The eight countries and four territories (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands covered by UNICEF’s Eastern Caribbean Area (ECA) Office are small island developing states (SIDS) highly vulnerable to external shocks and effects of climate change.

In 2016, most of the countries under the Multi-Country Programme (MCP) continued to experience low economic growth coupled with high debt ratios, exceeding 75 per cent, and high unemployment, particularly among youth. The impact of the economic downturn led to virtually all countries reducing or freezing social sector spending with resultant impact on the most vulnerable population. Consequently, disparities in access to social services and deprivations continued to disproportionately affect children.

In 2016, comprehensive, equity-based situation analyses (SitAns) were finalized for nine countries/territories in the sub-region. The SitAns highlighted progress for children, deprivations and exclusion as a SIDS with small populations and limited resources. The most vulnerable children were identified by stakeholders as: (a) children of migrants and “left-behind” children; (b) out-of-school children, mainly boys, and children who fall out of the education, health and protection systems; (c) pregnant teens and young mothers; and (d) children from single-parent households. Based on these findings and building on progress made and key lessons learned during the 2012-2016 programme cycle, UNICEF ECA developed the 2017-2021 MCP, together with stakeholders and in line with the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework.

In accordance with programming in middle-income countries, key achievements focused on institutional capacity development and evidence generation. The former included technical and financial support for the establishment of family courts, strengthening of diversion programmes and implementation of the recommendations from the comprehensive legislative review conducted in 2015. Major achievements in education included the strengthening of early childhood programming, which involved partnership with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and University of the West Indies (UWI). In collaboration with the University, positive behavioural management was incorporated into the basic teacher training curriculum. This facilitated a transition from ad hoc in-service workshops to a more sustainable pre-service approach. To address vulnerability and disparities, UNICEF ECA supported child- and gender-responsive budgeting in the Virgin Islands/UK and Montserrat to inform advocacy and progressive budget reforms to improve investment in children and adolescents.

Progress in strengthening evidence generation resulted in successful completion of key knowledge products: equity-based situation analyses for nine countries/territories; out-of-school study covering five countries; opinion polls addressing child protection issues; statistical digests for child protection and education; and fiscal space for a social protection floor in St. Lucia. These knowledge products will contribute towards valuable social data to
inform equity-focused programming, allocation of resources and advocacy for children.

Three main constraints affected programme implementation:

1. Social sector spending by some governments was reduced due to continued economic challenges. In addition, UNICEF ECA continued to experience challenges in resource mobilization, notwithstanding efforts to mobilize and leverage resources.

2. Weak institutional capacity among implementing partners was a major challenge. To address this gap, UNICEF ECA continued to invest in institutional capacity development, including by facilitating South-South collaboration.

3. Limited inter-sectoral coordination, mainly among government partners remained a key constraint. Consequently, opportunities to maximise limited resources were not always effectively harnessed. UNICEF ECA continued to support initiatives aimed at fostering strong multi-sectoral initiatives, including budget and fiscal space studies and surveys.

In 2016, the Office continued to consolidate and broaden its partnerships with national and sub-regional partners. The OECS remained a major partner for addressing education, child protection, social policy, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and advocacy for children. Other strategic partnerships included UWI, Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC), the CDB, CDEMA, faith-based organizations, the West Indies Cricket Board, Crime Stoppers International, and adolescent media networks. Partnership with DFID was pivotal in deepening UNICEF ECA programming in the UK Overseas Territories.

Within the context of ‘Delivering as One’, UNICEF ECA collaborated with various UN agencies, resulting in the finalization of the first-ever Caribbean-wide UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF) replacing six previous UN Development Assistance Frameworks. Also for the first time, common goals and results were defined in conjunction with other UNICEF Caribbean Offices (Belize, Jamaica, Guyana and Suriname) which are also part of the Framework. These partnerships provide a solid foundation for the implementation of the UNICEF ECA MCP (2017-2021) and contributions to the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

The Eastern Caribbean is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. In 2016, Tropical Storm Matthew affected three countries: Barbados, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Within the regional emergency preparedness and response network, UNICEF ECA supported public awareness campaigns on child protection in emergency contexts. Eleven out of the 12 countries covered by UNICEF ECA reported locally transmitted cases of Zika. By November there had been five reported cases of microcephaly, and of the 23 reported cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome in the Caribbean 14 were in two Eastern Caribbean countries. Through UNICEF’s technical support, all primary schools were reached with messages on Zika prevention. In collaboration with the Pan American Health Organisation, the Office supported the development of culturally relevant materials (workbook and cartoon video) for children on preventing Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases. Over 5,000 persons were reached with Zika prevention messages through social media. As part of ongoing emergency response in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Matthew, public service announcements on Zika prevention targeting the public were developed and aired on national radio stations.

In the education sector, UNICEF ECA followed through recovery efforts related to Tropical Storm Erika in Dominica in 2015. Water tanks were installed in all primary schools to ensure
adequate hygiene and sanitation standards. This intervention contributed to the good health, well-being, safe learning environments and dignity of school children who benefited from having access to clean water.

Efforts to strengthen education sector emergency preparedness and response were prioritised in 2016. UNICEF ECA entered into a partnership agreement with the CDEMA, launching a new intervention on capacity development of education ministries in the 12 countries and territories in disaster risk reduction (DRR). Within the context of ‘Delivering as One’, UNICEF ECA, together with the UN Sub-Regional team, supported a Caribbean Disaster Management, a CDEMA-led emergency simulation exercise held in Antigua and Barbuda, which was aimed at strengthening capacity for timely emergency response. Lessons learned from the simulation will inform emergency preparedness and strengthened coordination.

To ensure child-centred responses during humanitarian situations UNICEF ECA, in collaboration with CDEMA, supported sub-regional training for child protection stakeholders and national emergency machineries on the ‘Return to Happiness’ psychosocial recovery programme for children aged five to 12 years.

Emerging Areas of Importance

Accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD). In 2016 efforts to accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD) resulted in initiatives designed to strengthen the knowledge and improve the child-rearing practices of parents, caregivers and service providers to ensure the integration of health, nutrition and early stimulation for children in the 0-2 age group. This was addressed by integrating these components into community-based programmes and services around messages of developmentally appropriate and responsive care and stimulation and providing support for the creation of nurturing, safe and enabling environments. The opportunities were also used to share information on the importance of good health and nutrition, quality early education and the critical nature of positive early experiences to later life outcomes.

In addition, UNICEF ECA supported budget analysis in the Virgin Islands/UK and Montserrat aimed at analysing the efficiency and effectiveness of public investment for children. This analysis revealed that investments in ECD remain miniscule. The findings were used for advocacy for greater investment towards acceleration of integrated ECD.

Greater focus on the second decade of life. Greater focus was also placed on the second decade of life, based in part on the results of the out-of-school study, which underscored the critical need for holistic adolescent development. The study’s conclusions, used to advocate with governments, included findings such as: while adolescent boys and girls were largely in school, they face challenges that undermine their capacity to benefit optimally from available educational opportunities.

The report confirmed that available support services often lacked sufficient range and depth to significantly address adolescents’ academic and social needs, frequently resulting in their adoption of inappropriate coping behaviours with the concomitant negative consequences – including contact with the justice system in extreme cases. This gave impetus to a greater UNICEF ECA focus on more collaborative programming across education, child protection and communications towards improved integrated, multi-dimensional programming for adolescents.

UNICEF ECA used the development of the new multi-country programme (MCP) (2017-2021) as an opportunity to further strengthen programming in ECD and systematic attention
to adolescent development. Consequently, the new programme articulates results addressing these emerging issues.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Caribbean Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECDPG-PR</td>
<td>Eastern Caribbean Development Partners Group on Poverty Reduction</td>
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<td>CDEMA</td>
<td>Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency</td>
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<td>CMT</td>
<td>Country management team</td>
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<td>CPMP</td>
<td>Country programme management plan</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CRPD</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<td>DCT</td>
<td>Direct cash transfer</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development-United Kingdom</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
<td>Eastern Caribbean Area</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early childhood development</td>
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<td>ECHO</td>
<td>Early childhood health outreach</td>
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<td>ECSC</td>
<td>Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court</td>
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<td>GSSC</td>
<td>Global Shared Service Centre</td>
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<td>HACT</td>
<td>Harmonized approach to cash transfer</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communication technology</td>
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<td>MCP</td>
<td>Multi-Country Programme</td>
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<td>M &amp; E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>MOSS</td>
<td>Minimum operating security standards</td>
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<td>OECS</td>
<td>Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SitAns</td>
<td>Situation analyses</td>
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<td>SLC</td>
<td>Survey of living conditions</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>UNICEF ECA</td>
<td>UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area</td>
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<td>UWI</td>
<td>University of the West Indies</td>
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### Capacity Development

Capacity development across a wide spectrum of partners remained as one of the key programme strategies for the Multi-Country Programme in 2016.

To address issues of quality in early childhood development, UNICEF ECA in collaboration with partners such as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, the Pan American Health Organization and non-governmental organizations, supported training of stakeholders to develop child-centred ECD curricula, be more effective in identifying and responding to developmental delays and to use communication and play approaches to support holistic development of young children.

In collaboration with the University of the West Indies the knowledge and skills of tutors at teacher’s training colleges were enhanced to formally integrate positive behavioural management into the basic teacher preparation curriculum. This facilitated the transitioning from ad hoc in-service workshops to a more sustainable pre-service approach.
Through the ‘Break the Silence - End Child Abuse’ initiative, the knowledge and skills of professionals, caregivers and persons from nine countries who interact with children at the community level were enhanced through capacity-building workshops. This led to heightened media coverage of child abuse cases in these countries and public calls for improved child protection services.

UNICEF ECA also supported capacity building of government partners in Virgin Islands/UK and Montserrat to equip them with tools to conduct child and gender-based responsive budgeting, to ensure improved planning, allocation, execution and expenditure of funds for children.

UNICEF ECA supported capacity building of data producers and users from government and non-governmental organisations on the concepts, methodologies and standard recommendations for measuring disability. The knowledge gained on integration of disability in data collection will be critical in strengthening ongoing advocacy and the future availability of disability data.

In emergency preparedness and response, training for child protection stakeholders and national emergency machineries on the ‘Return to Happiness’ psychosocial recovery programme for younger children continued, to ensure child-centred responses during humanitarian situations.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

In 2016, the capacity to use evidence generation to inform policy dialogue and advocacy was significantly strengthened with the completion of nine situation analyses. SITAN findings were also valuable to developing 2017-2021 country programme priorities and planned results.

Evidence garnered through UNICEF’s 2015 “Study on Child Justice in Barbados” and subsequent consultations contributed to the drafting of the 2016 Juvenile Offenders Bill, which sought to remedy the shortcomings of Barbados’ national juvenile justice system. Likewise, ongoing policy dialogue and evidence on the disjointed nature of the prevailing child protection system contributed to plans by the new administration of Saint Lucia to restructure and integrate services that both prevent and respond to children’s protection rights.

The multi-country child poverty analysis conducted in collaboration with OECS Commission, based on a survey of living conditions, was completed in 2016. This analysis revealed that one in three children in the Eastern Caribbean Area live in poverty, compared to one in five adults. This data will be used for advocacy in countries.

The partnership between UNICEF and the OECS Commission led to the production of the OECS Education Statistical Digest, with a strong emphasis on the quality of education data and alignment with the SDGs. Child Protection Digests were also completed and ECD snapshots produced that provided baselines data for monitoring ECD and child protection indicators.

UNICEF ECA also supported an analysis of budgets and expenditure patterns in social sector investment in the Virgin Islands/UK, Montserrat and Trinidad and Tobago. The data presented facts, figures and rationale on how to improve efficiency and effectiveness of resources to realize the rights of children. The findings were also used for advocacy with the two UK territories as well as to help shape national planning priorities for the upcoming Trinidad and Tobago national development plan.
Partnerships

Strategic partnerships continued to be a key approach used to drive results for children in the Eastern Caribbean Area.

Partnership with the OECS Commission led to the development of a framework to strengthen provision and coordination of early childhood stimulation and education services in the public and private sector. Partnership with the University of the West Indies also enhanced the quality of training and certification of early childhood practitioners. The ‘Out of School Study’ covering five countries was a key achievement, thanks to partnerships with UWI, OECS and the CDB.

Knowledge levels of Caribbean stakeholders in health, education and social protection and the potential impact of positive/negative early experiences on the development of the brain of young children was strengthened through a partnership with St. Georges University in Grenada and the non-governmental organization, Reach Within.

An enhanced partnership with CDEMA led to structured cooperation in disaster risk management and resilience. The major focus was on greater youth involvement in disaster risk reduction, school safety programming incorporating risk management to address issues of greening and impact vulnerability of schools.

Through a partnership with Crime Stoppers International the capacity of child protection departments was enhanced in community mobilization for prevention of child abuse, while the partnership with the West Indies Cricket Board resulted in the development of age-appropriate materials for teenagers on preventing abuse in sports. Partnerships with national child protection departments led to the development of culturally relevant and age-appropriate materials for pre-school and primary school children and the establishment of protocols for churches on child-centred prevention and response strategies on child abuse.

Media outlets pledged to partner in promoting children’s rights through adherence to a new media code on ethical reporting – a product of UNICEF’s partnership with the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and regional media associations.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF ECA enhanced its position as a credible and trusted voice for children and engaged more diverse audiences, especially young people, as it continued to adapt the Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy to its multi-country context. Office efforts to position itself as a leader in this field was primarily accomplished through ‘Activate Talks’ held on topical issues including corporal punishment; a conversation with adolescents and young people on avenues to keep them and their peers connected to and in school; and as part of the global ECD ‘Early Moments Matter’ campaign launch, a special discussion on early brain development in children.

These discussions involved the engagement of non-traditional partners, including young people, religious leaders and academia.

These events, along with other main advocacy activities, were broadcast via the web throughout the sub-region, taking advantage of the region’s high internet penetration to relay advocacy messages to a broader public beyond the traditional mass media.

The year also saw an over 60 per cent increase in followers on social media channels such as Facebook and YouTube, as well as the activation of a Twitter platform in 2016, resulting
in a wider and younger audience being engaged through the use of shorter digital messages. Debate around the persistent problem of child sexual abuse in the Eastern Caribbean area dominated public discourse on social media; UNICEF ECA actively contributed to that dialogue.

Engagement with the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and the Association of Caribbean Media Workers over the past two years resulted in agreement on and adoption of a Media Code on Ethical Reporting on Children’s Issues and a public pledge by media managers and owners to ensure that practitioners in their organisations were promoting child rights and, through their actions, were not negatively contributing to the problem.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

Knowledge exchange, sharing of good practices and cross-border cooperation were key approaches as UNICEF ECA sought to advance the children’s agenda in its 12 programme countries/territories, especially in education and child protection. For example, as the success of the Trinidadian Family Court experience gained recognition over the last 12 years and remained the region’s best practice in the administration of family and children’s justice, UNICEF ECA, in partnership with the ECSC, supported efforts by Antigua and Barbuda to learn from the experience. A multi-sectoral team from Antigua has since piloted the start-up of the ECSC Family Division for eventual replication across the nine OECS member countries to improve the management and response to child justice cases.

As the various countries sought to apply the effective schools’ framework in a more holistic manner, Saint Lucia provided technical support to Tobago in the training of primary and secondary school teachers during their summer professional development sessions to introduce a three-tiered pyramid model of positive behaviour support and explore plans for improving behaviour management practices. Likewise, Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados supported Anguilla as the UK territory sought to apply the effective schools’ framework to ensure that all students were able to get maximum benefit from their secondary education experience.

Monitoring the success of efforts to increase reporting of child abuse continued to be a challenge for some countries. However, others implemented frameworks that can be considered as good practices. At a sub-regional workshop on monitoring ‘Break the Silence’ communication activities, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis shared their monitoring framework and tools with child protection representatives from other OECS countries.

**Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

UNICEF ECA continued to promote cross-sectoral collaboration between ministries and government departments for better protection of children. In Dominica, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UNICEF supported collaborative efforts by the ECD sector, ministries of education and the child protection departments to enhance the skills of early childhood practitioners and caregivers to develop safe and protective environments for preschool children. These partnerships resulted in the development of culturally- and age-appropriate communication materials that were used to teach preschool children about abuse and aid in the development of tools to promote positive behavioural management strategies in preschools, as an alternative to corporal punishment.

Workshops on situation analysis updates and dissemination held in Barbados, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago also provided an opportunity for country-level inter-sectoral dialogue on issues affecting children and the need for integrated programming.
Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

UNICEF ECA, together with the UN Human Rights Coordinator for the Eastern Caribbean, conducted trainings and supported preparations for the submission of overdue reports on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis; Grenada, whose report was due in 2016, received technical and financial support.

This collaboration supported the building of the capacity of civil society groups and government stakeholders in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, as well as Trinidad and Tobago, on the Universal Periodic Report and treaty bodies. Specific reporting workshops on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were held in Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago. As part of ongoing capacity development initiatives, a web-based CRC and CEDAW reporting toolkit was developed for use by OECS member states and UK Territories.

Officials from Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the OECS Commission acquired knowledge on the concepts, methodologies and standard recommendations for measurement of child disability. The participants comprised data producers and users from NGOs, ministries and representatives from organizations of people with disabilities. As a result, the participants committed to promote vetted data collection tools for measuring disability, especially during the 2020 census and upcoming household surveys.

The comprehensive, equity-based 2016 SitAns provided information on the situation of children and women with regard to the principles and rights enshrined in the CRC, CEDAW and the SDGs. The data gathered was useful for understanding the progress made towards achieving the rights of children and identified the facilitating factors to build on, as well as the bottlenecks that need to be addressed, to ensure progressive realization of these rights. The development of the new multi-country programme (2017-2021), with a strong human rights and equity focus on the most disadvantaged boys and girls, was therefore informed by the equity-focused analysis.

Gender Equality

Gender mainstreaming and equality is a key priority for UNICEF ECA, given the range of gender issues in the Eastern Caribbean Area (violence against women and girls, high repetition and drop-out rates for boys, especially at secondary school level). In 2016, as part of UNICEF ECA efforts to enhance evidence-based programming, a multi-country ‘Out of School’ study was conducted to garner information on children and adolescents at risk. The study highlighted gender disparities in education, namely:

- Boys are almost twice as likely as girls to repeat a grade or drop out at the primary and secondary levels.
- Gender disparities are evident in education system data on transition from Lower Secondary to Upper secondary (Form III to Form IV), with male students experiencing significantly higher rates of educational breakdown than girls.
- Repetition rates for both Primary and Lower Secondary revealed that 8 per cent of boys repeat a grade, compared to 4 per cent of girls.

The findings of the ‘Out of School’ study, which were shared with OECS Ministers of Education, will inform ongoing advocacy for addressing gender disparities in the education sector. Through partnership with the University of the West Indies’ Cave Hill campus, UNICEF ECA provided technical and financial support for a study focusing on gender in education.
**Environmental Sustainability**

In 2016, as part of measures taken to assess and reduce its environmental footprint, UNICEF ECA participated in the UN System greening initiative. The first step taken was the replacement of all lighting in UN House to LED; ultimately reducing the office’s energy footprint and resulting in savings by an anticipated one-third in electricity costs and reduced emissions. Furthermore, the fully realized implementation of electronic funds transfer as the primary payment modality eliminated dependency on the use of vehicles for payment deliveries and banking services, thereby reducing vehicle emissions and improving staff efficiency.

In July, UNICEF ECA successfully completed its 2016 Environmental Footprint Assessment Report which found that the majority of the office’s emissions were generated from electricity (62 per cent). It is anticipated that the subsequent UN House transition to LED lights will have a palpable impact on this emission level over time. The second-highest emission generator was travel (32 per cent). Under the Office’s multi-country mandate, air travel is inherent to effective programme delivery. However, the purchase of new equipment to improve communication with out-posted staff, along with continued focus on effective travel planning to maximise travel gains by making the fewest possible number of trips, are ongoing priorities.

**Effective Leadership**

As part of developing the country programme management plan (CPMP), the Office conducted a participatory review of major challenges to the implementation of the multi-country programme. These challenges included: (a) funding constraints, (b) results-based management and reporting, (c) natural disasters and epidemics, (d) attracting and retaining staff, given funding constraints and (e) governance and accountability.

To strengthen emergency preparedness and response, 12 country-specific risk profiles were developed. These reports, together with the Early Warning Early Action, system, formed the basis for risk-informed programming. Emergency simulation exercises organised by the UN sub-regional team and CDEMA helped develop capacity for emergency preparedness and response among key stakeholders.

The country management team (CMT) focused on effectively adapting to the global transition and subsequent local impact resulting from implementation of the GSSC and the departure of three long-serving operations staff. In addition to welcoming critical new staff, the CMT undertook the restructuring and retooling of existing posts to adhere to the centralized global business reality, and established the framework for streamlined operation.

The country management team also provided oversight and guidance to development of the 2017-2021 country plan and continued to place emphasis on staff morale by ensuring that results from the 2014 GSS were addressed and staff equipped to adapt to change. This culminated in a staff development activity focused on change management and team building.

Major initiatives taken by the CMT to improve operational and programmatic performance, while focusing on addressing areas of weakness, included:

- Payment workflows adopted to streamline operations and improve service levels
- HACT plan implemented to address minimum assurance activities
- Regular compliance with mid- and end-year closure reporting requirements
- Adherence to timelines for integration of ACHIEVE and completion of performance reviews
• Successful transition to the Regional Multi-Country Service Facility in April, and to the GSSC module for HR transactions in August.

**Financial Resources Management**

The CMT continued to monitor key performance indicators, including direct cash transfers (DCTs). Efforts were made to improve efficiencies in payments, resulting in improved timelines and a significant reduction in DCTs aged over six months. Introduction of finance workflows aided in improved payment times and introduced accountabilities in the payment process as a key internal control intervention.

In response to the GSSC transition, attention was paid to internal finance functions, which were constrained due to the inherent complexities of delivering across 12 countries using four currencies and to banking limitations not conducive to Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) arrangements. The re-establishment of the finance assistant post through the CPMP in October will allow the Office to effectively manage its unique and complex financial operation.

The CMT ensured compliance with financial, human resource, ICT and office management audit requirements and financial policies. Bank reconciliations were completed monthly and outstanding reconciliations addressed. UNICEF ECA adhered to IPSAS and VISION and worked towards successful completion of year-end closure activities.

Focus was placed on sustaining improved financial and administrative systems to ensure efficient, timely, cost-effective and transparent utilisation of resources. HACT compliance was a continued focus, with minimum assurance activities conducted, including a required audit of a long-standing partner. Macro assessments were conducted for all countries. Three micro assessments were concluded and 25 others were in execution stage at year-end. Programmatic visits continued to be a key assurance tool.

Utilization of regular and other resources were 100 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively. The outstanding DCT balance was US$174,464; 68.5 per cent of which representing zero-to-three months, 16.9 per cent representing three-to-six months, 12.2 per cent representing six-to-nine months and 2.4 per cent over nine months. The percentage utilisation of the Support Budget was 100 per cent.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

UNICEF ECA established a Resource Mobilization Task Force, consisting of the Representative, communication specialist, monitoring and evaluation specialist and social and economic policy specialist, guided by a terms of reference identifying key objectives for: increasing the funding base for short-, medium- and long-term planning; building capacity to sustain and build partnerships with donors and protect donor relations; leverage funds; and institutionalize resource mobilization as part of the ECA Office’s programmatic and operational norm.

The task force developed a resource mobilization strategy that identified: private sector fundraising, traditional sources such as national committees, innovative strategies, and leveraging funds as ways of ensuring that UNICEF ECA mobilized adequate funds to deliver on its programme results and maintain staff on OR funding.

The Office actively participated in efforts led by UNICEF’s Regional Office to establish a joint private sector fundraising specialist position for the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean, and secured the services of a consultant who undertook to scope the traditional funding
environment and develop investment cases for each of the programming areas.

Donor reports were submitted on time and the Office ensured that organizational standards for donor reports were met. Human interest stories demonstrating the impact of programmes supported by donor funds were also part of the reporting package submitted to donors. The mechanism in place to ensure that donor reports met organizational standards culminated with the Deputy Representative completing the final review of these documents.

Additional funds were mobilized through DFID, one of UNICEF ECA’s key partners. This funding will facilitate continued programming in the UK Overseas Territories. In addition, the child protection and education programme components continued to leverage sub-regional resources from USAID and the Caribbean Development Bank, respectively.

Evaluation and Research

For the first time, in 2016 UNICEF ECA used the web-based platform Plan for Research, Impact Monitoring and Evaluation (PRIME) as an internal corporate tool for planning and monitoring research, studies, evaluations and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity-development activities. The PRIME platform replaced the previous Excel-based integrated monitoring and evaluation plan, and was successfully used for planning and systematically updating and tracking the progress of M&E activities. It enabled automatic generation of progress reports and data graphs for decision-making processes and added efficiency to the management of the M&E function and cross-sectoral collaboration on M&E.

The Office began preparations for conducting impact evaluations of two pilot social assistance programmes of the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, with the objectives of strengthening service delivery and programme scale-up to reach the most deprived. These strategic social protection programmes reached a key milestone with the completion of the pilot phase and current plans to expand. UNICEF ECA recognized the importance of the initiative and the opportunity to contribute towards refining the design, delivery, coordination and monitoring of the programmes and to add efficiency for reaching even more disadvantaged groups.

Follow-up continued during 2016 on the findings of the early childhood health outreach (ECHO) and high scope pilot programmes’ evaluations, completed in 2015, as implementation of the recommendations required time and often depended on lengthy national processes. As a management response, a multi-sectoral action plan for 2016-2017 was developed to conduct a comprehensive review of ECHO’s aim and objectives, identify the scale and scope of the programme and develop a plan and budgetary allocation scenario.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

The introduction of the “Light” modality for information and communication technology (ICT) through a virtual server hosted by the UNICEF Regional Office was implemented, resulting in a reduced need for ICT staff to support local servers. This yielded cost savings from an equipment maintenance and technical support perspective. Through service-level agreements established with UNDP in Barbados and Trinidad, a unified and reduced-cost approach to ICT service delivery, under the delivering as one platform, has allowed for efficiency gains. The use of Skype for Business teleconference and video conference links have continued to realize cost savings as the Office transitioned from the telephone and cellular phone modalities as primary communication tools.

UNICEF ECA participated in the UN-wide greening initiative by contributing to the replacement of all lighting in UN House to LED, ultimately reducing the office’s energy
footprint and resulting in electricity savings by an anticipated one-third. The full implementation of electronic funds transfer as the primary payment modality eliminated the need for daily vehicle use and realized efficiencies in staff time.

The vehicle fleet was reduced from two to one in response to the evolving virtual workspace and to maximise and re-focus the smaller staff resource base resulting from a new global business reality. UNICEF ECA was among the first set of offices to make the transition to GSSC for human resource-related actions in August. In addition, UNICEF ECA subscribed to the multi-country service facility (MCSF) in Panama for the provision of professional-level human resources services. The transition to a single platform for human resources service delivery is expected to streamline operations and allow staff to focus on other operational areas and on the more strategic functions of the Office.

Supply Management

The value of supplies and services procured during the reporting period was US$986,554. The current value of inventory is US$327,838 (US$ 77,429 in warehouses). Warehousing areas are based at the UNICEF ECA Office, with one dedicated to programme supplies and the other to emergency supplies to facilitate response to the 12 countries/territories covered by the multi-country programme. The value of emergency supplies issued was US$6,513.

Long-term agreements (LTAs) are in place for graphic designers and editorial services, and the Office is endeavouring to utilise LTAs for printing of advocacy materials. No in-kind assistance was received by the Office. UN agencies continue to use LTAs with local vendors for airline ticketing and are working towards a unified vendor approach among common vendors under the delivering as one platform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF ECA 2016</th>
<th>Value in US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme (services) - individual contractor/consultant</td>
<td>211,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme (services) - corporate</td>
<td>616,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme - supplies</td>
<td>30,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme - emergency supplies</td>
<td>31,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations (services) - individual contractor/consultant</td>
<td>15,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations (services) - corporate</td>
<td>10,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations - office supplies</td>
<td>7,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations - office equipment</td>
<td>63,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Security for Staff and Premises

Several actions were taken to enhance safety and security of staff and premises, some in conjunction with the other UN Agencies:

- The SOP for the Tsunamic Evacuation Plan was completed.
- A tsunami practice drill was conducted by the Office.
- A hurricane/emergency preparedness exercise was conducted in April, which included all
UN Agencies in coordination with CDEMA.
• UNDSS undertook frequent site visits to the proposed new UN building in Trinidad to evaluate and coordinate security matters.
• The 2015 MOSS is still active; the 2016 MOSS is at the final approval stage.
• Updating of the country security plan completed.
• Updating of the agency warden security plan is ongoing as new staff join.

Human Resources

The appointment of two staff members at the beginning of 2016 completed implementation of 2014 PBR recommendations: an operations officer and admin/hr assistant. In December, the education manager post recruitment was completed.

With approval by the regional programme and budget review (PBR) of changes proposed in the 2017-2021 CPMP, three new posts (general service finance assistant, national M&E officer and national social policy officer) were added to the staff complement. The PBR also approved retention of the previously approved, but unfilled, national child protection officer, thus completing the strengthening of Office capacity to deliver the new programme.

Approval of the finance assistant post represented re-establishment of a post abolished in 2014 due to GSSC transition. The complexity of the multi-country programme, limited by banking constraints in-country, prevented the office from fully operating under the GSSC model and proved over-taxing to the budget assistant, who was challenged with the combined budget and finance portfolios. The new finance assistant will increase operational efficiencies and correct the unbalanced division of labour.

The transition of human resources services to GSSC and subscription to the multi-country service facility provided opportunities for the new HR/administrative assistant and operations officer to be inducted under the global principles of streamlined operations focused on maximising efficiency and effectiveness. All performance appraisals were completed on time for transition to the ACHIEVE system.

The Office continued its focus on addressing staff matters arising from the 2014 GSS survey. Along with the CMT, the re-established Local Staff Association Executive Committee maintained focus on key findings of the survey and ensured staff representation in development of the new strategy. The year culminated with two significant events: the visit of the Global Staff Association Chair who invested valuable time to understand and address staff matters; and a well-received two-day staff development activity focused on change management and team-building.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

Enhanced and increased use of ICT tools contributed to office efficiency and effectiveness. Major initiatives included transition from a locally hosted server environment to virtual hosting under the 'Light' framework, introduction of two service level agreements with UNDP (in Barbados and Trinidad) to provide end-user support to the Office and out-posted staff, and two visits from the UNICEF Regional Office ICT chief to monitor progress, guide delivery of ICT services under the 'Light' modality and provide peer training for operations staff with ICT responsibilities.

There was a noticeable increase in the use of Office 365 (O-365) and a moderate transition from using traditional shared drives to operating under the OneDrive/ SharePoint framework. Desktop sharing, remote assistance and increased online meetings were a part of everyday business, supporting UNICEF’s greening mandate. The sustained issuance of smartphones to all specialists and senior staff extended the reach of the O-365 tools to allow staff on
travel duties or after hours to connect with ease and to ensure business continuity. The Office remained compliant with hardware and software standards and procured replacement laptops consistent with UNICEF guidelines for useful life.

The Office procured a state of the art 360-degree audio/video communication system to connect more effectively with personnel who were out-posted, and in an effort to employ technology to cultivate team unity through virtual spaces. BGAN and other emergency telecommunication equipment were tested twice; once during an emergency simulation event and during the visit of the regional ICT chief. A SharePoint collaboration site is being created to maximise collaboration between UNICEF ECA and out-posted staff, and to promote opportunities for electronic databases and shared spaces, with the goal of reducing printing and maximising efficiencies. Efforts to enhanced ICT use for implementing partners, as well as greater connectivity with out-posted staff, will continue.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Equity-sensitive national policies, programmes and budget allocations are made based on reliable, disaggregated data reflecting the actual situation of girls and boys and their families in line with the CRC, CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals. By 2014, all countries will have fulfilled their Convention reporting obligations and by 2016 will have taken actions to comply with all Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Key barriers to increased and systematic production and use of social data on children for decision-making remain: the lack of internal demand and use of social data and the limited resources (human, financial and technical) for statistical and monitoring and evaluation work, despite the good practices and frameworks available, such as Caricom’s model statistical act.

Against this backdrop, significant results were achieved in assisting partners to produce and analyse more disaggregated data, as shown by: the widespread dissemination and use of the MICS reports in St Lucia and Barbados; outcomes of the SITAN process in 12 countries and territories; the increasing number of sub-regional and national statistical digests for child protection, ECD and education; and the use of recent and disaggregated social data on children to support social policy work in areas such as budget review, social protection and fiscal space analysis in St. Lucia, the Virgin Islands (UK) and Montserrat.

Results were achieved in supporting institutional change for improved sharing of data and stronger cross-sectoral coordination through inter-agency task forces and committees. However, all these actions need to be sustained to result in lasting institutional changes. Overall, the eastern Caribbean countries continue to be among the most data-deprived in the world, and building alliances with international and regional development partners remains a priority to address the identified structural barriers and bottlenecks.

The multi-country child poverty analysis based on Survey of Living Conditions (SLC) datasets, undertaken by UNICEF in collaboration with the OECS Commission, provided first-time evidence of the burden of poverty on children across the eastern Caribbean area. The analysis revealed, for example, that one in three children in ECA (35 per cent) live in poverty, compared to one in five adults, and that child poverty rates range from 24 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda to 51 per cent in Grenada. UNICEF and the OECS Commission are
using the findings to develop visually interactive and evidence-based knowledge products to influence the poverty policies and tools of the next round of surveys.

CRC reporting continues to lag behind. The environment in many ECA countries is not conducive to timely reporting due to limited administrative capacity and low priority paced on reporting. This has resulted in many overdue reports. Nevertheless, UNICEF sustained high levels of advocacy. To date, the following countries have yet to submit their CRC reports: Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago.

Building on the joint programme on social protection of UNICEF and UN Women, child- and gender-sensitive budgeting training led to the conducting of analyses on budget investment for children and fiscal space studies on social protection floors in St. Lucia, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands (BVI). With the overall objective of lifting children out of poverty and vulnerability, the studies provide valuable inputs and evidence to support sectoral ministries in preparing upcoming budgets and influence strategic planning and budgeting to ensure that resources for child-focused programmes do not decline following low growth rates and less favourable socio-economic progress.

A two-pronged approach supported the integration and delivery of coordinated social protection programmes. First, through high-level advocacy work in three countries (St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat), working under the umbrella of the UNICEF/UN Women Joint Programme on Social Protection, which includes reviewing social protection legislation. Second, UNICEF, with UN and development partners, provided technical support for the creation of a regional OECS advocacy and knowledge-sharing platform via the OECS Social Protection Technical Committee - that brings high-level government officials and technical experts together to implement social protection systems.

**OUTPUT 1** By 2016, 5 countries have strengthened national systems (admin data and survey plan) for producing social data on children in at least the Child Protection and Education sectors

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In 2016 UNICEF’s partnerships with central statistical offices, the OECS Commission and key ministries continued, contributing to strengthened national statistical capacities and systems in ECA.

The multi-country child poverty analysis based on SLC datasets, undertaken by UNICEF in collaboration with OECS Commission, provided first-time evidence of the burden of poverty on children across ECA. The analysis revealed, for example, that one in three children (35 per cent) in ECA live in poverty, compared to one in five adults, and that child poverty rate ranges from 24 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda to 51 per cent in Grenada. Based on the new data, the OECS Commission and UNICEF are developing visually interactive, evidence-based messages and user-friendly knowledge products to promote wider assimilation of findings and influence poverty policies. The tools developed from the analysis, such as tabulation plans and syntaxes, have been promoted for use in the next round of surveys.

Efforts to implement ambitious SitAns in each of the 12 countries and territories of the ECA continued. The analyses have benefited a great deal from the data produced over the past four years, and the reports are equity-based, risk-informed and gender-sensitive. Currently four SITAN reports have been published, for the UK OTs, and the other eight are at various stages of advanced drafting. The findings were valuable for developing the 2017-2021 Country Programme priorities and planned results, and the process facilitated closer engagement with traditional and non-traditional partners, including at the sub-national level.
Follow-up on the findings of the ECHO and Highscope pilot evaluations conducted in 2015 continued during 2016, since implementation of recommendations requires time and often implies lengthy national processes. During the year UNICEF began preparations for conducting in 2017 the impact evaluation of the pilot ‘MEND and RISE’ social assistance programmes instituted by the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, with the objective of strengthening service delivery, programme scale-up and reaching the most deprived.

The strategic partnership between UNICEF and the OECS Commission to strengthen administrative data continued through the production of the next OECS “Education Statistical Digest”, with a strong emphasis on the quality of education data and alignment with SDGs. Similar data-mining initiatives were pursued for ECD and child protection, to compile 2016 data snapshots and establish baselines to monitor ECD and child protection indicators. The most critical barriers and bottlenecks to strengthening administrative data systems remain the low demand for social data, lack of resources (staff, budget, skills) and insufficient cross-sectoral coordination.

OUTPUT 2 By 2016, all 12 countries have submitted any due and outstanding State reports on CRC and ratified CRC Optional protocols

Analytical Statement of Progress:
All countries except for Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago have submitted outstanding CRC state reports. Technical support and capacity building through the joint work of the UNICEF/UN Women CRC/CEDAW Reporting Toolkit was made available, especially to Grenada, in 2016.

Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and St. Vincent and Grenadines are waiting to be scheduled for presentation of their CRC State report to the UNCRC Committee. In Trinidad and Tobago bottlenecks related to the process of approval by the Attorney General’s office delayed the submission of reports; similar problems were encountered in Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis at the Cabinet level.

Systematic dissemination of the status of CRC implementation has not yet been achieved. Reports are prepared in a reactive manner. CRC state report preparations have yet to be adopted as an institutionalised process to guide national child-specific policy and programme development and implementation. Workshops on reporting training and substance were held on the UPR, CEDAW, CRPD and CRC, the support from the UN Country Team Human Rights Coordinator, complementing UNICEF’s effort to advance CRC reporting and implementation.

The two CRC optional protocols have yet to be ratified by: Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis. Barbados ratified the Optional Protocol on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, along with Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia. The Protocol on Children and Armed Conflict was ratified by Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

OUTPUT 3 By 2016, 3 countries and territories in the sub-region have incorporated child sensitive indicators in their national development planning framework

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Policy advocacy work to provide capacity building to achieve child-focused strategic planning is ongoing in Trinidad and Tobago, through technical assistance and resources for development of: a Vision 2030 Development Plan, the national child policy and national poverty reduction strategy (NPRS). The child policy will impact the most vulnerable children and promote the well-being of over 300,000 children in the country. UNICEF, through the UN
system, is providing technical assistance to ensure that a child-rights lens and sustainable development objectives are incorporated into the three documents. Political will and Government leadership is moving the policy development process, along with UNICEF and UN system continuous engagement and dialogues with high-level policy makers, including at UNDAF Steering Committee meetings. Focus group discussions were completed in November to provide input to the National Child Policy, led by the Office of the Prime Minister.

Child-sensitive performance indicators were proposed in the St. Lucia, Virgin Islands (UK) and Montserrat 'Budget Investment on Children' studies, to impact the improved well-being of about 65,000 children (0-17 years). UNICEF-proposed child-sensitive indicators for child protection, health, education and social protection were intended to be used in the programme-based budgeting reform process, to increase visibility and transparency in allocations for child-focused programmes and policies. However, the linkages to those indicators to guide national development planning are yet to be made, because national planning processes are not formalized. It was intended that sectoral planning and budget preparation would use child-sensitive key performance indicators to measure programme and policy impact performance, but barriers such as norms of practice in reacting to budget planning versus pro-active planning exist within the OECS and Caribbean public policy culture. The primary focus is on economic development, while social development, beyond holistic health and education focused on child well-being, are secondary.

Monetary child poverty analysis has been completed for 10 ECA countries and territories, with the exceptions of Anguilla and Trinidad and Tobago. Identification of the most appropriate means to measure multi-dimensional poverty at the OECS level is still evolving, through discussions with development partners, including the Eastern Caribbean Development Partners Group on Poverty Reduction (ECDPG-PR) at the regional level and the UN system. In Trinidad and Tobago, the multi-dimensional child poverty study quantitative component is on hold due to difficulties in accessing and gaining approval of data sets from the SLC 2014 and MICS 2012. The datasets are yet to be launched and approved by Cabinet. The qualitative component will be explored in conjunction with the development of the national poverty-reduction strategy.

UNICEF ECA and UNDP have supported high-level government consultations and technical meetings in Trinidad and Tobago to build support for establishing measurements of poverty, in all its dimensions, through a national poverty reduction strategy. The draft Vision 2030 Development Plan highlighted the importance of multi-dimensional poverty.

**OUTPUT 4** By 2016, duty bearers have increased national capacities to effectively implement a child and gender sensitive budgeting approach in national budgets

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Building on the UNICEF/UN Women Joint Programme on Social Protection, training in child- and gender-sensitive budgeting has led St. Lucia, Montserrat and the BVI to conduct analyses on budget investment for children and conduct fiscal space studies on a social protection floor, seeking to lift a total of 65,000 children out of poverty in the three jurisdictions. To meet the challenge, the Ministry of Finance is offering leadership and commitment, coordination and prioritization of consolidating and collecting data from all sectors.

St. Lucia launched reports on mapping child well-being, budget analysis and fiscal space analysis, with a presentation of the findings to Cabinet in November 2016 aimed at ensuring that the report’s recommendations will help prepare relevant sectors budget for the 2017. The British Virgin Islands and Montserrat findings are intended to influence the preparation...
for the next budget cycle for 2016-2017, as well as to influence strategic planning and budgeting, to ensure that resources for child-focused programmes do not decline due to low growth rates and less favourable socio-economic progress. Reports on the analysis are being finalized. One bottleneck in the enabling environment is that norms and practice among policymakers are based on preparing budgets that are reactive, not proactive. Re-prioritization is key for resources within and across sectors.

The Montserrat national policy agenda for development was developed in 2015, with the goal of helping to guide strategic planning frameworks and identify priorities for children for the long-term (i.e., national goals). However, the British Virgin Islands still lacks a national strategic planning framework, and the approach currently in place is sector-based planning on social development. In Trinidad and Tobago, a desk review of social sector expenditure patterns is being conducted; however, limitations include the fact that current public and accessible expenditure estimates are described and categorised based on activities, thus are not programme-based, which would allow more in-depth understanding of children’s share of expenditure.

The UNICEF ECA analysis will provide space and dialogue to better equip stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance and Planning, to advocate for resource allocation for children based on fiscal capacity and availability. The analysis will also provide a basis for ensuring that the upcoming Vision 2030 Development Plan will be strategically costed for children. Spending trends can be extracted based on education and health, as well as by ministries and the Tobago House of Assembly.

OUTPUT 5 By 2016, policies, strategies and plans are in place to increase integration and deliver coordinated social protection programmes which benefit excluded and disadvantaged boys and girls and their families in four countries

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Implementation of the UNICEF and UN Women-supported social protection policy in St. Lucia and Grenada that would impact the lives of 65,000 poor and vulnerable children (of a total combined child population of 90,000) was delayed. Delays were due to public sector restructuring, which involved freezing of funds in Grenada’s public service department and St. Lucia’s change in government administration during the second quarter of 2016. Under the Joint Programme, key knowledge products to enhance better delivery of social protection programmes for children were finalised and disseminated. Work continues to advocate for the planning and design of the current social safety net programme to enhance delivery for children and women rights-holders in St. Lucia. UNICEF, together with the UN System and development partners through the platform of the ECDPG-PR, continued to provide technical assistance to enhance universal access to social protection programmes, including cash transfer programme design, development of a PMT manual, mapping social assistance programmes for better integration and streamlining, evaluation of pilots for national scale up and promoting South-South exchange through the OECS Commission platform on enhancing social protection systems. This technical assistance will refine programmes to ensure that families and households that are caring for children will be economically empowered, allowing children can reach their full potential.

UNICEF technically guided and co-funded the last two OECS Commission Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings that took place in April in St. Kitts and Nevis and virtually in July 2016. UNICEF guided the TAC to ensure a coordinated and unified approach to support for the social protection reform process among the member states. UNICEF, with support from a legal consultant, prepared draft bills on social protection for Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat. The bills are currently pending final inputs from ministers of the respective social development ministries. Continued consultations will take place to ensure participatory and comprehensive discussion before final submission to the Attorney General.
For Antigua and Barbuda, the drafting of the social protection bill involved working in close collaboration with UN Women to address the needs of women-focused civil society groups. The bill seeks to ensure that child- and gender-specific needs are met to create an enabling environment of legislative and policy frameworks. A bill was also drafted for Montserrat; both bills seek to modernise and systematise social assistance and establish a social protection floor. One challenge is coordination between the labour and social development sectors, as the two main ministries involved will have to begin to strategically engage.

OUTCOME 2 By 2016, all girls and boys in 12 Eastern Caribbean countries benefit from rights-based laws, policies, programmes and institutions that provide equitable systems for positive development, lifelong learning and protection.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
As several countries move to implement universal access to early childhood education (Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago) the young children that continue to be left out of quality ECD programming constitute those in the early, foundational years (0-2+), for which strong advocacy backed up with adequate data, information and investment is crucial.

Participation in structured ECD programmes ranges from approximately 67-to-100 per cent for the three-to-five age group; and just 17-40 per cent for children aged two and under in the countries for which data is available (e.g., Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines). Supportive policy initiatives have included: implementation of community-based programmes such as early childhood health outreach (St. Lucia; St. Kitts and Nevis) and use of available spaces in primary schools in Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda.

For the second indicator, rights-based frameworks that affirm responsibilities of governments as duty bearers in the provision of child-centred, equity-focused education and early childhood services are currently in place in eight countries (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, Turks and Caicos Islands).

Special needs education in separate schools is available in all the countries; only a few seek to integrate these students into mainstream education. Student support in schools is largely centred on nutritional support and subsidized transportation, with very limited learning support services to address the needs of low achievers and differently-abled girls and boys. Currently at least 58 per cent of primary schools in eight countries (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St, Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) are seeking to institutionalize child-centred, protective and inclusive school environments.

For the fourth indicator, 57 per cent of students passed the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations with five or more subjects including English and Math. For the fifth indicator, the out-of-school study revealed that in the participating countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos Islands) 99.5 per cent of children age four are participating in structured pre-primary education. Initiatives to strengthen the quality of the pre-primary experience are ongoing.

The 2016 the out-of-school study showed that 17 per cent of children in primary schools and 33 per cent of children in lower secondary were over-age, that is, they repeated one or two grades. Only a quarter of the students commencing secondary school successfully complete their schooling, obtaining the requisite certification for continued education.
Key barriers in this regard include inadequate teacher capacity (teachers lack the skills and patience to support academically weak students, especially students with learning disabilities). In addition, harsh disciplinary practices push already disadvantaged children out. Linkages between schools and communities are weak, so neither children nor schools are adequately supported.

Efforts will therefore continue to support the utilization of data to ensure quality ECD and education programming; establishment and operationalization of policies and frameworks to support inclusive, interactive and student-centred learning from preschool through secondary; and to strengthen institutional capacity, governance and coordination mechanisms.

**OUTPUT 1** By 2016, girls and boys (0-5) living in households in the poorest communities in 9 countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago and Anguilla) have access to quality developmental and education services

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Positive progress was made by the early childhood programme. Efforts to confront bottlenecks and develop enabling environments to support access and quality in programmes and services were bolstered through collaborative partnerships with development partners, including those in the academic field.

Efforts to strengthen the integrated ECD portfolio were made through established systems in the education, health and social development sectors. UNICEF ECA designed Initiatives to strengthen the knowledge and child-rearing practices of all caregivers by integrating counselling and demonstration components in programmes and services, such as ECHO and the Care for Child Development programme. Messages emphasized developmentally appropriate and responsive care and stimulation, support for the creation of nurturing, safe and enabling environments and the creation of opportunities to share information on the importance of good health and nutrition, quality early education and the critical nature of positive early experiences to later life outcomes.

A strong partnership with the OECS resulted in the development of a Comprehensive Integrated Operational Framework designed to strengthen the provision and coordination of early childhood stimulation and education services in the public and private sectors. A new training manual will present trainers with the content, strategies and sample activities to introduce caregivers and practitioners to the use of the OECS Curriculum Framework and Handbook.

In response to OECS’s strategic imperative to “increase access to quality ECD services for children from birth to five years of age” UNICEF partnered with UWI- Cave Hill to enhance the quality of training and certification of early childhood practitioners at the certificate, associate degree and bachelor degree levels.

An impactful knowledge-sharing opportunity was created through the convening of an Activate Talk and ECD Forum on the theme ‘For every child, Early Moments Matter’. This was achieved through collaboration with the NGO Reach Within, St. George’s University and University of Massachusetts. Approximately 140 ECD stakeholders in Grenada and the wider Caribbean region were exposed to new information on the potential impact of positive/negative early experiences on the development of the brain of young children. In addition, clearer understanding of the importance of early identification of developmental delays and timely intervention was gained by 100 ECD practitioners and health care workers.
in St. Lucia through a strategic partnership with the Child Development and Guidance Centre.

While the positive gains made in ECD programming can be celebrated, increased focus is needed to accelerate the implementation of integrated programmes providing quality care, early learning and interactive experiences for children from birth to age five, through functioning coordination and monitoring systems for quality assurance, management of data to track developmental progress, implementation of policies and standards and utilization of available frameworks to increase access to equitable and holistic ECD.

OUTPUT 2 By 2016 duty bearers in 8 countries have increased capacity, supported with policy frameworks, to employ positive disciplinary and learning practices in student-centred teaching and learning environments within school effectiveness/child friendly schools’ framework.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This year saw the end of the 2012-2016 programme cycle, during which efforts to change teachers’ attitudes and practice in schools in order to improve the psychosocial environment bore some fruit. Fifty-eight per cent of primary schools and 39 per cent of secondary schools in eight countries confirmed having implemented positive behaviour-management strategies that, directly and indirectly, contributed to reduced tardiness, truancy, noise levels and use of corporal punishment, as well as improved student participation and parental involvement.

This, together with a focus on improved student participation (35 per cent of primary schools and 56 per cent of secondary schools now have active student councils); strengthened delivery of health and family life education (HFLE) in schools (93 per cent of primary and secondary schools deliver life-skills-based HFLE); and enhanced parental involvement, resulted in an overall improvement in school climate and had a positive impact on learning. Consistent data collection continues to present a challenge, especially quantitative data; only three countries report using the Effective/CFS Monitoring Tool.

Two major partnerships were key to ensuring the needed sustainability of programming initiatives. The actions taken by the Eastern Caribbean Joint Board of Teacher Education – to include a focus on rights-based education and positive behaviour intervention and support in schools in the associate degree teacher education – were critical to ensuring a continued supply of trained teachers with the capacity to effectively utilise positive behaviour supports for improved classroom management. At the same time, collaboration and partnership with the OECS Commission was also critical, especially in helping to ensure political support for the process as well as gain buy-in by senior education officials.

The 2016 review of Student Support Services, as well as the comprehensive reviews of existing policy in the areas of behaviour management, student participation, school safety and inclusive education to determine gaps, adequacy and effectiveness of these policies will serve as the basis for strategic advocacy and policy engagement towards more positive school engagement and learning outcomes.

Notwithstanding the positive gains noted, the capacity to report more comprehensive and evidence-informed results was constrained by a reluctance to fully utilize the ECF/CFS monitoring tools, limited quality assurance in data collection as well as an unwillingness to collect and/or report data which might present schools in a negative light, such as data on violence in schools. This is an area for continued focus.
OUTPUT 3 Child centred, equity focused and costed national sector plans reflecting regional frameworks in place in 9 countries (OT 208)

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This five-year programme period saw the strengthening of education data collection, analysis, planning and reporting in the eastern Caribbean; the OECS Education Sub-regional Strategy (completed in 2012) provided the strategic direction for planning and guiding support to the education sector in OECS countries. The clear focus on using educational data to guide policy and planning resulted in eight countries completing annual statistical digests over the past two years (Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Turks and Caicos Island). Countries also made solid steps toward provision of child-centred, equity focused education and early childhood services through the strengthening of planning frameworks in eight countries. Building planning using the Teacher Simulation Model as a means of projecting and costing teacher supply and demand was integral to the enhanced education planning processes.

In 2016 a major focus was on dissemination of the findings of the “Out of School Children” study, commencing with the engagement of ministers of education and chief education officers around identified bottlenecks and barriers to successful school completion. This will continue next year through a series of national consultations with education stakeholders to further interrogate the findings as the basis for developing relevant action plans.

This year also saw a deepening of the engagement with CDEMA, the regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in the Caribbean. Cooperation centred on development of mechanisms to achieve greater youth participation in disaster management and response, as well as the overall strengthening of DRR in the education sector, with an emphasis on school safety.

OUTPUT 4 By 2016, duty bearers in 12 countries have national capacity to support the adoption of rights-based child protection legislation.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Emphasis was placed on removing bottlenecks in the legislative environment for children’s protection. Countries have accelerated progress on drafting rights-based child protection laws. All countries now have new draft legislation in at least one of six agreed priority areas, a vast improvement over the baseline situation. Moreover, some countries have approved, and started implementation of, these new laws. These results were largely achieved through the creation of a critical mass of national level duty-bearers. Through dialogue, they better understand legislative deficiencies and have the knowledge to support the adoption of rights-based child protection legislation.

UNICEF ECA support for convening and standard-setting has been largely provided through the transnational agencies – the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and the OECS Commission. Together with UNICEF, these agencies used their convening power to bring together judges, magistrates, social workers, parliamentarians and chief policy advisers on child protection. Work with a broad cross-section of parliamentarians contributed to a relatively non-partisan approach to the evolution of jurisprudence on children’s rights.

Nevertheless, challenges continue around addressing persistent social norms, behaviours, attitudes and practices that are inimical to children’s best interest, which are entrenched in societies and institutions. They require stronger participation and stakeholder empowerment through expanded spaces for dialogue and national debate. Furthermore, when policy decisions are made, national adaptation and adoption are often slowed by lengthy national
processes. Finally, updating a law does not guarantee that all revised provisions are in line with international standards.

UNICEF remains the chief contributor to these processes. It supports partner design of stakeholder caucuses, underwrites the costs of convening events, undertakes evidence-generation by producing national legislative compliance reports vis-a-vis international child rights standards, and provides expertise in drafting legislation and guidance for consultations. USAID has become a major collaborative partner for the reform agenda on juvenile justice administration. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DFID UK play a similar role in strengthening the safeguarding of children.

**OUTPUT 5** By 2016, duty bearers have new standards, knowledge and abilities for developing improved children protection systems to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse against children.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
National governments in the region have recognised that their national child protection systems require a strong regulatory framework, and are beginning to focus on the institutional architecture and capacities therein. Setting standards for the child protection sector and technical know-how for their application have produced standards for the prevention and management of child abuse, management of children in alternative care, management of children’s psychosocial need in post-disaster situations and standards for diverting children away from the criminal justice system. These represent sub-regional consensus on solutions for these particular issues, and embody universally agreed procedures, requirements, specifications, guidelines and characteristics to consistently ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for purpose. Furthermore, the fact that they were developed in a multi-stakeholder, inter-country environment means that they reflect a double layer of consensus: among both technical experts and countries.

Notwithstanding these advances, national adherence to the standards remains patchy. Sustainable quality assurance mechanisms have not been agreed at either the national or sub-regional level. The level of specialization required by some of the standards is simply not available in each of these small developing island states. Furthermore, a gap exists between spirited public commitment and the required dynamic change management leadership necessary to remedy capacity deficits identified by the institutional appraisals of child protection agencies.

The OECS Commission, together with national governments, has been the pivotal implementing partner, with technical and financial resources from USAID, DFID UK and UNICEF. UNICEF’s support produced the technical guidance on standards, sponsored convening processes and undertook appraisals of child protection agencies in selected countries.

The lessons learned from this programming will shape the critical pillars of engagement on the institutional build-out of child protection agencies in the forthcoming programme cycle.

**OUTPUT 6** By 2016, duty bearers responsible for civil registration have the knowledge and skills to achieve timely, free and fully completed birth registration and certification.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Baseline data revealed a significant minority of children whose names had not been officially registered, despite high levels of birth registration in the four Windward Islands. UNICEF research showed two main reasons for the gap. Some families did not see it necessary to
return to civil registry offices to enter their children’s names until the children required formal identification to access social services. In other cases, cultural factors were at play. Some family traditions required that children should not be named for a period after birth. Others placed greater value on the faith-based naming ceremony of baptism than the legal birth registration process.

To address these bottlenecks, the respective national civil registries addressed critical supply and demand aspects of existing birth registration systems. On the supply side, they adopted bedside registration systems. These systems bring services closer to people, reduce the possibility of late registration fees and eliminate the cost of travel expenses to registrar offices and time away from employment to register a child. On the demand side, they addressed social and cultural practices and beliefs in relation to the naming of children. Apart from birth registration catch-up campaigns, national communication for development approaches informed expectant mothers and their partners about birth registration through health clinics and heightened awareness about the benefits of full registration, as well as providing details on the registration process. Consequently, parents are now equipped with the necessary documentation to facilitate bedside registration of their newborns. Together these strategies have reduced the proportion of children without officially registered names and virtually eliminated new cases of incomplete registration; and in addition, more children have their father’s’ names on their birth certificates.

**Evaluation and research**

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### Programme documents

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