Executive summary

No incidents or events causing major changes to the situation of children took place in the Dominican Republic during 2017.

An evaluation undertaken by UNICEF and the Central Electoral Board generated evidence that demonstrated the effectiveness of the strategy used to increase timely birth registration; rates increased from 40 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016. The evaluation findings led four government institutions to sign an inter-institutional agreement, with the President of the Republic as a witness, to scale-up the strategy nationwide. The strategy was then included in the Government’s national strategy for the reduction of extreme poverty and allocated a budget, ensuring its sustainability.

In a context where 36 per cent of young women marry before reaching 18 years of age and the social norms tolerate this, UNICEF and NGO partners advocated to raise the legal minimum age of marriage to 18 years of age. The reform was approved by the Chamber of Deputies, and is currently pending in the Senate. Additionally, UNICEF launched a communication campaign in a soap opera style ‘La Peor Novela’ (‘the Worst Soap Opera’) to shift society’s perceptions on child marriage. It consisted of two stories divided into five short chapters, each ending with key information on the consequences of early marriage for girls and the country. The show was widely broadcast, reaching 23 million people. Monitoring indicated the campaign’s success: compared with previous on-line campaigns, ‘La Peor Novela’ increased audience engagement from 1.4 per cent to 4 per cent, positive comments increased from 30 per cent to 63 per cent and negative comments declined, from 59 per cent to 7 per cent. This led to important dialogue between UNICEF and the vice-president on the issue of government commitment to ending child marriage.

UNICEF Dominican Republic made a notable contribution to reducing maternal and neonatal mortality in selected hospitals. In 2017, efforts were focused on training and engaging the Ministry of Health’s (MOH) vice-ministry for quality of care to lead the evaluation and certification of hospitals. As a result, the MOH certified the first hospital in the country as a ‘hospital certified for quality and humanization of health attention to mothers and new-borns’ (previously known as the baby-friendly hospital initiative). This hospital reduced its maternal mortality rate from 299.8 to 190 per 100,000 live births, and the neonatal mortality rate from 33.5 to 27.4 per 1,000 live births in just over two years.

Together with other UN agencies, UNICEF supported the government’s inter-ministerial commission for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Joint efforts are also ongoing to strengthen the capacity of the National Statistics Office (ONE) to produce data to report on SDG indicators. UNICEF, the Resident Coordinator’s Office and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) contributed to the development of an ‘SDG data lab’, which designs new ways to monitor SDG indicators that are not currently available. UNICEF participated in inter-agency mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support mission (MAPS) to
help the Government maintain a focus on children when evaluating the extent to which the SDGs have been integrated into national plans. MAPS will provide a roadmap for Government achievement of the SDGs.

The Government continued deporting migrants, mainly Haitians; however, its commitment not to deport children or families with children was maintained. The permanent presence of UNICEF’s observers at border crossing points with Haiti prevented the deportation of 220 children and 83 families with children. Deportation orders were also revoked for 78 adults with children living in the country. UNICEF coordinated the return of children identified at border points to their families.

The new country programme document (CPD) 2018–2022 was approved by the Executive Board. The country management team (CMT) played a key role in ensuring the quality of the country programme management plan (CPMP), in close coordination with UNICEF’s Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) and regular participation by the staff association throughout the process. The management plan includes a detailed analysis of risks and partners’ capacity to mitigate risks of non-delivery of results.

A shortfall in 2017 occurred in the area of improving the situation of adolescents deprived of liberty. Although the number of adolescents in detention centres has declined steadily, lack of government engagement hindered UNICEF’s ability to improve their conditions or monitor their situation.

The UNICEF Dominican Republic Business Advisory Council continued in 2017 to advocate for children’s rights and create new opportunities for partnerships. Collaboration with the private sector to achieve programmatic results was strengthened: 19 health insurance companies disseminated Zika-prevention messages, 30 companies and tourism associations maintained their commitment against child sexual exploitation, 22 companies participated in the ‘Super Dad’ campaign, 19 media and three agencies broadcast ‘La Peor Novela’ to combat child marriage.

**Humanitarian assistance**

The peak of the Zika virus epidemic has passed, and UNICEF integrated the Zika response into regular programmes by focusing on longer-term environmental health education at the household level, and ensuring integrated care and support for families with children born with congenital Zika syndrome (CZS) through multisectoral coordination. A longer-term response to Zika needs is complex, as it involves crosscutting issues such as social protection for children with disabilities and their families, environmental health promotion, family planning, reduction of stigma and discrimination and early childhood development (ECD).

UNICEF strengthened government capacity to coordinate with non-governmental actors in order to reach the most vulnerable families and children affected by Zika with integrated care and support programmes. UNICEF advocated for the inclusion of children with CZS in clinical care and other fundamental crosscutting services such as ECD, referral systems and social protection. Non-clinic care is provided by an NGO partner (Pastoral Materno Infantil) to 86 families (40 per cent of the total affected).

UNICEF facilitated coordination between the MOH and Ministry of Education (MOE) with adolescents-youths organizations and civil society. Home visits for vector-control promotion were organized with 488 adolescents, mostly organized through schools, 122 youth municipality representatives and 525 volunteers. These individuals served as community mobilizers,
reaching 8,954 families and 6,000 school children with messages on Zika prevention and vector control. Multimedia educational materials disseminated to the general public reached more than 3.8 million people, while ad-hoc social media mobilization and a partnership with the Dominican Republic’s national health insurance and 13 private health insurance companies reached 100 per cent of people with health insurance in the country.

The 2017 hurricane season severely affected countries across the Caribbean in September. UNICEF declared a level 2 emergency for the devastation caused by category 5 Hurricane Irma (the most powerful ever recorded over the Atlantic), and category 3 hurricane Maria. While the Dominican Republic was far less affected than neighbouring Caribbean countries, the intense windstorm surges and heavy rains caused the preventive displacement of 40,000 people, including 7,500 children, as well as the damage to roads, houses, electricity lines and agricultural production in the northern provinces of El Seibo and Montecristi. The central Government and local authorities provided timely and efficient response in most of the affected areas, and no additional support was needed.

Within the framework of joint UN work, UNICEF supported the MoE to resume children’s education in Montecristi through distribution of school supplies and recreational kits for 2,150 children at nine schools where damage was reported. Also, in El Seibo Province, where water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services were most affected, 1,500 hygiene kits were distributed to affected families to mitigate the risk of water-borne disease transmission through a community-based water and sanitation programme, as well as recreational activities to promote key hygiene practices. The quality of water was ensured through the assessment of water distribution and treatment points. UNICEF Dominican Republic also contributed to the level 2 hurricane response by deploying a staff member to Turks and Caicos Islands for six weeks as the emergency-recovery coordinator.

Throughout the year, efforts were made to reinforce the resilience of the WASH in emergency sector by strengthening one national and seven provincial WASH groups to better prepare, cope, and recover from emergency situations. In alliance with OXFAM, capacity for risk analysis and information management was reinforced through three regional workshops and sectoral networking, while coordination was improved through monthly meetings, seven emergency simulations and 21 local coordination workshops.

For the first time, UNICEF and UNDP are supporting the national social cash transfer programme (PROSOLI) to develop a national protocol for social protection during and immediately after a disaster. The protocol outlines two main interventions: (1) improving effectiveness and efficiency in mitigating the risk that the most vulnerable families will fall into poverty in the face of climate or disaster shocks, and (2) generating synergies between social protection policies and disaster risk management. UNICEF also supported improvements in the information system covering beneficiaries of the social protection programme(SIUBEN)to improve data collection on vulnerable families to obtain their climate change vulnerability index.

UNICEF Dominican Republic strengthened its staff response capacities for emergency preparedness and humanitarian response through a training facilitated by UNICEF LACRO in May, which included a two-day emergency simulation exercise. UNICEF Dominican Republic’s emergency focal point attended the regional training on the ‘Capacity for Disaster-Reduction Initiative’ and a national workshop on the post-disaster needs assessment.

**Strategic Plan 2018-2021**
UNICEF Dominican Republic plans to implement and monitor the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021 (SP) through implementation and monitoring of its new country programme document, which is well-aligned with SP goal areas 1, 2, 3, and 5. The new CPD echoes the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on realizing the rights of every child, with a special focus on the most disadvantaged children; and it includes five outcomes: 1) children’s social inclusion, 2) child protection, 3) children survive and thrive, 4) learning for all and 5) programme effectiveness.

Country programme document outcomes address 15 result areas of the Strategic Plan: Goal area 1 - maternal and newborn care, quality ECD, gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition, HIV treatment, HIV prevention; goal area 2 – out of school from early learning to secondary education, learning outcomes; goal area 3 – violence, access to justice, child marriage, child migrants; goal area 5 – gender discriminatory roles and practices, adolescent empowerment, child poverty, social protection and disability. In addition, the country programme document includes both of the Strategic Plan’s cross-cutting priorities: humanitarian action and mainstreaming gender equality.

All eight Strategic Plans change strategies (‘the how’) are included in the new CPD. Three of these change strategies highlight the new CPD’s alignment with the SP: gender-responsive programming; UN working together; and winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public. These strategies mark a strategic shift for the CPD by addressing gender inequalities and strengthening systems and results for every child in all programme components—with special emphasis on transforming harmful gender norms and practices, such as child marriage and child sexual exploitation. Given that poverty and inequality are among the most important structural causes of the violations of children and adolescents’ rights in the country, the CPD introduces a new programme component: children’s social inclusion.

The new CPD will maintain the “UN working together” strategy to achieve results in key result areas. Examples of such collaboration will be with the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO) in results for maternal and newborn care, quality ECD, gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition and HIV treatment and prevention. UNICEF will work the UNDP on child poverty, social protection and disability; and with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) on issues relation to child migrants. Several joint activities to address discriminatory gender roles and practices will be coordinated through the UN Communication Group, under the leadership of UNICEF.

UNICEF Dominican Republic invested time and effort in developing its CPMP - in close coordination with UNICEF LACRO, the country management team and the staff association. The CPMP included analyses of risk management, partnerships and capacity, as well as a new staffing structure to provide needed technical assistance and support to achieve planned CPD results. Up to 25 per cent of the programme budget will be dedicated to promoting gender equity through different programmatic and communication activities.

Several key opportunities exist in the Dominican Republic to deliver the results laid out in the Strategic Plan. The Government significantly increased its efforts and investment in children in education and ECD services, and has requested UNICEF technical assistance for improving the quality of these services. Efforts to improve the quality of public hospital services, to reduce neonatal and maternal death, are also being consolidated. The Ministry of Health recognized the effectiveness of continuous improvement of maternal and neonatal health care model, and declared it a public policy.
Challenges to implementation of the Strategic Plan and country programme document are also be present. Cultural practices that favour machismo and sharp gender inequities are structural causes of rights violations, especially for adolescent girls, along with social tolerance of rights violations against the most vulnerable children. Other challenges include the risk of more violent and frequent climate-related disasters, the low quality of some public services and duplication of services provided by different public institutions, as well as the weakness of national statistics systems, especially in some key administrative areas.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**An increase focus on the second decade of life.** UNICEF Dominican Republic initiated for the first time in the country several activities to prevent child marriage and early union. The problem emerged during the elaboration of the situation analysis, and is reflected in the new CPD.

The phenomenon of child marriage/early union is a socially accepted cultural practice; public opinion does not recognize it as a problem. To change this situation, UNICEF developed five lines of work during 2017:

1) *Led preliminary coordination meetings:* UNICEF met with the representatives of public institutions, NGOs and experts to share knowledge and experience about child marriage in the country, and found out that there was no studies or programmes (public or private) to prevent child marriage. The coordination meetings concluded that studies are needed to understand the situation, and to implement communications campaigns to raise public awareness.

2) *Investigated the issue:* UNICEF joined with the World Bank to research the economic impact of child marriage in the Dominican Republic. The research sought to gain understanding of the sociocultural aspects of child marriage and early union in the country. The results provided evidence of the negative impact of child marriage on a child’s life and the country’s economy. Child marriage is a factor in two thirds of teenage pregnancies; the elimination of child marriage would reduce poverty by 10 per cent, increase national income by 1.15 per cent and women’s income by 17 per cent.

3) *Influenced public opinion:* UNICEF launched a public advocacy campaign ‘La Peor Novela’ (the Worst Soap Opera) that started to change social perceptions about child marriage. It was broadcast nationwide, reaching 20.9 million people through social media and 2.1 million through television. The evidence shows a shift in public perceptions toward child marriage. The momentum created led to a commitment by the vice-president of the Republic, who leads the social protection programme, to start the country’s first programme to prevent child marriage.

4) *Supported legal reform:* UNICEF and civil society organizations advocated for raising the legal age for marriage to 18 years. The reform was approved in the Chamber of Deputies, and was being reviewed by the Senate in late 2017.

5) *Supported public policy formulation:* During 2017 UNICEF coordinated with the European Union and the Government Social Protection Programme Cabinet to develop a pilot intersectoral programme to reduce child marriage and early union, led by the vice-president of the Republic. This initiative was developed within the framework of the Regional Programme to End Child Marriage and Early Unions.
Summary notes and acronyms

AMP annual management plan
AWP annual work plan
BCP business continuity plan
BGAN broadband global area network
C4D communication for development
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women para la Ejecución de la Justicia de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes
CMT country management team
CONANI National Council for Children and Adolescents (Consejo Nacional para la Niñez y Adolescencia)
CPD country programme document
CPMP country programme management plan
CZS congenital Zika syndrome
ECD early childhood development
ENHOGAR National household survey (Encuesta Nacional de Hogares)
GASH water, sanitation and hygiene group (Grupo de Agua, Saneamiento e Higiene)
GSSC Global Shared Service Centre
HACT harmonized approach to cash transfers
ICT Information and communications technology
INAIPI National Institute for Integrated Attention in Early Childhood
INSALUD Instituto Nacional de la Salud
IOM International Organization for Migration
JCC joint consultative committee
LACRO Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (UNICEF)
MAPS mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support
MDM master data management
MEPyD Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development
MICS multiple indicator cluster survey
MOE Ministry of Education
MOH Ministry of Public Health
NAS network attachment storage
NatCom UNICEF National Committees
NGO non-governmental organization
ONE National Statistics Office (Oficina Nacional de Estadística)
OR Other Resources
WHO/PAHO World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization
PBR programme budget review
RR Regular Resources
SDG Sustainable Development Goals
UN United Nations
UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS United Nations Department of Safety & Security
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF contributed to reinforcing MOH capacity to lead the evaluation and certification of public hospitals that comply with standards of the ‘Mothers and Newborns in Good Care’ model to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality. UNICEF supported the MOH’s vice-ministry for quality of care through two training workshops and several meetings to deepen the knowledge and skills of technical staff. The MOH now has agreed tools and an external team of experts to conduct hospital evaluations and objectively determine levels of compliance with the model, and to make recommendations for improvement, when necessary. The MOH, with UNICEF support, undertook the first evaluation and certification of a hospital in 2017.

Measures to produce SDG indicators were identified by the national statistics office, after reviewing national capacity and existing mechanisms. With the support provided by UNICEF and other UN agencies, it was concluded that 59 per cent of the indicators could be produced by improving existing sources, while the rest must be produced by creating new sources or transforming existing ones.

UNICEF contributed to strengthening the Government’s social protection programme’s beneficiaries’ information system by training their staff to carry out a survey to update the climate change vulnerability index and to include information on children in data on poor households, such as children with a disability or pregnant adolescents.

In preparation for the new CPD, a communication for development (C4D) strategy and gender workshop was organized, with partners’ participation, to develop institutional capacities. Identified focus areas for the workshop were: early childhood development, preventing child marriage, sexual exploitation and teenage pregnancy. The gender-focused communication for development strategy seeks to understand and promote a change in gender inequalities rooted in social norms, families, communities and the larger society that put children at risk.

UNICEF and civil society organizations advocated for raising the legal age of marriage to 18 years of age. This reform was approved in the Chamber of Deputies, and was being reviewed by the Senate in late 2017. UNICEF also launched a communication campaign ‘La Peor Novela’ (the Worst Soap Opera) that began to change social perceptions about child marriage. It was broadcast nationwide, reaching 23 million people. The momentum created led to a commitment by the vice-president of the Republic, who leads the social protection programme, to start the country’s first programme for ending child marriage in 2018.

UNICEF and the MoE carried out a study of out-of-school children, to clarify issues related to educational exclusion in the education system. It identified a large number of out-of-school children, and found that low learning achievement in early grades at primary school and over-
age are the main factors leading children to drop out. The MoE’s strategic plan 2017–2020 reflects these findings, and a new teaching model is being adopted to increase children’s learning outcomes in grades 1 to 3.

The evidence generated by an evaluation of a UNICEF strategy for timely birth registration in 12 targeted public hospitals led four government institutions to commit to scaling-up the strategy nationwide, and to include it in the national strategy to reduce extreme poverty.

**Partnerships**

Jointly with other UN agencies, UNICEF supported the Government’s inter-ministerial commission for achieving the SDGs, led by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPYD), by actively contributing to the development and monitoring of a work plan. With technical support provided by UNICEF and other UN agencies, the ONE identified measures to produce the SDG indicators, after reviewing national capacity and existing mechanisms. UNICEF, together with the Resident Coordinator’s Office and UNDP, contributed to the development of an SDG data lab to design new ways to monitor SDG indicators that are not currently monitored or available. Furthermore, UNICEF Dominican Republic and other UN agencies participated in a MAPS mission, led by UNDP, to help the Government maintain a focus on children when evaluating the level of integration and implementation of the SDGs. In February 2018 the MAPS will provide the Government with a roadmap for SDG achievement.

UNICEF and civil society organizations advocated to raise the legal age for marriage to 18 years. The reform was approved in the Chamber of Deputies, and is under review by the Senate.

The UNICEF business advisory council continued to advocate for children’s rights and create new opportunities for exercising corporate social responsibility. To increase programmatic outreach, 19 health insurance companies supported the dissemination of a communication campaign for Zika prevention, reaching 100 per cent of people covered by health insurance. To promote the role of fathers during children’s early years the ‘Super Dad’ campaign was supported by 22 companies and reached 3 million people. To ensure mass communication, creative companies and the media supported ‘La Peor Novela’ campaign, which was broadcast nationwide through 14 TV channels, five newspapers and social media, yielding in-kind donations valued at US$1,075,307 and reaching 23 million people.

**External communication and public advocacy**

UNICEF Dominican Republic and civil society organizations advocated to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years of age. Intensive communication messages disseminated during congressional debates resulted in increasing public interest, and the reform was approved in the Chamber of Deputies; Senate approval is pending.

Also during 2017 UNICEF launched a soap-opera style communication campaign (‘La Peor Novela’) to shift society’s perceptions on child marriage. It consisted of two stories divided into five short chapters, ending with key messages, data and the consequences of child marriage for girls and the country. The show was broadcast widely, reaching more than 23 million people and successfully shifting public perceptions on child marriage.

This led to key political dialogues between UNICEF and the vice-president to commit to ending child marriage.
The ‘Super Dads’ campaign promoted fathers’ role in child development. Five influential national figures and 22 corporate partners committed to work with their employees and shared best practices of their ‘super Dads’ in social media accounts. A heart-warming story of a super Dad whose life was deeply touched by UNICEF’s ECD interventions received 270,000 views on Facebook. The campaign reached seven million people through digital platforms.

UNICEF’s Zika prevention campaign reached 3.8 million people through social media. It was supported by 19 health public and private health insurance companies, which disseminated prevention messages among clients and employees; 122 municipal youth representatives; and 525 volunteers, who used the campaign material during home visits, reaching 8,954 families.

UNICEF’s digital presence was strengthened and engagement with audiences increased. The engagement rate increased by 82 per cent compared to 2016 (27 per cent vs. 7.31 per cent). UNICEF’s voice was exponentially amplified by reaching 24.2 million people, a 35 per cent increase over 2016.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

Through the Specialized Office for Prosecution of High-Technology Offences and Crimes, and funded by the British Embassy, UNICEF Dominican Republic organized a sub-regional meeting to strengthen technical capacities and coordination among 51 officials from national judicial authorities (from Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua). Training was focused on conducting joint cross-border investigations of on-line child pornography and led by hands-on experts from INTERPOL, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, Facebook, the Spanish National Police and the Child Rescue Coalition. The meeting helped to strengthen cross-border coordination among participating countries.

Eight professionals from the National Institute for Integrated Attention to Early Childhood (INAIP), the National Health Service, WHO/PAHO and UNICEF were trained on the integrated approach to care and development in early childhood, including new evidence available and practical application of this knowledge in health, education and rehabilitation institutions based on cooperation between UNICEF and WHO/PAHO in Honduras and Paraguay. Gaps and limitations in the health sector were identified for: ECD surveillance at all levels of health services, the absence of a referral system, and national protocols to provide care to children with a disability.

In coordination with General Directorate of Migration and Haitian local authorities, UNICEF maintained its permanent presence through observers at three main official border crossing points. The observers supported authorities to identify people in the process of deportation who either claimed to be under 18 years old, a parent with children in the Dominican Republic or pregnant— to avoid erroneous deportations and facilitate family reunification. As a result, at least 400 detained people were returned to their homes in the Dominican Republic. Some 283 Haitian children without families in the Dominican Republic were handed over by Dominican authorities to Haitian authorities, or to NGO partners for family reunification in Haiti.

**Identification and promotion of innovation**

UNICEF challenged social tolerance of child marriage by using innovative, soap-opera style story-telling. Child marriage is widespread and culturally accepted in the Dominican Republic. ‘La Peor Novela’ told stories of adolescent girls whose surrounding environments forced them into child marriage. The stories portrayed common reasons for child marriage, such as escaping poverty or violence at home, and the common ‘solution of seeking refuge with older men. The
stories stimulated the audience’s imagination on the deeply negative consequences of such practice in the girls’ future, and how it violates the rights of a child. The dramatization of day-to-day life in a popular soap opera style captured the public interest and opened free discussions. Qualitative analysis demonstrates the perceptions are beginning to change, as people began to identify child marriage as a problem and thinking twice before blaming girls.

The Zika response provided opportunities to introduce innovations in UNICEF work on behalf of children with disabilities. Through the NGO partner Pastoral Materno Infantil, community sessions were organized with families with children with CZS. The dialogue was guided by a religious leader, and families had a rare opportunity to share their sense of shame and fear of having children with disabilities. The families realized that the stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities started at home. The key take-home messages were to accept the child as s/he is, regardless of the disabilities, and to love and be proud of your child like any other parent. Through moments of catharsis, the families managed to express their needs and hopes. The importance of care and support to families with children with disabilities was made evident. A short video was produced and disseminated to encourage empathy and engagement on the part of the general public to work with families with children with disabilities.

Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages

Based on evidence generated by an evaluation of the strategy for timely birth registration, which demonstrated its success in increasing timely birth registration from 40 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016, political momentum was created and four government institutions jointly committed to scale-up the strategy nation-wide. They signed an inter-institutional agreement, with the president of the Republic as a witness. The strategy and a budget for its implementation were included in the Government’s national strategy for the reduction of extreme poverty.

UNICEF Dominican Republic continued its support to the cross-sectoral response to the national roadmap for the prevention and elimination of violence against children. A protocol was developed by the MoE for personnel at hospitals and health centres to oblige them to detect and report abuse against children through an inter-institutional channel for attention to child and adolescent victims of violence. In the education sector, many of the 32 schools piloting the national strategy for schools with a culture of peace reported a reduction of discriminatory practices due to efforts to reduce bullying and violence in school. The MoE plans to expand the strategy nationwide.

The cross-sectoral response for social inclusion of children affected by ZCS was guided by the draft roadmap for early detection and comprehensive care for children and adolescents with disabilities in the Dominican Republic. UNICEF facilitated coordination between the health sector and INAIPI, which implements comprehensive services for early childhood care, to provide coordinated, quality interventions for children affected by ZCS. UNICEF is advocating with the country’s social protection programme to include families with children affected by ZCS as beneficiaries.

Service delivery

Limited service delivery was undertaken during the emergency response. See the humanitarian assistance section.
Human rights-based approach to cooperation

In support of the government implementation of the concluding observations to the Dominican Republic on its combined third-to-fifth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF provided technical assistance to: increase timely birth registration from 40 per cent in 2012 to 67 per cent (2017); improve coordination between child protection authorities in the Dominican Republic and Haiti; prevent the deportation of 220 children, 83 families, and 78 adults with children living in the country; and improve the quality of education.

In response to concluding observations on the Dominican Republic’s combined sixth and seventh periodic reports on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UNICEF advocated for legal reform to increase the minimum age for marriage to 18 and launched a campaign against child marriage. The Chambers of Deputies approved this reform, which was being reviewed by the Senate at year-end. UNICEF also supported the Government to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in five selected hospitals, and contributed to reducing neonatal mortality from 50.5 to 21.8 per 1,000 live births, and maternal mortality from 235 to 154 per 100,000 live births.

UNICEF, UNHCR, and the Resident Coordinator’s Office supported the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children. In her end-of-mission statement, the Rapporteur recognized the country’s progress in fighting poverty, coverage of primary and secondary education and combating online sexual exploitation. She expressed her grave concern about child sexual exploitation, and stressed that child marriage is very widespread and mostly affects adolescent girls; she urged the Government to establish an absolute prohibition of child marriage.

Formulation of the new CPD 2018-2022 was guided by equity-focused and human rights-based approaches, targeting structural barriers to the fulfilment of children’s rights, such as poverty and social tolerance of practices such as child marriage and sexual exploitation.

Gender equality

UNICEF advocated for raising the minimum legal age for marriage to 18 years of age. This step was approved by the Chamber of Deputies and is under review by the Senate. UNICEF, jointly with the World Bank, developed a study (The Economic Impact of Child Marriage in the Dominican Republic) and launched a public campaign that shifted society’s perceptions of child marriage. UNICEF also advocated successfully with the Government to launch a programme to prevent child marriage starting in 2018. Expenditures on gender equity totalled US$109,400.

The situation analysis on women and children carried out by UNICEF in 2017 identified cultural practices that tolerate and promote machismo, gender inequities and gender-based violence as the structural causes of violation of the rights of adolescent girls, particularly for sexual abuse, sexual exploitation linked to trafficking, child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Better understanding of attitudes on gender inequality and the beliefs and practices of families and communities, and promoting a change in harmful behaviours and gender-based violence constitute a priority in the CPD 2018–2022, to which UNICEF Dominican Republic plans to dedicate 25 per cent of the programme budget.
The new CPD reflects gender mainstreaming in all programme components, identifying gender results in the results matrix. One of the programme’s priorities is preventing child marriage, with interventions planned to promote adolescent girls’ secondary education and prevent teenage pregnancy.

A C4D workshop focused on gender equality was organized, with partners’ participation, to develop institutional capacities to understand and promote change in gender inequalities, social norms and behaviours among families and communities focused on four areas: ECD, preventing child marriage, combating sexual exploitation and reducing teenage pregnancy.

UNICEF Dominican Republic launched the global ‘Super Dads’ campaign, encouraging fathers to play an active role in their young children’s development. Seven million people were reached through 22 corporate partners that shared key messages through their social media accounts, other digital platforms, and by fathers who posted their photos with their children.

**Environmental sustainability**

UNICEF provided to the MoH a timely, small-scale WASH response, thanks to 2017 efforts to reinforce the resilience of WASH-in-emergencies by strengthening one national and seven provincial WASH groups to better prepare, cope, and recover from emergency situations. In alliance with OXFAM and the MoH, national capacity for risk analysis and information management were reinforced through three regional workshops, and sectoral networking and coordination was improved through monthly meetings, emergency simulations and local coordination workshops.

UNICEF contributed to strengthening the Government social protection programme beneficiaries’ information system by training staff to implement surveys to update information on the most vulnerable families. Among the surveys was a vulnerability to climate shocks index, which assesses household vulnerabilities across five core areas: 1) proximity to specific climate hazards, 2) demographics, 3) housing characteristics, 4) economic and 5) health. The index will permit identification of the population most vulnerable to hurricanes, storms, and drought, and help authorities to identify locations that require greater investment in raising peoples’ capacity to cope with climate shocks.

UNICEF continued its ‘greening’ efforts, replacing the remaining 10 per cent of air conditioners to those with split inverter technology, and all office lamps with LED lights. The effort resulted in a 10.08 reduction of energy consumptions compared to 2016. The installation of motion sensors for lights and air conditioners in corridors and conference rooms was ongoing in 2017, with greening & accessibility funds, and scheduled for completion during the first trimester of 2018. UNICEF staff continued to bring recyclable materials from home to fill recycling bins installed in the office.

**Effective leadership**

The new CPD 2018-2022 was approved by the Executive Board in September. The country management team met four times, ensuring the quality of the CPMP and regular participation by the staff association throughout the process. The CPMP includes detailed analysis of risks and partners’ capacity to mitigate the risk of non-delivery of results. The document was developed in close coordination with UNICEF LACRO. The new staffing structure was approved by the programme budget review (PBR).
All audit recommendations were closed in March, and some were mainstreamed in the office’s day-to-day practice. Throughout the year, management indicators were carefully monitored.

Weekly programme coordination meetings reviewed the programmatic and financial implementation of annual work plans, and monitored the fulfilment of annual targets as well as the correct application of UNICEF standards, policies and procedures. All mandatory monitoring milestones related to the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) were met. Possible risks regarding political context, changes in authority and extreme weather conditions were monitored. The team discussed mitigation measures and provided systematic follow-up.

Staff participation and good communication was ensured through three joint consultative committee (JCC) meetings and 18 all-staff meetings. Management continued efforts to improve the work climate. Based on the results of the 2017 global staff survey, an improvement plan was developed with the staff association and approved by the joint consultative committee. Interventions will focus on issues with lowest scores in the survey. Actions for improvement began in 2017.

The business continuity plan (BCP) was reviewed and updated. UNICEF activated the plan during two hurricanes that affected the country, thereby improving emergency preparedness procedures. In addition, UNICEF’s response capacity during disaster preparedness and response phases was strengthened through the preparation of checklists to be followed by each programme area. UNICEF Dominican Republic received technical support from UNICEF LACRO to improve its emergency response capabilities.

Financial resources management

During 2017 the country management team played an active part in developing the CPMP for the new CPD. The team also monitored financial management, ensured compliance with internal controls, as well as adequate segregation of duty in the table of authorities. All audit recommendations were closed before the first quarter of the year. Programme coordination meetings continued to provide close follow-up to the monitoring of financial implementation, as well HACT implementation, ensuring UNICEF’s accountability.

100 per cent of the institutional budget was implemented. The implementation rate for programme resources was 98.67 per cent, for Regular Resources (RR) 99.97 per cent and for Other Resources (OR) 97.14 per cent. All grants were utilized before their expiry dates.

All transactions were carried out by the local focal point, through the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC). A significant improvement was observed with GSSC transactions in general, and both the finance and master data management (MDM) teams worked proactively to follow-up and resolve identified problems. This allowed UNICEF Dominican Republic to process financial requests in an average of five business days, and one business day for master data management requests. The Office obtained a business credit card after many years of struggle, which greatly improved operational effectiveness by reducing the number of low-value financial transactions for small purchases, staff members’ official use of UBER and small costs related to staff travel. The Office is looking at additional options for eliminating all small transactions generated by the staff members’ in-country travels. All bank reconciliations were undertaken within the timeframe and in collaboration with GSSC, and all open items were reconciled accordingly.
**Fundraising and donor relations**

During the year under review 99 per cent of planned OR was mobilized and spent on programmes included in the country programme document. The fundraising strategy was based on public institutions, embassies or local representations of international organizations, UNICEF national committees (NatComs) and the local private sector.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided US$150,000 for the prevention of child trafficking and online sexual exploitation. A joint programme with other UN agencies received US$50,000, from the UN Development Operations Coordination Office, for a lab to innovate indicators for SDGs.

UNICEF, IOM, UNFPA and UNHCR submitted a proposal to the European Union for a binational (Dominican Republic and Haiti) project to protect children in border areas.

The Spanish National Committee raised US$336,767 for the child protection programme, which it has received annually. The Spanish NatCom visited the country to observe UNICEF-supported programmes, and a three-year project for child marriage prevention is being proposed. The Italian National Committee visited the country with a private company, which resulted in funding of US$73,000 for a study on how to improve child rights in social housing. The agreement included funding of US$250,000-US$500,000 for the next two years.

From the private sector, US$336,960 was raised locally from six companies under three-year agreements. Three tourism companies raised funds through the ‘Guest with a Heart’ programme, one company provided grants and carried out fundraising campaigns and one made a corporate donation.

Regarding in-kind donations, 14 TV channels, five newspapers and two advertising companies supported the ‘La Peor Novela’ campaign against child marriage, with a value of US$1,068,903.

All six donor reports due in 2017 were submitted on time. Quality was assured before each submission through a careful review by the Deputy Representative.

**Evaluation and research**

UNICEF Dominican Republic and the Government finalized the evaluation of the strategy to increase timely birth registration in 12 targeted public hospitals, implemented with UNICEF’s support. The evaluation received good reviews from the Evaluation Office, and was found to be objective, impartial and useful. The evidence showed that the initiative was effective, since birth registration rates rose from 40 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016. It also indicated the potential for scale-up, to contribute to equity promotion by increasing birth registration of the most excluded children in the country.

The evaluation also showed that 90 per cent of foreign users of the service, mostly Haitian mothers giving birth in the Dominican Republic, considered the service received by the government staff to be very good, and received information about how to register their child’s birth in the country’s registry for foreigners.

Furthermore, changes in attitudes were noted among staff working both at the hospitals and the civil registration offices: they are more aware of their roles and responsibilities for birth registration of newborns at the hospital and tend to treat pregnant women with more respect.
The management response to the recommendations of the evaluation included promotion and generating momentum among four government institutions to jointly commit to scaling-up the strategy nationwide in coming years, and to sign a high-level inter-institutional agreement (involving the Central Electoral Board, MoH, National Health System, Presidency of the Republic and UNICEF). The country’s President signed the agreement as a witness. The strategy is now included in the national strategy for reducing extreme poverty.

The findings and recommendation of the evaluation are fully reflected in the CPD 2018–2022.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

UNICEF Dominican Republic continued to reducing its costs for maintenance of office premises by sharing common expenses with other UN agencies at UN House, and to benefit from inter-agency agreements for acquisition of goods and services, including messenger services, an audit firm for HACT requirements and long-term agreements for travel and events.

The 2017 decision to increase the contract review committee threshold to US$50,000 meant that only three of 21 contracts required committee review, without compromising the quality of the review process. This resulted in savings of staff time.

Eleven project agreements were signed with local and international partners, for a total amount of US$521,660. All the programme documents were below the US$100,000 partnership review committee threshold, hence could be processed using the simplified review method begun in 2016 to increase efficiency and save staff time. This saved an estimated 50 person hours.

In preparation of the new staffing structure with five new posts planned for January 2018, the Office recovered all the work spaces rented to other UN agencies, and began to remodel and re-distribute existing space.

UNICEF continued its ‘greening’ efforts, replacing the remaining 10 per cent of air conditioners with those using split inverter technology and replacing the office lamps with LED lights. The effort resulted in the reduction of energy consumptions in kilowatt by 10.08 per cent compared to 2016. Installing motion sensors for lights and air conditions in corridors and conference rooms continued, with greening & accessibility funds, and is scheduled to be completed during the first trimester of 2018. UNICEF staff members continued to bring recyclable materials from home to deposit in office recycling bins.

**Supply management**

The total value of procurement of goods and services in 2017 was US$691,234.91, of which 5.91 per cent was funded by the support budget and 94.09 per cent by the programme budget. Goods and services procured with programme funds represented 20.6 per cent of total programme implementation in 2017. Of the total US$650,374.64 funded by the programme budget, 90.97 per cent corresponded to services and consultancies, 3.25 per cent to supplies and materials, and 5.78 per cent to goods delivered to counterparts (mainly printed materials and ICT supplies).

The office has no warehouse; all procured items were delivered directly to counterparts, as indicated by the responsible programme staff member.

Although the basic cooperation agreement with the Government signed in 2004 stipulates that UNICEF is exempt from paying taxes, the Government has not provided UNICEF (or other UN
agencies) with a legal document indicating this. The issue has been raised with the authorities by agency heads and the Resident Coordinator since 2013, but continues without resolution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total procurement</th>
<th>Services and consultancies</th>
<th>Supplies and goods</th>
<th>Office renovation</th>
<th>Total per budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support budget</td>
<td>$574,783.08</td>
<td>$58,704.85</td>
<td>$16,886.71</td>
<td>94.09%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme budget</td>
<td>$32,227.56</td>
<td>$8,632.71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Security for staff and premises**

UN House premises comply with minimum operating security standards approved by the security management team in June 2017. According to a 2017 self-risk assessment, the Dominican Republic continues to be classified as low risk, level 2. No significant incident was reported during the year. New staff and consultants participated in induction training sessions coordinated by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and completed examinations on basic security and advanced security in the field.

The inter-agency security plan was updated for activation as needed. Two fire drills for the entire UN House were undertaken in coordination with UNDSS. A business continuity plan was simulated during emergency training in May, in coordination with UNICEF LACRO. In preparation for hurricanes Irma, Jose, and Maria, UNICEF Dominican Republic carefully reviewed the plan, the status of satellite phones and updated the vendors list in VISION. Two simulation exercise for communication equipment and several call-tree activation exercises were held.

The office management team, together with UNDSS, followed up the situation with the five VHF-repeaters station, but without resolution.

**Human resources**

The staffing structure for the new CPD was approved, as submitted in the CPMP. The PBR approved 14 new or changed posts, mostly upgrades to respond to new programme needs. Recruitment for 10 fixed-term posts started during the third quarter of the year.

The Office contracted 17 individual contractors and consultants to respond to the needs of the office in the areas of programmes and communication.

UNICEF Dominican Republic consistently promoted staff development by facilitating both in-house/group knowledge building sessions and individual learning opportunities. The training plan was implemented with one two-day all-staff training related to emergencies and a communication for development - gender workshop, both facilitated by UNICEF LACRO specialists. In addition, two staff (GS-05 and NO-B) participated in stretch assignments related to communications in LACRO (one month) and New York (three months). Nine staff members received training outside the country in the areas of: ECD, Zika response, procurement, new HACT interface, human resources and global staff survey and advanced peer support. The Deputy Representative was deployed to Turks and Caicos Islands for six weeks to support the regional emergency response to hurricanes Irma and Maria.
The global staff survey results showed significant improvement in staff members’ positive outlook (4th place in LAC) on the management response to the survey, and on ‘speak up’ culture, job satisfaction, motivation and staff engagement. A consultative action plan was developed jointly with the JCC to target areas where the outlook was less positive, such as knowledge about the Ombudsman, work/life balance and office efficiency/effectiveness.

A wide range of activities – including open discussions during the Ethics’ month, sessions on HR reform/recruitment, recruitment plans, and presentations on contracts’ conditions – were held to keep staff members well informed on matters of interest and to prepare them for HR changes.

### Effective use of information and communication technology

The ICT service contract with a national provider was renewed to support the office with ICT and communication services during 2017. Adequate mitigating measures were taken on the risk involved.

Given the not so satisfactory experience on outsourcing ICT services during the last two years, the CPMP included creation of a post of ICT assistant at GS-07 level. The post was approved and will become effective on 1 January, 2018.

UNICEF Dominican Republic reduced energy consumption following the ICT migration to ‘LIGHT’, as it removed local servers from the office. The energy savings were significant. With the local server, total consumption was approximately 868,000 kilowatts per month, but after the acquisition of a network attachment for storage of multimedia content communication materials, monthly consumption dropped to approximately 10,000 kilowatts. In addition, replacing old laptops contributed to energy savings, as new models are more energy-efficient. The same is true for the replacement of 11 old network points cat5 to cat6, and a newly purchased portable device for video conference calls.

### Programme components from RAM

#### ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

**OUTCOME 1** Effective and efficient programme management and operations support to programme delivery

**Analytical statement of progress**

The office continued to have effective and efficient programme management and operations in 2017. The security level remains low, at level 2. The major risk to UN staff are activities related to crime and hazards identified as ‘substantial risk 4’ in the risk control self-assessment updated in November 2017. High risks are the prevalence of several tropical diseases, as well as hydro-meteorological and geophysical-related natural hazards, as the country is located in the Caribbean’s ‘hurricane alley’.

**OUTPUT 1** Effective and efficient governance and systems

**Analytical statement of progress**

The CMT played an active part in developing the CPMP for the new CPD 2018-2022. The CMT monitored financial management, ensured compliance with internal controls and adequate
segregation of duty in the table of authorities. All audit recommendations were closed before the first quarter of the year.

During 2017 the CMT met four times and monitored progress in HACT implementation, which was marked by auditors as the only high-risk area. Management indicators were carefully monitored as well. By year-end, all HACT mandatory monitoring milestones were met: 26 programmatic visits; nine spot-checks; and one micro-assessment. Country management team meeting minutes were kept and shared with all staff.

UNICEF Dominican Republic carefully reviewed its BCP, which was activated twice in 2017: during hurricane preparations and during an emergency training, in coordination with UNICEF LACRO. Critical personnel held several meetings, communication equipment was checked (BGAN, Sat phones and VHF radios) and the call tree was activated. Staff worked from home two days, as a precaution, during the period when hurricanes were threatening the country.

Management continued efforts to improve the work climate. A consultative action plan was developed with the JCC to target areas with a less positive outlook in 2017 global staff survey results, such as knowledge about the Ombudsman’s office, work/life balance, career and professional development and office efficiency/effectiveness.

The JCC met three times, and 17 all staff meetings were held during the year to keep staff well informed about CPMP preparation and other matters of interest, and to prepare them for personal HR changes, discussions during Ethics month, sessions on HR reform/recruitment, recruitment plans, and presentations on contract conditions among other issues.

OUTPUT 2 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources

Analytical statement of progress

The Office managed HACT implementation effectively and efficiently; all HACT requirements and assurance activities were fulfilled: 25 programmatic visits and eight spot-checks were carried out. Since 92 per cent of UNICEF Dominican Republic’s implementing partners receive less than US$100,000 per year, and thus did not require micro-assessment, the Office adopted an optional practice of applying a simplified check list to update risk levels, which remained low for 60 per cent of partners.

Significant improvement occurred in 2017 in relation to GSSC transactions; average processing time was five business days for finance requests and one business day for MDM requests. Continuous efforts were made to reduce the number of small-value financial transactions through the use of a business credit card for the office, facilitating small purchases. Bank reconciliations were completed within the timeframe, in collaboration with the GSSC, and all open items were reconciled accordingly.

UNICEF Dominican Republic continued to reduce costs for office maintenance by sharing common expenses with other UN agencies at UN House. In 2017 the office continued to benefit from inter-agency agreements for goods and services (such as messenger services, audit firm for HACT and long-term agreements for travel and events).

UNICEF continued its ‘greening’ efforts and replaced the remaining 10 per cent of air conditioners with split inverter technology equipment and office lamps with LED lights. The effort resulted in the reduction of energy consumptions in kilowatt by 10.08 per cent compared to
2016. Installation of motion sensors for lights and air conditioners in corridors and conference rooms continued in 2017 (using ‘greening & accessibility’ funds) and is scheduled to finish during the first trimester of 2018. UNICEF staff continued to bring recycling materials from home for recycling bins installed in the office.

OUTPUT 3 Effective and efficient management of human capacity

Analytical statement of progress:
UNICEF Dominican Republic continued to improve its management of human capacity in 2017. With the increase of the contract review committee threshold to US$50,000, three of 21 contracts were reviewed by the committee, resulting in savings of staff time, without compromising the quality of the review.

Eleven projects with local and international partners were signed in 2017. All programme documents were below the US$100,000 partnership review committee threshold, hence were processed through the simplified review method introduced in 2016 to increase efficiency and save staff time. In 2017, this process saved an estimated 50 person hours, and the approval process was accelerated without compromising review quality.

The training committee implemented 100 per cent of the planned activities in its 2017 plan.

OUTCOME 2 By 2017 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 contributed to building evidence of the challenges facing the country’s education system through its study of out-of-school children, the findings of which are reflected in the MoE’s strategic plan 2017-2020, which is aligned with the national development plan, the SDGs and other international commitments.

The plan includes four priority themes based on progress achieved by the MoE, with UNICEF support, during the current CPD period: 1) elimination of bullying and violence in school through standards for harmonious coexistence in public and private schools; 2) improving children’s learning outcome through a new education model for reading/writing and mathematics in the early grades of primary education; 3) inclusion of children with disabilities; and 4) improved efficiency of administrative and pedagogical processes through use of the quality management model in 90 per cent of schools, districts and regional and central MoE offices.

UNICEF continued to provide technical support to the MOE to improve children’s learning achievement in reading/writing and mathematics during the first three grades of primary education. The Ministry and the National Teacher Training Institute began implementation of the strategy for continuous teacher training at the national level, consisting of: 1) implementation of the new teaching model for reading/writing, 2) baseline data and monitoring of its implementation and results, 3) use of information systems for early warnings and taking action to prevent school drop-out and 4) school improvement plans. Implementation began in 33 educational districts, and is planned for expansion to all 105 districts by 2020.
UNICEF and the MoE jointly carried out the ‘out-of-school-children’ study to understand the situation facing these children and identify reasons for low learning achievement and bottlenecks in the education system. The study’s main findings were two-fold: 1) The large number of over-aged children in primary school (19 per cent, or 239,000 children) puts children at risk of dropping out; and 2) third grade is the most difficult grade to pass. Some 36 per cent of over-aged children are between the first and third grades. The study also showed that 18 per cent of children aged five years and 9.9 per cent of children aged 15-to-17 years do not attend school.

The MoE, with UNICEF support, developed a national strategy for schools with a culture of peace, to eliminate bullying and violence in schools. In the pilot experience in Boca Chica (Santo Domingo Este Province) 106 children were trained as school mediators to help their peers to resolve conflicts peacefully. The pilot validated the national schools for a culture of peace strategy, and the MOE’s annual operational plan for 2018 includes a budget for expanding use of the strategy to three education regions (Santo Domingo 10 and 15 and San Cristóbal).

In 2017 UNESCO’s global education monitoring report, _Accountability in Education_, recognized the Dominican Republic as one of just three middle-income countries in the world that produce annual accountability reports in education, thanks to UNICEF’s support to the Dominican Initiative for Quality Education, along with international cooperation agencies, the private sector, civil society, the MoE, and other government institutions that produced high-level follow-up and monitoring reports during 2012–2016.

**OUTPUT 1** By 2016, in four prioritized 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**

UNICEF and the MoE jointly carried out the ‘out-of-school-children’ study to understand the situation facing these children and identify reasons for low learning achievement and bottlenecks in the education system. The study’s main findings were two-fold: 1) The large number of over-aged children in primary school (19 per cent, or 239,000 children) puts children at risk of dropping out; and 2) third grade is the most difficult grade to pass. Some 36 per cent of over-aged children are between the first and third grades. The study also showed that 18 per cent of children aged five years and 9.9 per cent of children of aged 15-to-17 years do not attend school.

UNICEF continued to provide technical assistance to the MoE to improve learning achievement among children in early grades, and begin to apply a new teaching model for reading/writing and mathematics. A critical mass of 80 language and mathematics specialists and expert trainers from the MoE and teacher trainers from universities and education institutes were trained by master-trainer specialists from Argentina. They began to work with 12 universities and teaching colleges, under a technical and financial agreement with the MoE, as implementing partners to train 1,000 teachers in 33 education districts in improved teaching methods. The model focuses on strengthening teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the new teaching model, and introduces interactive, participatory teaching methods to improve children’s learning outcomes. The new model also facilitates strengthening schools’ monitoring capacity by introducing a self-application baseline in each school in the areas of teaching,
learning and school management.

UNICEF continued its effort to eliminate bullying and violence in school. It provided technical assistance for the development of various practical tools for applying standards on harmonious coexistence in public and private schools: the school mediation programme and its operating procedures guideline, a manual on positive discipline methods to support teachers’ work in the classrooms and an implementation and monitoring plan. The tools were piloted in 32 schools in Santo Domingo and Boca Chica, and many schools demonstrated a reduction in discriminatory practices. For example, schools now allow girls with naturally curly hair to wear their hair loose, instead of forcing them to have it always braided. Other schools reported suspending the practice of temporary exclusion or permanent expulsion of children from schools as a disciplinary measure. The MoE included a budget line for expanded implementation of the strategy in their operational plans for 2018 to three education districts (Santo Domingo 10 and 15 and San Cristóbal 04), as the start of a gradual scaling-up of this strategy to eliminate violence in schools.

The ‘Guide for Attention to Diversity in the Classroom’ was concluded, teachers and specialists were trained and its implementation started in 516 schools. These actions supported 3,156 children with disabilities and learning difficulties to receive support for their learning, 90 per cent of whom showed progress in their learning and passed onto the next grade. In addition, 261 students received psycho-pedagogical evaluation, and teachers were supported to elaborate psycho-pedagogical support plans.

OUTPUT 2 By 2016, in six prioritized 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
UNICEF continued its support for implementation of the Government’s ECD programme, “Quisqueya Starts with You,” which now reaches 117,954 children under five years of age, compared to 18,000 children when launched in 2014. With UNICEF’s technical support, the Institute for Integral Care in Early Childhood (INAIPI) strengthened its focus on the new approaches suggested by UNICEF and WHO/PAHO for a comprehensive care for child development approach, going beyond early stimulation. Two leading INAIPI staff members participated in workshops in Honduras and Paraguay, an expert trained key staff from all ECD centres on this new approach, and the MoH and INAIPI signed an agreement.

UNICEF supported a comparative study to identify the programme’s impact on parenting practices, comparing families participating in the Government’s ECD programme for one year (treatment group) and families with only one month of participation (control group). The treatment group demonstrated improved parenting practices through a higher rate of activities for their children’s development and a lower rate of neglect and verbal, physical and psychological discipline. Interactive teaching aids, such as cards, posters, flyers and games are being developed for families and community ECD promoters to facilitate their day-to-day practice with children.

With UNICEF’s technical support, 670 young children with disabilities now have access to integrated ECD services through INAIPI’s centres and family and community-based programme. INAIPI designed and implemented the guidelines ‘Sara’s Story’ and ‘Identification of warning signs in child development,’ which guide INAIPI staff to detect early developmental risks and to
provide quality care for children with disabilities. Based on this, INAIPI developed a training module using the guides for detection and care for children with disabilities to train 100 teachers and community agents, and plans to continue the training in 2018.

With UNICEF advocacy and technical support for the social inclusion of children with disabilities, the MoH and INAIPI designed a roadmap that streamlines the coordination of key services, such as clinical care and other key cross-cutting services related to referral systems and social protection. While its approval remains pending, the roadmap is already being used by practitioners as a reference. To date, 86 families (40 per cent of all families with babies born with CZS) received non-clinical care, including ECD services, from an NGO partner, Pastoral Materno Infantil.

OUTCOME 3 By 2017, 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
In 2017 UNICEF provided technical assistance to national institutions to improve their capacity to protect children against all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking, and guarantee their right to an identity. At the end of the current CPD in 2017, the Dominican Republic had improved public policies to protect children from violence, promote birth registration and sanction crimes against children, especially sexual exploitation.

The timely birth registration strategy has become a public policy and government priority. UNICEF undertook an evaluation of a strategy for timely birth registration in 12 targeted public hospitals, which demonstrated that the initiative was effective, as birth registration rates increased from 40 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016. It also indicated a potential for a scale-up, to contribute to promoting equity by improving birth registration for the most excluded children. The evidence generated created momentum that led four government institutions to commit to scaling-up the strategy nationwide and to sign an inter-institutional agreement, with the President of the Republic as a witness. The timely birth registration strategy was then included, with an allocated budget, in the Government’s strategy for reducing extreme poverty.

Protection against violence, abuse and trafficking for children on the move has improved. The Government continued to respect its commitment not to deport children or families with children, in the best interest of the child, while the deportation of illegal residents, mainly Haitians, continued. UNICEF maintained the presence of permanent observers at three of four official border crossing points with Haiti. As a result, 220 children in the process of deportation were returned to their families in the Dominican Republic, and the deportation of 83 families with children and 78 adults with children living in the country was annulled. In addition, 283 Haitian children without families in the Dominican Republic were handed over by Dominican authorities to Haitian authorities or to NGO partners, for family reunification in Haiti.

Public policy to protect children against violence and abuse was extended. Implementation of the ‘National Roadmap for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Children’ was extended until 2020. A statistical data management system (InfoViolenciaRD) was developed, with UNICEF’s technical support, to monitor the progress of the Roadmap’s goals and indicators, which will promote evidence-based decision making by the Government.
During 2017, 14 public institutions developed 65 activities within the framework of the Roadmap. The MoH launched the protocols and the inter-institutional route for attention to child and adolescent victims of violence, which obliges directors of hospitals and health centres to report suspected cases of child abuse to the police. Training of health system personnel is underway, with UNICEF support.

National capacity to prosecute crimes of sexual exploitation was strengthened. The Attorney General’s Office continued to consolidate its capacity to prosecute on-line child pornography, with UNICEF support. For the first time in the country, two cases of local production of child pornography were detected, investigated and sanctioned. Local production of child pornography indicates that the exchange of pornographic material in the country is widespread, requiring action. Also for the first time, the Government has evidence that child victims of trafficking are linked to child pornography in the country: both cases involved four child victims. In addition, 560 internet protocol addresses were investigated for exchange of child pornography, 86 house warrants were carried out, 41 people were brought to trial and 15 were convicted. Only two cases of sexual exploitation were investigated in 2014.

The principal bottleneck encountered in 2017 was the change of key counterparts in the Attorney General’s Office, which slowed down ongoing cooperation for the prosecution of sexual exploitation and hindered progress toward reaching better understanding of the situation of adolescents deprived of liberty. To overcome these constraints, UNICEF strengthened its relations with the newly established international cooperation unit in the Attorney General’s Office.

OUTPUT 1 By 2016 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
To support implementation of the national roadmap for the prevention and elimination of violence against children, now extended until 2020, the MoH launched a guide and protocols that oblige directors of hospitals and health centres to report suspected cases of child abuse to the police, and trained 39 regional health system officials in November. Traditionally, such cases were not reported for the fear of retaliation and lack of clarity about responsibilities and procedures.

UNICEF supported the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) to develop a statistical data management system (InfoViolenciaRD) to monitor progress toward the roadmap’s goals and indicators, starting in 2018. CONANI established 29 new local child protection boards in 2017, bringing the total number of child protection boards established during the current country programme cycle to 116.

Advocacy for roadmap implementation was reinforced by the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Rapporteur urged the Government to: continue implementing the roadmap, incorporate child protection as a core issue of its tourism strategy, strengthen the protection of victims of sexual exploitation and prohibit child marriage, among other issues.

Together with partner organizations, UNICEF advocated raising the minimum age of marriage to
18 years. The new draft Civil Code was approved by the Chamber of Deputies, and is currently under Senate review. UNICEF launched a timely advocacy campaign (La Peor Novela) to position child marriage at the centre of society’s agenda, reaching 23 million people. This led to important policy dialogue between UNICEF and the Vice-President on ending child marriage.

UNICEF Dominican Republic, in close coordination with the British Embassy and other UNICEF offices, organized a sub-regional training workshop to reinforce coordination on prosecuting online sexual exploitation, with participation by 51 judicial officials from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

UNICEF supported the Attorney General’s Office to strengthen its capacity to investigate and prosecute online child pornography. Some 560 IP addresses were investigated for exchange of child pornography, 86 house warrants were carried out, 41 people were brought to trial and 15 were convicted. This represents significant progress, given that the Dominican Republic did not prosecute any case of sexual exploitation until 2014, when two cases led to convictions.

In addition, for the first time in the country, two cases of locally produced child pornography were detected, investigated and sanctioned. The local production of child pornography indicates that exchanging pornographic material is a widespread phenomenon, and demands action. Also for the first time in the country, the Government has evidence linking child pornography and trafficking of children: the two cases involved four child victims.

Fifteen hotels, restaurants and tour operators signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. A total of 1,414 children, 427 parents, 269 families and 166 authorities received information on preventing child sexual exploitation from the NGO MAIS, with UNICEF support.

OUTPUT 2 By 2016 in 6 prioritized territories the Registrar’s Office delivers birth certificates to undocumented children and pregnant adolescents.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF contributed to reducing inequity among children by providing improved access to birth registration, which fulfils a child’s right to identity, name and nationality. The evaluation of the strategy for increasing timely birth registration—implemented in 12 public hospitals since 2012, with UNICEF support—was finalized. The findings showed that the initiative was effective; birth registration rates rose from 40 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016. The evaluation also indicated the potential for scale-up, contributing to promoting equity by expanding birth registration to the most excluded children in the country.

These results created momentum that led four government institutions (the Central Electoral Board, MoH, National Health System and the Presidency of the Republic) to jointly commit to scaling-up the strategy nationwide in coming years, signing a high-level inter-institutional agreement with UNICEF. The president of the Dominican Republic signed the agreement as a witness. The strategy is now included in the national strategy for reducing extreme poverty (Quisqueya Sin Miseria), with the aims of increasing timely registration of newborns in hospitals and late registration for children whose registration was not completed during their first 60 days of life.

The agreement includes 29 specific commitments that must be fulfilled by the signatory institutions within three years; UNICEF will provide technical advice. A medium-term national
programme to solve this challenge, including financial resources, was under development at year’s-end. This high-level agreement had already begun to show results by late 2017: a) the Central Electoral Board created a specialized unit to support and monitor civil registry offices in hospitals; b) the Directorate of Special Programmes of the Presidency committed US$500,000 for 2017 and US$43,500,000 for 2018 to improve timely and delayed birth registration; c) 233 community promoters and social workers were included in the initiative to raise awareness and provide information to families about the importance of, and requirements for, registering their children; and d) 622 late birth registrations were granted to children under 16 years of age in the prioritized communities of the Government programme ‘Quisqueya Sin Miseria’.

In addition, the MoH and the National Health Service continued to raise awareness among public hospital personnel about the importance of birth registration. In 2017, some 240 hospital directors, maternity ward chiefs, nurses and security personnel were sensitized during three workshops.

Over the next three years, it is expected that the UNICEF-supported strategy to increase timely birth registration will be applied in at least 30 registry offices in public hospitals, contributing to increasing the percentage of children registered in a timely manner to 75 per cent, thus meeting the SDG goal.

OUTPUT 3 By 2016 mechanisms exist for the prevention, control and care of children victims of trafficking and smuggling in border regions and prioritized territories.

Analytical statement of progress

UNICEF continued to strengthen the capacity of local communities in provinces bordering Haiti to prevent child trafficking and provide protection for children on the move between the two countries. In coordination with UNICEF Haiti, UNICEF Dominican Republic, Plan International and World Vision organized three meetings in border towns (Dajabón, Jimaní and Elías Piña) with 18 local representatives from community-based child protection networks to build their capacity for preventing child trafficking, based on actual cases of unaccompanied children. In addition, a binational meeting with representatives of institutions working for child protection on both sides of the border area was organized to strengthen collaboration between community-based child protection networks and local representatives of national child protection systems in both countries. Sixty-five representatives of local and central protection systems from both countries participated, along with members of security forces, community-based child protection networks and civil society. IOM representatives in the Dominican Republic and Haiti also participated.

In coordination with the General Directorate of Migrations, the IOM and UNHCR, UNICEF Dominican Republic maintained its permanent presence through observers at three of four official border crossing points. These observers helped authorities to identify children/people in the process of deportation, who claim to be: younger than 18 years of age, a parent with children in the country or pregnant, to avoid erroneous deportations and facilitate family reunification in the country. During the year under review 220 children detained for deportation were returned to their families in the country, and the erroneous deportation of 83 families with children and 78 adults with children living in the country was halted, based on the principles of family unity and the best interests of the child. UNICEF also facilitated contacts with local protection institutions in Haiti and Haitian consulates at border areas.
In close coordination with UNICEF Haiti and Dominican migration authorities, 283 Haitian children without families in the Dominican Republic, or unaccompanied children who tried to enter the Dominican Republic were handed over by Dominican authorities to Haitian authorities or NGO partners for family reunification in Haiti.

**OUTPUT 4** By 2016, the number of adolescents deprived of liberty per 100,000 inhabitants will have been reduced by 30 per cent.

**Analytical statement of progress**
National capacity to prosecute crimes against children were reinforced as a result of the participation by three officials from the Attorney General's Office and Supreme Court of Justice in the 20th international course on jurisdictional protection of children's rights, held in December in Panama.

UNICEF provided support to the Supreme Court of Justice for inaugurating two new interview centres for conducting interviews with child and adolescent victims or witnesses of crimes to avoid their re-victimization, in Santo Domingo and Valverde provinces (northern region).

While the number of adolescents sanctioned with deprivation of liberty has declined steadily surpassing the target, thanks to UNICEF’s constant advocacy over the years, the major challenge during 2017 for UNICEF’s work in the area of juvenile justice was the Government’s lack of engagement and leadership to improve conditions for adolescents in conflict with the law in detention centres, which hindered the work of the Commission for the Execution of Justice for Children.

No measures were taken during 2017 to improve the situation of adolescents deprived of liberty, and the situation of detained adolescents is not known, as the Commission could not establish a calendar to visit adolescent detention centres or an annual work plan without Government leadership. UNICEF offered technical assistance to the Attorney General’s Office to improve conditions of adolescents deprived of liberty; however, no response was received. The Government did not agree to open juvenile detention centres to international observers, and cancelled at the last minute a monitoring visit scheduled for the United Nations Special Rapporteur.

**OUTCOME 4** By 2017 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 and the World Bank collaborated to produce a study on the economic impact of child marriage and early unions in the Dominican Republic, which highlighted the negative economic impact of child marriage. Females who enter into child marriage earn 17 per cent less income and have more children compared to peers who marry later. Eliminating child marriage would: reduce teenage pregnancy by two thirds and slow population growth by 0.17 per cent; reduce poverty for girls who marry before reaching 18 years old from 41 to 32.1 per cent, and the country’s overall poverty rate from 30.5 to 27.7 percent. National income would increase by 1.15 per cent. If child marriage had been eliminated in 2015, the social benefit for the country that
year would have been US$171 million (in purchasing power parity) and by 2030, US$4,880
million. These findings will contribute to defining effective intervention strategies to prevent child
marriage. The launch of the study was hosted by the vice president, with the presence of the
UNICEF LACRO regional director.

UNICEF provided technical and financial support for an inter-institutional team, involving the
MEPyD Analysis Unit and the General Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance. The team’s
capacity was sufficiently strengthened to undertake an analysis of public investment in children. The study showed that the Government’s investment in children totals 5.1 per cent of GDP, with steady increases (up from 3.86 per cent in 2013), representing 23.7 per cent of public expenditure and 55.8 per cent of public social investment. The study also demonstrated that 94.8 per cent of the social investment was financed by the Government’s own resources, indicating the stability of these investments.

The study also found that 69.5 per cent of social investment for children went to the education sector, 11.4 per cent to social protection, and 8 per cent to health; the latter is lower than in other countries in the region. When analysing direct investment classified by age groups, it is shown that early childhood (0-5 years) received the lowest percentage of investment, just 5.4 per cent, while children aged 6-12 years represented 46.7 per cent, and adolescents (13-17 years) received 24.8 per cent. This analysis provided evidence to support advocacy for increased and more efficient use of public investment for children, focused on early childhood and the health sector, as well as the need for better disaggregation of programmatic budgets, mainly in the health sector.

UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to enable the country’s unique information system on beneficiaries of social protection programmes to carry out a household study on socio-economic status in 2017. Detailed and updated data on the most vulnerable households in the country will be obtained to analyse the potential for their inclusion in the Government’s social protection programme. Data from the study will also allow updates to the Climate Change Vulnerability Index.

The evaluation of the strategy to increase timely birth registration in 12 targeted public hospitals was finalized. The evidence showed the initiative was effective as birth registration rates rose from 40 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016. It also highlighted the potential for scale-up, to contribute to equity promotion by improving birth registration rates among the most excluded children in the country.

Three situation analyses were finalized in 2017, as part of preparations for the new CPD: maternal and child health; adolescent health, violence against children; birth registration and children out of school. The development of strategy notes and the new CPD were guided by the evidence and analysis generated through these documents, and will serve as the basis for defining UNICEF’s programmatic interventions.

In conjunction with other UN agencies, UNICEF supported the Government’s Inter-Ministerial Commission for the Achievement of SDG, led by the MEPyD, by actively contributing to the development of a work plan. Rapid analysis found that 73 per cent of the results expected in the country’s national development plan for 2030 are in line with the SDGs.

The UN interagency committee supported the ONE to explore measures to produce 240 SDG indicators for Agenda 2030. After reviewing national capacity and existing mechanisms, it was concluded that 59 per cent of the indicators can be produced by improving existing sources,
while the rest will require new sources or transforming existing ones. UNICEF collaborated with the Resident Coordinator’s Office and UNDP to develop an SDG data lab to design new ways of monitoring SDG indicators not currently being monitored or available. UNICEF prepared a preliminary draft of childhood indicators to support the country in the presentation of its first voluntary report on SDG progress in 2018.

UNICEF provided support to the UN’s MAPS mission, to help the Government maintain a focus on children when evaluating the level of integration and implementation of the SDGs through strategic issues such as birth registration, maternal and neonatal mortality, quality of education, gender-based violence and child marriage. In February 2018 MAPS will provide the Government with a roadmap for achieving the SDGs.

**OUTPUT 1** By 2016 the Ministries of Planning and of social sectors, as well as local governments and civil society organizations, manage and utilize quality information, with a gender and equity focus, for public policy decision making and the allocation of resources.

**Analytical statement of progress:**
UNICEF provided technical and financial support to an inter-institutional team, comprised of the MEPyD’s analysis unit and the general budget office of the Ministry of Finance. The team’s capacity was sufficiently strengthened to undertake an analysis of public investment in children. The result showed an increase in investment in children to 5 per cent and a need to continue increasing the budget for early childhood and the health sector. It is expected that other studies will be undertaken each year. Information technology assistance is pending for the first quarter of 2018, to allow the public institutions to modify the parameters of their information platforms.

UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to the system used by the Government to track beneficiaries of the social protection programme (SIUBEN) to carry out a socio-economic household study in 2017. Detailed and updated data on the most vulnerable households in the country will facilitate identification of those to be included in the social inclusion programme, as well as permitting an update of the Climate Change Vulnerability Index.

A national survey of immigrants was carried out by the ONE in 2017, with support from UNFPA, UNICEF, other UN agencies and experts participated in a national committee of experts, and contributed to the development of questionnaires for immigrants.

The evaluation of the strategy to increase timely birth registration in 12 targeted public hospitals was finalized. The evidence showed the initiative was effective; birth registration rates rose from 40 per cent in 2012 to 68 per cent in 2016. It also highlighted the potential for scale-up, to contribute to equity promotion by improving birth registration rates among the most excluded children in the country. The evidence generated created momentum that led four government institutions to commit to scaling-up the strategy nationwide and to sign an inter-institutional agreement, with the President of the Republic as a witness. The timely birth registration strategy was then included, with an allocated budget, in the Government’s strategy for reducing extreme poverty.

Together with other UN agencies, UNICEF supported the government’s inter-ministerial commission for achievement of the SDGs, led by the MEPYD, by actively contributing to the development of a work plan. ONE identified measures to produce the 240 SDG indicators for Agenda 2030, after reviewing national capacity and existing mechanisms. It was concluded that 59 per cent of the indicators can be produced through improvements in existing sources, while
the rest will require new sources or transforming existing ones. UNICEF collaborated with the Resident Coordinator’s Office and UNDP to develop an SDG data lab to design new ways of monitoring SDG indicators not currently being monitored or available. Three situation analyses were finalized as part of preparations for the new CPD 2018-2022: maternal and child health, adolescent health, violence against children and out-of-school children.

OUTPUT 2 By 2016 in the prioritized territories adolescents rely on mechanisms for demanding their rights and for participating in relevant decision making processes.

Analytical statement of progress:
Children participated actively in UNICEF’s effort to eliminate bullying and violence in school. Children were empowered by the new school mediation programme and the positive discipline methods manual for teachers’ work in the classrooms, to carry out the standards for harmonious coexistence in public and private schools. Children in many of 32 pilot schools in Santo Domingo and Boca Chica experienced a reduction of discriminatory practices. For example, schools now allow girls to wear their naturally curly hair loose, instead of forcing them to have it always braided. Other schools reported halting the practice of temporary exclusion or permanent expulsion of children from schools as a disciplinary measure. Children also played a key role in the MoE’s student forum for a culture of peace, to prevent violence, and the construction of spaces for mediation and conflict negotiation.

UNICEF continued to seek innovative ways to make the voices of the most vulnerable women heard as they demand their right to be treated with dignity during childbirth. With NGO partners and INSALUD, cinema-forums were organized, using the film ‘Nueve Lunas,’ (Nine Moons), directed by a female Paraguayan filmmaker. Active discussions took place reflecting on how women are treated during childbirth, what constitutes obstetric violence and how to prevent it. Some 220 obstetricians, general medical doctors and nurses from six hospitals attended the sessions. This effort raised awareness and demand by service users: 5,200 pregnant women received information about women’s right to be treated without obstetric violence.

Thanks to UNICEF’s advocacy, MoH resolution 00010-17 was approved to develop mechanisms for participation and citizen oversight, by people and communities, in health services declared to be of high priority, to accompany the management of policies, plans, programmes and health services.

UNICEF and the NGO INSALUD strengthened the capacity of 15 multipliers to serve as ‘social watchers’ to amplify women’s voices by interviewing them about treatment received during prenatal visits, labour and childbirth by health personnel at three targeted hospitals. This provided critical insight and detailed information about the quality of health services; for example, whether women were treated with dignity, counselling was provided by themes, interventions were applied to eliminate obstetric violence and whether they received support related to birth registration.

A platform of several NGO working on sexual and reproductive health, including UNICEF’s partner INSALUD, launched the first report of the ‘MIRA Que Te MIRO’ (LOOK,I See You)initiative for social surveillance on women’s rights to sexual and reproductive health, based on the Montevideo Consensus on population and development. The country scored only 56 per cent of completion in four components: human rights and secularism, comprehensive sexuality education, sexual and reproductive health and accountability.
OUTCOME 5 Conferences and meetings

Analytical statement of progress

Activities are on track.

OUTPUT 1 Conferences and meetings

Analytical statement of progress

UNICEF Dominican Republic applied flexible working hours to support staff members’ needs, such as caring for their children and family members, and allowed working from home, with prior agreement from the direct supervisor. The communication officer expanded her knowledge and skills by undertaking a three-month stretch assignment at NYHQ, and the programme assistant-communication had a one-month assignment at the UNICEF Regional Office.

The CPD 2018–2022 was approved by the Executive Board, and the new staffing structure was approved by the PBR. The CPMP was developed, in close coordination with LACRO, and communication with staff was maintained during this process. The CMT played a key role in ensuring the quality of the document and regular participation by the staff association throughout the process.

Management continued its efforts to improve the work climate. Based on the results of the 2017 global staff survey, an improvement plan was developed with the staff association and approved by the JCC. Interventions will focus on the issues for which the office had a low score in the global staff survey, such as knowledge about the Ombudsman’s office, work/life balance, career and professional development and office efficiency/effectiveness. Many actions for improvement began before the end of 2017.

The JCC met three times during the year and 17 all-staff meetings were held to keep staff members well informed about CPMP preparation and other matters of interest, and to prepare them for the impact of HR changes. Discussions also focused on Ethics’ month, HR reform/recruitment, the office recruitment plan and contract conditions, among other topics.

Sufficient time was allocated to explain recruitment procedures for newly established posts before they were advertised, and staff members were encouraged to apply. The Office is applying the new human resources policy to maximize existing mechanisms, such as lateral re-assignment, talent groups and semi-closed advertisement limited to UN personnel.

Document centre

Evaluation and research

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