

## Iran

### Update on the context and situation of children

2019 was a challenging year for Iran, with major developments hitting hard on the most vulnerable including children.

#### **Devastating floods hit three quarters of Iran's provinces**

In March-April 2019, flash floods hit 25 of Iran's 31 provinces, forcing mass evacuations, ravaging infrastructure, and inflicting heavy losses on different socio-economic sectors, as well as on communities. This emergency affected 10 million people, of whom 2 million were severely impacted and 500,000 displaced – half of them were children. Over 1,000 health facilities and 1,000 schools were either destroyed or severely damaged forcing 100,000 children out of school and depriving thousands of essential healthcare.

During this emergency, despite banking sanctions blocking international transactions, UNICEF managed to mobilize funds, from international and local donors, thematic funds, as well as individual donors abroad. UNICEF Germany and UNICEF Switzerland opened accounts for individuals outside Iran to make donations for the flood response.

#### **Sanctions affected the most vulnerable children**

Since April 2018, tightening of the US unilateral sanctions has impacted vulnerable populations, including children. The World Bank estimates the economy had contracted by 4.9 percent in 2018/2019 and a further 8.7 percent is expected in 2019/2020. Inflation, meanwhile, surged to above 40 percent. At present, there is little reason to expect sanctions will be lifted in the near or medium term.

Evidence suggests that the sanctions are negatively impacting children's health and wellbeing. In August 2019, the Head of Iran's Food and Drug Administration announced that Iran is supplying 97% of its needs for drugs through in-country pharmaceutical production. However, due to the sanctions, the country is currently facing shortages, as a result of challenges in procurement of specialized and single-source pharmaceutical products needed for treatment of children's diseases. While medical goods are officially exempt from sanctions, banking restrictions and overcompliance have made it difficult for Iranian firms to pay suppliers for imports. Pharmaceutical companies have also been increasingly reluctant to sell products to Iran. Moreover, though Iran is mostly self-sufficient in agricultural production, inflation is making food less affordable for the population.

The most vulnerable in the country are increasingly at risk of not being protected by functional social safety nets and quality social services as the Government budget to provide social protection programmes is tightening.

#### **The UN country team designed a technical response package to sanctions**

In 2019, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Iran designed a six-point Technical Assistance Package (TAP) to support the Government in protecting the most vulnerable from economic hardship at this critical time. As the co-chair of the resilient economy pillar - together with UNDP- UNICEF has been actively engaged in shaping the TAP which comprises of Programmatic, Operational, and South- South tracks. This overarching framework provides an opportunity for UN agencies to jointly accelerate results for the most vulnerable, based on their respective comparative advantage. UNICEF is taking the lead in social protection programming for the most vulnerable children. UNICEF has also been engaged in the joint UN-government pro-health group, which has been established to address the impact of sanctions on health.

#### **UNICEF was the first UN agency to conduct its Mid-Term Review(MTR)**

The MTR of the UNICEF Country Programme, which was jointly conducted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all implementing partners, provided an opportunity to make necessary adjustments to accelerate delivery of cross sector results for children, with a focus on most vulnerable children impacted by sanctions and children in disparity provinces. UNICEF Iran and the Government concluded that priority should be given to system strengthening at all levels, as well as to adaptive programming. To operationalize this over the two next years, investments will be accelerated in few areas identified as catalytic for the wellbeing of children living in Iran: a) neo natal health in deprived provinces b) inclusive education for Afghan refugees and children with disabilities; c) adolescent health wellbeing through a life skill focus; d) preparedness capacity of provinces for disasters response; e) child friendly cities with a vision of transition to child friendly provinces for the next program cycle.

#### **The Government adopted the revised Act on Determining the Nationality Status of Children Born to Iranian Mothers and Non-Iranian Fathers**

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The revised Act was approved by the Parliament and adopted in 2019. According to the revised Act, even children under 18 years will now be able to obtain Iranian citizenship if their Iranian mothers file the required application. Those who are 18 and above can personally apply for Iranian nationality. The issue had gained prominence in recent years due to a large number of marriages between Iranian women and Afghan men, whose children were unable to obtain the citizenship. The revised law is expected to significantly improve the lives of these children. According to a national survey conducted by the Government, the Act is expected to help at least 50,000 children obtain official birth certificate and nationality of Iran.

### Major contributions and drivers of results

**UNICEF Iran delivered emergency supplies & life-saving services in flood-affected areas, having mobilized \$ 3.1 million.** In response to the heavy flooding in March 2019, UNICEF led the emergency and recovery response in WASH, Education and Child Protection sectors of the joint UN response. UNICEF worked closely with WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNHABITAT. A post-disaster needs assessment was conducted by the Planning and Budget Organization, for which UNICEF provided technical support to the WASH and education sectors as a lead agency. Supported by donor countries such as Japan, Kuwait, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Canada, as well as local donors from the private sector, UNICEF mobilized \$3,134,029 for the flood response, ensuring access of the most vulnerable children, including refugee and immigrant children to essential services.

Though WASH has not been part of the current country programme, UNICEF mobilized a total of \$1,895,225 to ensure access to clean water through a more resilient water and wastewater system among the flood affected population. These funds were used to ensure sustainable and adequate access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation facilities.

In cooperation with MOHME and WHO, UNICEF strengthened the health system capacity and contributed to building a resilient infrastructure, ensuring maintenance of the cold chain and provision of uninterrupted immunization services to children in the affected provinces through procurement and distribution of 300 refrigerators, 295 cold boxes and 600 vaccine carriers. Moreover, 65,000 and 13,500 doses of 200,000 and 100,000 IU vitamin A supplements were distributed among under five children in 3 flood affected provinces, respectively.

The Education Response Plan included procurement of educational equipment for 550 most affected schools in Lorestan, Golestan and Khouzestan; support rehabilitation of WASH facilities in 170 affected schools in Lorestan and Golestan and, provision of psychosocial support in school, to support an estimated 100,000 children.

UNICEF supported the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) to provide Child Protection in Emergency (CPIE) in 4 severely-affected provinces.

Due to breakdown of regular social protection systems in the flood-affected areas of Golestan and Lorestan, UNICEF helped build the capacity of IRCS volunteers for provision of case management in affected communities. As a result, over a period of 3 months, 300 families benefited from case management and follow-up services.

Furthermore, UNICEF helped IRCS establish Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in Lorestan province. Feedback received from CFS educators and parents reflected that they were effective in reducing stress and aggressive behavior, as well as promoting personal hygiene practices among children. UNICEF continues to support establishment of 3 CFS in Golestan province.

As part of UNICEF's preparedness work for CPIE, and in order to strengthen capacities of IRCS rescue and relief teams on Psychological First Aid (PFA), UNICEF supported localization of the PFA package and Training of Trainers workshops for IRCS. The PFA package and training has been incorporated in the national curriculum of IRCS rescue and relief teams.

During the flood emergency, UNICEF widely echoed the situation of the most vulnerable children affected by the crisis as well as UNICEF response and the funding gaps by publishing a global press release, and arranging a field visit to the affected areas with the presence of UNICEF GWA.

**Amidst a challenging sanctions environment, UNICEF delivered 2 million doses of IPV polio vaccines, and mobilized \$ 1.5 million for treating children suffering from EB skin disease.** UNICEF initiated a mapping of children diseases treatments impacted by sanctions.

**The Government enhanced its capacity for neonatal health in disparity provinces, established a national food and nutrition surveillance system, and scaled up national programme on PMTCT.** In 2019, UNICEF supported "Help Babies Breathe" capacity building programme for neonatologists, midwives and pediatricians in specialized skill labs, improving their skills in caring for healthy babies and assisting newborns that do not breathe on their own after birth. In line with improving the survival of newborns, UNICEF facilitated obtaining a license agreement from the American Academy of Pediatrics for translation of print and video resources on the Helping Baby Survive programme. The neonatal survival

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programme was supported by financial resources from the Government of Korea.

In cooperation with MoHME, UNICEF helped to contextualize some global standard measuring tools for early detection of developmental, social and emotional delay/disorders among children 0 to 3 years.

UNICEF helped the MOHME to improve in-service trainings through procurement of 600 resuscitators for distribution across the country, especially in disparity provinces. UNICEF joined hands with UNFPA for procurement of 280 birthing simulators which help to create realistic training scenarios and facilitate engaging role plays, making the capacity building efficient for frontline health workers.

Another programme supported was the Newborn Individualized Developmental Care and Assessment Program (NIDCAP), which is both a practice and a philosophy to ensure comfort, wellbeing and a sense of security to a premature newborn, ensuring a healthy development. This support included development and publication of relevant guidelines, as well as support to exchange experiences between Iran and countries in the region.

UNICEF provided technical support to the establishment of a food and nutrition surveillance system in the most disadvantaged areas of Iran that have the highest prevalence of malnutrition. UNICEF provided technical support to the development of a preliminary roadmap to design targeted interventions for overnutrition and undernutrition for the most vulnerable children living in Iran.

As the main UN agency supporting MOHME's programme on prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), UNICEF continued to support capacity building among experts in MOHME and the Associations of Gynecology and Midwifery. Furthermore, UNICEF supported an assessment of the pilot phase of PMTCT national programme, which contributed to identification of gaps and helped scale the programme nation-wide.

Following the success of the nationwide scale up of the PMTCT programme, with specific focus on vulnerable populations, the MOHME embarked on the road to elimination of mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV. In this regard, UNICEF supported an assessment of private and public hospitals which helped the MOHME to avoid losing track of HIV positive cases among pregnant women in these hospitals. In close cooperation with UNAIDS and WHO Iran, UNICEF provided technical support for development of a roadmap for Iran to achieve EMTCT, including South-South Cooperation with Thailand, a country that has achieved EMTCT.

**The joint UN-government pilot initiative of 7 Adolescent Well-being Clubs (AWBC) achieved results for a second year.** In coordination with UNAIDS & UNFPA with the support of the Governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland, UNICEF continued its extensive support to AWBCs, through capacity building and skills enhancement programmes for MOHME and SWO staff to improve the quality of services to high-risk and hard to reach girls and boys. UNICEF facilitated South-South Cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan, developed and piloted a positive life skills training package for high-risk adolescents based on their specific needs and oriented staff of AWBCs and related ministries.

Outreach teams of AWBCs built their capacity to identify and reach out to the hardest to reach adolescent girls and boys including Afghan refugees. UNICEF supported MoHME to develop, pilot and revise a comprehensive real-time data collection, and monitoring system with different levels of access to data in 7 AWBCs. The clubs empowered the adolescents with skills & knowledge to reduce social and psychological harms as well as promote a healthy lifestyle.

Building on previous achievements, UNICEF supported capacity building of practitioners from MOHME, SWO and Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ) on "Selective Drug Prevention for high risk adolescents", piloted in Primary Health Care setting in 5 provinces of Tehran, Markazi, Ghazvin, Alborz, and Khorasan.

UNICEF also supported DCHQ and MOHME to translate and adapt the evidence-based drug treatment and rehabilitation packages for children and adolescents, including those belonging to most vulnerable communities, for two age groups 0-12 and 12-18 years-old.

DCHQ and MOE rolled out a culturally-sensitive FAST (Families & Schools Together) programme - which includes drug prevention through improving family relationships, positive parenting, and empowering children facing risky behaviors - in selected primary schools of all provinces of Iran, including provinces with high migrant populations.

**Advancing towards an inclusive and participatory learning environment for children.** UNICEF worked with the Special Education Organisation to further facilitate the physical access of children with disabilities to regular schools in all provinces. This intervention is aimed to ensure regular schools are disability-friendly and welcome children with special needs.

UNICEF advocated for the inclusion of citizenship education, in teachers' education curricula, with a focus on the most

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vulnerable, including children on the move, in collaboration with Farhangian University (National Teachers College).

UNICEF worked with the Office for Boarding Schools of MOE, to mainstream social participation skills in the education system of boarding schools. Building on the achievements of a joint partnership with MOE on enhancing the welfare of students in 24 boarding schools – including 16 girls' schools and 8 boys' schools – in three provinces of Sistan and Baluchistan, Hormozgan and Kerman, UNICEF and MOE collaborated on a capacity building package for the management of boarding schools to nurture social participation skills of the students.

UNICEF continued and expanded its advocacy efforts for inclusion and retention of Out of School Children (OOSC), including children on the move, in the national education system. Escalating previous efforts, a series of technical consultations were conducted with MCLSW to design a policy and situation analysis of OOSC. This is intended to shape an intersectoral model for integrating those children in schools in 2020.

UNICEF and MOE concluded implementing the pilot girls' empowerment entrepreneurship skills programme in Tehran covering students, teachers and parents.

**The Government took concrete steps for advancing pre-primary education in 6 provinces.** Based on the needs assessment conducted by the MOE for pre-primary educational kits in 6 provinces, including 3 disparity provinces, UNICEF planned the procurement of the kits and equipment for 220 pre-primary classrooms of girls and boys in selected provinces.

UNICEF agreed with the Office for Pre-Primary Education of MoE, to conduct a study on the quality of pre-primary education and, generate evidence in support of expanding access to pre-primary education in the country. UNICEF further worked with that office to conduct a needs assessment to equip pre-primary classrooms with educational kits in less developed provinces, with a focus on the areas with refugee and immigrant populations.

**National capacity enhanced for system strengthening for children living without effective caregivers, national roadmap designed for social services workforce and technical resources on justice for children locally adapted.**

UNICEF supported MOHME to conduct a situation analysis of child maltreatment, including a mapping and analysis of existing systems and services, as well as social norms and behaviour. The study provides evidence-based information on key gaps in provision of services and also referral systems among sectors involved in prevention of child maltreatment.

UNICEF also supported the MOHME's pilot establishment of specialized referral health centres for prevention of child maltreatment and provision of specialized services in 4 provinces of Tehran, Hormozgan, Golestan and Semnan.

UNICEF supported MoHME for a review of the Positive Parenting (PP) package and associated communication materials to enhance the quality of the PP programme, applying a child and gender sensitive lens. UNICEF also supported a Training of Trainers on PP for 61 provincial mental health professionals providing counseling services to children and families. MoHME and SWO were supported to initiate integration of *the Care for Child Development* intervention in current child care services.

With UNICEF support, the SWO developed 3 protocols for provision of comprehensive care and support to children without effective caregivers in nurseries (0-3 years), residential centres, and family-based foster care settings, which also benefits children on the move. Aimed at establishing national minimum standards, the protocols are expected to ensure effective supervision of the wellbeing and development of children placed in alternative care. Experts of SWO and Social Clinics across the country were trained on the developed protocol for children in family-based foster care settings, to enhance national capacities for effective implementation of the protocol. These experts will also go through 9 months on-the-job coaching and supervision.

In line with UNICEF's global strategy for strengthening the Social Service Workforce (SSW) and in partnership with the MCLSW and Iran Association of Social Workers, UNICEF facilitated the engagement of Iran in the MENA Regional Mapping of SSW. The review provided an initial baseline on the status of SSW in Iran and 7 other countries in the MENA region. It informed development of a country-level action plan for strengthening the SSW in Iran.

UNICEF also continued support to the Judiciary to finalize a locally-adapted capacity-building package on Justice for Children (J4C). This package will be used as the key resource in conducting J4C trainings for relevant professionals. A UNICEF-supported workshop on Juvenile Justice contributed to increasing the awareness and knowledge of 44 legal experts on national and international Juvenile Justice standards in Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad province. The Juvenile Justice trainings are in line with national policies to promote alternatives to deprivation of liberty, in particular for children below the age of 18.

**Strategic partnership with the National Body on the CRC (NBCRC) resumed after 6 years.** UNICEF resumed its partnership with the NBCRC, with a view to advocating for promotion of child rights at national and provincial levels. This is

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a strategic development because NBCRC is officially mandated to monitor and coordinate implementation of the CRC in Iran.

As a first step, UNICEF provided technical support to a summer school programme on child rights held in Tabriz with a session dedicated to the rights of refugee children in Iran.

**Multidimensional Child Poverty measurement nationally piloted with continued support for improving evidence-based policy-making and social protection.** UNICEF supported national piloting of the multidimensional child poverty measurement and identified 39 deprivation indicators among children (& 43 for adults). UNICEF is advocating with the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) to add the multi-dimensional poverty indicators in the next household income/expenditure survey, as this national adaptation provides the evidence for informed decision making resulting in policies that can better integrate the needs and knowledge of vulnerabilities and marginalization.

UNICEF also partnered with MCLSW on a vision to build a real-time monitoring system as a response to the on-going economic downturn with a focus on children's vulnerabilities within the social protection programmes. The first phase of this initiative i.e. situation analysis was successfully completed, and implementation of road map is being drafted. Furthermore, given the wide range of stakeholders involved in provision of social services for children, a parallel pilot initiative was developed and supported to monitor the real time status of children (7- 17 years) supported by the State Welfare Organization (SWO) under the well-established quasi-family centers in 3 areas of health, nutrition and education.

UNICEF continued to support MCLSW to enhance the existing social protection system through increasing efficiency and better targeting to optimize services for the most vulnerable children. Furthermore, UNICEF contributed to strengthening national capacities on child-sensitive public financial analysis and management through partnership with MCLSW to conduct a feasibility study for child-focused schemes in targeting cash transfers, specifying the minimum range of payments for every child under 11 years.

As a follow-up to 2018 National Conference on children with disabilities, UNICEF supported SWO to conduct a Situation Analysis on children with disabilities (CWDs) including children on the move. The study provides a mapping of existing capacities as well as the needs and opportunities for provision of inclusive health, education and protection social services, through a gender lens. A new partnership with SWO rehabilitation department has been signed to address the recommendations of the study.

**Global advocacy initiatives for children locally adapted to advance public awareness in the context of CRC@30.**

UNICEF enhanced the knowledge and skills of national journalists and photojournalists on ethical guidelines of reporting and photography of children, focusing on the most vulnerable. UNICEF also advocated for child rights in two major International film festivals. UNICEF supported government to promote book-reading and film-production by children in the most disadvantaged areas. UNICEF raised public awareness on children's issues through web-based and social media including. On CRC@30, UNICEF and the government initiated a national photo contest titled "Children and Hope". The new bilingual UNICEF was launched allowing better user engagement. UNICEF significantly increased its digital engagement on all its social media channels and doubled its user engagement and outreach. UNICEF advocated for child rights through publications reaching out to more than 10,000 people in both the public and private sectors.

**With support of UNICEF, the Government launched the Child Friendly City Initiative (CFCI) in Iran, with 12 cities ready to pilot.**

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, CFC criteria for pilot cities were finalized and a handbook was published in Farsi. The first National CFC Conference was held in Isfahan and UNICEF also facilitated the participation of a high-level delegation from government officials in CFCI Summit in Cologne in which the Mayors' Declaration was signed by the Mayor of Isfahan. The City action plan has been finalized and upon approval an MoU will be signed, and Isfahan will receive CFC Candidacy Logo. UNICEF also facilitated the contribution of 2000 Iranian children shaping the Global Child Rights Manifesto and assisted participation of Iranian cities in CFCI Inspire Award 2019.

**Expanded private sector partnerships to achieve results for children.**

UNICEF Iran leveraged the support of private partners for children. In the 2nd Corporate Partnership event, UNICEF's corporate partners reconfirmed their commitment and made some donations to UNICEF. UNICEF's corporate partners including Saman Bank, Tejarat Bank, Iran Chamber of Commerce and Tehran Chamber of Commerce continued to support UNICEF programmes in Iran, including the emergency flood response, with their generous donations. \$ 187,000 was raised from the Iranian private sector contributions in 2019. To support the health needs of children impacted by sanctions, a fund-raising Musical Theater was held with EDGE Business Group. In partnership with Refah Chain Stores, UNICEF joined the "For Mothers" Campaign for the second consecutive year in which 20,000 Food & Hygiene packs, with a monetary value of 247,000 USD, were delivered to families in less advantaged areas. UNICEF in collaboration with Iran-Switzerland and Tehran Chambers of Commerce and Embassy of Switzerland, conducted an advocacy session with food businesses on improving child nutrition in Iran.

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### Lessons Learned and Innovations

**Improved Efficiency in Flood Response.** The floods revealed important gaps in emergency management capacity. This situation slowed appropriate responses to the education needs of affected areas. UNICEF proposed creating a task force on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Ministry to address Education in Emergency issues.

UNICEF identified pre-positioning of immediate emergency response items for the first 72 hours as a preparation measure to prevent facing significant delays. Furthermore, UNICEF initiated development of a mechanism with each partner to simplify the process of receiving emergency requests with technical specifications to reduce/prevent the delays.

**Innovating as we navigated the challenges posed by sanctions.** UNICEF faced unforeseen challenges for procurement of emergency supplies, leading to delays in identification and contracting suppliers and shipping companies to work with Iran. In full coordination with RO and HQ, UNICEF identified new supply and shipping paths in the region to solve this issue and to mitigate risks.

**Facing constraints in programme implementation.** Due to the flood emergency, MOHME's previous priorities of health in UNICEF's programmes shifted and led to delays in the signature of the bilateral work plans. Furthermore, UNICEF faced some challenges, such as delays in custom clearance of procured items and the halt in the neonatal investment case. UNICEF continues to advocate at high level with MOHME for timely implementation of what has been jointly agreed.

Our work on adolescents remains sensitive, and access to related data is challenging.

Meanwhile changes in the structure of the Ministry of Education, including integration of some offices as well as new senior appointments, coupled with uncertainties in the socio-political context of the country, slowed planning and implementing joint activities with MoE.

Management changes within the government partners constrained implementation of joint activities and formalizing of a key partnership that can enable UNICEF to place children at heart of planning and budgeting. UNICEF continues to promote evaluation culture and the positive steps taken during the reporting period to endorse the terms of reference of the NIDCAP evaluation through a formal steering committee.

**Harnessing Emerging Opportunities.** Consultations are ongoing to increase the number of AWBCs and integrate them into the national strategic programme. MoHME is considering the pilot implementation of boarding AWBCs in Tehran (girls) and Kermanshah (boys). UNICEF's technical role in the field of adolescence has been acknowledged as critical, including in supporting the provision of latest adolescence knowledge for national technical staff and tailor-made interventions for adolescents with specific needs and characteristics.

Resuming partnership with the NBCRC represents a strategic opportunity for UNICEF to advocate for child rights. Supporting NBCRC provincial bodies' work will be important.

While UNICEF supported the MCLSW to operationalize multi-dimensional poverty measurement, we need to advocate and liaise more to bridge the coordination gaps between different line ministries.

Partnership with Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance on media advocacy for children was a success, thus providing a unique opportunity to use national art and cultural events to advocate for children's issues. This partnership needs to be nurtured.

The SitAn on child maltreatment and mapping of existing systems/services in 4 targeted provinces created a platform for multi-sector cooperation among government and UN. This provides a valuable foundation for longer-term coordination among relevant stakeholders in this area, including for development of multi-sector policy guidance on prevention of child maltreatment.

Provision of case management and Community-Based Child Protection services in emergencies are two initiatives, recently introduced in the national CPIE response interventions with UNICEF support, that have been an initial success. Further technical consultations are required to assess the findings and review necessary coordination mechanisms.

Following the MENA Regional Health and Nutrition Network meeting which was held in Tehran in June - where over 60 participants from UNICEF MENA Country Offices, the Regional Office and Headquarters gathered to discuss and exchange their experiences on the integrated approach for programming for Goal Area 1 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021, UNICEF Iran is pursuing a number of requests for South-South cooperation on Primary Health Care.

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UNICEF and the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology signed a partnership on Innovations for children in Iran. UNICEF showcased innovations for children in INOTEX 2019 and awarded the best innovative ideas by adolescents. UNICEF Iran Innovation Package was developed and shared with Pardis Technology Park (PTP). UNICEF is briefing Iran's startup ecosystem on its Innovation Initiative. The Office has facilitated participation of Iranian startups in the Global Innovation Fund. These efforts will be further pursued.

Through UNICEF advocacy, all municipalities in Iran are now committed to the CFCI with established CFCI councils and secretariats in 25 municipalities. Several cities are selected to pilot CFCI in 2020-2021 for the UNICEF CFCI Candidacy.

With the support of the European Union, in 2019 UNICEF continued to build resilient inclusive systems that better address the needs and protect the rights of most vulnerable children living in Iran, including Afghan refugee children. The economic crisis and volatility associated with sanctions is stressing the country's social protection policies, with increasing demands and constrained public resources. It is therefore critical for UNICEF to continuously advocate and work with partners for dedicated public finance for children across sectors and help accelerate reforms towards streamlined inclusive and adaptive social protection programs to minimize the long-term consequences from the current economic downturn.

As a result of the MTR, UNICEF is committed to moving the needle in the identified tangible programmatic areas and demonstrating proof of concept on results for children at the provincial-level. UNICEF is also committed to ensure that the human resource structure of the office is fit for purpose in technical areas, such as public financing for children, emergency preparedness and addressing the impact of sanctions on vulnerable children.