1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Achievements:
- In the area of data collection, the priority given by UNICEF and other partners in advocating for a new demographic and health survey (DHS) is starting to pay off after two years of intensive effort. The survey is scheduled to start in 2011, with preparatory steps launched late this year. Further, the CO supported two surveys that contributed to knowledge generation in the area of budgeting for children and violence against children. These studies will lay the basis for effective engagement with the Government in the areas of child-friendly budgets and social protection schemes targeted at the poor, within the overall framework of UNICEF focus area 5.
- With regards to education quality improvement and disparity reduction, institutional and operational capacities were reinforced in educational data collection, analysis and micro-planning at the national and provincial levels through training and provision of technological equipment. The technical capacity of all teachers in the country was reinforced via the new pedagogical approach and the competency-based approach to teaching.
- In the area of Child Protection, the draft law on juvenile justice was adopted by the National Assembly and the Senate and is pending promulgation by the Head of State.

Shortfalls:
- Shortfalls affecting progress for children are primarily related to systemic issues and limited technical and funding capacity of counterparts in the areas of planning, implementation and monitoring. In key areas such as health and protection, both technical and financial commitments have not been commensurate with the needs of the most vulnerable and require continued strengthening. In this context, a promising area for improved collaboration is with the Ministry of Health, which is the principal recipient of R5 Malaria and R8 HIV funds from the GFATM.
- Some disruption in programme implementation resulted also from civil servants’ strikes during 2010 in sectors such as Health, Education and Social Affairs.

Collaborative partnerships:
- New partnerships with the First Lady and the spouses of Cabinet Members have strengthened the CO’s advocacy leverage.
- Traditional partnerships with UN agencies, the private sector and national NGOs have continued.

2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Gabon has a population officially estimated at about 1.5 million. Women, children under 18, and children under 5 years of age represent 52%, 50% and 19% of the population respectively. The country is highly urbanized with only 15% of the population living in rural areas.

The 2010 Human Development Report estimates Gabon’s GNI/capita at US$ 12,747 (PPP), making it one of the wealthiest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, income disparity is significant: the richest quintile controls 50% of national income; and 33% of the population live below the national poverty level. Furthermore, social indicators are inconsistent with the national income-level. In 2010, Gabon ranked 64th in the world based on GNI/capita but 93rd based on human development index ranking.

Gabon has made inconsistent progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the 3rd National Report on Monitoring the MDGs published in 2010, the country is highly likely to achieve MDG 2, moderately likely to achieve MDGs 3, 4, and 7, and unlikely to achieve MDGs 1, 5, and 6.

Equity analysis performed by UNICEF Gabon and national partners in 2010 shows that, in general, the most disadvantaged children in Gabon are the poor (4th and 5th wealth
quintiles), followed by those living in rural areas. Discrepancies in child outcomes based on gender are not consistently observed. The majority of the poor (75%) live in cities. The main obstacle for this group is not physical access to services but rather financial and time constraints.

The major obstacle to performing a detailed equity analysis in Gabon is the lack of up-to-date nationally-representative data. The most recent DHS was conducted in 2000. In 2010, UNICEF's Country Office (CO) in Gabon advocated for and participated in the initial stages of a DHS scheduled for 2011. The successful implementation of this survey will be a major step towards a better understanding of the situation of children and women in Gabon.

In 2010, the CO and national partners jointly published a nationwide study on violence against children. The study found physical violence (75%) and sexual violence (8%) as the most recurrent forms of violence against children in Gabon. Importantly, the study identified families instead of schools as the place where children are threatened the most, and reported that boys admit to being more exposed to violence than girls.

A UNICEF-supported study on pro-child budget allocations evaluated Government budget allocation towards social sectors and will serve as an advocacy tool for child-friendly social policies.

Based on national statistics, the primary school net attendance rate is 96%, and there is gender parity. However, high repetition rates continue to be a problem.

A number of global reports published this year contributed to ongoing analysis of the situation of children and women in Gabon. The 2010 report of the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation estimated the 2009 under-5 mortality rate (U5MR) for Gabon at 69 (per 1,000 live births), down from 93 in 1990.

The Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group’s (MMEIG) 2010 report estimated Gabon’s maternal mortality rate (MMR) for 2008 at 260 (per 100,000 live births) using a new estimation methodology, compared to 519 MMR based on the DHS estimate in 2000. Regrettably, when the MMEIG’s new methodology is applied retroactively, no progress is observed in regard to MMR in Gabon since 1990, which is a source of considerable concern.

A report on global food security, the Global Hunger Index for 2010 described the levels of hunger in Gabon as "moderate" and assigned the country a rank of 12th out of 84 developing countries worldwide. Though ranking highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is recognition that nutritional security, especially of vulnerable children and women, needs greater effort and investment.

Gabon has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in WCAR. The Children and AIDS Fifth Stocktaking Report 2010 indicated an adult HIV prevalence rate of 5.2%. There are an estimated 1,900 HIV-positive pregnant women in the country, of which 30% are estimated to be receiving ARVs. The number of children needing antiretroviral therapy is estimated at 1,600 with a coverage rate of 17%. The epidemic affects young women and girls disproportionately: HIV prevalence among 15-24 year olds is estimated at 3.5% for females as against 1.4% for males. The number of orphans is estimated at 64,000, with 18,000 having lost one or both parents to AIDS.

3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT

3.1 CP Analysis

3.1.1 CP Overview:

Please see analysis based on each strategic component and the good practice related to it below.

3.1.2 Programme Strategy

3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:

Capacity development remains one of the most important strategies of UN and UNICEF support to Gabon. In 2010, it was promoted through the following:
• In child protection, capacity building efforts were conducted for improving the quality of care for children in need of special protection.
• In education, teachers of all primary schools in Gabon were trained on the “New Pedagogical Approach” and the competency-based approach to teaching.
• For improved capacity in budgeting and planning, the programme contributed to the capacity reinforcement of the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Health in the areas of budgeting for children and design of social protection schemes for the most vulnerable.
• Via a UNICEF-initiated project, in partnership with WHO, all regional and capital-based logisticians were trained on vaccination stock and cold chain system management.
• The CO helped organize and participated in a workshop on results-based management (RBM) which brought together some thirty participants and strengthened the skills of UN, Government and other partners on this approach. The workshop was facilitated by WACRO and supported by a consultant.

3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:
Along with capacity building, advocacy is a key feature of the Country Programme (CP) in Gabon. To this end, several successes can be highlighted:

• To fill a long-standing need for quality current data, one of the key areas of advocacy by the CO, in collaboration with the UNCT and development partners, has been towards the updating of data on social indicators via a nationally-representative survey (DHS or MICS). These efforts are producing concrete results. All funding requirements for a DHS have now been met and the Government signed a contract with Macro International in November 2010 to conduct the survey. UNICEF advocacy efforts with Cabinet Members as well as with the First Lady have contributed to this process.
• Harmonization of national and international laws in the area of child protection was another target of advocacy activities. The adoption of the draft law on Juvenile Justice by both chambers of the Parliament (National Assembly and Senate) is evidence of the progress made during the year. The Palermo Protocol was also ratified by the country in September 2010.
• As a result of UNICEF advocacy, the recently adopted National Health Policy includes as its core the Accelerated Child Survival and Development (ACSD) model. The inclusion of the most effective health interventions for children, newborns and pregnant women, integrated in a cost-effective package, will contribute to Gabon’s efforts to reach the health-related MDGs.

3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:
The CO is engaged in partnerships with UN agencies, civil society, intergovernmental bodies, the media, as well as the bilateral agencies.
The partnership with the First Lady, who is very committed, especially to promoting child survival, is helping UNICEF to voice essential issues related to children and mobilize support for major initiatives such as the recently approved launch of the second DHS. The strategic partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Libreville on child trafficking allowed child trafficking related issues to be voiced and led to capacity building of the locally involved actors.
A mapping of existing NGOs was conducted in collaboration with the EU to analyse the current environment and assess possible opportunities for strategic partnerships and engagement in advocacy and programme implementation with UNICEF. The study will be completed in 2011. The mapping is meant to inform the CO’s local partnership strategy for the future.
Existing partnerships with the private sector include a project with TOTAL Gabon and Tullow Oil that is allowing the CO to support community development in child survival, and youth participation in the response to HIV prevention.
A partnership between UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO supported the capacity building of 48 Gabonese Government agents from various Ministries in the area of monitoring and evaluation of the education sector to generate data from the field and facilitate data analysis at local and national level.

The national HIV/AIDS response has been hampered by a lack of national coordination mechanism. While pursuing advocacy efforts toward the creation of a national mechanism, UNICEF and UN agencies also coordinate their own activities within the Joint UN Team on HIV-AIDS.

Last October, the UN Agencies signed a partnership agreement with public media to facilitate coverage, visibility and dissemination of UN supported programmes. This will help to enhance the informal partnership between UNICEF and the media (public, private and community TV and Radio). A list of media focal points was developed for better information sharing and interventions.

3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:
In 2010 the CO supported Knowledge Management initiatives at two levels:
(i) Internally, by setting up an archive of key documents and programme operations to make them available to all the staff of the office. This effort continued through the sharing of electronic documents including mission reports and other documents deemed important across an office-wide shared drive and a systematization of debriefings during various internal meetings.
(ii) Externally, by dissemination of documents issued by NYHQ and CO (for example, a booklet on the 4 key behaviours for child survival was published and distributed to children in all 9 provinces of the country), and sharing of research reports, surveys and evaluation (survey on violence against children, studies on the determinants of community development etc.). In addition, all formal meetings with national counterparts continued to be used as opportunities to discuss the new information/data affecting the lives of women and children in Gabon.

3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development:
In Gabon, current communication activities are neither designed nor delivered at a scale to make measurable contributions to child related MDGs. To address this problem and move toward C4D strategy elaboration, the CO is engaged in supporting the Government and NGOs in data collection to analyse the cause of problems, gather information on knowledge, attitude and practices, and identify the main existing community and media channels.

A study on all forms of violence against children in Gabon was validated in February 2010. The qualitative and quantitative data available will allow child violence to be addressed in Gabon through multi-sectoral approaches, including strategic communication responses with clear objectives and results that can be measured, and with appropriate messages.

A KAP study on the determinants of HIV-AIDS vulnerability and early pregnancy among adolescent is to be launched in early January 2011. As of last quarter of 2010, the TOR is finalized and international and national consultants identified.

Inspired by the last version of the “Facts For Life” document, with UNICEF technical support and children’s participation at all stages, BD Boom and Club Ami de la BD (two national NGOs) finalized an illustrated handbook promoting the 4 Essential Family Practices for child survival. The Handbook aims to increase children’s awareness at early age and develop a sense of participation and commitment in the resolution of problems that concern the community as a whole. The handbook will be disseminated in primary schools in all 9 provinces in 2011.

With the support of the Regional Country Office (WCARO), and in partnership with WHO, a C4D strategy for supplementary immunization activities was finalized in December 2010. Some 25 persons from the MoH, others public institutions involved in health issues and a network of NGO representatives were trained and have developed the required
skills for designing and planning a participatory communication strategy. In addition, the participants in the training reviewed the communication channels and tools used during campaigns and strengthened their skills on better designing messages and communication tools.

3.1.3 Normative Principles

3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation:
Efforts were made in 2010 to allow for better implementation of the human rights-based approach during the various stages of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Country Programme of cooperation and at the UNDAF level. A pool of UN staff and representatives of the Government had their skills strengthened on this approach during a workshop facilitated by WCARO and supported by a consultant.

Using a different approach for capacity building of duty bearers and rights holders, the CO started the process of organizing awareness campaigns for students on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These campaigns are also extended to supervisors of secondary schools in the country. Also within the framework of the CRC, the CO is currently testing an approach known as "child-friendly police" whose goal is to get the police to behave in ways that respect the rights of the child in all their activities related to minors.

3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming:
The CO participated and helped organize a workshop on gender mainstreaming which brought together some thirty participants and strengthened the skills of UN, government and other partners on this approach. The workshop was facilitated by WACRO and supported by a consultant. Despite the lack of reliable statistics in the country, UNICEF, through studies, surveys and assessment on behalf of the programme of cooperation placed particular emphasis on disaggregation of data by gender whenever possible. This disaggregation was also ensured in the compilation of data that resulted from the trainings conducted with the Government. In addition, UNICEF has encouraged the participation of a greater number of women in training and managing the proposed programme activities.

3.1.3.3 Environmental Sustainability:

3.2 Programme Components:
Title: Policy development, advocacy and partnerships

Purpose:
The policy development, advocacy and partnerships programme aims to ensure that the protection and fulfilment of the rights of children and families are given high priority within national policies and programmes. It will promote policy development for appropriate institutional frameworks and resource allocations for priority social areas as well as seek increased partnerships involving civil society and the private sector.

Two results were planned for 2010-2011:
1. Budgets allocated to social sectors are increased and completely utilized;
2. Communication, partnership and strategic alliances further contribute to the realization of programme priorities and the promotion of child rights.

Resources Used:
Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: US$445,000
Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: US$163,632; OR: US$190,922; Total: US$354,554
Any special allocations (list): None
**Result Achieved:**

The Country Programme, which is being implemented through a biennial work plan (2010-11), consists of several activities that are ongoing. The key results achieved in 2010 are:

- Pro-child Budget Allocation Study was developed and has been validated by partners.
- Study on Social Policy Development in Gabon is on track; this study will be extended in order to include an analysis and costing of social protection policy and programme.
- The Determinants of Community Development Study was developed and validated.
- At least 60% of Media including TV and Radio from Public, Private and Community sectors, the main newspapers and electronic press, covered UNICEF supported activities on a regular basis as well as on special occasions and celebration days. Interface with the Media and its engagement was facilitated through meetings, Press conferences, workshops, release of studies, and campaigns.
- A mapping of national NGOs has been finalized by a network of national NGOs with UNICEF and EU support.
- 1000 copies of an illustrated Handbook for the promotion of the 4 Essential Family Practices have been distributed in the Capital.

**Constraints:**

- Rapid turnover of staff in government and other partners tends to slow down the pace on programme implementation. Insufficient communication/data exchange between different parties involved in the budget planning process makes it difficult to achieve coherence. The creation of a comprehensive budget database with UNICEF support in 2011 should help overcome this problem.
- The lack of information on Media audiences, the high cost of broadcasting, and dearth of information about knowledge, attitude and practices related to health issues at the community and family levels are other constraints. To address this gap, a KAP study on the 4 basic behaviours is planned for 2011.

**Studies:**

- Pro-child Budget Allocation Study - This aims to support the evaluation of government budget allocations to critical social sectors, and identify, among others, the policy and resource constraints that account for lack of progress and efficiency in those sectors. The evidence from the study will inform further advocacy for future allocations and efficient utilization.
- Social Policy Development Study - Lack of efficient social policy could be a significant reason of low budget allocation in social sectors. This study will show how relevant social policies are to a country’s development, and in what areas support from external partners (UNICEF and others) could enhance sound social policies and their implementation towards the improved wellbeing of the more disadvantaged and vulnerable families and children.

**Partnerships:**

- The CO strengthened partnerships and interagency collaboration with WHO, UNFPA, UNESCO and UNDP (for example in the finalization of the communication strategy in support of the Polio campaign).
- UNICEF partnered with a network of NGOs and leveraged resources in the countrywide mapping of NGOs.
- UN agencies signed an agreement with the Ministry of Communication to facilitate common sharing of information and to increase visibility of UN system’s interventions through public media.
- The UNICEF-supported programmes were implemented under Government leadership and coordination. The partnership with the First Lady was invaluable as it helped the CO
to position issues related to the CP at a high level on the national agenda.
- Bilateral and multilateral agencies such as US Embassy and EU are among the CO allies in the area of Child Protection.
- Partnership with UNHCR, UNFPA, WHO, and UNESCO contributed to achieve results in capacity building, advocacy and technical support.
- UNICEF actively participates in UNCT and CCM activities.

Future Workplan:
- The activities initiated in 2010 under the two-year work plan will continue into 2011 towards their completion.
- At the macro level, the CO will support the process of elaboration of the new National Strategic and Policy Document, and will undertake informed advocacy to promote the inclusion in the document of social policies which are more equity and pro-child based.
- The CO will finalize the visibility and resources mobilization kit.
- It will establish with media a partnership based on information and knowledge sharing and the promotion of messages.
- Based on the NGO mapping, the CO will seek to improve the quality of data ensuring greater disaggregation by gender and other socio-economic categories.
- The KAP study on health practices at community and family levels will be implemented and its results used to inform further advocacy and programming.
- The CO will scale up the promotion of the handbook of the 4 EFP based on the experience gained with its promotion in 2010.

Title:  **Capacity-building for child survival, development and protection**

Purpose:
The programme aims to achieve results for children in Young Child Survival, Development and Protection. It has four components: Child Survival, Community Development and Education, HIV/AIDS and Children, and Child Protection. These broadly support UNICEF’s Focus Areas 1 through 4.
The main purpose is to strengthen capacities of institutions to offer services ensuring fulfilment of the rights of children within national programmes. It seeks to promote equitable access to services and to achievement of MDGs on maternal and child mortality, and HIV and AIDS.

Results:
The results expected by the end of 2011 are as follows:
(i) At least 75% of children under 5 years of age benefit from a package of interventions for neonatal health and child at all levels of the health system and community levels;
(ii) 60% children complete primary school and enroll in the 1st grade of secondary school by the end of the 2010-2011 academic year;
(iii) The proportion of pregnant women, children, and young people that have access to HIV prevention, care and support is increased by 20%;
(iv) The Child Protection programme focuses on supporting the establishment of a national integrated child protection system in Gabon.

Resources Used:
Total approved for 2010 as per CPD:  US$1,640,000
Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: US$498000; OR: US$1,088,180; Total: US$1,586,180
Any special allocations (list): Thematic Funds Education, and Gender Equity, HIV/AIDS
List of donors: UNICEF Natcom (Spanish, Swiss, UK), Private sector (TOTAL, TULLOW OIL), UN Trust Fund for Human Security, Micronutrient Initiative.

Result Achieved:• At the macro level, both the Health Policy document and the Health National Action Plan developed with WHO and UNICEF technical support were adopted in 2010 and include the main strategies of the accelerated child survival development
(ACSD) initiative.
- With regards to advocacy for Child Protection, the Law on Juvenile Justice is finally adopted by the Senate, now pending promulgation by the Head of State. The Palermo Protocol was ratified by the Government.
- More than 55% are sleeping under ITN; 67% of 11 month olds got the new "Pentavalent" vaccine; and 60% of women were immunized against tetanus during the 2010 campaigns. At the end of November 2010, 30% of pregnant women were tested for HIV (i.e., 12,000 women) and efforts have to be made to increase early diagnosis of exposed babies. Normative documents were developed with UNICEF technical support in the area of IMCI, neonatal care, HIV and care and support. All health departments use the RED strategy in which was added Vitamin A since 2009 in health facilities.
- The institutional capacities of the Ministry of Education were reinforced in educational data collection, analysis and micro planning at the national and provincial levels. All provincial academies were equipped with computers and software for statistics purposes and competencies of 76 statisticians (73 male, 3 female), were reinforced. The above was achieved with joint support from UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNFPA.
- Teaching capacities of 1807 primary school teachers and headmasters (65% women) were reinforced on competencies’ based approach as part of a strategy for reducing the repetition rate. Evidence on this indicator is expected to be gathered during 2010-2011 academic years.
- The CO reinforced technical capacity of the National Committee against Child Trafficking which is operational in one more province; this expands its presence and activities to 3 out 9 rural provinces.

**Constraints:**
- Dearth of data/statistical analyses and its insufficient use as a routine tool for efficient management.
- Rapid turnover of the administrative staff along with understaffing at all levels.
- Prolonged civil servants' strike in the area of Health, Education and Social Affairs had a negative impact, for instance, on immunization coverage rates and social care services.
- Coordination mechanisms in the national response to HIV/AIDS are not fully operational.

To overcome the data related constraints, UNICEF and its partners reinforced advocacy for surveys, and collectively supported the strengthening of the statistical system in social and child development areas. The CO is looking into options of strengthening collaborative partnership with relevant NGOs and other civil society organizations. In HIV/AIDS control, UN agencies coordinate their activities within the Joint UN Theme Group on HIV-AIDS as well as continue to advocate for the creation of a national coordination body.

**Studies:**
A nationwide study on violence against children helped the national observatory in designing an action plan to prevent violence (in schools, communities, families).

**Partnerships:**
The private sector (namely, TOTAL and Tallow Oil) funded the CO supported programmes and helped enhance results for children.

**Emergencies:**
The CO supported the Government in preparing an immunization campaign to prevent Poliomyelitis epidemic.

**Future Workplan:**
In collaboration with the line Ministries and NGOs, the 2010-2011 workplan will pursue its priorities. Among others, it will:
- Continue supporting the R8 GFATM funded project.
- Support the implementation of high impact interventions to reduce infant mortality, as well as the strengthening of routine EPI + by the RED approach.
- Reinforce C4D especially for the promotion of breastfeeding and the 3 other family
practices.

- Support quality education and retention improvement, and quality disaggregated data collection.
- Develop an appropriate communication strategy with a C4D perspective.
- Finalize and validate life-skills-based education and primary prevention of HIV training modules; Support the scaling up HIV prevention activities in schools, and of PMTCT and paediatric care in health facilities and communities.
- Undertake qualitative study on the factors of vulnerability and determinants of risky behaviour among adolescents towards HIV, ISTs and other SRH risks.
- Support design and deliver alternative services for children in conflict with the law.
- Support empowerment of the Child Protection NGOs network (RESPEg) by building their capacities in promoting Child Rights, social norms, and social change.

**Title:** Cross-sectoral costs

**Purpose:**
To support the implementation of the Country Programme

**Resources Used:**
Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: USD212,000
Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: USD120,000; OR: USD168,884.05; Total: USD288,884.05
Any special allocations (list): Government’s 2010 allocation of USD100,000 (expected).

**Results Achieved:**
a) The cross sectoral component provides complementary support for office activities and operating expenses. Initially planned for a total of USD 212,000 as per approved CPD 2007-2011 (RR: USD 100,000 and OR: USD 112,000), the finally allocated budget amounted to USD 288,884 (RR: USD 120,000 and OR: USD 168,884). The said amount was used mainly for cross sectoral salaries (33%), renovation of office premises (20%), travel (8%), security and rental of premises (7% each), cleaning of premises (7%) and the remaining 25% to partially cover communications, utilities, and miscellaneous expenses.

b) A critical constraint for 2010 came from the Government’s annual contribution (amounting to about USD 100,000) for 2010 not coming in as late as December 2009. In early 2010 accordingly the CO requested and obtained from DFAM a loan to be reimbursed upon receipt of the contribution.

**Future Workplan:**
In 2011, the office will continue to use the cross sectoral funds to support the office activities and budget allocation. Besides the cross-cutting salaries and recurring operating expenses, the office will give priority to staff learning and, jointly with UN agencies, HACT micro assessment and market survey exercise.

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### 4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

#### 4.1 Governance & Systems

**4.1.1 Governance Structure:**
a) The office objectives and priorities for 2010 were defined in the Biennial Work Plan 2010-2011 and summarised in the Annual Management Plan. Information was shared
with all staff in different forums. The ERP plan developed within the framework of UNCT was revisited for updating.

b) The office has developed effective control structures as per current regulations. The mechanisms related to emergency risk management will be established in 2011 as defined in the ERP at the level of all programme components as well as the BCP.

c) The office held 4 CMT meetings in addition to bi-monthly joint Programme/Operations meetings and, at the area level, 2 Senior Management meetings through video conference to review and monitor programme implementation and assess the coordination mechanism between programmes and operations in each of the 3 offices (Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome e Principe) of the Southern Gulf of Guinea Area Office. Among the major initiatives taken at the Gabon office level:

- The set up of 8 work processes, to be later increased to cover other business areas;
- The CO developed a monthly report’s model for monitoring programme implementation, with performance indicators such as the DCT situation, donor reports and PBA expiration timeline. This resulted in a better DCT clean up with a particular emphasis on the ‘more than 9 month’ category (only 2% balance of total outstanding amount), timely submission of donor reports, and full expenditure of all expiring PBA with only one extension request (granted);
- Renovation of the office premises for significantly improved working conditions and optimized space;
- Filing and archiving systems operationalized;
- Exposure to emergency situation through support mission to Haiti;
- Enhancement of ICT efficiency, support to and interaction with Malabo and Sao Tome offices in both programme and operations as part of the integrated management approach.

d) Monthly reports on programme implementation with related performance indicators were reviewed by CMT and Programme committee. More effort is required for quality assurance, and a newly appointed Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist will reinforce the office capacities in this area.

e) The last audit of the office was performed early 2006 and the overall rating was not satisfactory. The CO has been taking necessary steps to improve overall performance focusing on the specific deficiencies pointed out in the audit.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:

a) The office is in the process of elaborating a holistic, structured approach to manage risks and opportunities following its focal point’s participation in the training on Enterprise Risk Management/Risk & Control Self-Assessment which took place in UNICEF Harare/Zimbabwe from 4-5 November 2010.

b) The process consists in assessing the risk management, developing office risk profile and control library and reviewing selected work processes. Once the structure is in place, the office will regularly assess the effectiveness of controls to mitigate risks. In the framework of the preparation of their next country programme cycle (2012-2016), Gabon and Sao Tome offices will make their programme work plans as well as office management plans risk informed.

c) The Gabon office is committed to make its Country Programme risk informed starting 2011.

d) The Business Continuity (BC) related issues will equally be addressed in an integrated manner (Gabon, Sao Tome e Principe & Equatorial Guinea) in Annual Work plans and through a regularly update of the BC Plan.
e) Though Gabon has already elaborated its BC Plan, the mechanisms identified in the document will be established in 2011. The CO’s critical telecommunications systems and reinforcement of alternative IT equipment are already upgraded to meet the required organizational standards. In 2011, the CO will perform a simulation exercise to test the efficiency of BCP and staff readiness with likely support from an experienced office.

4.1.3 Evaluation:
At the beginning of each year, the CO develops an IMEP which, among other things, plans the evaluations that will be conducted during the year. The relevance of each evaluation is discussed in programme meetings and a final list is validated. The TORs for each evaluation are drafted and finalized by the Programme Officers with the M&E team. This year, one evaluation was conducted. This was the first evaluation of the Community Health Centre of Gabon, carried out with UNICEF support, which will serve as a model for the entire country. As recommended by the evaluation, the office funded a workshop to develop a strategy to revitalize the centre.

To improve efficiency in monitoring assessments, the office intends to approve the major evaluations in CMT and monitor the implementation of recommendations. The office has an M&E team whose members are fairly knowledgeable about the organization's policy on evaluation.

4.1.4 Information Technology and Communication:

a) The ICT function contributed significantly to programme implementation through facilitating the use of the audio visual means, advising on appropriate specifications and software of the equipment donated to partners and assisting in its best use for optimum results.

b) Collaboration between UN agencies has yet to reach the required level of optimized common services and resources. In 2010, no significant progress was made towards the above, among others, due to scattered locations of the agencies.

c) Gabon ICT has achieved a common approach within the integrated management framework at the level of the 3 offices through the following actions:
- Extension of Local Area Network to increase office’s capacity
- Re-cabling to Cat.6 for greater speed of data exchange
- BCP/ITDR testing/reconfiguring computers of staff working remotely to access the main UNICEF applications through tools like Citrix, Business Every Where, SSL-VPN
- Implementing multiple video conferencing facilities
- Upgrade of IT environment of the office as per ITDSS standards in view of migration to Vision, Outlook and Exchange from 2011
- Deployment of a BlackBerry server to increase staff mobility.

d) All office IT equipment is purchased offshore through LTA.

e) The CO has adopted the 30% annual replacement principle as an exigency to keep pace with fast developing technology. Most of its outdated equipment is disposed either through donation to partners or sold by auction. It is exploring a possibility to get the used cartridges recycled locally to reduce expenses on supplies.

4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship

4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:
The CO has set up a mechanism of continuous monitoring of use of available funding through the management report produced and submitted to the Area Representative and shared with all staff on a monthly basis, ahead of the HQ produced report. The report indicates in detail the level of expenditure, donor reports due and expiring PBAs within
the four following months. As a result, all donor reports due during the year have been sent on time and 100% of funds have been spent before PBA expiration (a request for an extension to end 2011 of a Swiss NatCom PBA was granted in the middle of the year).

The office is working on the reinforcement of the fund – raising strategy that should be ready to support the 2012-2016 CPD.

4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:
In compliance with audit recommendations, the CO significantly improved its operations. It completed, with the support of DFAM, the cleanup process of issues in suspense accounts. In view of IPSAS launch in 2012 (mainly PAR balance brought down to only USD 3,427 as per 3rd quarterly report, fully cleared GL accounts, only 2% outstanding DCT of 9 months and more (as of 1st December), timely management of bank reconciliations and related reconciling items, monthly Petty Cash replenishment, only one operating bank account, delays of payments brought to minimum, frequent bi-lateral and group review sessions, compliance with Table of Authority and segregation of duties, savings from x-rate fluctuation, etc).

Owing to the mechanisms put in place, the office was able to focus on a regular monitoring of the bank optimisation practices to ensure coherence between funding forecasts and disbursements within the established benchmarks as per Financial Circular 40. The office is now striving to find a way to lessen delays (currently exceeding 6 months) for collection of VAT reimbursements from the Government. So far, attempts to get exemption did not succeed but efforts will continue towards achievement of that objective.

In terms of budget utilisation, the support budget implementation rate was nearly 90% by end of November. It is expected to be fully spent by year-end closure. Programme budget implementation stood at 79% as of 20th December.

4.2.3 Supply:
a) The CO had to deal with two emergency related activities. The first was geared to children victims of traffic who benefited from UNICEF’s assistance while in transit centers before their repatriation. The second entailed the offshore purchase of polio vaccines for the Government for a polio vaccination campaign. The regular supply activities entailed a total commitment of USD 312,622 for office supplies and USD 634,183 as Procurement Services.
b) Supply activities are undertaken based on annual work plans with partners and on competitiveness for both local and offshore orders.
c) Overall quality and timeliness of supply inputs were good, but could be improved in terms of better specifications and timely preparation of a distribution plan.
d) For the past few years, the local market has expanded for a wider range of goods and services. In 2010, the office concluded for the second consecutive year a series of 6 LTAs for main supplies.
e) During 2010, the office had only one in-kind donation of supplies, consisting of HIV sensitization materials, by the French National Committee.
f) Joint activities with other UN agencies were limited to procurement services with UNDP and UNFPA as UNICEF Gabon acted as a coordinator between Supply division and the two agencies.
g) In 2009, a training session for counterparts on in-country warehousing was held both in Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. The Ministry of Health in each country was the main recipient. In 2010, no such training occurred.
h) The low volume of supplies enabled the CO to easily and efficiently manage the delivery of supplies to end-users.
i) The monitoring of supplies needs to be more systematically undertaken during field visits.
j) No particular mention was noted during the reporting period in this area.
k) Supply Division’s services extended to the CO were timely, efficient and helpful.
l) In 2010, by way of professional development, only one supply section staff member took a series of e-learning sessions to keep abreast of the latest processes.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity:

a) There has been a significant improvement in the past 3 years in both staff capacity reinforcement and the recruitment process. The staffing overall is almost gender balanced; however, more women need to be recruited to achieve gender balance among international professional staff. Though the 2010 learning plan has not yielded the expected results mainly in language skills due to budget constraints and disruption caused by the renovation of the premises, e-learning, training on the spot, information sharing and support missions (Haiti emergency) were actively encouraged and contributed effectively to staff skills enhancement..

b) Based on the objectives set out in the office Annual Management Plan (AMP), the staff PERs have been clearly defined and regularly monitored through honest discussions on performance. As a guiding indicator, individual work plans were set and continuously evaluated in terms of achievements, gaps and corrective actions.

c) As part of the process that the CO will undertake in 2011 in the implementation of emergency risk management and response, the assessment of staffing gaps will be high on the agenda and addressed.

d) In the above context, staff counselling resources will need to be identified and made available.

e) In respect of HIV safeguards in the workplace, on the occasion of the International Day against HIV, a questionnaire was circulated among staff to test their knowledge. About 60% proved to have basic knowledge on HIV and appropriate means of protection.

f) The CO benefited from the global HR initiatives, the NETI M&E provided invaluable support as the position does not exist yet in the organigram, and the Deputy Representative successfully completed the LDI programme.

5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

5.1 List of Studies, Surveys & Evaluations:

1. *Etude sur les violences faites aux enfants au Gabon. Quelle implication pour la protection de l’enfant*
2. *Etude sur les déterminants du développement communautaire*
3. *Analyse du budget consacré à l’enfance en République Gabonaise*
4. *Evaluation du fonctionnement du centre de Santé Communautaire d’Owendo*

5.2 List of Other Publications

2. *Livret sur la Convention Relative aux Droits de l’Enfant*