Executive Summary

The Parliament of Georgia declared 2014 as the “Year of Protection of the Rights of the Child”, and in partnership with UNICEF committed to develop specific laws and influence policies to ensure children’s rights are fully respected, protected and fulfilled. Eight legislative initiatives were prepared and partly introduced into Parliament.

Children will be better protected from violence as a result of the revision of 10 different laws adopted by Parliament in October, which widened the scope of the definition of violence to include neglect, introduced mandatory reporting of cases of violence against children by professionals working with children and prohibits corporal punishment in family settings.

The number of children living in extreme poverty (below US$1.25 per day) is projected to fall by 50,000 from nine per cent in 2013 to 3.3 per cent as the result of increased social benefits and the UNICEF-supported revision of the Targeted Social Assistance scheme, which was approved by the Cabinet at the end of December. UNICEF advocated and advised on the new methodology which significantly improves the targeting of poor children and introduces a child benefit to 40 per cent of children.

All five-year old children will have access to a compulsory school readiness year once the new Law on Early and Pre-school Education, which was prepared and introduced into Parliament with UNICEF’s support, comes into effect. A National Preschool Education Policy and Strategic Plan have been prepared, the status of pre-school teachers was upgraded, and a pre-school curriculum and pre-service training programmes are being developed. The availability of pre-school facilities remains a challenge, and has been prioritized in the regional development plans.

While maternal micro-nutrient supplementation was introduced for all pregnant women and an in-principle agreement reached on the introduction of flour fortification (subject to a further survey of the level of iron deficiency), progress on reducing child mortality needs to be accelerated. In pursuance of system-based maternal and child health (MCH) approaches, an agreement was reached and the introduction of home visiting and the regionalization of perinatal care started in two pilot regions (Imereti, Racha-Lechkumi). The reform of the MCH surveillance system was initiated.

Although the number of children in large-scale state institutions was reduced to 88, concerns remain regarding the continued use of such institutions for children with disabilities as well as disparities in access to services between urban centres and rural and mountainous areas. Some 40 percent of the Georgian public stigmatize children with disabilities. The Prime Minister launched a special initiative to increase cash benefits and expand services for children with disabilities, in particular home visiting services. A Law on Adoption and Foster Care and a Government programme on home care for children with disabilities is under development. Early intervention services have been expanded by doubling the number of beneficiaries and increasing the budget of the early intervention program.
A Juvenile Justice Code, covering all children in contact with the law, was prepared in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the European Union (EU) and will be submitted to Parliament in spring 2015. According to expert opinion, it is fully compliant with international standards and one of the most modern pieces of juvenile justice legislation in the region. It introduces a wide range of alternative measures to detention, the creation of a child-friendly environment, and the specialization of justice professionals.

The resignation of the de-facto President of Abkhazia and subsequent elections stalled UNICEF’s discussions with the de-facto authorities to transform its engagement from a predominately emergency modality towards a strategy with longer-term approaches targeting system change. UNICEF worked on a more systematic collection of still missing information about the situation of children in Abkhazia through undertaking preparations for a household welfare monitoring survey, a child protection assessment/mapping and an assessment of the education system planned for 2015. Assurances have been received concerning the use of Georgian as the language of instruction for ethnic Georgian school children. The international community remains with no access to the Tskinvali / South Ossetia region, with the situation of children unmonitored.

In partnership with the EU and other UN agencies, UNICEF successfully advocated for the inclusion of child rights into the National Human Rights Action Plan and the Association Agenda between the Government and the EU. A child rights coordination mechanism was established as part of the Human Rights Council under the Prime Minister. The Government finalized and submitted its fourth periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In 2014, UNICEF and the Government held the Mid-Term Review of the country programme.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

Over the past 40 years, natural hazards of hydro-meteorological and geological origin affected 70 percent of the territory in Georgia, and caused a negative impact on the national economy and development with economic losses exceeding US$14 billion. In this context, the Government of Georgia made a commitment at the 2013 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction to strengthen the national disaster risk management system, improve preparedness and coping capacities on local and central levels, and ensure disaster risk reduction (DRR) is integrated across development strategies, plans and frameworks.

In 2014, UNICEF along with other key stakeholders supported the Government to undertake a Disaster Risk Reduction Capacity Assessment, and to develop a draft National Plan of Action for Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Reduction. The capacity assessment and the development of the National Plan were undertaken through a participatory and multi-stakeholder consultation process involving more than 60 governmental institutions, non-governmental organisations and international cooperation partners in Georgia between February and December.

UNICEF is in the process of ensuring that the draft National Plan for DRR Capacity Development includes components on social protection, education, and water, sanitation and hygiene in line with UNICEF’s Core Commitments for Children and Resilience Agenda for Children. The National Plan is expected to be approved in 2015, and will provide the basis for the alignment of existing and planned development programmes carried out by various stakeholders into a single comprehensive framework owned by the Government of Georgia.
In 2015, UNICEF Georgia will continue to supporting the Government, on disaster risk reduction amongst for vulnerable communities and institutions (UNICEF-DIPECHO Programme). In particular, support will be provided to the Government in reviewing and revising the existing DRR pedagogical materials to enhance awareness and knowledge of school children against disaster risks. Two schools will be supported to serve as models for others to learn about school safety protocols and procedures. At the national level, UNICEF will work with the relevant government and non-government organisation (NGO) partners to promote child participation through the involvement of children and youth in disaster risk reduction forums and debates. In the area of emergency preparedness, UNICEF will strengthen its own staff’s response capacity and will also collaborate in inter-agency contingency planning process.

**Equity Case Study**

Over the past years the Government has taken important steps to improve the social situation in the country, including providing free health insurance and increasing social benefits. Despite these efforts, there are still far too many children who are left behind: children living in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, children victims of violence, rural children and those living in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas. In fact, the national poverty among children has worsened since 2011, and it is evident that the country requires more inclusive social protection programmes, which are available to the most vulnerable and extremely poor children and their families.

During the past five years, UNICEF promoted wider social inclusion in Georgia and successfully triggered upstream policy changes for children living in extreme poverty (UNICEF’s Strategic Plan Outcome 7, Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda/RKLA 8). The following case study demonstrates how UNICEF’s induced social protection reform in Georgia played a vital role in achieving greater equity, resilience and supporting national human and economic development through its focus on extremely poor children. This involved UNICEF:

1. Conduction a thorough analysis and fully understand inequities arising from existing social protection schemes; 
2. Informing and promoting a revision of Georgia’s social assistance approaches which remove key barriers and bottlenecks affecting children, and; 
3. Supporting the Government in the reform of the social protection system that addresses the identified inequities for the poor focusing on the best interest of the child. The details of these three steps follows.

1. Through various surveys, studies and other means, UNICEF has been tracking the same households country-wide on a wide range of different dimensions of poverty, including household income, consumption, access to services and goods, health, education and subject well-being (biennial Welfare Monitoring Surveys, Barriers to Access to Social Services Study, Child Poverty Discussion papers, and other). Based on the generated data, UNICEF was able to examine the coverage and impact of the social assistance schemes, including the Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) programme, old-age pensions, disability and other benefits, and to understand the situation of children living in poverty. The survey generated evidence that children in Georgia face a higher risk of poverty than any other age group. Families with children were found to be poorer than those without children, and yet, the social protection system failed to systematically ensure their inclusion into benefit schemes.

2. In its observations, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child pointed out that Georgia’s social protection systems need to be more responsive to the needs of children. To address the inequities, UNICEF developed a set of policy options for improving the performance of the social protection system, which included universal and targeted approaches for child benefits focusing
on most excluded and extremely poor children. In June 2013, as a result of UNICEF advocacy, the Government committed itself at the National Conference on Early Child Survival and Development to halve extreme child poverty (below US$1.25), which at that time affected 77,000 children. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Social Service Agency and UNICEF to revise the Targeted Social Assistance system and make it more child-sensitive.

(3) In 2013/14, UNICEF and the Government jointly revised the social protection system. This included:
(a) The revision of the TSA formula to take child poverty into account;
(b) The development of new benefits schemes and qualification thresholds, thereby increasing inclusion and benefits for extremely poor through a five tiered threshold approach;
(c) The introduction of child benefits which previously did not exist in the country, and;
(d) Strengthened links between social and child protection systems through the introduction of a child assessment referral mechanism within the TSA system.

Overall, the improved TSA model with the newly introduced child benefit is a significant step towards the reduction of child poverty in Georgia. Currently, about 55,000 children still live below US$1.25 consumption per day, while more than 200,000 consume less than US$2.25 per day. It is expected that once the social protection system is operational in 2015, it will halve the current numbers of children living in extreme poverty; which, taking 2012 as a baseline, will be a reduction of extreme child poverty by two-thirds.

During the reform process, UNICEF worked on building alliances with other key actors in the field to promote an inclusive social protection system for poor children and their families. A strong partnership with the World Bank emerged and resulted in a joint statement on the vision and principles for a fiscally sustainable social protection system that protects the chronic poor, especially children, prevents families from sliding into poverty, and provides opportunities for better livelihoods. UNICEF and the World Bank are currently supporting the Government in implementing this newly developed social protection scheme. UNICEF will continue advocating for additional components (such as universal child benefits) to break the inter-generational cycles of poverty and exclusion. Investing in children and social inclusion will remain one of UNICEF Georgia’s key priorities for the new Country Programme 2016-20.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

**Acronyms**

BCP - Business Continuity Plan  
CAF - Capital Asset Fund  
CMT - Country Management Team  
CPD - Country Programme Document  
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child  
CRC@25 – 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child  
DCT - Direct Cash transfer  
DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction  
ECD - Early Childhood Development  
EPE - Early and Preschool Education  
EU - European Union  
HRAP - Human Rights Action Plan  
HA - Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
ICATT - Interactive Computer-Assisted Training Tool
ICT - Information and Communication Technology
IMEP - Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
LTA - Long Term Arrangement
MARA - Most at Risk Adolescents
MCH - Maternal and Child Health
MoES - Ministry of Education and Science
MoIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoLHSA - Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
MoSY - Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs
MIS - Management Information System
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR – United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIAI - Office of Internal Audit and Investigation
PDO - Public Defender’s Office
PEP - Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PHC - Primary Health Care
PSV - Peer Support Volunteer
RKLA - Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda
RO - Regional Office
SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency
SP - Strategic Plan (UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017)
SSA - Social Service Agency
TSA - Targeted Social Assistance
UNCRC - UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID - United States Agency for International Development

**Capacity Development**

Capacity development remained a key strategy of the programme of cooperation in 2014. In order to strengthen the MCH system, the Government with UNICEF support embarked on the introduction of the home visiting approach in two pilot regions (Imereti, Racha-Lechkumi), which will be scaled up country-wide. Aiming to develop the capacity of caregivers, all 375 rural primary health care (PHC) nurses were trained on child growth and development monitoring through telemedicine sessions.

In support for justice for children programming, UNICEF strengthened the capacity of specialized professionals working with children. Prosecutors, legal aid service lawyers and judges (101 in total) and 32 police officers received in-depth training on juvenile justice international standards/practices, psychological facets, and interviewing child victims and witnesses of crime. In addition, 106 diversion professionals strengthened their skills on diversion and mediation. Forty social workers and psychologists were trained on how to work with children on probation.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the newly adopted legislative package on domestic violence, UNICEF supported capacity development of social workers and psychologists from the
Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) and the Social Service Agency (SSA) to better address and refer cases of domestic violence against children.

UNICEF developed the capacity of outreach workers from key non-state actors on HIV/AIDS testing and counselling services for most at risk adolescents. Overall, 20,000 youth were reached, of whom 5,398 tested their HIV status. A series of training sessions on drug abuse and healthy lifestyle was undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. Sixty peer educators were trained, reaching 5,000 college students, 1,872 secondary school students and 144 youth leaders.

UNICEF Georgia supported the Government to establish an inter-ministerial working group, which developed an action plan to improve monitoring of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out. To improve the quality of primary/secondary education, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) revised and developed the national curriculum (grades one to six), teacher’s standards, and a new teachers’ professional development scheme.

In Abkhazia, UNICEF strengthened quality health services through training for 200 medical professionals. To promote quality education and basic services for children with disabilities, UNICEF, in partnership with World Vision, trained pre-school teachers and the staff of three Child Development Centres.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

In 2014, UNICEF in Georgia generated evidence to support policy dialogue and advocacy for children’s rights across the UNICEF Strategic Plan Outcomes, addressing critical equity gaps in education, health, child protection and social protection.

The preschool costing study of 2013 revealed an equity gap, with only 30 per cent of poor children enrolled in preschool education. Consequently, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science to develop the Law on Early and Preschool Education, which most notably establishes compulsory school readiness for all five-year-old children in Georgia. The Law was registered in Parliament in December 2014.

The 2014 quantitative study on adolescent and youth behaviour, needs, attitude and knowledge about drug abuse revealed that only 40 percent of young people are aware about the negative consequences of drug abuse. The findings were used for developing a large scale communication campaign “Be Real” on drug abuse prevention, reaching around 20,000 young people.

The 2013 study on violence against children in Georgia prompted the revision of the child protection referral procedures, and informed policy-dialogue and advocacy work leading to the development and adoption of a comprehensive legislative package to address violence against children. Furthermore, the study findings informed UNICEF’s communication campaign to create a powerful voice against violence. This included public events, art installations, workshops for journalists and bloggers, and round-table discussions.

UNICEF’s work on generating insights and evidence proved that children face a higher risk of poverty than any other age group and yet, the social protection system failed to ensure their inclusion. Child poverty became a significant topic on the public agenda, and led to the Government’s commitment to halve extreme poverty, which was reflected in the National
Human Rights Action Plan and Georgia’s Socio-Economic Development Strategy. Finally, to address inequities, the research significantly contributed to the development of a better targeted and child-sensitive social protection system.

UNICEF in Georgia partnered with the media to publicise the generated evidence that contributed to the realization of child rights and the promotion of equity and exert public pressure on key decision-makers.

**Partnerships**

Within the framework of the “Year of Protection of the Rights of the Child”, UNICEF Georgia forged a strong alliance with the Parliament, the Prime Minister’s Office, line ministries and governmental agencies to develop specific laws and influence policies to better protect child rights. In his opening speech at the UNICEF Executive Board meeting in early 2014, UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake highly praised the efforts of Georgia’s Parliament in undertaking substantive legislative changes for children. Within this strategic partnership, the preparation of a number of legislative initiatives was supported:

a) A legislative package for the protection of victims of domestic violence (adopted by the Parliament in October 2014);
b) The Law on Early and Preschool Education (registered in Parliament at the end of 2014);
c) The Juvenile Justice Code;
d) Legislative changes concerning the situation of children living and working on the street;
e) The Law on Adoption and Foster Care;
f) Amendments to the Law on Patient’s Rights concerning HIV testing, and;
g) Legal amendments to introduce flour fortification. Most of this legislation is scheduled for adoption during the Parliamentary session in spring 2015.

UNICEF agreed with the World Bank on a shared vision and principles for a social protection system in Georgia that better addresses the needs of the most vulnerable groups through protecting the chronic poor, especially children, preventing families from sliding into poverty, and providing opportunities for better livelihoods.

In partnership with the European Union, UNICEF promoted juvenile justice reform, including the development of a comprehensive Juvenile Justice Code, the introduction of individual sentence planning in the penitentiary and probation system and the diversion and mediation programme. Moreover, the scope of the juvenile justice reform was expanded to encompass all children in contact with the law.

UNICEF also successfully advocated for the inclusion of children’s rights into the Association Agenda between the European Union and the Government. In partnership with the EU, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), support was provided to the preparation of the National Human Rights Action Plan, which resulted in the inclusion of a separate chapter on children’s rights.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

Extensive media pitching, advocacy around specific issues as well as innovations such as ‘Activate Talks’, and engaging artists in public advocacy all contributed to enhanced visibility and a stronger voice for children. The ‘Activate Talks’ focused on children with disabilities and were a truly innovative tool that created a lot of discussion and mobilized the public’s attention. One of the speakers from Georgia, who talked about creative ways of making toys for children,
was featured in the UNICEF State of the World’s Children Report and in local media talk-shows.

The 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC@25) campaign was used to draw attention of decision-makers and the society to the problems of the most vulnerable children in Georgia. A special session at the Parliament was organized with participation of children. Panel discussions with writers and literary workers were held, and essays of Georgian writers on child rights were produced and released online. Famous Georgian singers, including the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, added their voices to imagine a better world for children. Georgian journalists also joined the campaign by dedicating special talk-shows to this initiative or by singing the ‘Imagine’ song live in their programmes. Concerts of the Georgian Philharmonic Orchestra were dedicated to child rights. Through the film festival “We imagine - We change”, students presented their films on child rights. All these events were used to highlight advocacy messages on most vulnerable children. Heightened media attention and advocacy within the CRC@25 and the Year of the Child resulted in a number of important decisions for children such as the introduction of cash benefits for children, increased benefits and services for children with disabilities, the adoption of legislative changes concerning violence against children, and initiation of the law on pre-school education. Media outreach campaigns also included strategies to boost social media platforms, including Facebook.

UNICEF continued a partnership with the Charter of Journalistic Ethics to further enhance the capacity of Georgian media on ethical reporting on children, and jointly established an annual prize for best examples on child-friendly reporting.

UNICEF continued with the nationwide campaign on Violence against Children and an awareness-raising campaign on children living and working on the street to create a powerful voice for children.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

UNICEF Georgia promoted and facilitated cross-border South-South and Triangular Cooperation and knowledge exchange on quality, inclusive education systems, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling, child care reform and ending institutional care for children.

Using lessons learned from Estonia, UNICEF supported a knowledge exchange between officials from Georgian and the Estonian Ministries of Education targeting a more inclusive, quality education system (primary and secondary). As a result, the Government revised the national curriculum for grades one to six and developed teachers’ standards and a pre-service teacher training with four major State Universities. This will provide the foundation for the development of new teaching and learning material as well as teacher training materials.

A regional knowledge exchange between Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan on ‘HIV Paediatric Care, Treatment and Support for Children’ in December was an excellent opportunity for regional collaboration and continued partnership to combat HIV/AIDS amongst children. The UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS, UNICEF Georgia and the Paediatric European Network for the Treatment of AIDS jointly organized this regional workshop. It was highly beneficial for Georgia to host such a significant event. Around 39 Georgian paediatricians, infectious disease and tuberculosis specialists participated in this South-South Cooperation, and contributed to the regional exchange on: (a) diagnosis and clinical presentation of HIV in children; (b) anti-retrovirals and children; (c) HIV disclosure to a child, (d) prevention of mother to child transmission, and; (d) HIV and co-infections.
UNICEF Georgia and UNICEF Tunisia jointly facilitated a South-South partnership on de-institutionalization between the Government of Georgia and Tunisia. A Tunisian delegation composed of representatives of UNICEF Tunisia and the Government visited Georgia from 24 - 29 November 2014, and exchanged experiences and practices around ending the institutional care of children.

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

Following discussions at the 2013 National Conference on Early Child Survival and Development, UNICEF Georgia pursued discussions with the Government and other stakeholders to develop integrated early childhood development services and improving multi-sectoral coordination, which is planned to be structured for the following periods: (a) preconception, prenatal and post-natal period; (b) services for children zero to 36 months of age; (c) services from 37 months to 60 or 72 months of age and; (d) services from six to eight years of age. Integrated case management for vulnerable children will encompass the ability of the system to identify and refer children vulnerable due to such issues as poverty, developmental delays or neglect, who will then receive additional support. Activities were initiated to strengthen the identification of vulnerable children through the re-establishment of child growth and development monitoring based on a home visiting approach. The preparatory work was completed to pilot this approach in two Georgian regions, including training of primary health care nurses and the revision of the respective state programmes.

An appropriate system of services for children living and working on the streets was developed through intensive cross-sectorial consultations and cooperation between various ministries including the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

UNICEF co-chaired an inter-sectorial coordination mechanism related to juvenile crime prevention, diversion and social work in the probation system.

As part of the revision of the Targeted Social Assistance programme, a child assessment screening instrument is being introduced that will be used by the social agents to identify potential cases of child rights violations and refer them to the respective agencies, including social workers, doctors and the police.

**Service Delivery**

While in the middle-income country context of Georgia service delivery is not a primary intervention strategy anymore, it has been used to model and pilot new types of services and support conflict-affected regions.

UNICEF supported the development of a Government mechanism to support children living and working on the streets, in which NGOs (World Vision, Caritas Georgia and Child and Environment) provide 400 children with appropriate, individually tailored services. The initiative is a two year project being implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs in partnership with UNICEF and funded by the EU. Such a mechanism did not exist before. It identifies children living and working on the streets, offers them immediate support and protection, and works with children and their families with the ultimate goal of integrating them into social and child protection services. Within this context, three types of services were developed: mobile teams, day care centres with a crisis intervention unit, and transitional 24-hours services. All staff were trained. The operating costs of the services are covered by the
Government.

In order to respond to the need of most-at-risk adolescents and youth to undertake voluntary and confidential testing and counselling on HIV, UNICEF supported five non-state actors operating in five cities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Telavi, Rustavi, Zugdidi and Batumi) to improve their testing and counselling services and prevention case management. As a result, around 5400 youth and adolescents have tested their HIV status, and more than twice as many received counselling services and were able to access medical, psychological and social services impacting their HIV-related risk-taking behaviour.

In Abkhazia, UNICEF’s work continued to have a major component in support of service delivery. This assistance was provided in the form of community support and capacity building for medical professionals, teachers and para-social workers. UNICEF through its partner, World Vision, provided 246 children with disabilities and their parents with basic services (life-skills development, speech therapy, physiotherapy, psychological counselling) through three Child Development Centres. In addition, 450 children in returnee and remote rural areas received pre-school education services in 46 pre-school groups.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

The Government of Georgia finalized and submitted its fourth periodic report to the UNCRC in December 2014. In response to previous observations, a child rights coordination mechanism was established as part of the Human Rights Council under the Prime Minister.

UNICEF Georgia provided technical advice to the development of the National Human Rights Action Plan (2014-2015), which includes a chapter on child rights. The Action Plan is based on the National Human Rights Strategy (2014-2017) adopted by the Parliament of Georgia and has been an important basis for UNICEF programming and cooperation with its partners. With UNICEF support, the Child Rights Centre of the Public Defender's Office (PDO) developed a three year strategy for child rights' monitoring. The new strategy will help the PDO to monitor the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan as well as the Anti-Discrimination Law.

The Parliament of Georgia declared 2014 as the “Year of Protection of the Rights of the Child” and in partnership with UNICEF committed to develop specific laws and influence policies to ensure children’s rights are fully respected, protected and fulfilled. The following eight legislative initiatives were prepared and partly already introduced into Parliament: a) a legislative package for the protection of victims of domestic violence (adopted by the Parliament in October 2014); b) the Law on Early and Preschool Education (registered in Parliament at the end of 2014); c) the Juvenile Justice Code; (d) legislative changes concerning the situation of children living and working on the street; (e) the Law on Adoption and Foster Care; (f) amendments to the Law on Patient’s Rights concerning HIV testing, and; (g) legal amendments to introduce flour fortification. Most of this legislation is scheduled for adoption during the Parliamentary session in spring 2015.

UNICEF Georgia continued mainstreaming human rights principles into all supported programmes and projects, and closely cooperated with national and international partners to achieve progress in the realization of children’s rights in Georgia.
Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

UNICEF Georgia is a part of the UN Gender Theme Group that continuously works to strengthen coordinated action of UN agencies as well as donors, international NGOs and local foundations towards greater gender equality and women’s empowerment. The group regularly meets and discusses ways to better promote gender equality in Georgia.

UNICEF played an important role in increasing the accountability of the Government to implement Georgia’s national and international commitments in the area of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Political will was mobilized through a series of meetings and high-profile work conducted together with UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Public Defender’s Office for addressing the issue of early marriages in Georgia.

As a result of the advocacy of members of the UN Gender Theme Group, the Government of Georgia signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in June 2014. The legally-binding instrument, commonly referred to as the "Istanbul Convention", obliges governments who have signed on to take concrete steps to counter all forms of violence against women, from domestic violence to female genital mutilation. In October, a series of legal amendments prepared with the support of UN Women and UNICEF Georgia were introduced into Parliament in order to harmonize national legislation with the Istanbul Convention.

Environmental Sustainability

Over the past years, 70 percent of the territory of Georgia has been affected and exposed to natural hazards of hydro-meteorological and geological origin. The risk of seasonal flooding and subsequent landslides in Western Georgia, and the risk of earthquakes in the Northern region may affect communities, in particular most vulnerable populations, particularly children.

In this context, the Government of Georgia made a commitment at the 2013 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction to strengthen the national disaster risk management system, improve preparedness and coping capacities on local and central levels, and ensure disaster risk reduction is integrated across development strategies, plans and frameworks. In 2014, UNICEF along with other key stakeholders supported the Government to undertake a Disaster Risk Reduction Capacity Assessment, and to develop a draft National Plan of Action for Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Reduction taking climate change and other vulnerabilities into account.

The three-year programme on Youth Participation and Development in the conflict-affected regions of Shida Kartli, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Abkhazia continued to facilitate youth engagement and social capital development by engaging youth groups in environmental protection activities and in reducing threats to the environment. The programme also contributes to increasing the knowledge and understanding of youth on the environment and associated challenges, such as human health, ecosystems, as well as on developing skills to address these issues.

Finally, UNICEF Georgia reduced its environmental footprint through the optimization of office space and subsequent closing of the separately rented office.
In 2014, the UNICEF Georgia Annual Management Plan was prepared through a participatory and comprehensive process with involvement of all Tbilisi Office and the Sukhumi Zone Office staff. Annual objectives were aligned with the Country Programme needs and the current country specific context and environment. Regular Country Management Team (CMT) meetings were convened to identify and discuss office needs related to programme and operations management, focusing primarily on programmatic priorities. Management indicators focusing on budget utilization, direct cash transfers (DCTs), donor reporting, performance appraisal and audit issues were part of CMT discussions. The CMT reviewed the implications of the efficiency and effectiveness initiative in relation to the impact of the Global Shared Services Centre on the office.

UNICEF Georgia was audited in 2013, and the audit recommendations were closely followed up throughout 2014. The CMT closely monitored the implementation of the action plan agreed with the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigation (OIAI). By the end of 2014, the office fully implemented all seven of the audit recommendations.

In 2014, the office conducted the emergency risk assessment in a programme result-oriented manner, and closely linked each programme priority with respective risks. The summary of the country risk profile was placed on the UNICEF Enterprise Risk Management Performance Management portal.

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was updated several times throughout the year to reflect staff and resource changes. The office was not able to undertake any BCP test and simulation exercises in 2014, and aims to undertake one in the first quarter of 2015. Procurement of the emergency telecommunication equipment required for the BCP was initiated in November, and the equipment is scheduled to arrive in the first quarter of 2015.

Communication facilities between the country office and the zone office were enhanced.

Programme management performance was strengthened by setting up a system of quarterly coordination meetings with the Prime Minister’s Office and concerned line ministries to systematically follow up on the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review, which was held earlier during the year.

The closure of the second office in Tbilisi and co-location of all staff in one office facilitated enhanced teamwork across sections.

By the end of 2014, UNICEF Georgia achieved full 100 percent Regular Resources (RR) and Other Resources budget utilization no outstanding DCTs over six months.

The action plan agreed with OIAI following the 2013 audit exercise was fully implemented. By November 2014, the office reported to OIAI that out of seven recommendations the office had fully implemented five. The remaining two actions were completed in December 2014.

Efficiency gains were achieved by: (a) renovating and optimizing the use of the Government-provided office space and the subsequent closure of the second, commercially-rented office; (b) the reduction of one RR-funded position in the operations section; (c) increased outsourcing of non-core activities through Long Term Arrangements (LTAs), and; (d) further optimization of
business processes, including deploying Vision to the field office.

The Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), as one of the important financial management tools, was one of the 2014 priorities for the office, and a number of steps were taken to strengthen practices in this respect. The Operations Manager participated in the regional HACT training where the newly released HACT Framework was discussed. Subsequently, all staff members were trained on new approaches and policies outlined in new HACT framework. UNICEF, on behalf of the UN Country Team, contracted a consultant to undertake an assessment of Georgia’s Public Financial Management systems, which was finalized and endorsed by the UN Country Team. The office also adjusted the Micro Assessment and Assurance Plan as per the new HACT framework. The office successfully continued using the services of a local audit firm which assisted in Micro Assessment and Assurance activities related to HACT. UNICEF Georgia fully utilized the funds provided by the Regional Office for HACT-related activities.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

UNICEF Georgia submitted all fifteen required donor reports on time and met the quality standards of donor reporting.

By the end of 2014, the office had mobilized 75 per cent of Other Resources as per 2011-2015 country programme ceiling, with additional estimated US$3 million in the pipeline and expected in spring 2015.

The systematic monitoring of utilization of financial resources facilitated guaranteeing appropriate use and full absorption of available resources. Sets of reports from VISION Transaction Management and VISION Performance together with manually-produced user-friendly reports of monitoring the implementation of financial management indicators were shared with the team on a monthly basis during the meetings of the CMT and the Programme Management Team.

UNICEF Georgia regularly updated its fundraising strategy. The EU, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), as well as the Government of Estonia are major donors and strategic partners to advocate for the protection of the rights of children. The office worked with UNICEF National Committees (Luxemburg and Poland) to keep them informed on the use of their donations and new funding opportunities. The office further strengthened its cooperation with other UN Agencies through the development of UN Joint Programmes on the Protection of Human Rights and on Access to Justice towards which the European Union pledged funding.

**Evaluation**

The office had an up-to-date Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP), which was used to plan and implement evaluations in key programmes, strategies and management areas. The Social Policy Specialist acted as a Monitoring and Evaluation Focal Point. The limited capacity within the office and within the country for undertaking comprehensive quality evaluations still remains a challenge for the team.

In 2013, Georgia was part of the multi-country evaluation within the UNICEF Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda 1 ‘Children’s right to be raised in a family environment’. By investing additional financial resources, the office carried out a Georgia-specific analysis within the RKLA 1 evaluation on the child care reform. The findings of the evaluations showed that as
a result of the reform, children’s living conditions had positively changed, however it was not equally inclusive for all vulnerable groups of children at each stage of the reform. The office is in the process of incorporating comments from UNIVERSALIA, the external evaluation quality control partner. As soon as the report is cleared, the office will start developing the management response.

UNICEF Georgia also participated in the multi-country evaluation within RKLA 2 on the Impact of Juvenile Justice System Reforms on children in conflict with the law. The evaluation showed the positive outcomes concerning decrease in use of detention and increased use of diversion. The evaluation team was unable to assess the trend in the length of pre-trial detention due to the lack of sufficient data. The management response is being prepared by the Regional Office.

The office has been following up on the recommendations of the assessment of the deinstitutionalization process, carried out in 2011, and documented the updated management response.

In preparation of the new country programme, a Situation Analysis was undertaken at the end of 2014.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

UNICEF Georgia, through its annual management exercise, continued the revision and optimization of its work processes started in 2013. The aim was to elaborate a more simplified approach to existing practices and to eliminate obsolete, repeated and no-value-added procedures and to develop more time-effective processes which will allow all staff (especially professional) to redirect their focus from transactional functions onto substantive work. This included: (a) the removal of cumulative limit of US$2,500 on small value purchases for LTA suppliers; (b) the deployment of Vision to the field office in Sokhumi; (c) opening of a bank account in Sokhumi; (c) VISION processing of petty cash in Sokhumi, and; (d) salary payments to field office staff directly from UNICEF headquarters. These measures have reduced the required staff time, the transactional workload and reduced overtime.

The outsourcing of several frequently-used low level services increased from services valued US$55,000 in 2013 to US$195,000 in 2014.

Efficiency gains were realized as a result of office space renovation. The optimized space allowed to accommodate all staff in the Government-provided premises and the closure of the annex office, which had been commercially leased. The annual saving amounts to approximately US$24,000 for rent, utilities and security services.

The operations unit was reduced by one RR-funded post.

**Supply Management**

In line with the general nature of UNICEF’s operations in a middle-income country, supply procurement was significantly reduced. Programme supply in 2014 was valued at US$21,500 only (mostly publications and printing) versus US$303,000 in 2013. Operational supply reduced from US$94,000 to US$58,000. Consequently, the office abolished the post of Admin/Supply Assistant. Most functions of the Supply Assistant were shifted to the Information Technology Assistant, and some functions to Programme Assistants.
The office continued providing procurement services as per the Memorandum of Understanding for the provision of procurement services signed between the Government of Georgia and UNICEF Supply Division for the delivery of vaccines, safety injection supplies and cold chain equipment with the total cost of US$1,320,114. The Government of Georgia appreciated UNICEF’s support, and apart from the routine vaccines requested support in procurement of non-routine vaccines as well, including the rabies vaccines and immunoglobulin.

**Security for Staff and Premises**

In February 2014, UNICEG Georgia received a fund allocation for premises and security improvements of US$35,500. The major part of this amount was committed and reserved for the cost-sharing of security upgrades of the UN House in 2015 which will be undertaken by UNDP. The remaining funds were spent on BCP-related preparedness (for details see section on Information and Communication Technology) and on First Aid training of all staff, which was conducted in December.

During the renovation and optimization works of the office space, a number of security related improvements were undertaken, including the replacement of old electrical wiring, which was a major fire security risk. In this respect, substantial Capital Asset Fund resources were used to remove and completely replace the entire system of old wiring for proper distribution and balancing of load.

Staff safety was further improved by abolishing the second, commercially-rented office facility and moving the respective staff to the main office in the UN Common Premises.

Throughout the year UNICEF cost-shared a number of security related upgrade works in the common premises, undertaken by UNDP, including outside perimeter lightening, entrance door replacement and arrangement of electronic door-pass/lock system and renewal of fire alarm systems.

Fire extinguishers were renewed in all UNICEF locations: the country office, basement storage, warehouse, the zone office, as well as in vehicles.

All staff security audit recommendations related to the Sokhumi Zone Office were successfully implemented.

UNICEF security staff and wardens undertook VHF radio training organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) during the second quarter.

The warden system was fully operational, and warden zones were regularly updated. Warden zone checking visits were undertaken quarterly, and the average total circulation time was two hours per warden zone.

**Human Resources**

While there were no significant changes in the office structure in 2014, a number of appointments were not extended due to reduction in Other Resources funding, including the Family and Child Wellbeing Officer (National Officer-C, 66610); Health and Nutrition Officer (National Officer-B, 42042) and Programme Assistant-Health (General Service-6, 68295). Also due to funding gaps, the office was unable to extend Temporary Assignment post of the Project Officer Disaster Risk Reduction (National Officer-A, 81971). The next phase funding for this post arrived by last quarter of the year and recruitment is ongoing.
Due to the significant reduction of the supply component, the RR-funded post of Admin/Supply Assistant (General Service-6, 22886) was abolished effective July 2014. However, at the request of the Ukraine country office, the post abolishment was deferred until March 2015, in order to deploy the respective staff member to the Ukraine office in response to the crisis in the country. The funding of the Admin/Supply post is being provided by the UNICEF Ukraine.

The most recent Global Staff Survey was carried out in November 2014 and the results are not available yet for any follow up. At the same time, the CEE/CIS region carried out a regional staff survey. The Georgia-specific results of the regional survey were discussed at the Joint Consultative Committee meeting in October. The office is addressing the identified issues.

Regular Performance Appraisal System (PAS) discussions took place between staff and their supervisors.

The following activities were accomplished during 2014 in order to increase the knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention among youth: UNICEF, together with the partner national NGOs, observed the World AIDS Day in Tbilisi. Peer educators distributed information materials to Tbilisi Universities. Free-of-charge HIV testing and counselling was offered to youth at Tbilisi Medical University. Youth from UNICEF staff families participated in the event to increase their knowledge on HIV/AIDS and its prevention.

A new stock of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits was received with changed composition. A workshop was organized in UNICEF to discuss the PEP kits usage, its new composition, eligibility and reporting. The list of the UN custodians in Tbilisi and field offices, also guidance of use of PEP Kits, have been provided to UNICEF personnel.

There are two active Peer Support Volunteers (PSVs) in the office. All staff are aware of availability of staff counselling in UNICEF and use it as needed. There were a number of work-related cases the PSVs addressed this year. In addition, there was one health-related case when PSVs directed staff to the appropriate professional health service. Both PSVs had several meetings, discussions and consultations with concerned staff, and occasionally provided mediations between supervisors and senior management.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

New standards and technological improvements were introduced during the last year. UNICEF Georgia was one of the pilot countries which implemented the Office 365 platform and some other new information technology initiatives. Email migration was done from Lotus to Outlook. All data including archives were successfully converted into Outlook format.

Upon CMT request, the operations team, with assistance from the UNICEF Division of Information Technology Solutions and Services created the Georgia Team Site. It became one of the major tools for planning and information sharing within the office, including CMT reporting and follow-up process on the Team Site. The new platform allowed all staff to work from any location with their own devices. As a result, the quality of coordination and information sharing improved. Particularly noteworthy is the efficiency increase for the zone office staff located in Sokhumi.

The office implemented a number of programme activities with an information and communication technology (ICT) component, including “Electronic solutions for the Registries”,
Emergency preparedness and readiness was a priority for office’s ICT operation and a key aspect for BCP preparedness. As part of the business continuity plan the office purchased from security funds a number of ICT equipment: BGAN satellite device to replace old equipment, two satellite phones (one for the country Office and one for the Zone Office) with repeaters to allow in-building operation, and two laptops for alternate office location. In addition, within the BCP scope from the same funding the office replaced old internet USB wireless EVDO modems with more advanced equipment. These internet access modules can be used in emergency to access office network from home or other remote locations.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 By the end of 2015, more children and mothers benefit from quality basic and alternative social services (including integrated and decentralized services) that address targeted disparities.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Following social policy advocacy and capacity development interventions, UNICEF contributed to significant results for the delivery of social services for children in Georgia during the year in review. There was a marked reduction in the rate of extremely poor children from nine per cent in 2013 to around six per cent; which is expected to be further halved after the introduction of a revised more child-sensitive targeted social assistance system. UNICEF advocated and advised on the new methodology which significantly improves the targeting of poor children and introduces a child benefit to 40 per cent of children.

While maternal micro-nutrient supplementation was introduced for all pregnant women and a principle agreement was reached on the introduction of flour fortification (subject to a further survey of the level of iron deficiency), progress on reducing child mortality needs to be accelerated. The current under five mortality rate is 13 deaths per 1,000 live births. In pursuance of system-based MCH approaches, the introduction of home visiting and the regionalization of perinatal care started in two pilot regions (Imereti, Racha-Lechkumi). The reform of the MCH surveillance system was initiated.

With UNICEF support, the new Law on Early and Pre-school Education was prepared and introduced into Parliament, which once it comes into effect will establish compulsory school readiness for all five-year old children. A National Preschool Education Policy and Strategic Plan were developed, the status of pre-school teachers was upgraded, and pre-school curriculum and pre-service training programmes are being developed. The availability of pre-school facilities remains a challenge and has been prioritized in the regional development plans.

After nearly a decade of UNICEF-supported Child Care Reform, significant progress was made to end institutional care and to ensure a family environment for every child. The number of children growing up in institutions decreased remarkably from 4,600 in 2005 to 88 in 2014, with
yet another large scale institution for children with disabilities closed down during the year. However, children with disabilities still comprise the majority of children living in the last remaining state-run institutions. That over 40 per cent of the Georgian public continues to stigmatize children with disabilities underscores the broader societal challenges that face effective policy reform and implementation. A Law on Adoption and Foster Care and a Government programme on home care for children with disabilities is under development.

Significant progress in supporting the juvenile justice reform in Georgia was also noteworthy, with the development of the Juvenile Justice Code covering all children in contact with the law. Pending submission to the Parliament in the spring of 2015, the Code is fully compliant with international standards and brings a wide range of alternative measures to detention, the creation of a child-friendly environment, and a specialization of justice professionals working with children to the country.

UNICEF helped to protect children from violence as a result of the revision of 10 different laws adopted by Parliament in October 2014, which widened the definition of violence to encompass neglect, introduced mandatory reporting of cases of violence against children by professionals working with children; and prohibited corporal punishment in family settings.

The resignation of the de-facto President of Abkhazia and subsequent elections stalled UNICEF’s discussions with the de-facto authorities to transform its engagement from a predominately emergency modality towards a strategy with longer-term approaches targeting system change. Hence, UNICEF’s work continued to have a major component in support of service delivery. This was provided in the form of community support and capacity building for medical professionals, teachers and para-social workers. UNICEF in partnership with World Vision, provided 246 children with disabilities and their parents with basic services (life-skills development, speech therapy, physiotherapy, psychological counselling) through three Child Development Centres; and 450 children in returnee and remote rural areas received pre-school education services in 46 pre-school groups. All staff of three Child Development Centres, and pre-school teachers were trained. Furthermore, UNICEF strengthened the quality of health services through training sessions for 200 medical professionals.

UNICEF worked on a more systematic collection of still missing information about the situation of children in Abkhazia through undertaking preparations for a household welfare monitoring survey, a child protection assessment/mapping and an assessment of the education system. The international community remains with no access to the Tskinvali / South Ossetia region, with the situation of children unmonitored.

OUTPUT 1 By 2015, 50 per cent of poorest municipalities ensure pre-schools provide inclusive and quality education in line with national standards.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A Child’s Right to an Inclusive Quality Education:

Early Learning and School Readiness: According to Welfare Monitoring Survey, the preschool enrolment reached 58 per cent in 2013 versus 46 per cent in 2012. In 2014 the Parliament of Georgia, with UNICEF’s technical assistance, developed a Law on Early and Preschool Education (EPE), which was registered for hearing by the Parliament during the fall session in 2014 (Strategic Plan (SP) Outcome 5, RKLA 3). The law will enable increasing the access to and quality of services that are essential for children’s improved school readiness, transition and learning achievements in lower grades of primary schools. The implementation of
the law will be guided by the EPE Strategy and Action Plan, which are currently under development by the Government with UNICEF’s direct involvement in collaboration with Open Society Foundation, World Vision, academia and other partners. The document will be completed by June 2015.

Based on bottlenecks identified through the 10 determinant analysis, with UNICEF’s direct guidance, the Ministry of Education and Science initiated the implementation of two new priorities aiming at developing: a) a first-ever national curricular for compulsory preschool education of five year old children, and; b) a fully-fledged university programme for pre- and in-service training of preschool teachers. The course will provide the foundation for the development of a detailed training programme in 2015 by academia institutions.

**Including All Children in Quality Learning:** UNICEF continued supporting the Government of Georgia in improving access to and quality of primary and secondary education for all children (RKLA 4). According to the Programme for International Student Assessment/PISA Plus Report of 2009, two-thirds of all 15-year-olds are not proficient in reading, mathematics and science in Georgia. Hence, UNICEF provided technical assistance and guidance to the MoES and the Teachers Professional Development Centre in the revision of teachers’ standards and professional development schemes in order to support teachers to understand the standards and improve performance in the best interest of learners in schools. With UNICEF together with Estonian experts, MoES revised the national curricula for the primary grades one to six. Revision of the curricula for grades seven to 12 will be conducted in 2015.

**A Child’s Right to Clean Water, Safe Sanitation and Hygiene:** With regard to the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools the following interventions were accomplished (SP Outcome 3, RKLA 6) in coordination with the MoES and the Agency for Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development:

- a) Two national comprehensive water, sanitation and hygiene assessments of preschools and schools of Georgia were undertaken;
- b) National technical regulations for WASH in schools have been developed and submitted for approval by the MoLHSA;
- c) The monitoring framework of WASH in schools was developed and tested for integration into the Education Management Information System;
- d) The teachers’ guide and students’ text-book on WASH for grades one to four were developed, and;
- e) 150 master trainers were equipped with knowledge and skills to train other teachers in hygiene teaching.

Furthermore, preparations for WASH in pre-schools were initiated, including the national technical regulations, integration into EMIS, development of training materials and capacity building, and will continue to be part of the Government/UNICEF agenda in 2015/16.

In **Abkhazia**, UNICEF promoted access to quality education in returnee and remote rural areas. 450 children benefitted from these services in 46 pre-school groups (RKLA 3). For this purpose, the professional knowledge and skills of 80 teachers were strengthened through additional training. UNICEF also continued to promote youth development and participation (RKLA 10) among more than 2,000 youth of various ethnic communities through educational and recreational activities in 25 youth groups of Social Community Centres) and 18 youth clubs in schools. To promote the inclusion of children with disabilities into general education, UNICEF and World Vision provided 1,500 pupils, teachers and community members with disability sensitization training and 100 teachers with training on inclusive education.
OUTPUT 2 By 2015, maternal and child health services have resourced programmes which address gaps in quality and access of services and gaps in household knowledge of child birth and parenting.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A Child’s Right to Health: In line with “A Promise Renewed”, the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs and UNICEF collaborated to address gaps in access to health services that have resulted in disparities in child mortality, immunization and nutrition.

MoLHSA acknowledged the current poor status of primary health care services for mothers and children, and decided to embark on the key reform concerning the child growth and development (SP 1, 4; RKLA 6, 7). Before initiating a full-scale reform, in 2014 the goal was to develop a model for home-visiting that best suits Georgia’s context, and then introduce a pilot in two regions, which will serve as a basis for scaling up of the model country-wide in 2015/16. In order to build capacity for the implementation of the pilot, UNICEF trained all rural PHC nurses (total 375) from the selected pilot regions on the home visiting approach using innovative distance-learning methods.

UNICEF was also involved in the process of strengthening the MCH Management Information System in order to enhance the government capacity in stewardship and administration of MCH services (SP Outcome 1; RKLA 6). Poor quality and incompleteness of MCH data emerged as the key barrier for proper epidemiological analyses. Therefore, in 2014 the Government requested UNICEF to support in establishing the following data collection instruments: (a) Medical Birth Registry- a national health registry containing information about all births in Georgia; b) Register of Pregnancy Termination - a national health registry containing information about all miscarriages and processed requests for pregnancy termination, and; (c) Birth Defect Registry. UNICEF collaborated with the University of Tromso to develop the registry system based on the Norwegian best practice example. The three new registries will become functional in 2016.

UNICEF in collaboration with the USAID is supporting the Government in regionalization of perinatal care: that is, the grading of maternities by levels of care for pregnant women, mothers and newborns (SP Outcome 1). In 2014, the criteria for determination of the levels of perinatal care were developed and adopted. Currently, maternity houses across the country are assessing and rating their levels of care into an online system; the process has been monitored by the Government and will be finalized by March 2015. The regionalization process will then be piloted in two regions of Georgia (Imereti, Racha-Lechkumi) and scaled up to the entire country during in 2015, in partnership with UNICEF.

Half a million Georgians, mainly women and children, suffer from malnutrition. UNICEF recommended to the Government to focus on periods of highest risk (pregnancy, maternity, infancy), which was partially addressed by the Government in 2014. Mothers in Georgia are now getting free access to folic acid and the medicines to treat iron deficiency anaemia. UNICEF will be advocating for micronutrient supplementation for six to 24 month old children, intensive breastfeeding promotion and nutrition education as part of its 2015 agenda. Furthermore, UNICEF lobbied for the enforcement of mandatory national flour fortification, and worked with Parliament to initiate the amendment of the fortification law. The process is targeted to be finalized in Parliament by end of the 2015 spring session.

An Adolescent Right to Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Second Chances: In 2014,
UNICEF strengthened the capacity of outreach workers from key non-state actors in undertaking HIV/AIDS testing and counselling services for most at risk adolescents (MARA), and introduced an ICATT on HIV/AIDS testing/counselling to Georgia’s context (SP Outcome 7, RKLA 10). In parallel, UNICEF worked to ensure outreach sessions for MARA: with over 20,000 youth having been reached, of whom 5,036 were tested on their HIV status.

Around 60 peer educators were trained on drug abuse and healthy lifestyles. Large-scale public events were undertaken in coordination with various stakeholders. Peer educators are actively working for raising youth awareness on drug abuse through outreach sessions in universities, public schools and summer camps organized in Anaklia by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. Overall, the peer educators trained 5,000 college students, 1,872 secondary school students aged 14-18 and 144 youth leaders.

In Abkhazia, the UNICEF Sukhumi zonal office continued to promote access to quality health services through training of medical professionals and through health promotion. UNICEF conducted a monitoring on perinatal care and an evaluation of antenatal care and developed a Neonatal Care Development Strategy. Capacity building included training for about 200 medical professionals on perinatal and antenatal care, general paediatrics, obstetrics, gynaecology, intensive care, management of chronic diseases, as well as new pneumococcal vaccines. In support of immunization, UNICEF continued to strengthen the use by medical professionals of the electronic immunization database including over 52,000 children, adolescents and young adults. Additionally, about 5,000 pupils, teachers, parents and community members received knowledge and skills on WASH in schools and immunization through various UNICEF health promotion activities.

**OUTPUT 3** By 2015, Government strengthens prevention of institutionalization and social work response mechanisms to protect vulnerable children from abuse, violence, exploitation and loss of family care.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

**A Child’s Right to a Supportive and Caring Family Environment** (RKLA1): Georgia’s Human Rights Action Plan 2014-2015 demonstrates the Government’s commitment to prevent the placement of children in institutions, and to develop/expand family support services to avoid unnecessary family separation. UNICEF agreed with MoLHSA and the Public Defender’s Office the need for a more systematic and quality monitoring on the situation of children in child care institutions and other alternative care services.

Following Georgia’s ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF issued a systematic review and recommendations to align current national laws and policies on children with international standards. UNICEF will support the Government to develop a package of legal changes to be presented to the Parliament in 2015.

With UNICEF’s support, a new version of the Child Care Referral Procedures – a major instrument to address violence against children - was finalized and the target is for the Government to adopt these in the first half of 2015. Legislative changes to prevent and effectively respond to domestic violence against children and adults were passed by the Parliament and came into force in November. Amongst other, the legislative changes prohibit corporal punishment within the family setting and introduce mandatory reporting on cases of violence against children. In parallel, UNICEF supported MoLSA to train psychologists and social workers to identify and address cases of violence against children.
The Government initiated a programme to address the issue of children living and/or working on the streets. With UNICEF’s support, services were developed in Tbilisi and Rustavi, and will be extended to Kutaisi during the first months of 2015.

**A Child’s Right to Access to Justice** (RKLA 2): A legal framework for juveniles is in the process of development: the draft Juvenile Justice Code was finalized and will be submitted to the Parliament during the spring session of 2015. At the end of 2014 there were 50 convicted juveniles. Individual approach and sentence planning programme for children are functional in the penitentiary, probation systems, and in pre-trial detention facilities for juveniles. The number of social workers in the justice system has been increased: there are now 40 trained social workers and fifteen psychologists in place, both in penitentiary and probation offices across the country. Diversion and mediation is functional throughout the country and was expanded to cover grave crimes. In 2014, 203 juveniles were successfully diverted away from the criminal justice system.

UNICEF supported comprehensive specialization training for professionals in the justice system for children. A total of 35 prosecutors, 38 Legal Aid Service lawyers and 28 judges were assigned/identified, and the judges trained with UNICEF support on access to justice for children, including on how to interview child victims and witnesses of crime. A decision to introduce specialization of police was made by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and a model for specialization of police will be developed in 2015.

In Abkhazia, UNICEF focused on setting up and reinforcing community-based services for children with disabilities (RKLA 1). In partnership with World Vision, 246 children living with disabilities and their parents were provided with services (early life-skills development and education, speech therapy, physiotherapy and psychological counselling) by three Child Development Centres. The Child Development Centres services were further strengthened through additional capacity building for their staff. UNICEF and World Vision also trained 53 rural nurses and six doctors for early identification of disabilities. UNICEF furthermore trained 15 psychologists and pedagogues of local NGOs in methodologies to promote good parenting practices (RKLA 1, 3, 7).

**OUTCOME 2** By the end of 2015, Georgia advances the fulfilment of key outstanding Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) observations.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The Government of Georgia finalized and submitted its fourth periodic report to the UNCRC in December 2014. In response to previous observations, a child rights coordination mechanism was established as part of the Human Rights Council under the Prime Minister.

Within the framework of the “Year of Protection of the Rights of the Child”, UNICEF advocacy efforts for advancing child rights in Georgia. This was conducted in a strong alliance with the Parliament, the Prime Minister’s Office and several line ministries to develop specific laws and influence policies to better protect child rights. Extensive media pitching, advocacy around specific issues, and engaging artists in public advocacy, contributed to enhanced visibility and a stronger voice for children. In particular, the CRC@25 campaign was used to draw attention of decision-makers and the wide public towards most vulnerable children in Georgia.

The number of children living in extreme poverty (below US$1.25 per day) is projected to fall by 50,000 from nine per cent in 2013 to 3.3 per cent as the result of increased social benefits and the UNICEF-supported revision of the Targeted Social Assistance scheme, which was approved
UNICEF advocated for and advised on the new methodology which significantly improves the targeting of poor children and introduces a child benefit to 40 per cent of children (RKLA 8).

UNICEF successfully advocated for the inclusion of children’s rights into the Association Agenda between the European Union and the Government. In partnership with the EU, OHCHR and UNDP, support was provided to the preparation of the National Human Rights Action Plan, which resulted in the inclusion of a separate chapter on children’s rights.

In 2014, UNICEF Georgia continued to generate evidence and knowledge influencing key policy makers to promote social policies addressing critical equity gaps for child rights. This was achieved in close partnership with governmental and nongovernmental counterparts as well as National Statistics Office and statistics departments of line ministries. The office closely partnered with the media to promote the generated evidence that contributed to the realization of child rights and the promotion of equity and exert public pressure on key decision-makers.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, Ministries access and use integrated and disaggregated data for policy formulation, budgeting and monitoring of social exclusion and child poverty.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A Child’s Right to Social Protection (SP Outcome 7, RKLA 8): In 2014 UNICEF continued to advocate for evidence-based decision making in the social sector, which entailed working closely with governmental and nongovernmental counterparts, as well as National Statistics Office and statistics departments of line ministries. UNICEF continuously generated knowledge and information (Welfare Monitoring Survey, Discussion Paper on Child Poverty) influencing key policy-makers to design a child-cantered social protection system.

UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs and the Social Service Agency and since then has been closely working with the Government on the reform of the Social Protection system in Georgia. UNICEF assisted in the development of a new methodology for identifying poor households and a new benefits scheme, which includes child benefits. The methodology was approved by the Government on 31 December, and the benefits scheme will become operational during the first half of 2015. As a result of strong advocacy, the issue of child poverty and the necessity of up-to-date data on children also became part of the National Human Rights Action Plan.

In the Georgia context, UNICEF and the World Bank joined forces and embarked on an innovative partnership to promote a social protection system that protects the chronic poor, especially children, prevents families from sliding into poverty, and provides opportunities for better livelihoods. A joint World Bank-UNICEF Statement on Social Protection in Georgia incorporating the mentioned principles was issued in December.

UNICEF, as an important contributor to knowledge and data generation for child-cantered policies, started the development of an interactive online platform, which will make data sets for secondary analysis available to the wider public.

OUTPUT 2 By the end of 2015, child rights monitoring bodies and civil society organisations analyse, advocate and participate in policy dialogue on legislation and budgeting for children, including advancement of targeted CRC observations.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
The Government of Georgia finalized and submitted its fourth periodic report to the UNCRC in December 2014.

Within the framework of the “Year of the Protection of the Rights of the Child”, UNICEF undertook advocacy for eight legislative initiatives: a) legislative package for the protection of victims of domestic violence (adopted by the Parliament in October 2014); b) the Law on Early and Preschool Education (registered in Parliament at the end of 2014); c) the Juvenile Justice Code; (d) legislative changes concerning the situation of children living and working on the street; (e) the Law on Adoption and Foster Care; (f) amendments to the Law on Patient’s Rights concerning HIV testing, and; (g) legal amendments to introduce flour fortification. Most of this legislation is scheduled for adoption during the Parliamentary session in spring 2015.

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the CRC, Parliament held a session to review progress on children’s rights throughout the year. Children from various regions participated and voiced their concerns. Public discussions at the Frontline Media Club were organized on the issues of disabled children, inclusive education, child poverty, child mortality and children living and working on the streets.

With UNICEF support, the Child Rights Centre of the Public Defender's Office developed a three year strategy for child rights’ monitoring. The strategy was presented at a joint advocacy meeting dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the CRC. The new strategy will help the PDO to monitor the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan as well as the Anti-Discrimination Law.

The Charter of Journalistic Ethics and UNICEF established an annual prize to reveal the best examples of ethical and in-depth reporting. The prize will be awarded to the best journalistic work in every December.

OUTCOME 3 Cross Sectoral

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Cross-sectoral costs covered the recurrent costs for activities not directly attributable to one programme, such as travel and equipment and salaries for staff performing cross-cutting functions, external relations and the country programme administration.

OUTPUT 1 External Communication

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Extensive media pitching, advocacy around specific issues, and engaging artists in public advocacy, contributed to enhanced visibility and a stronger voice for children.

The CRC@25 campaign was used to draw attention of decision-makers and the wide public towards most vulnerable children in Georgia. A special session in Parliament was held, with the participation of children and youth. Children from different regions of Georgia presented their views on the various issues of their concern. Panel discussions with writers and literary workers were held and essays of Georgian writers on child rights were produced and released on the internet and through social media. Famous Georgian singers, including the UNICEF Ambassador, added their voices to imagine a better world for children. Georgian journalists also joined the campaign by dedicating special talk-shows to this initiative or by singing the ‘Imagine’ song live in their programmes. Concerts of the Georgian Philharmonic Orchestra performing
masterpieces from the world’s famous composers were dedicated to child rights. Through the film festival “We imagine - We change”, students presented their films on child rights. Ten short videos about CRC@25 were developed and disseminated. Stories of 25 year olds about their lives and views were collected and disseminated through social media.

All these events were used to highlight advocacy messages concerning the situation of the most vulnerable children. UNICEF was invited to various TV and radio programmes to talk about children’s issues. Heightened media attention and advocacy within the CRC@25 and the Year of the Child resulted in a number of important decisions for children such as the introduction of cash benefits for children, increased benefits and services for children with disabilities, adoption of legislative changes concerning violence against children and initiation of the law on pre-school education.

The Activate Talks’ in June was an innovative event featuring speakers on the issue of children with disabilities. The event was very well attended and covered by the media.

UNICEF continued with the nationwide campaign on Violence against Children to create a powerful voice against violence and promote positive parenting. The campaign embraced public events, art installations, workshops for journalists and bloggers, video discussions, media pitching, round-table discussions, and social media campaigns.

**OUTPUT 2 Operating expenses**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
This Output was established to consolidate cross-sectorial programme support activities. It covers respective staff costs and some cross-sectorial operating expenses. In 2014, the Country Office contributed towards following cross-sectorial support resources and facilities:

- Security costs
- Transportation services
- Communication services
- Annex office-related costs
- Operating office supplies
- Country programme-related travel of senior management staff
- Cross-sectoral staff costs
- Warehouse cost sharing/contribution
- Common premises and services

**OUTCOME 4 Special Purpose**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Special purpose security funds were allotted for UNICEF Georgia for improvement of security measures for UNICEF personnel and premises. The use of the funds are limited to the following:

- Construction of suitable walls and perimeters.
- Construction of more effective access and parking controls to include screening of pedestrians and vehicles.
- Installation of counter-surveillance measures such as cameras and alarms which have proven to be an effective deterrent to attack, making the premises appear to be a less viable option with increased likelihood of detection for offenders.
- Enhancing the ability to respond to on-set emergencies through the creation of specialised equipment pools – in particular armoured vehicles and personnel protective equipment.
- One-time security mandated office relocation costs.
- Based on a Global assessment, the contracting of blast engineers to identify options to create protected work environment through increasing stand-off distance, reinforcement of existing walls and windows or the application of new technologies - where permitted.
- Provision of First Aid training for drivers and staff who are frequently on mission.
- The provision of additional professional security advisors to provide technical advice and guidance in the most vulnerable locations impacting staff, on a case-by-case basis.

**OUTPUT 1 Premises and Security**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The Special Purpose Security funds are planned to be used for the following:

a) First Aid training;
b) Safe driving training;
c) Procurement of personal protective equipment;
d) Improvement of building access control measures;
e) Installation of special security systems.

In February, UNICEF Georgia received a fund allocation for premises and security improvements of US$35,500. The major part of this amount was committed and reserved for the cost-sharing of security upgrades of the UN House in 2015 which will be undertaken by UNDP. The remaining funds were spent on BCP-related preparedness and on First Aid training of all staff, which was conducted in December.

Throughout the year UNICEF cost-shared a number of security-related upgrade works in the common premises, undertaken by UNDP, including outside perimeter lightening, entrance door replacement and arrangement of electronic door-pass/lock system and renewal of fire alarm systems.

The office renewed fire extinguishers in all UNICEF locations (country office, basement storage, warehouse, zone office) and vehicles.

UNICEF security staff and wardens underwent VHF radio training organized by UNHCR during the second quarter.

**OUTCOME 5 Programme Support**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF Georgia, through its annual management exercise, continued the revision and optimization of its work processes started in 2013. The aim was to elaborate a more simplified approach to existing practices and to eliminate obsolete, repeated and no-value-added procedures and to develop more time-effective processes which will allow all staff (especially professional) to redirect their focus from transactional functions onto substantive work. This included: (a) the removal of cumulative limit of US$2,500 on small value purchases for LTA suppliers; (b) the deployment of Vision to the field office in Sokhumi; (c) opening of a bank account in Sokhumi; (c) VISION processing of petty cash in Sokhumi, and; (d) salary payments to field office staff directly from UNICEF headquarters. These measures have reduced the required staff time, the transactional workload and reduced overtime.
OUTPUT 1 Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, the UNICEF Georgia Annual Management Plan was prepared through a participatory and comprehensive process with involvement of all Tbilisi Office and the Sukhumi Zone Office staff. Annual objectives were aligned with the Country Programme needs and the current country specific context and environment. Regular CMT meetings were convened to identify and discuss office needs related to programme and operations management, focusing primarily on programmatic priorities. Management indicators focusing on budget utilization, DCTs, donor reporting, performance appraisal and audit issues were part of CMT discussions. The CMT reviewed the implications of the efficiency and effectiveness initiative in relation to the impact of the Global Shared Services Centre on the office.

UNICEF Georgia was audited in 2013, and the audit recommendations were closely followed up throughout 2014. The CMT closely monitored the implementation of the action plan agreed with the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigation. By the end of 2014, the office fully implemented all seven of the audit recommendations.

OUTPUT 2 Financial Resources and Stewardship

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Georgia, through its annual management exercise, continued the revision and optimization of its work processes started in 2013. The aim was to elaborate a more simplified approach to existing practices and to eliminate obsolete, repeated and no-value-added procedures and to develop more time-effective processes which will allow all staff (especially professional) to redirect their focus from transactional functions onto substantive work. This included: (a) the removal of cumulative limit of US$2,500 on small value purchases for LTA suppliers; (b) the deployment of Vision to the field office in Sokhumi; (c) opening of a bank account in Sokhumi; (c) VISION processing of petty cash in Sokhumi, and; (d) salary payments to field office staff directly from UNICEF headquarters. These measures have reduced the required staff time, the transactional workload and reduced overtime.

Further efficiency gains were achieved by (a) renovating and optimizing the use of the Government-provided office space and the subsequent closure of the second, commercially-rented office, (b) the reduction of one RR-funded position in the operations section, (c) increased outsourcing of non-core activities through LTAs and (d) further optimization of business processes, among other things by deploying Vision to the field office.

The Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers, as one of the important financial management tools, was one of the 2014 priorities for the office, and a number of steps were taken to strengthen practices in this respect. The Operations Manager participated in the regional HACT training where the newly released HACT Framework was discussed. Subsequently, all staff members were trained on new approaches and policies outlined in new HACT framework. UNICEF, on behalf of the UN Country Team, contracted a consultant to undertake an assessment of Georgia’s Public Financial Management systems, which was finalized and endorsed by the UN Country Team. The office also adjusted the Micro Assessment and Assurance Plan as per the new HACT framework. The office successfully continued using the services of a local audit firm which assisted in Micro Assessment and Assurance activities related to HACT. UNICEF Georgia fully utilized the funds provided by the Regional Office for HACT-related activities.
Output 3 Human Capacity

Analytical Statement of Progress:
While there were no significant changes in the office structure in 2014, a number of appointments were not extended due to reduction in Other Resources funding, including the Family and Child Wellbeing Officer (National Officer-C, 66610); Health and Nutrition Officer (National Officer-B, 42042) and Programme Assistant-Health (General Service-6, 68295). Also due to funding gaps, the office was unable to extend Temporary Assignment post of the Project Officer Disaster Risk Reduction (National Officer-A, 81971). The next phase funding for this post arrived by last quarter of the year and recruitment is ongoing.

Due to the significant reduction of the supply component, the RR-funded post of Admin/Supply Assistant (General Service-6, 22886) was abolished effective July 2014. However, at the request of the Ukraine country office, the post abolishment was deferred until March 2015, in order to deploy the respective staff member to the Ukraine office in response to the crisis in the country. The funding of the Admin/Supply post is being provided by the UNICEF Ukraine.

The following activities were accomplished during 2014 in order to increase the knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention among youth: UNICEF, together with the partner national NGOs, observed the World AIDS Day in Tbilisi. Peer educators distributed information materials to Tbilisi Universities. Free-of-charge HIV testing and counselling was offered to youth at Tbilisi Medical University. Youth from UNICEF staff families participated in the event to increase their knowledge on HIV/AIDS and its prevention.

A new stock of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits was received with changed composition. A workshop was organized in UNICEF to discuss the PEP kits usage, its new composition, eligibility and reporting. The list of the UN custodians in Tbilisi and field offices, also guidance of use of PEP Kits, have been provided to UNICEF personnel.

There are two active Peer Support Volunteers (PSVs) in the office. All staff are aware of availability of staff counselling in UNICEF and use it as needed. There were a number of work-related cases the PSVs addressed this year. In addition, there was one health-related case when PSVs directed staff to the appropriate professional health service. Both PSVs had several meetings, discussions and consultations with concerned staff, and occasionally provided mediations between supervisors and senior management.

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