section.)

Second, with support from UNICEF, the MEPyD produced its first analysis of public investment for children. The study showed that investment in children in 2013 reached US\$2 billion, equivalent to 3.6 per cent of GDP. This is a significant increase over the past four years. In 2010, the investment was US\$0.8 billion, equivalent to 1.9 per cent of GDP. While challenges remain, the analysis marks a positive step, as the Government is currently working on creating its own tracking and monitoring mechanism, which will allow them to regularly monitor public social investment for children. (See Evidence Generation & Policy Dialogue section.)

Another new key knowledge generated regarding children in the country was the "Characterisation of Children, Parents, Mothers of Foreign Origin in Dominican Republic," completed in coordination with the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo. The study reveals the social exclusion of descendant children of migrants, mainly from Haiti. According to the study, 235,942 children of immigrant parents reside in the country (52.4 per cent male and 47.6 per cent female), similar to the structure of the general population in the country. Sixty-five per cent of children of Haitian parents live in urban areas. School attendance at the primary level for children born in other countries is 77 per cent for females and 87 per cent in males, while for those born in Haiti the rates are 57 per cent for females and 46 per cent for males. At the secondary level, the situation is worse: 18 per cent females and 8 per cent males. UNICEF plans to publish the study in early 2016, and advocate for inclusive education for Dominican children of Haitian origin by addressing issues of stigma, discrimination and lack of identification documents, among others.

OUTPUT 1 The Ministries of Planning and of social sectors, as well as local governments and civil society organisations, manage and utilise quality information, with a gender and equity focus, for public policy decision making and the allocation of resources.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF supported the generation of new data and knowledge on children. In April, the main results of the 2014 household survey conducted by the ONE were published. The survey provides key indicators on children and women related to the MDGs and the CRC and shows progress achieved and remaining challenges. For example, while 98 per cent of births are institutional and attended by qualified personnel, neonatal mortality remains very high, with a rate of 25 deaths per 1,000 live births, representing 80 per cent of infant mortality. Exclusive breastfeeding to six months is a mere 5 per cent, and low birthweight affects 14 per cent of new-borns. Early pregnancy was at 21 per cent, one of the highest rates in Central America and the Caribbean. Only 40 per cent of children aged three-to-five receive early education. With the support of UNICEF, ONE developed channels for public dissemination of the main survey outcomes, such as: infographics, digital animation, printing the report's main findings and a basic facts brochure. Also, two public events were organised in rural provinces of the country.

The first of its kind in the country study – "Disability in Children and Adolescents in the

Dominican Republic: Situation Analysis and Response" – was concluded. It builds on the data from the Population Census 2010 and household survey of 2013, as well as qualitative information generated through focus group discussions with staff working in institutions and families of children with disabilities. The study reveals that 1.82 per cent of girls and 2.24 per cent of boys younger than 19 years of age live with disability.

The ONE produced three statistical profiles of the tourist provinces where UNICEF works for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children. The final products will be made available in early 2016.

Together with UNFPA, UNICEF supported a bottleneck analysis of administrative data on infant mortality in order to improve the quality of infant mortality data. After the identification of bottlenecks, a protocol of action was developed for ONE, JCE and MOH.

The second stage of the information system on adolescents in conflict with law and alternative measures was concluded. This will improve the juvenile justice system by monitoring the sentenced time of adolescents deprived of liberty in detention centres. In addition, a technological application to publicise statistics on adolescents in conflict with law is being prepared. Publicising this information will facilitate social surveillance to avoid delays in investigation processes for adolescents in conflict with law, beyond the established period of 60 days.

The information system known as 'CONANIINFO' was updated with the latest data from official household surveys in the country. The system provides information about children's health, education, nutrition, protection and other relevant social, demographic and economic data.

OUTPUT 2 In the prioritised territories adolescents rely on mechanisms for demanding their rights and for participating in relevant decision making processes.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

With the results of the analysis of public investment for children, the MEPyD together with general budget directorate, developed a tool for monitoring social investment for children, with technical assistance from UNICEF. The tool facilitates social surveillance by generating regular public reports on the evolution of social investment for children.

With Save the Children, a national seminar on social investment for children was organised, with the participation of over 80 members of Government institutions, local governments and civil society. Its main achievement was the creation of a follow-up board for social investment for children. The process included participation by adolescents, through Children's and Youth Councils (AJI).

The Dominican Federation of Municipalities continued to assume leadership for developing new AJIs. In 2015 four new AJIs were created, and another 15 are in process. Local governments now finance the activities of AJIs. This confirms the sustainability of the adolescent participation initiative that UNICEF supported financially over the years, modifying UNICEF's intervention from financial to technical to implement its exit strategy.

UNICEF provides technical assistance to the MOH's Statistics Directorate to improve the calculation of maternal mortality rates using the administrative data at the hospitals. UNICEF contributed to developing a process of active searching for cases of maternal deaths

nationwide, data analysis and definition of a methodology for the calculation of maternal mortality. The process was in the final stage, and the results are expected in early 2016.

OUTCOME 5 Conferences and meetings

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Activities are on track.

OUTPUT 1 Conferences and meetings

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Four full-time positions were financed under this Output during 2015, whose support was essential for effective implementation of programmes. The breakdown of the funded posts under this output was: a programme assistant (GS-6) who processes procurement at level 1 and acts as the HACT focal point, a logistics assistant (GS-3) and two drivers (GS-2).

Due to the monthly review of outstanding DCT and the continuous close follow-up, UNICEF maintained a low level of outstanding DCTs over the course of the year, except with the MOE. With the MOE, in addition to close follow-up, efforts were made to re-program outstanding DCT to accelerate implementation, while securing the MOE's own funding to complete the originally financed activities. While the situation improved over the months, at year-end, DCTs over six months remained at 8.55 per cent, higher than previous years.

OUTPUT 2 The Communication Strategy of the Country Programme has contributed to making visible the most excluded, and to promoting behaviour change and attitudes in favour of children's rights.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

With the creation of 880/002 ADVOCACY/COMMUNICATION in VISION, this component was discontinued and inputs were moved to 880/002.

Document Center

Evaluation and Research

Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
Adolescencia y VIH en la República Dominicana: Un análisis polietapico de vulnerabilidad, riesgos y resiliencia. ("Adolescence and HIV in Dominican Republic: A multistage analysis of vulnerabilities, risks and resilience")	2015/001	Review

Other Publication

Title
National Household Multipurpose Survey (ENHOGAR-MICS 2014)
Guest of Heart video
Education programme videos

Prevention of sexual exploitation of children video
You are Important video (www.alguien.do)
Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative: Brochure and set of 3 posters