Executive summary

This annual report sets out the key achievements in 2017, the second year of implementation of the UNICEF-Government of Kazakhstan Country Programme of Cooperation for 2016-2020. It describes progress towards the achievement of planned results and reflects on efforts to reposition UNICEF's engagement with Kazakhstan and to ensure that it is ‘fit for purpose’ to continue its support towards advancing the realization of children’s rights.

Implementation took place against the background of relatively unfavourable economic conditions but also optimism for future economic and social growth. President Nazarbayev announced the 'Third Modernisation of Kazakhstan' towards global competitiveness. Political reforms in 2017 strengthened the respective roles of executive bodies to regulate socio-economic processes. However, a decline in real wages, a fragile banking sector, and exchange rate fluctuations highlighted that much of the population remains vulnerable to external economic shocks. In addition, tightened fiscal budgets and flattened allocations to social reforms, may have restricted progress.


A number of key and sustainable results are already emerging for the country programme. For example, a number of UNICEF Kazakhstan-supported pilots at sub-national level are approaching readiness for national scale up, and represent valuable contributions to the knowledge and evidence-base for children. UNICEF supported sub-national authorities to pilot universal-progressive home-visiting services to all families with children under-five years of age and to pregnant women, and progressive services for the most vulnerable families. Initial assessment for Kyzylorda indicated that infant mortality decreased from 14.4 per 1,000 in 2016 to 8.8 deaths in 2017; and under-five mortality rates fell from 17.7 per 1,000 in 2016 to 12.1 in 2017. UNICEF also supported alternative services in the child-friendly justice system at sub-national level. The cost of the piloted services was one-tenth the economic cost of placing children in closed institutions.

UNICEF-supported sub-national initiatives achieved a sustainable decrease of suicidal behaviour among most vulnerable adolescents, reaching over 60,000 adolescents. Collaboration with community service organizations enabled 13 regions to launch similar programmes reaching over 250,000 adolescents. Kazakhstan’s experience will be profiled at the First International conference on the Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Adolescents, taking place in January 2018 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This is first international platform for horizontal cooperation established by the country programme.

UNICEF Kazakhstan continued to strengthen strategic partnerships in 2017. Collaboration with the National Commissioner for Children’s Rights (NCCR) continued to provide opportunities to accelerate implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child through national
dialogue platforms; convening Parliament, all branches of government, civil society and the business sector. Traditional partnerships also continued to evolve. In 2017, the National Statistics Committee developed and published the first annual Statistical Yearbook on Children of Kazakhstan with UNICEF support. Children were also prioritized in nationalized Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

New partnerships with the business sector advanced three UNICEF technology initiatives – in blockchain, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAVs) and data science. UNICEF hosted the first international hackathon on leveraging blockchain technologies for advancing children's rights, which brought together start-ups, experts and venture capital from across Russian-speaking countries in Central Asia and Europe.

In March 2017, the UNICEF Country Office opened its first Innovations Lab in Central Asia, hosted by the International IT University (IITU). The Lab facilitates multi-stakeholder collaboration around innovative, technology-driven ideas focused on results for children. The Lab also ran a summer residency for social entrepreneurs and innovators for children. UNICEF and IITU continued to run hackathons, including at EXPO-2017 on ‘Innovation for Children in an Urbanising World’.

UNICEF’s exhibition at Astana-EXPO-2017, in June-September 2017, raised awareness on the impact of climate change on children. Brand awareness and visibility for UNICEF was raised through various events reaching over 100,000 people, including United Nations (UN) Day (June 13) and UNICEF’s dedicated keynote event in August, on ‘Advancing Children's Rights through Innovation’.

More than 20 events were dedicated to World Children’s Day between 1st and 21st November. These included the presentation of UNICEF’s National Goodwill Ambassador for Kazakhstan, Ms. Dina Saduakassova, a four-time world chess champion and international grandmaster.

The country management team engaged local governments in assessing the situation of children and exploring critical support needs for 2017. However, current political and economic conditions significantly reduced Other Resources funding from within Kazakhstan for 2018 and UNICEF’s ability to raise these funds through traditional donors remains severely limited. This presents a critical risk to programme implementation for 2018. Nevertheless, UNICEF Kazakhstan leveraged further European Union (EU) funding, responding to a multi-country initiative on children affected by migration beginning 2018.

**Humanitarian assistance**

UNICEF Kazakhstan did not provide humanitarian assistance during the reporting period.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**Refugee and migrant children.** Kazakhstan is a destination and transit country for men, women and children from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The number of children on the move is unknown and the absence of accurate data requires attention. In 2018, UNICEF will support national authorities and NGOs to implement a multi-country EU-funded work plan to strengthen protection systems for children affected by migration, including alternatives to detention and inclusive services.

**Accelerated integrated early childhood development (ECD).** In 2017, UNICEF supported authorities to evaluate the national ECD and early childhood education (ECE) systems,
contributing to the evidence base and identifying areas for continued focus, including with
support from UNICEF. The evaluation found that integrated early childhood development (IECD)
is an on-going policy priority for the Government of Kazakhstan. Efforts to boost IECD services
and programmes manifested in improved child health, nutrition, development and early learning
outcomes. All oblasts have shown progress, and policy reforms resulted in significant systems
level changes in across sectors. However, while various ECD and ECE services were available
for the children under seven years in health, nutrition, education and social protection, low
participation of children under three years of age in formal ECE programmes was observed in
four regions.

Inequalities in an access to services affected the most vulnerable children, including ethnic
migrants and children with special needs. The uneven quality of ECE-ECD services also needs
attention. In 2017, UNICEF continued to support national authorities to pilot universal-
progressive home-visiting services in two regions of Kazakhstan. The services provide a
comprehensive range of social and health assistance to vulnerable children under five and their
families, as well as to pregnant women, covering nutrition, health and critical services.

Greater focus on the second decade of life. The country programme focuses on two
significant issues for adolescents which are particular to Kazakhstan: suicide prevention and the
engagement of vulnerable adolescents through outreach by Youth Resource Centres (YRCs)
nationwide. In 2017, UNICEF Kazakhstan extended the scope of this work to support national
partners in advancing a comprehensive approach to adolescent mental health through research,
policy advocacy and programming for and with adolescents. Research included the evaluation
of adolescent suicide prevention programme in Kyzylorda Oblast; the assessment of the mental
health needs of adolescents in conflict with the law in East Kazakhstan Oblast; a randomized
control study in Mangistau Oblast on adolescent mental health promotion, which collected data
from 8,200 (out of 27,970 participating) adolescents; and the second national online
consultation with children, adolescents and youth explored six themes, namely participation and
engagement; education and employment; education and intercultural learning; health, wellbeing
and happiness; safety, security and justice; ICT and youth policy. In addition, in collaboration
with the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, age-related barriers to access to
services and the realization of rights for children and adolescents, including through focus
groups involving vulnerable adolescents were explored. The quality of services of 300 youth
friendly services and YRCs resulted in the endorsement of national standards that establish
more transparent and accountable understanding of youth work, including for most marginal
groups.

Support “movements” to accelerate results for children. UNICEF supported the National
Commissioner for Children's Rights, together with the Ministry of Education and Science and
Parliament of Kazakhstan, to host a two-day international event dedicated to Kazakhstan's
continued implementation of outstanding recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of
the Child in its fourth periodic report. Thirteen dialogue platforms were convened during the
event, representing clusters of recommendations, each focusing on a specific set of children's
rights. The platforms facilitated comprehensive and inclusive discussions on children's rights in
Kazakhstan, with the participation of children, civil society and Government. Each dialogue
platform is chaired by a Member of Parliament and/or Government official and benefitted from
the technical support of a variety of international experts, representatives from civil society and
UNICEF. Actions for addressing the remaining Committee recommendations were developed,
which will contribute to multisectoral action plans for implementation over the next years, and
which may be funded from the national budget. It is intended that dialogue platforms will
convene frequently in coming years to monitor that the recommendations are being
implemented. The initiative presents an opportunity for UNICEF to leverage the continued work and consensus of the dialogue platforms around results for children.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

**Acronyms**
- CFCI - Child-Friendly City Initiative
- CMT - country management team
- CSO - civil society organization
- DRR - disaster risk reduction
- ECARO – Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (of UNICEF)
- ECD - early child development
- ECE - early childhood education
- EU - European Union
- ICF - International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
- ICT – information and communication technology
- IITU - International Information Technology University
- MICS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
- NCCR - National Commissioner for Children's Rights
- NGO - non-governmental organization
- NPM - National Preventive Mechanism
- OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- ODA – official development assistance
- OR - Other Resources
- SDG - Sustainable Development Goal
- TransMonEE – Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity
- TSA – Targeted Social Assistance
- UAV – unmanned aerial vehicles
- UN - United Nations
- UNCT - United Nations Country Team
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
- UNDSS - United Nations Department of Safety & Security
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
- UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
- YRC - Youth Resource Centre
- WHO - World Health Organization

### Capacity development

UNICEF works to strengthen the technical capacities of government and CSOs at national and local levels for the improved development, implementation and monitoring of inclusive, rights-based, child-friendly policies and services. In 2017, in anticipation of its extended mandate under law, UNICEF supported capacity development for members of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) to monitor closed and residential institutions for children. Eighty four members from Aktau, Astana, Almaty and Kyzylorda, were guided on monitoring the rights of children (including children with disabilities) in such settings and in communicating effectively with children. Similarly, UNICEF supported local authorities in Mangistau on independent situation monitoring of child wellbeing through an integrated data system.

UNICEF also continued to support capacity development for statisticians in data collection and analysis for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and the Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced EquityTransMonEE (on refugee and migrant children). With the national statistics
office, the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and Nazarbayev University, UNICEF conducted cognitive testing of the inclusive education module which helps to assess the inclusiveness of the learning environment for children with special needs. This included training of trainers for field work, providing experience and capacity for statistics specialists and the Ministry of Education.

A training programme for personnel from the Youth Resource Centre was finalized, and used to develop the skills and knowledge of 20 national master trainers on youth work as well as 50 staff of 18 Centres from two regions of Kazakhstan. Starting from 2018, the Scientific Research Centre “Youth” will roll out the training programme to develop the capacity of staff from over 180 YRCs to ensure high quality, needs-based services for young people.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy are core roles and component strategies of UNICEF’s country programme in Kazakhstan. Evaluation and research feeds into UNICEF’s engagement in social policy dialogue supported by all programmes, influencing policy decisions in the best interest of children. In 2017, a number of actions were supported by UNICEF Kazakhstan in this respect. The Office commissioned the evaluation of the national ECD and ECE systems with respect to national priorities for children, and initiated discussion on related challenges and actions between education, health and social protection sectors. An analysis on proposed changes to the Targeted Social Assistance approaches supported by UNICEF facilitated consensus on the potentially negative impact on the most-vulnerable families.

Support for confidential audits of maternal and perinatal mortality in healthcare facilities generated recommendations for tackling premature mortality. UNICEF also commissioned a situation analysis on the Rights of Children and Women in Kazakhstan to identify emerging areas of importance for children.

UNICEF also continued to support national data, evaluation and research systems to generate information and analysis on the rights of children. For example, in 2017, UNICEF supported the national statistics office to produce the first Annual Statistical Yearbook on Children (a second was published by the end of 2017), generating further demand from national and sub-national authorities for more and disaggregated data on children, meeting international standards.

UNICEF provided substantive technical assistance to the national working group on Sustainable Development Goal indicators, ensuring that SDG-related data on children is prioritised. There is significant demand from national authorities for UNCEF-supported data initiatives, including for MICS, evaluations and studies.

At sub-national level, UNICEF continued to support improved qualitative data collection on child wellbeing. A set of tools under development will be tested in 2018, and will enable local statistics offices and authorities to better monitor child wellbeing using a holistic approach. UNICEF also supported regions to establish situation analytical centres providing data on children to better inform policy decisions.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF Kazakhstan continued to re-orient and strengthen a range of strategic partnerships in 2017. These were with government (at national and central levels, and including ministries, departments and agencies), with CSOs (across sectors and disciplines), with academia, with the business sector, and with influential individuals and international organizations, including UN agencies.
For example, the strategic importance of UNICEF’s collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner for Children’s Rights is indicative of the returns for children from well-placed investment in partners through technical, material and financial assistance. Collaboration continued to provide opportunities to accelerate implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Kazakhstan through the national dialogue platforms. These involve convening Parliament, all branches of government, civil society and the business sector, as well as horizontal cooperation opportunities with Ombudspersons in other countries. Continued cooperation with the General Prosecutor’s Office will greatly facilitate UNICEF’s 2018 support for reducing the impact of negative social norms and practices and facilitating cross-sectoral collaboration on violence against children.

Parliament continues to be a key partner, working with UNICEF to implement several legislative initiatives and raising children’s issues in public discourse. UNICEF continued to pursue direct partnership with sub-national governments to broaden and continue to leverage greater collaboration and responsiveness to initiatives for children.

Partnerships with academia and civil society in 2017 enabled UNICEF to work in emerging areas of importance and innovation. Working more closely with the business sector leveraged a new and evolving source of progress for children. In 2017, new partnerships in the technology sector advanced three UNICEF initiatives – in blockchain, unmanned aerial vehicles and data science - leveraging the UNICEF Innovation Lab with IITU, Kazakhstani start-ups, incubator-accelerators and venture funds. Partnering with the business sector also revealed demand for UNICEF guidance on corporate social responsibility and on children’s rights and business principles.

**External communication and public advocacy**

With special attention to UNICEF’s global cause framework and key moments, discourse around children’s rights was well-profiled throughout the year on UNICEF Kazakhstan’s social media channels. Followers on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook continued to increase, and UNICEF Kazakhstan joined UNICEF’s Facebook global credit line to better target messaging through paid ads.

The UNICEF Representative raised awareness on key children’s issues, including violence against children, the needs of children in contact with the law, child neglect, and the low engagement of fathers in early childhood. These country programme priorities were frequently publicized and discussed by the media across platforms, including television. With partners, the Office invested in programme communication, broadcasting key messages from research on violence against children and the MICS, and ensuring the appropriate placement of video-spots raising awareness about critical services for children.

Approximately 20 events and activities dedicated to World Children’s Day took place in Kazakhstan between 1st and 21st November. Most notable was the second international conference on ‘Child-Friendly Kazakhstan’ and the introduction of UNICEF’s National Goodwill Ambassador for Kazakhstan, Ms. Dina Saduakassova, a four-time world chess champion and international grandmaster. Parliamentarians, high-level officials and civil society convened around national dialogue platforms dedicated to advancing children’s rights realization in Kazakhstan. Strong support from state media and the business sector ensured news coverage of World Children’s Day events in Russian, Kazakh and English across all channels, including six ‘Kids Takeover’ activities.
UNICEF’s exhibition at EXPO-2017, which took place in Astana in June-September 2017, raised awareness on the impact of climate change on children and other issues including water scarcity, air pollution and urbanisation. Brand awareness and visibility for UNICEF was also raised through various events reaching over 100,000 people, including UN Day (June 13) and UNICEF’s dedicated keynote and hackathon events in August on ‘Advancing Children’s Rights through Innovation’.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

UNICEF Kazakhstan continued efforts to facilitate beyond-border exchange of knowledge, experience and lessons learned in selected areas in the country where it has achieved significant results for children and/or innovated to tackle emerging issues affecting children.

In 2017, the Office established the first platform for horizontal cooperation, focusing on Kazakhstan’s progressive experience in promoting adolescent mental health and in addressing suicide ideation and attempts among adolescents. UNICEF, with national authorities, will host the first international conference on adolescent mental health in January 2018 in Almaty. It will bring together over 350 international participants, including experts, international professional associations, UN agencies, donors, and government authorities from seven countries to exchange knowledge and good practice.

Effective knowledge management is an essential component of the horizontal cooperation approach. UNICEF Kazakhstan continued to take steps to ensure the comprehensive packaging of programme information and knowledge to support horizontal cooperation. In 2017, particular emphasis was placed on documenting Kazakhstan’s results in justice for children (for horizontal cooperation in 2018), including the review of sub-national pilot programmes on alternative measures, and the commission of a sector evaluation for 2018.

With the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF commenced exploring the Government’s commitment to invest official development assistance (ODA) in children’s programmes in Central Asia. UNICEF will support effective strategies – including a child-friendly ODA concept – that ensure that it is distributed in a manner consistent with the principle of protecting the ‘best interests of the child’.

Horizontal exchange was also supported to advance current programmes. Experience was shared by national authorities in Moldova and Serbia on SDG monitoring for children. Good practice exchange between ombudspersons for children was also facilitated, including with Armenia and Uzbekistan and through participation of the National Commissioner for Children’s Rights for Kazakhstan at the European Network of Ombudspersons. With Child Helpline International, UNICEF also supported knowledge exchange between child helplines in Central Asia and Asia Pacific Region.

**Identification and promotion of innovation**

The country programme continued to mobilize Kazakhstan’s growing capacity in technology around results for children. Multiple partnerships were developed in 2017 with academia, start-up incubator-accelerator programmes, venture funds, quasi-state bodies and the UNICEF Office of Innovation to advance in three areas.
- On blockchain, UNICEF engaged start-ups, incubators and venture funding around the development of smart contracts for UNICEF business processes.

- On data science, UNICEF engaged academia and the business sector in establishing a collaborative hub for the innovative analysis of varied data from multiple sources, including on information poverty and school connectivity.

- With national partners, UNICEF commenced actions to establish the first unmanned aerial vehicles testing corridor in Central Asia, primarily to explore their utility for disaster risk assessment.

In March 2017, UNICEF opened its first Innovations Lab in Central Asia, hosted by IITU. With technical support from UNICEF, the Lab facilitates multi-stakeholder collaboration around innovative, technology-driven ideas focused on results for children, incubates and transforms those ideas into ‘market-ready’ products.

In June-July 2017, the UNICEF Innovation Lab ran a full-time residency programme for social entrepreneurs and innovators for children. The programme included master-classes on project management, design, programming, branding and marketing. UNICEF and IITU continued to run hackathons, including at EXPO-2017 on ‘Innovation for Children in an Urbanising World’. From 2018, the Lab will focus on blockchain and data science.

UNICEF Kazakhstan continued to engage the Ministry of Health on a range of technologically innovative approaches. These included digitizing data collection and reporting for home- visiting nurses, facilitating better data retention and faster analysis, and more time for interaction with families. Mobile applications to improve parenting skills were also rolled-out.

In 2017, UNICEF, with the national statistics committee, worked to introduce U-survey in Kazakhstan at sub-national level to collect data on children to track their subjective wellbeing and inform relevant policies.

### Service delivery

UNICEF continued to support local authorities to model inclusive programmes and policies promoting new and enhanced services that reduce equity gaps for the most vulnerable children.

For example, in 2017 UNICEF supported authorities in Mangistau and Kyzylorda to pilot the delivery of universal, progressive home visitation services. Expanding the scope of services required re-orientation of primary health care systems in pilot facilities and related capacity, including nurses and social workers; revision of pre- and in-service training modules and the development and integration of mobile technology into e-health management systems. Around 14,000 households (including 5,750 children aged under five) were covered, and over 450 families with children under-five were referred to progressive services such as pre-school and social protection services or crisis centres. Each nurse reached about 75 families per month (five per day), and identified about nine families at-risk. While an assessment is on-going, the services may have contributed significantly to a number of results for children. These could include: reducing infant mortality among the households covered; increasing exclusive breastfeeding; achieving greater recognition among women on danger signs; and reducing child injuries. The UNICEF-supported development and application of mobile technology for home- visitors with the Ministry of Health demonstrated the efficiency and potential use of digital health records, including for monitoring the performance of service providers.
UNICEF also worked to influence the policies and standards governing the quality and coverage of services. For example, UNICEF facilitated exchange between state authorities, NGOs, and schools of social work on family support services and the development of the social work profession. This included efforts to incorporate international ethical principles, standards and good practice around case management, intersectoral referral, quality assurance and supervision, and the prevention of stigma and discrimination against families and children at risk. Similarly, UNICEF continued to improve service delivery for children in contact with the justice system in line with international standards and approaches.

**Human rights-based approach to cooperation**

In June 2017, the Government of Kazakhstan submitted its first state party report on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. The report noted that there are approximately 145,000 children with a disability of whom around 96,500 are of school age; and that 80,000 of the children have a registered disability. It highlighted progress for children, especially in the development of CSO-run social services for developing abilities and for rehabilitation, improved social allowances, foster care initiatives for children with disabilities, better participation in sports, and improved statistics. The report can be found at http://www.enbek.gov.kz/ru/node/344745

The 'medical model' of disability currently determines how children and adults with disabilities are counted, their eligibility for services and benefits and it strongly influences how they are perceived by society in general. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disability called for greater urgency by Kazakhstan to adopt the 'social model' of disability and highlighted the importance of addressing challenges, including demographic data disaggregation, and effective representation of persons with disabilities by CSOs.

Being developed with the support of UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women, the upcoming 5th periodic report of Kazakhstan to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women will highlight progress to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against children and women. Initiatives include the elaboration and adoption of standards on the protection of victims of domestic violence, and the review of the Law on Domestic Violence which will clarify roles and responsibilities for state bodies in the prevention, identification, registration and response to cases of violence. This pays special attention to procedures for the protection of the girl child by law enforcement and judicial bodies.

UNICEF continued to support Kazakhstan to implement outstanding recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This included support to the National Commissioner for Children's Rights to convene national dialogue platforms which were established in 2016 to coordinate the efforts of the Government and CSOs around implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF provided support to ensure adherence to international standards, and facilitated inter-country knowledge exchange and dialogue on good practices. The latter included establishing collaborative links between Ombudsperson functions in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and with the European Network of Ombudspersons.

In 2017, UNICEF supported the National Statistics Committee to produce a comprehensive compendium of child well-being statistics that are aligned with international standards, including improved disaggregation. With the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR),
UNICEF participated in advocacy and policy dialogue on the protection of the rights of stateless children to registration, education and health services.

**Gender equality**

Gender-responsive adolescent health remains relevant for Kazakhstan, with mental health issues affecting girls disproportionately. Data shows that mental health problems are the most-prevalent underlying causes of suicidal behaviour among children aged 13-16 years in Kyzylorda and Mangistau regions. Girls showed higher rates of psychological problems leading to a higher prevalence of suicidal ideation, requiring specific strategies to promote girls' mental health and well-being. In 2017, UNICEF continued to support national partners to implement comprehensive, school-based, gender-responsive mental health promotion and suicide prevention services.

UNICEF also continued to support the piloting of universal, progressive home-visiting nurse services in Kyzylorda region. The approach increased access by pregnant women and mothers with children under five years of age to health services and information. According to an external assessment, in 2017, 69 per cent of pregnant women received home-visiting services at least twice compared to 21 per cent in 2016. A UNICEF-supported evaluation of the ECD and ECE systems in Kazakhstan also noted demonstrated improvements in early start of lactation and proper feeding of infants and young children. About 90 per cent of women reached were guided by home-visiting nurses on breastfeeding, supplemental feeding, child interaction and stimulation. More children under-six months of age were exclusively breastfed, especially in rural areas (an increase from 46 per cent in 2016 to 58 per cent in 2017 of children being exclusively breastfed).

A piece of UNICEF-supported research found societal tolerance for gender-based violence. Some 58.9 per cent of respondents believed that girl victims are partly to blame for sexual abuse, including one out of three media representatives and 39.3 per cent of child protection and justice specialists. Among children in institutions, girls (60.7 per cent) were significantly more likely than boys (28.9 per cent) to experience physical violence from parents and/or caregivers. Conversely, in school settings, boys (22.9 per cent) rather than girls (14.5 per cent) were more likely to experience physical violence from parents and/or caregivers. In 2018, UNICEF will support national authorities in a comprehensive, gender-sensitive communication campaign to promote zero tolerance towards all forms of violence against children.

**Environmental sustainability**

In 2017, UNICEF commissioned a situation analysis to inform the country programme, among other issues, on the most urgent climate issues affecting children's rights in Kazakhstan and to enable UNICEF prioritize its engagement in coherence with other UN organizations. Preliminary findings identified air pollution as an urgent issue affecting children in urban areas; however the availability and quality of related information requires further strengthening. In 2018, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF will further research the severity of air pollution in Kazakhstan and identify respective areas of support.

UNICEF raised awareness on the impact of climate change on children through its participation at EXPO-2017, an international exhibition on sustainable energy supply and resource management, which took place in Astana in June-September 2017. One of the most popular exhibits was an interactive sandbox for children, commissioned by UNICEF and UNDP that promoted environment-friendly 'green principles'.
Within its support to the country programme, UNICEF continued to refine the methodology for disaster risk analysis focusing on children’s vulnerabilities, including those related to climate change. Tested in three regions, the analysis informed on the nature and extent of risks linked to various hazards and risky conditions. Twenty-one cities and four districts participated in the child-friendly city initiative to apply an assessment system, comprising indicators on the concentration of harmful air pollutants (CO2, NO2, SO2 and lead), and questions about the impact on children of environmental hazards (air pollution and noise levels) The assessment also contained questions addressed to children, including on the availability of local green spaces, ecological education, access to drinking water, clean air and the collection of garbage.

Consultations with children and youth revealed that 55.4 per cent are “very” or “extremely worried” about natural disasters. UNICEF supported national authorities to mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into education standards and curricula and teachers’ in-service training.

UNICEF Kazakhstan took steps to minimize its carbon footprint in line with the “Greening UNICEF” initiative, including information-sharing, monitoring of office consumption of electricity (which contributed to 60 per cent of CO2 emissions), paper and water, and recycling.

**Effective leadership**

UNICEF in Kazakhstan continued to advance strategic management priorities set out for 2016-2020. The country management team (CMT) organized results groups to ensure timely and effective contributions by key specialists across programmes to multi-sectoral results. Complementing this, the CMT promoted a multi-sectoral approach to systemic reform for children in the country. The CMT also continued to expand and leverage UNICEF’s programme presence at the sub-national level, engaging local governments in assessing the situation of children and exploring critical support needs for 2017 with local authorities, including in Aktau, Akmola, Almaty, Kyzylorda and Mangistau oblasts.

The CMT continued to expand innovative and strategic partnerships with Parliament, the Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights, and national and international partners around a platform for continued implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Similar partnerships were enhanced with academia, civil society, the private sector and the Regional Office Bureau in Almaty on accelerating SDG results for children nationally and in Central Asia.

Along with other high-profile events in the country, UNICEF’s participation at EXPO-2017 from June to September 2017 was leveraged to strengthen UNICEF advocacy and public discourse for children, including around innovation for children’s rights and SDGs. Significant attention was given to developing partnerships with the business sector, including in technology.

Progress on annual priorities was monitored regularly by senior management. Management decisions were risk-informed. The most frequently applied operating procedures were reviewed, including processing of cash transfers, use of long-term agreements and procurement planning. Steps were taken to strengthen planning and reporting, including budget management and internal communication. In collaboration with UNICEF Headquarters’ Field Results Group, the Country Office prepared to implement e-tools.
UNICEF Kazakhstan implemented a harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) assessment and assurance plan for 2017, and revised the table of authority and composition of statutory committees, which operated in accordance with organizational standards.

**Financial resources management**

During 2017, UNICEF Kazakhstan maintained adequate and functioning internal controls over financial management, in line with organizational financial rules, regulations and procedures. Financial responsibilities were executed in a manner consistent with the delegation of authority established in the table of authority. In 2017, the status of bank and general ledger accounts were monitored monthly, and financial year closure activities were completed on time. Bank reconciliations were error free and completed on time. Receivables and cash receipts (including VAT, reimbursement for common services, income from disposed assets and cash refunds) were recorded accurately. Petty cash counts were conducted quarterly. The physical count of property, plant and equipment was conducted and reconciled without discrepancy.

The disbursement of cash transfers to implementing partners was accurately recorded. The status of disbursements was monitored regularly and there was no instance of delinquent direct cash transfers over nine months at year end. UNICEF Kazakhstan also implemented programme monitoring visits and spot checks related to partners’ appropriate use of cash transfers. All staff benefitted from training to introduce the UNICEF eZHACT. Migration to eZHACT required revision of the vendor database and adjustments to user’s roles and accountabilities.

UNICEF Kazakhstan fully utilized its Regular Resources and Support Budget allotments for 2017. Expiring Other Resources allotments were fully utilized. Donor reports pertaining to the country programme were submitted on time. Budget utilization was reviewed systematically during CMT, programme and section meetings. The CMT also considered the overall funding needs of the country programme.

Cash flow forecasting for programmes was inconsistent in 2017, resulting in underestimation of cash needs in the fourth quarter. Cash flow estimation will be strengthened in 2018 under the supervision of the CMT. The Contract Review Committee and Programme Cooperation Agreement Review Committee met in accordance with procedures, to ensure efficient, transparent and cost effective commitment of resources.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

Other Resources (OR) income continued to be a significant contributor to UNICEF’s results for children in Kazakhstan in 2017, supporting a large share of activities taking place at the oblast level. While UNICEF Kazakhstan participates in regional initiatives and was a recipient of some flexible Other Resources thematic funds in 2017, much of the OR income available to the country programme continued to be provided by the Government of Kazakhstan through multi-year UN joint programmes in Kyzylorda and Mangystau regions. Approximately US$2.3 million was fully utilized by UNICEF in 2017 to support the programmes, which concluded in 2017. The country programme also benefitted from EU funding in 2017, supporting reform for children in contact with the justice system.

Reliance on OR will continue in 2018, although current political and economic conditions significantly reduced OR funding from Kazakhstan. UNICEF’s ability to raise OR through traditional donors also remains severely limited. Donors have reduced their presence in Kazakhstan, or are focusing away from supporting large-scale reforms in favour of small grants
to NGOs. Nevertheless, UNICEF Kazakhstan leveraged further EU funding, responding to a multi-country initiative on children affected by migration beginning 2018.

The private sector remains a largely untapped source of income and innovative partnerships. The relatively large numbers of international subsidiaries in Kazakhstan point to a growing private sector and the potential for alliance-building around results for children. In 2017, UNICEF Kazakhstan explored a range of potential private sector partnerships, including around corporate social responsibility and with potential for generating Other Resources income. In 2018, UNICEF Kazakhstan will implement a revised fund mobilization strategy, focusing on emerging donors and pursuing innovative fund-raising initiatives for flexible, non-earmarked resources, including through Government and the private sector. UNICEF Kazakhstan will also consider establishing a dedicated fundraising function.

**Evaluation and research**

The UNICEF Kazakhstan evaluation function is incorporated within UNICEF’s overall support to the national Child Rights Monitoring System. In 2017, UNICEF Kazakhstan prioritized core resources to evaluate and research the performance of national systems which impact on children’s rights, and to strengthen national capacity in evaluation and research. In line with the Plan for Research, Monitoring, Impact and Evaluation (known as ‘PRIME’), the office completed one sector-wide evaluation (on ECD-ECE) and commissioned two further evaluations: the first on the justice for children sector and the second on a UNICEF-supported pilot programme on adolescent mental health. UNICEF also engaged in research and capacity development. At year end, three of the planned activities were completed and five were ongoing.

In 2017, standard operating procedures were established to enhance staff accountability for, and the efficiency and quality of UNICEF-supported evaluations and research. In 2018, the office will continue to enhance the functioning of its Evaluation Review Board, including through the engagement of national partners. UNICEF Kazakhstan will also continue to strengthen the national evaluation capacity, including the institutionalization within academic and research institutions of evaluation standards and curricula.

In accordance with its Costed Evaluation Plan, UNICEF Kazakhstan published the joint evaluation of national ECD and ECE systems in meeting respective policy goals for children. The United Nations Evaluation Group standards of independence, objectivity, impartiality were met. A working group comprising the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, relevant CSOs and the private sector began to address findings, while related UNICEF-supported activities were incorporated into 2018-2019 multi-year work plans.

UNICEF Kazakhstan also participated in the evaluation of UNICEF’s approach to Health Systems Strengthening, commissioned by the Office of Evaluation, contributing case studies in a number of areas. UNICEF also contributed to the evaluation of UN Joint Programmes in Kyzylorda and Mangistau regions. Despite efforts, neither of the UN evaluations was considered by UNICEF to meet United Nations Evaluation Group standards, nor were they found useful for programmatic learning.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

The CMT reviewed its environmental footprint for 2016 and identified clear opportunities to reduce consumption. These included reducing use of electricity, water and paper which in 2016, compared to 2015 baseline values had increased by 16 per cent (electricity), 140 per cent (water) and reached 1000 sheets per day of paper. While the number of office-based personnel
had also increased by 30 per cent, partially explaining the increases, the following actions were taken in 2017 to reduce consumption

The office replaced electric lighting with LED energy-savings lamps. Light efficiency sensors were installed in bathrooms and stair flights. A certified electricity audit was commissioned to assess consumption patterns and to develop an optimization plan. Testing and measurement of office devices was conducted and results of the assessment are expected in February 2018.

The office renovated central heating radiators and pipes and caulked window flaws. The use of oil-heaters was reduced to a minimum - significant for Astana where winter temperatures regularly fall below minus 25 degrees Celsius.

All printers were set by default to two-sided printing mode, scrap paper was reused, reducing paper consumption and improving paper recycling by 33 per cent.

The office transitioned to Light Office, which is expected to realize efficiency gains and cost savings progressively, notwithstanding the initial cost of migration which required one-time investments to set up new infrastructure and doubling of bandwidth (from 40 Mbps to 100 Mbps). By 2020, forgone investments in server infrastructure and maintenance could save US$25,000. Intangibles such as high-speed internet and simplified connectivity will also increase efficiency, without compromising security and potentially enable faster response lead-times.

**Supply management**

In 2017, UNICEF procured programme supplies, individual and institutional contracts for services, office supplies and assets amounting to US$2,675,052. Supplies channelled through Procurement Services were valued at US$1,476,345. Supply assistance to the country programme was US$1,198,700, including institutional contracts (US$657,944, mainly for research, including studies and surveys), individual consultancies (US$348,275), operating supplies (US$157,351, including consumables and low-value purchases), and US$36,137 in assets purchased by direct ordering. No emergency supplies were procured in 2017.

The procurement function was managed in accordance with financial rules and regulations, and relevant UNICEF policies and procedures. Most service contracts did not exceed US$30,000. Nine requests for proposals and one invitation to bid were solicited. The Contract Review Committee reviewed seven cases, including two contracts above US$100,000. Service providers submitted vendor documentation to the UN Market Place for pre-qualification and clearance by UNICEF’s Supply Division. Where appropriate, the procurement of services and supplies within programme cooperation agreements was implemented by partners themselves, with UNICEF support through direct cash transfers.

In accordance with the memorandum of understanding with SK Pharmaceuticals, the state distributor of vaccines and pharmaceuticals, in 2017 through Procurement Services, UNICEF procured antiretroviral drugs on behalf of the Government of Kazakhstan. This was valued at US$1,476,345, providing a comparatively lower-cost and higher-quality procurement option for the country, which reportedly allowed for a 30 per cent increase in coverage of essential medicines for children and mothers. The Government committed subsequently to procure a further US$5.3 million in antiretrovirals in 2018 through UNICEF Procurement Services.
UNICEF Kazakhstan organized an experience-sharing seminar with the participation of UNICEF Supply Division, the Ministry of Health, Republican AIDS Centre and the procurement agent - SK Pharmaceuticals - and presented UNICEF’s global experience and knowledge in procurement. In 2018, UNICEF will support the reduction of system gaps in the supply chain for essential commodities, including better needs forecasting, policy advocacy and technical assistance to align legislation with international standards for the procurement of essential supplies for children. Effective 2018, the office will be supported by a Procurement Services Officer (NOA), funded by Supply Division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF Kazakhstan: 2017 total value of procurement, including for other UNICEF offices (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services – institutional contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services – individual consultancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct order assets/low value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Security for staff and premises**

UNICEF Kazakhstan significantly enhanced security systems in 2016 to address outstanding recommendations by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). In 2017, the Office maintained those measures and finalized others. This included a metal detector frame being installed at the front entrance to the UNICEF premises for screening visitors. Access control software was configured to establish control zones within office space and enable the use of electronic keys (UN IDs) and corresponding logs. New digital cameras were procured to improve the quality of CCTV, additional lightning was installed in front of the garage doors in the inner yard.

Additionally, a number of security enhancements were initiated in the UN Common Premises in Almaty by UNDSS and the UN Common Premises team, including the installation of metal bars, reinforcement of gates and entrances, and renewal of CCTV. Some of the measures will be completed in 2018. UNDSS also facilitated security and first aid training for all UN personnel in Astana, which was attended by at least 50 per cent UNICEF staff.

One fire drill and one warden drill were conducted in 2017. The Business Continuity Plan was tested and updated, with critical staff executing key functions by remote access to office systems. The VHF connectivity was tested by hand-held radios, and the office satellite equipment (BGAN, Thuraya) was examined.

**Human resources**

Seven recruitments were completed in 2017, including one international UN Volunteer (Partnerships) and one national UN Volunteer (Child Rights Monitoring). A new post of administrative assistant (GS5) was allocated additionally to the office effective 2018, enabling the Office to have a dedicated human resources assistant post. Two temporary assignments were engaged to cover staff maternity leave and special leave without pay. The Regional Programme and Budget Review also approved a procurement officer (NOA), for which
recruitment was ongoing at year end. The post will support procurement services and supply chain strengthening. E-recruitment was used effectively to systematize the selection of staff, consultants and individual contractors.

All staff finalized their performance plans for 2016 in ‘ACHIEVE’ on time. Staff development needs were identified in the office learning plan. The majority of learning activities were group-focused, with some designed and delivered by staff. In 2017, staff undertook training in Emergency Preparedness and Response, Procurement and Contracting for Services, e-ZHACT, UN for All, Staff Safety and Security, Performance Management and Emotional Intelligence. New staff were provided information on UN Cares on induction and all staff passed on-line training on HIV at workplace, and know how to use First Aid kit and post-exposure prophylactics. Senior staff undertook the UNICEF Management Master Class Course and one staff benefited from a stretch assignment at another duty station. The office was also briefed on the key components of human resources reform by the UNICEF Regional HR Manager for Europe and Central Asia.

The local Staff Association developed an action plan to address recommendations arising from the 2017 global staff survey. The Joint Consultative Committee was convened twice in 2017. Staff also benefitted from office renovation, new furniture, improved safety of office premises. Flexi-time, alternative work arrangements and special leave without pay were exercised by over 20 per cent of personnel. All staff effectively used the online human resource self-service facilities.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

The Office continued to prioritize the functioning of and accessibility by staff to information and communication technology facilities and systems, including effective systems maintenance and user support. Internet speed was upgraded with ISP K-CELL and ISP Kazakhtelecom. Internet bandwidth was increased in Astana to 100 Mbps and to 20 Mbps for Almaty, which improved connectivity quality. The backup internet solution was enhanced to ensure internet stability and business continuity.

With UNICEF ECARO support, major global releases were implemented: Astana and Almaty offices migrated to Light Office (which supports easy remote access to UNICEF systems), OneDrive was activated for end users, and a new backup solution was implemented. The PBX was upgraded with new technology. Savings are expected from office investments in hardware and infrastructure support, and through efficiency gains in terms of connectivity speed and system access. The Almaty office will reduce common services expenditures upon discarding local area network support. UNICEF-supported standards on hardware and data security were maintained: the office phased out obsolete computers, replacing them with energy-saving laptops.

The External Relations function at UNICEF Kazakhstan maintained UNICEF’s presence on the following digital platforms and social networks:

- YouTube ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmHmRc4VeyagxqEoYMN2-jg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmHmRc4VeyagxqEoYMN2-jg));
- Twitter ([https://twitter.com/unicef_kaz](https://twitter.com/unicef_kaz));
- Facebook ([https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFKazakhstan/](https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFKazakhstan/));
- Instagram ([https://www.instagram.com/unicefkazakhstan/](https://www.instagram.com/unicefkazakhstan/));
- VK ([https://vk.com/club22173703h](https://vk.com/club22173703h)).
In 2017, improvements to UNICEF Kazakhstan web-portal (http://unicef.kz///) interface design and content were introduced. The Partnerships function of the country programme also supported the development of the following external civil society web-portals: www.balahelp.kz; and www.balanews.kz.

Programme components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1: Families with children, adolescents, and young people living close to or below the national subsistence minimum are more resilient (to economic and social deprivation, and stress) and they benefit more from equitable access to quality and inclusive social services and transfers.

Analytical statement of progress
The second year of implementation of the Country Programme of Cooperation (2016-2020) between the Government of Kazakhstan and UNICEF took place against the continued backdrop of relatively unfavourable economy. These included tightened fiscal budgets and flattened allocations to social reforms, including a moratorium on new publically funded social initiatives through 2017. These conditions reinforced the urgency of enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable children, their families and communities, and provided an opportunity for UNICEF Kazakhstan to continue to demonstrate how this can be done cost-effectively at the local levels and to advocate for more effective and targeted social assistance.

Despite the economic constraints, overall in 2017 the country achieved positive results for the most vulnerable children. These include those children living under or close to the national poverty line, children with disabilities, children without parental care, children victims of violence, abuse and neglect, children in contact with the justice system, as well as marginalized, stigmatized, and socially-excluded children and adolescents.

UNICEF engaged in policy dialogue with Parliament, line ministries, local authorities and CSOs with aim to establish national policy and budgeting framework for effective social assistance and social services in the country. UNICEF provided recommendations on the roll out of reformed targeted assistance schemes, advocating reducing exclusion errors and enhancing poverty measurement approaches, based on evidence. The simulation of reformed poverty reduction benefits in the country demonstrated potentially negative effects on vulnerable children in low income families. For example, up to 362,264 households which currently receive the State Children's Allowance and categorical transfers for families with four and more children would lose their benefits as a result of the reform. UNICEF also contributed to development of the draft concept of social work and social services, and in 2018-2020 will support the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in a joint programme on social work in support of current reforms.

In addition, continued economic and social challenges and pressure on social sector budgets raised the value-add of UNICEF in demonstrating cost-efficient ways to transform policy into effective and sustainable equity-focused solutions for children. UNICEF supported several initiatives to pilot child-focused services that respond to social and economic risks facing particular groups of children.

For example, UNICEF supported authorities in Kyzylorda and Mangistau oblasts to pilot universally progressive home-visiting services. These provide a package of social and health
services to all families with children under-five and to pregnant women, and progressive services for the most vulnerable families. The initial assessment for Kyzylorda indicated that infant mortality caused by preventable diseases decreased from 14.4 per 1,000 in 2016 to 8.8 deaths in 2017; and under-five mortality rates fell from 17.7 per 1,000 in 2016 to 12.1 in 2017. Similarly, the percentage of mothers who could identify danger signs to health increased to 63 per cent in 2017.

UNICEF also supported pilot initiatives demonstrating significant improvements in mental health and well-being, and notable decrease of suicidal behaviour among most vulnerable adolescents experiencing mental health issues. These reached over 60,000 adolescents over two years, and equipped over 700 educational psychologists and 200 health workers with instruments and skills to identify and follow up on adolescents at high risk of mental health problems and suicidal behaviour. Significant collaboration with CSOs enabled 13 regions across the country to launch locally-resourced adolescent mental health promotion and suicide prevention programmes reaching over 250,000 adolescents. Kazakhstan’s experience will be strongly profiled at the first international conference on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children and Adolescents, taking place in January 2018 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

UNICEF’s specific contribution to the progressive achievement of this Outcome is defined through outlined multisectoral outputs. In 2017, UNICEF Kazakhstan organized its contribution around a portfolio of programme inputs in advocacy, policy dialogue and advice, knowledge generation and child rights monitoring, convening partnerships and leveraging resources for children, capacity development of professionals and organizations, modelling and testing innovations and horizontal cooperation, including beyond borders. The results and progress of the component outputs for this Outcome are detailed below.

**OUTPUT 1.1:** The effectiveness of social assistance in reducing the vulnerability of children and their families is strengthened; the revised national subsistence minimum is equity-based and child-friendly; and the social model of disability is incorporated into relevant legislation.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF advocacy to reduce exclusion errors and enhance poverty measurement approaches to expand coverage of social assistance programmes continued in 2017. Ongoing reform of programmes aims to change eligibility rules and transform access to benefits and their administration. UNICEF’s assessment of social assistance transfers (Targeted Social Assistance and State Children’s Allowance for low-income families) revealed large exclusion errors, which were indirectly estimated to be 80 per cent for Targeted Social Assistance and 20 per cent for the State Children’s Allowance.

Simulation of reformed poverty reduction benefits in the country with an eligibility threshold of 50 per cent subsistence minimum demonstrated potentially negative effects on vulnerable children in low income families. For example, 362,264 households which currently receive State Children’s Allowance and categorical transfers for families with four and more children would lose their benefits as a result of the reform.

UNICEF advocated to increase the eligibility threshold for Targeted Social Assistance up to 70 per cent of subsistence minimum (reformed threshold is 50 per cent) to minimize exclusion of low-income families with children (551,156 children in 2016). To improve effectiveness of targeting, UNICEF recommended the review of means-testing imputations, in particular, revision of agricultural income calculation to enable enhanced coverage of rural poor. The importance of
transitional arrangements for families with four and more children was stressed, and a phase-out approach was recommended to avoid negative effects on 232,159 households who received categorical cash transfer in 2015. The phase-out approach was adopted, and revision of the agricultural income methodology was initiated with support from UNICEF.

The Government approved a revision of subsistence minimum, by changing the share of food in the basket to 55 per cent with an estimated 9 per cent increase of nominal value of subsistence minimum in 2018. The revised level appears to cater for the needs of children in line with international standards. A national subsistence minimum that underpins poverty measurement remains a major bottleneck for comprehensive reform and social assistance programmes in the country. UNICEF’s assessment noted a lack of consistency in poverty measurement with application of an equivalence scale to households with children. In the short-term, the feasibility of overhauling the subsistence minimum standards was assessed to be very unlikely. Hence, UNICEF focused on addressing coverage and targeting issues of the social assistance programmes.

UNICEF’s study on barriers to access social assistance and social services identified factors in low uptake of social assistance programmes, including limited awareness of poverty-targeted social assistance, restrictive eligibility rules and onerous documentation requirements. In 2018, UNICEF will support a framework for joint activities with government and CSOs to improve access to cash transfer programmes by families with children.

UNICEF continued raising awareness of the ministries and the Parliament towards the incorporation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) methodology into national legislation and policy, including for the identification and measurement of disability in children. The incorporation of the ICF methodology would likely increase the number of children recognized as having a disability and improve their access to social support and rehabilitation services. However, recognizing that the adoption of the ICF methodology would require more social services, which are currently unavailable, the Government prolonged the timeframe for adoption.

**OUTPUT 1.2: Improved legislation facilitates the better cohesion of the health, education and social protection services**

**Analytical statement of progress**

Systemic barriers to better cohesion of services for vulnerable and poor families with children in Kazakhstan persist. Gaps in legislation, sector-based budgeting (which excludes intersectoral needs), and the absence or limited effectiveness of cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms often lead to shortfalls in the social service system affecting children and their families. In 2017, with UNICEF support, the Government continued to address such issues as limited linkages between different service providers at sub-national level, the establishment and functioning of intersectoral mechanisms, and reinforcement of social work.

Focusing at sub-national level, UNICEF approached the development of intersectoral protocols of cooperation between primary health care services, social transfer administrators, and other locally available social services in two areas.

In contributing to proposed reforms of Targeted Social Assistance programmes and with focus on family support services, UNICEF assessed barriers facing vulnerable and poor families in accessing specialized social services. The study revealed that people living in poorest regions
lack information about special social services, including about what is currently available, the application process and the eligibility criteria. Furthermore, time and distance factors either deter households from applying and taking-up special social services or inconvenience the receipt of necessary support. It was recommended that local service providers focus on targeted outreach to better identify families in difficult life situations and provide them with information. It is important to reinforce the role of frontline workers in social sectors at community level, including social workers, patronage nurses, and teachers.

The universal-progressive home-visiting services model was piloted at primary health care level of Kyzylorda oblast. The model was developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and local authorities, and tested in three primary health care facilities in Kyzylorda oblast. During the active pilot phase (May 2016 – December 2017) the model service reached to 5,755 children aged under five years. Each of the 21 patronage nurse provided services to about 75 families per month, including about nine families each with progressive services due to their risk status.

In response to the needs of vulnerable and poor families, an inter-disciplinary task force was set up at local level to test the referral mechanisms and intersectoral cooperation among social service providers. These include local governments, social protection and employment, education, health, internal affairs, and migration services. The intersectoral protocols of the model were successfully tested at pilot primary health care facilities with a focus on case management approaches. As a result, all families with children identified by nurses as being at risk were provided with comprehensive family support from other sectors (pre-school services, employment services, cash and in-kind assistance, specialised services) in addition to medical care.

**OUTPUT 1.3:** The patronage nursing system provides a comprehensive range social and health home visiting services to children and their families, which meet international standards.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF supported authorities in Kyzylorda and Mangistau oblasts to pilot universal-progressive home-visiting services that provide a universal package of social and health services to all families with children under-five and to pregnant women, and progressive services for the most vulnerable families, in line with a dedicated case management approach. In Kyzylorda oblast, piloting was conducted by three primary health care facilities at urban, peri-urban and rural areas of Kyzylorda oblast, covering 14,000 households in 2017. Coverage improved in 2017, with about 30 per cent of pregnant women reached in their first trimester. Approximately 450 families with children under five were referred to progressive services by home-visiting social workers. Each nurse reached about 75 families per month (twice as many as non-pilot primary health care facilities, including all children under five years) and covered approximately nine vulnerable households in need of more frequent and progressive services.

Intersectoral commissions institutionalized detailed referral algorithms between health, education, and social protection services. Authorities also established a system of ‘supportive supervision’ for nurses to mentor difficult cases, guide in the application of procedure, develop competencies, and reduce burnout of nurses.

According to a lot quality assurance sampling assessment in Kyzylorda, infant mortalities caused by preventable diseases decreased from 14.4 per 1,000 in 2016 to 8.8 deaths in 2017; and under-five mortality rates fell from 17.7 per 1,000 in 2016 to 12.1 in 2017. Similarly, the
percentage of mothers who could identify danger signs to health increased to 63 per cent in 2017. Increased trust in the nurses, and near universal communication by nurses on child development practices were also noted.

UNICEF, in cooperation with E-Health Department of the Ministry of Health, launched mobile applications for patronage nurses and for parents to improve knowledge on ECD. In total, 30 nurses piloted the technology, which will be scaled up in 2018. The application greatly simplified data collection by nurses, with impact on case management and monitoring, since the data is being synchronized into digital platforms by the Ministry of Health.

With the Kazakh University of Continuous Studies, UNICEF supported Departments of Health in 16 regions to prepare to roll out training on the universal-progressive approach, based on 16 modules developed by UNICEF ECARO. Integrated management of childhood illness coordinators and lead paediatricians are now ready to roll out the training across the regions. The 16 modules were also incorporated into vocational, bachelors and masters curricula for nurses and medical students in partnership with the Union of Medical Colleges of Kazakhstan and the Republican Centre of Health Development.

Slower implementation of the pilot was experienced in Mangistau, where an outdated system of zoning paediatrician districts impedes cooperation between nurses and general practitioners. UNICEF will support a solution to the issue in 2018.

The positive outcomes and remaining challenges pertaining to the pilots were reviewed at a dedicated national conference held in Astana in December 2017, gathering representatives from all regions. The Ministry of Health endorsed the pilot and recommended gradual replication nationwide. UNICEF will continue to support national authorities in 2018 to perfect the model and ensure its evaluation and costing prior to replication.

OUTPUT 1.4: A quality assurance system over social work, including case management, gatekeeping and referral is functioning and aligns international standards.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF’s review of policies and standards in social work identified gaps in quality assurance on gate-keeping, referrals, case management and supervision. For example, the social work system is fragmented and sectorial. Ministries of health, education and social protection have developed separate job descriptions, standards and tools guiding the provision of special social services and the work of social workers. Quality assurance is not elaborated in social work standards and effective and quality responses to meet multiple and complex needs of families with children is lacking. The absence of an integrated governance structure, budget and shared information systems greatly limits effectiveness.

In 2017, UNICEF-supported pilots at primary health care level and in the justice sector are demonstrating the incorporation of international standards on social work. Home-visiting nurses and social workers were coached on needs assessment for families with children and counselling techniques. Almost 500 families with children under five reached by the pilot were referred by social workers to pre-school, social protection, violence response and migration services. Supportive supervision was provided for social workers. Unified tools for case management (including for needs assessment and child/family plans) were established. Based on the pilot experience, the Ministry of Health initiated the revision of regulations guiding the field social workers in health with case management tools.
Case management in the justice sector was also tested within the UNICEF-supported pilot of alternative services for children in contact with the law, covering 108 cases. For example, alternative justice centres provided social work support to children and families, worked with teachers in schools and colleges, and referred the child to other support agencies as appropriate.

Quality assurance remained challenging and further coaching is needed in reporting to referring bodies and case-related decision making. The differences in case management approaches across sectors makes it difficult to sustain referrals and ensure consistency. UNICEF research showed that case management is weaker in education sector. Social pedagogues and guardianship authorities do not follow social work principles and have no operational procedures for working with children at risk (such as child victims of violence, children in conflict with the law, those without parental care, and out-of-school children). In 2018, UNICEF will focus on strengthening social work in education for children without parental care and those out-of-school.

In 2017, UNICEF also provided key inputs to the draft ‘Concept on the Continued Modernization of Social Assistance’. This aims to reform targeted social assistance, to introduce community-based social services and service financing through social banking, and to upgrade the capacity of social workers. The Concept impacts on numerous issues important to children, including Targeted Social Assistance, social work quality and alternative family-based care for children with disabilities. At the first national Social Workers’ Forum organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection with the support of UNICEF and other UN agencies, the principle of the best interests of the child in all social services reforms and of acute disparities among groups of children left behind by current services was raised.

**OUTPUT 1.5:** District-level authorities resource innovative approaches and policies to reduce the incidence of adolescent suicides; Youth Resource Centres (YRCs) provide outreach and awareness to vulnerable adolescents on the signs of depression, and promote help-seeking behaviour.

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF continued to support the introduction of intersectoral programmes to promote adolescent mental health and prevent suicide among adolescents. This was through advising accountable regional authorities in the roll out of the programmes, under a nationally-endorsed roadmap and budget and based on two UNICEF-supported pilots in Kyzylorda and Mangistau oblasts. By the end of the year, 13 of the 16 regions had allocated significant resources to launch the programmes.

UNICEF’s approach to suicide prevention is evidence-based and applies approaches advocated by WHO (2014) and The Lancet (2015). In Kazakhstan it is reinforced by experience from the implementation of large-scale programmes in Kyzylorda and Mangistau. These programmes reached over 60,000 adolescents during two years, and equipped over 700 educational psychologists and 200 health workers with instruments and skills to identify and follow up on adolescents at high risk of mental health problems and suicidal behaviour. Over 42,000 school and college staff members were trained as gatekeepers.

In 2017, active collaboration with NGOs enabled further outreach, including through online training, screening and monitoring. Some 257,527 adolescents nationwide from 2,169
educational institutions participated in three interactive awareness-raising lessons and received programme communication materials promoting mental health, health seeking behaviour and referral services. Strong support among 94 per cent of adolescents for the programme and its replication was noted in Kyzylorda.

At impact level, the Kyzylorda oblast programme showed a 50 per cent reduction in suicide ideation among adolescents aged 13-16 years, improved mental health status and well-being. The impact was more pronounced among adolescents at risk, showing an 80 per cent reduction in suicide ideation, the decreased prevalence of depression (from 9.1 per cent to 1.1 per cent), of anxiety (from 60.7 per cent to 6.8 per cent), and stress (from 13.5 per cent to 2.3 per cent). Notable improvement was observed in other pathological scales, such as psychological well-being, deliberate self-harm, emotional, conduct and peer problems, hyperactivity, pro-social behaviour. A significant increase was noted in cohesiveness and satisfaction levels, as well as a substantial decrease in friction and difficulties. There was better inclusion in the class environment and reduced levels of perceived barriers to help-seeking. Importantly, the programme greatly increased trust between adolescents and school psychologists, adolescents and parents, and parents and school staff. Remaining challenges include gaps in the referral system, which derive from some resistance among health workers to focus on addressing adolescent mental health issues.

UNICEF continued to support the institutional development of Youth Resource Centres towards transparent and accountable services for young people that promote, among other issues, needs-based direct activities with a particularly focus on the most marginal groups. Based on a three-year piloting experience, a master training package for building the capacity of YRCs was elaborated. A pool of 20 national master trainers on youth work led activities that increased the skills and knowledge of over 100 staff of 44 YRCs from five regions. UNICEF also supported the development of National YRC Standards with the Ministry of Religious and Civil Society Affairs. Beginning in 2018, the training programme and new YRC Standards will be applied by the national pool of master trainers to build the capacity of an additional 150 YRCs.

OUTPUT 1.6 District-level authorities incorporate risk and vulnerability assessment into local planning methodologies to improve needs-focused services for the most vulnerable children and adolescents and families and to support resilience.

Analytical statement of progress
The methodology on disaster risk analysis with focus on children’s vulnerabilities was developed by UNICEF with consideration of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for 2015-2030 and based on the good practices in the region. The methodology was adapted for application in Kazakhstan, taking into consideration the country’s system of the local governance and relevant emergency preparedness norms and standards. It is aimed at increasing the efficiency of the disaster risk management at the local level and decreasing children’s vulnerabilities in a cross-sectoral manner. It involved the participation of the governors of the territorial entities (districts, villages), local authorities from several sectors, and the general population, including children and youth.

In 2017, UNICEF facilitated testing of the methodology in Syrdarya district, Kyzylorda region, and Mangistau district, Mangistau region. The capacity of the local level emergency, education, health, social welfare, economy and infrastructure authorities and governors of villages in applying the methodology was strengthened. Using the risk formula, the probability and impact of disasters, the capacity of each districts’ territorial entities to withstand the negative factors of
natural disasters, severe weather conditions and emergencies were assessed. Teachers, parents and children were engaged in assessing children’s vulnerabilities that often exacerbate in disaster events.

The outcomes and recommendations of the child-centred disaster risk analysis were presented at the local (Kyzylorda, Aktau), national (Astana) and regional (DRR knowledge and management workshop in Bishkek) levels in March-July 2017. As a result, the methodology was recommended for the national level scale-up. Its integration into the existing risk management system will bring a number of benefits. It will improve interagency cooperation on DRR, increase the effectiveness of and responsibility for the DRR activities by involving all stakeholders, including residents, business organizations, to attract additional resources to prevent disaster risks and eliminate their consequences. The methodology will ensure improved awareness on safe behaviour, especially for vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and people with disabilities. It will also enable the general population to participate in the development and implementation of DRR activities that take into account their needs and to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of activities through public monitoring.

UNICEF will continue to support mainstreaming of the methodology, including in the system of retraining and advanced training of emergency specialists, in the work of interagency emergency commissions at the local level, and in the Territorial Development Programmes and action plans. In these Programmes and plans, a focus will be on including indicators which measure the improvement of the infrastructure to prevent, reduce the impact and eliminate the consequences of risks; on strengthening interdepartmental interaction; improving early warning system, and involvement of the general population. UNICEF will continue to advocate for the alignment of the oblast level safety profiles development mechanism to cover the issues of children’s vulnerabilities.

OUTCOME 2: Children, especially those in difficult life circumstances, suffer, witness and practice less psychological and physical maltreatment, including all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation at home, in school, in care, in custody and in public spaces.

Analytical statement of progress
Despite the economic constraints experienced during the year, Kazakhstan achieved positive results overall for children in 2017 under this component.

UNICEF continued to advocate for the elimination of violence against children. As a result, the national ‘Standards for Provision of Special Social Services to Victims of Domestic Violence’ were adopted to regulate the provision of services to victims of violence in the family, as well as those who are in a difficult life situation due to the existing risk of violence or abuse in the family, including children. Adoption of the Standards will allow for more systematic allocation of funds for violence prevention and rehabilitation services, as well as their coverage and quality.

The General Prosecutor’s Office, in cooperation with national authorities and UN agencies, continued implementation of the programme ‘Kazakhstan without violence in the family’. Within this programme, UNICEF supported piloting of structural reforms in South Kazakhstan oblast, which focused on the establishment of a Department and Units for Family Affairs at regional and district levels. UNICEF also assisted in developing horizontal and vertical cooperation algorithms between relevant state authorities; introducing social and psychological support services to families and children; opening centres for working with aggressors in the family; and updating administrative data related to violence in families.
UNICEF continued to support the National Commissioner for Children's Rights for Kazakhstan, strengthening its capacity for addressing violations and promoting children's rights in line with international standards. A public consultation office was opened in 2017, and a network of CSOs was engaged to pilot child rights monitoring in five regions of Kazakhstan. A children’s helpline (‘111’) was operationalized, taking over 5,350 calls, including over 200 cases concerning violence against children. UNICEF supported the National Commissioner for Children's Rights in key advocacy messaging, including a call to prohibit of corporal punishment of children in the family, in daycare, and in residential and alternative care settings.

With injury the third leading cause of child mortality in the country, UNICEF facilitated cross-sectoral initiatives on its prevention. This included technical discussions among relevant partners on the status of implementation of the national action plan for 2016-2017 to reduce mortality from childhood injuries. UNICEF commissioned a situation analysis of child injuries in Kazakhstan and initiated a knowledge, attitudes and practices study among parents/guardians of children on unintentional child injury. Capacity development was also prioritized for professionals working with children (including teachers, health workers, social workers, and police officers) on child injury prevention, as was developing a resource package for school children. National and local level education, emergency and construction authorities were engaged in follow up of the UNICEF-supported assessment of the structural safety of schools in East Kazakhstan, Kyzylorda, Mangistau, Almaty and Astana cities. Recommendations were also submitted to Parliament.

The country programme identified six component outputs which would entail UNICEF’s contribution towards the overall achievement of the outcome result. These six outputs target specific changes in the behaviour of social systems to achieve the goal that children – especially those in difficult life circumstances – suffer, witness and practice less psychological and physical maltreatment, including all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation at home, in school, in care, in custody and in public spaces.

The results achieved and the progress made within these six outputs are highlighted below.

**OUTPUT 2.1:** Greater awareness of the risks and long-term social and economic costs of violence against children results in increased public demand for ‘zero tolerance’ policies, reporting of cases and enforcement of legislation protecting children from violence.

**Analytical statement of progress**

With the National Centre for Human Rights and the European Union, UNICEF published the results of a knowledge, attitudes and practices survey related to violence against children in the family. The study significantly strengthened the national evidence base on violence against children, aided messaging for a communication for social change campaign planned for early 2018, and informed policy dialogue around ending violence and promoting ‘zero’ tolerance policies at national and sub-national levels.

UNICEF supported advocacy by the National Commissioner for Children's Rights on preventing and addressing violence against children. Key messages were delivered in the Parliament, and at thematic conferences and meetings. They included a call to prohibit corporal punishment of children in the family, in day care, residential and alternative care.

The second national conference on ‘Child Friendly Kazakhstan’ convened all sectors of
government and civil society around the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Specifically, the work of Dialogue Platform on prevention of violence against children, was supported by UNICEF technical assistance on international standards and practices. The Dialogue Platform, which includes Parliamentarians and CSOs, identified needed revisions to legislation to accurately define violence against children, to widen reporting, and to improve service provision for victims. Community-based social services for vulnerable families were piloted in Karaganda region, covering 52 women with children who were provided with housing and rehabilitation services.

UNICEF provided key inputs to the draft Law ‘On Amendments and Additions to Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan Concerning the Work of the Organizations Carrying out Child Rights Protection Functions’ to improve identification of children subject to violence, abuse and neglect through the medico-socio registry system. While the draft Law increases responsibility for violence and neglect of children from parents and caregivers it does not yet provide for family support services, such as improving parenting skills. The draft Law will be reviewed by state authorities in February 2018. The UNICEF-supported pilot on medico-socio home visits by nurses in Kyzylorda oblast identified and reported 87 cases of violence against children or child neglect cases, which were referred to authorities.

The National Commissioner for Children's Rights operationalized ‘Helpline 111’ in 2017, processing more than 5,350 calls from children in its first eight months, including 212 cases of violence against children. UNICEF supported capacity development for the management and staff of the helpline and connected it with the network of Child Helpline International. This enable the initiation of an accreditation process with Child Helpline International. In 2018, UNICEF will support a robust follow-up system for the Helpline on violence against children. The coordination by national authorities and CSOs of ‘Helpline 111’ services with other similar services will also be addressed. Overall, UNICEF will prioritize further development of case-management and referral protocols related to violence against children and engaging national authorities to sustain and develop a culture of reporting.

At sub-national level, more funding was allocated in 2017 to rehabilitation services for child victims of violence. However, the resource allocation for such programmes remains discretionary. UNICEF supported the costing of the services and discussed with representatives of Government and Parliament. The above-mentioned draft Law aims, among other issues, to ensure allocation of funding for the services, delivered by CSOs, through ‘state orders’.

**OUTPUT 2.2:** Legislation, policies and protocols (including respective accountabilities) related to violence against children are aligned across health, education and justice systems, legally enforced and regularly monitored.

**Analytical statement of progress**
National standards for the provision of special social services to victims of domestic violence were adopted by the Government, following advocacy by UNICEF, other international organizations and CSOs. The standards regulate service provision to victims as well as to those who are at-risk of violence or abuse in the family, including children. The adoption of the standards allows for more systematic allocation of funds for prevention and rehabilitation services.

In consultation with UNICEF and CSOs, the Institute of Legislation under the Ministry of Justice analysed the Law on Domestic Violence and its implementation in practice. A number of
findings and recommendations for improving the Law and its implementation framework were
addressed to the General Prosecutor’s Office, which oversees implementation of the national
legislation. The recommendations highlight the absence of a state authority responsible for
coordinating bodies involved in prevention of violence against children, as well of mechanisms
and algorithms for coordination. The recommendations included a focus on the education sector
for identification of child victims of violence, mandatory reporting of alleged child abuse, and
social rehabilitation for perpetrators.

The General Prosecutor’s Office continued implementation of the programme ‘Kazakhstan
Without Violence in the Family’. UNICEF supported the programme to achieve strong
programmes including: piloting of structural reforms in South Kazakhstan oblast to establish a
Department and Units for Family Affairs at regional and district levels; developing horizontal and
vertical cooperation algorithms between relevant state authorities; introducing social and
psychological support services to families and children; opening centres for working with
aggressors in the family; and updating administrative data related to violence in families.

UNICEF continued to pilot universal, progressive home-visitation services by nurses in
Kyzylorda. The extended mandate of the nurse included the identification, reporting and referral
of observed violence against children cases. Eighty-two severe cases of child abuse were
reported by nurses involved in the pilot, who applied new protocols and referred children and
families to respective authorities. The involvement of the nurse in reporting violence and in
promoting better parenting is emerging as a critical intersectoral function among healthcare,
education, guardianship and law enforcement authorities.

UNICEF also continued to support a pilot programme on preventing violence in schools. The
costing was completed in 2017, and efforts are under way for ensuring sustainability and
national scale-up of the programme.

Since measures remain largely uncodified, UNICEF supported draft Standard Operating
Procedures for police for processing criminal cases involving children. The Procedures also
provide instructions on processing cases involving violence against children.

The equipping of pilot child-friendly rooms in police, juvenile courts and probation offices in East
Kazakhstan, Kyzylorda and Mangistau oblasts was completed. Since 2017, video recording and
communication systems between the child’s room and the courtroom prevent direct contact by
child victims with perpetrators and facilitate children’s participation in court. Child-friendly rooms
in police and probation offices are equipped to provide secure and confidential environment for
communicating with children. Video-recording of interviews with child victims of crime is being
installed across the country from the national budget. In 2018, UNICEF will support training for
interviewing and other criminal procedures with children, in line with international standards.

OUTPUT 2.3: National authorities endorse and resource the transformation of residential
institutions, including schools for children with offending behaviour.

Analytical statement of progress
The draft law on the development of ‘Alternative Social Services and Transformation of Schools
for Children with Offending Behaviour’ passed the first reading in Parliament. The Law will
extend the mandate of the National Preventive Mechanism to monitor all children’s institutions.
It also transforms role of the centres of adaptation of adolescents to provide community-based
services for children in contact with the law, street children, and children on the move. However,
the law does not clarify the transformation actions at sub-national level. UNICEF will continue to support statutory and alternative services to perform gatekeeping and family support functions, revise standard operating procedures, and transform schools for children with offending behaviour into small community-based units for the provision of professional programmes to children in contact with the law.

A strategic framework and theory of change was elaborated in support of transformation initiatives in Kyzylorda and Aktau. UNICEF focused on (i) improving the institutional, legal and policy components for the effective functioning of child protection support services; (ii) transforming TSANs and special schools from residential institutions and places of detention to central hubs of the child protection system, and; (iii) establishment of small, closed units within community areas which provide therapeutic, rehabilitation services to children who are held on pre-trial detention or given a custodial sentence.

The framework guided central bodies in transforming two schools for children with offending behaviour (involving 17 children). UNICEF supported the legislative review of the relevant policies and protocols, mapping of children’s profiles and staff training. Although the transformation met resistance from the 88 staff and is not provided or by legislation, in Kyzylorda, a plan is under development to transform one ‘school' formulated based on the needs of children, and towards the provision of restorative and rehabilitation programmes.

To support transformation of orphanages under the Ministry of Education, UNICEF facilitated the review of the national approaches on de-institutionalization, prevention, family support and gatekeeping, alternative and after-care services, strengthening of social work. The analysis identified that despite the declining number of children in residential care institutions, children with disabilities are being left behind by the reforms.

UNICEF supported the Akimat (mayor) of Almaty city to review the status of de-institutionalization and document its experience with family support preventive services. UNICEF will support the design of a city plan to sustain services. To facilitate the transformation of residential care facilities and build capacity of professionals, a six modules package was drafted by the CSO “Family Academy” on social work techniques. Experience from Georgia and Moldova on de-institutionalization was also initiated to sensitize key duty bearers, including Parliamentarians, relevant government staff, NGOs and residential care institutions, and will continue in 2018.

OUTPUT 2.4: The quality and use by police and the judiciary of diversion, probation and rehabilitation schemes for children in justice processes is increased.

Analytical statement of progress
The Convention on the Rights of the Child recommends that every child taken into custody ‘should be brought before a competent authority to examine the legality of this deprivation of liberty within 24 hours’. Until recently, Kazakhstani legislation did not explicitly recognize the ‘shortest appropriate period of time’ principle and police custody lasted for up to 72 hours, including for children. Effective from January 2018, a new provision now limits detention to 24-hours police custody for children.

UNICEF continued to provide technical support to the Parliament on justice sector reforms and developed provisions to the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes introducing diversion mechanism for children in conflict with the law. Besides, UNICEF initiated a dialogue and
advocacy on adoption of the national concept or strategy for further development of the justice system for children to set new priorities and vision for its evolution.

UNICEF continued to pilot child-friendly justice system models at sub-national level. In East Kazakhstan, UNICEF demonstrated mechanisms for alternatives to convictions and deprivation of liberty. In Kyzylorda, alternative justice programmes for children at high risk of offending served as an alternative to placement of children in special schools for children with deviant behaviour. In Mangistau oblast, child-victim support services raised awareness on better protection and rehabilitation of children victims of crimes.

The piloted services demonstrated social and economic benefits. The cost of the provision of piloted services is ten times less than placing children in closed institutions. This was a critical consideration in the decision by central and local authorities to sustain existing services for children victims and witnesses of crimes in Mangistau oblast. However, continued discussion on sustainability with other piloting regions, East Kazakhstan and Kyzylorda oblasts, did not yet result in funding commitment by local governments. UNICEF will continue to advocate for sustainability for the services.

Considering evidence from the pilots, with the Parliament of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Interior has introduced amendments to legislation on 'medical and social records' for children and families in difficult life situations. In particular, this provision will allow local governments in cooperation with NGOs to provide medical, social and psychological support to children in contact with the justice system.

UNICEF commissioned a comprehensive evaluation of the Justice for Children sector. The evaluation, which will cover the three pilots, will serve as additional evidence for advancing the rights of children in contact with the justice system in Kazakhstan in line with international standards.

**OUTPUT 2.5: A system for data collection, monitoring reporting and analysis on the quality of care in closed institutions and schools is functioning; the Children's Ombudsperson and civil society independently monitor violence against children in closed institutions and schools.**

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF continued to support the recently established National Commissioner (Ombudsperson) for Children’s Rights in Kazakhstan, strengthening its capacity for addressing violations and promoting children’s rights in line with international standards. A public consultations office was opened in 2017, a network of CSOs was engaged to pilot child rights monitoring in five regions of Kazakhstan, and a children’s helpline (‘111’) was operationalized, taking over 5,350 calls, including over 200 cases concerning VAC. UNICEF supported the National Commissioner for Children’s Rights in key advocacy messaging, including a call to prohibit corporal punishment of children in the family, in daycare, and in residential and alternative care settings.

The first annual report of the National Commissioner for Children's Rights was publicly presented to Parliament, Government representatives, international and civil society organizations. UNICEF supported the elaboration of strategic development vision for the National Commissioner for Children's Rights. Overall, UNICEF’s support focused on enabling the office of the NCCR to function in line with international standards, and providing international peer support, including through the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children. In the
beginning of 2017, an NGO (Bakytty Bala) was established to support work of the NCCR. Among Government, there is an intention to establish a state-run secretariat to support its work.

Overall, the NCCR pursued further the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This included convening 13 cross-sectorial dialogue platforms around the implementation of the recommendations, and hosting the second annual conference “Child-friendly Kazakhstan”. Both initiatives aimed to raise public discourse and national commitment to address the issues and problems in protection of child rights in the country. In 2017, under each dialogue platform, a representative of CSOs received state funding for supporting the agenda of the group.

UNICEF continued to support the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), which was established in 2013 in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The National Commissioner for Human Rights held the first national NPM forum, highlighting the need and opportunities for expanding its mandate to cover children’s closed institutions. Currently, the mandate of NPM covers the centres for adaptation of children, special educational institutions, including those with special detention regime, colony for juveniles, pre-trial and post-trial detention facilities, police stations, children's departments at psychiatric and tuberculosis dispensaries, and children's home in the women's colony. Expanding the NPM mandate will allow total coverage of closed facilities for children. There are more than 200 institutions, including children's homes, medical and social institutions for children with disabilities, correctional boarding schools, orphanages and others. The draft Law ‘On Amendments and Additions to Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan Concerning the Work of the Organizations Carrying out Child Rights Protection Functions’ introduces this important change, and is at the final stage of discussion.

**OUTPUT 2.6:** National authorities resource inter-sectoral initiatives to advance child safety and reduce mortality and disability from injuries in children

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2016, UNICEF supported development of a methodology on school safety assessment in accordance with the global school safety framework and applied it in four regions and in Astana and Almaty cities. Working closely with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Emergency Committee and local authorities, UNICEF assessed the safety of 38 schools. Recommendations, such as development of a subset to the national school database on structural characteristics of school buildings that are currently missing from the record, and allocating funds for strengthening the structure of educational facilities were validated at the local, national and regional levels. In 2017, Almaty city initiated an assessment of all public buildings, including schools, engaging the capacity of the Construction Institute strengthened by UNICEF. UNICEF invested in cooperation with the National Education Academy, aimed at development of the monitoring framework of safe learning environment, which is in process.

In 2016-2017, jointly with the Republican Teachers' In-service Training Institute, UNICEF supported capacity development of pedagogical staff of 14 pilot schools and six kindergartens in Kyzylorda and Mangystau regions on school-based DRR. In April 2017, through a national conference, horizontal experience and knowledge-sharing among teachers and students on child-centred DRR was facilitated. In addition, representatives of the National Education academy, Emergency Committee, Teachers’ In-service Training Institute, National Construction Institute, the Regional Centre for DRR, ‘Zubr’ consulting centre and UNICEF exchanged good
practices on child-centred DRR at the regional DRR knowledge and management workshop in Bishkek (4-6 July).

Child injury is the third leading cause of child mortality in Kazakhstan. In 2016-2017, UNICEF facilitated an inter-sectoral review of the implementation of the national action plan on ‘Decreasing Child Mortality from Injuries and Accidents and on Prevention of Injuries in Children’, initiated a situation analysis and a knowledge, attitudes and practices study on unintentional child injury. Also, in 2017, in cooperation with the Republican E-health Centre UNICEF adjusted the e-registry for inpatients in line with international standards, adding the causes and places of injury that enabled better desegregation of injury statistics. The capacity of the Information and Computing Centre and regional level supervisors of the interviewers was increased in the area on child injury prevention, aiming to ensure better quality research in this area.

For the purposes of further development of the DRR programme, replication and scaling up of the activities, and tailoring new and innovative approaches, good practices assessment and documentation was initiated by UNICEF in 2017. A mission to the pilot regions, resource schools and pre-schools, meetings with the national, local and regional partners took place in November 2017 and the findings and recommendations will be validated at the workshop for stakeholders on Innovative DRR for Children’s Resilience, planned for February 2018.

OUTCOME 3: The Government of Kazakhstan fosters opportunities for State institutions, civil society, private sector, academia, the media and the International community to mobilize support, capacity and resources to advance the rights of vulnerable children and adolescents, within and beyond the borders of Kazakhstan.

Analytical statement of progress
During the second year of implementation, the country programme advanced in the implementation of actions towards achievement of the planned Outcome level results. UNICEF Kazakhstan continued efforts to facilitate beyond-border exchange of Kazakhstan’s knowledge, experience and lessons learned in selected areas where it has achieved significant results for children and/or innovations to tackle emerging issues affecting children. In 2017, UNICEF established the first platform for horizontal exchange/horizontal cooperation focusing on Kazakhstan’s progressive experience in promoting adolescent mental health and in addressing suicide ideation and attempts among adolescents. UNICEF, with national authorities, will host the first international conference on adolescent mental health in January 2018 in Almaty. It will bring together over 350 international participants, including experts, international professional associations, UN agencies, donors, and government authorities from seven countries to exchange knowledge and good practice.

Opportunities for Kazakhstan to contribute to promulgating and leveraging policy actions in the best interest of the child were explored. As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, in 2018, Kazakhstan has indicated willingness to adopt UNICEF values to build consensus around security and safety of children. In 2018, UNICEF will also support Kazakhstan’s membership in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, through which the country can also help prioritize a global focus on children in SDG progress reporting each year.

Under the coordination of the National Statistics Committee (under the Ministry of National
Economy), a special intersectoral government task force developed and published the first Statistical Yearbook on Children of Kazakhstan with UNICEF support in early 2017. The Statistics Committee published a second Yearbook in later 2017, demonstrating national commitment to resource and publish statistics on children annually. Improvement to data collection and calculation methodologies and expansion of indicators will continue in 2018.

UNICEF Kazakhstan continued to re-orient and strengthen a range of strategic partnerships in 2017. These were with government (at national and central levels, including ministries, departments and agencies), with civil society organizations (across sectors and disciplines), with academia, with the business sector, and with influential individuals and international organizations, including UN agencies.

Partnerships with academia, civil society and the business sector in 2017 are enabling UNICEF to work in emerging areas of importance. In 2017, new partnerships in the technology area continued to mobilise Kazakhstan’s growing capacity and interest in innovation for the benefit of children and youth around three UNICEF initiatives. On blockchain, UNICEF engaged over 200 start-ups from Europe and Central Asia region, incubators and venture funding around the development of smart contracts for UNICEF business processes. On data science, UNICEF engaged academia and the business sector in establishing a collaborative hub for the analysis of data from multiple sources, including around information poverty. With national partners, UNICEF is working to establish the first UAV testing corridor in Central Asia, primarily to explore their utility for disaster risk assessment.

In March 2017, UNICEF opened its first Innovation Lab in Central Asia, hosted by the International IT University. The Lab facilitates multi-stakeholder collaboration around innovative, technology-driven ideas focused on results for children. In June-July 2017, the Lab ran a full-time residency programme for social entrepreneurs and innovators for children. UNICEF and IITU continued to run hackathons, including at EXPO-2017 on ‘Innovation for Children in an Urbanising World’. From 2018, the Lab will focus on blockchain and data science.

UNICEF’s exhibition at EXPO-2017, which took place in Astana in June-September 2017, provided awareness raising on the impact of climate change on children and other issues including water scarcity, air pollution and urbanisation. Brand awareness and visibility for UNICEF was also raised through various events reaching over 100,000 people, including UN Day (June 13) and UNICEF’s dedicated keynote event (August) on ‘Advancing Children’s Rights through Innovation’.

The country programme identified four component outputs which would entail UNICEF’s contribution towards the overall achievement of the outcome result. These target specific changes to foster opportunities for State institutions, civil society, private sector, academia, the media and the international community in order to mobilise support, capacity and resources to advance the rights of vulnerable children and adolescents, within and beyond the borders of Kazakhstan. The progress and results achieved in 2017 for each of the outputs are detailed below.

**OUTPUT 3.1**: Innovative and sustainable platforms for beyond-border knowledge exchange are established within national systems in selected focus areas.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF continued efforts to facilitate beyond-border exchange of Kazakhstan's knowledge, experience and lessons learned in selected areas where it has achieved significant results for children and/or innovations to tackle emerging issues affecting children.

In 2017, the office established the first platform for horizontal cooperation and exchange, focusing on Kazakhstan's progressive experience in promoting adolescent mental health, and in addressing suicide ideation and attempts among adolescents. UNICEF with national authorities will host the first international conference on adolescent mental health in January 2018 in Almaty. It will bring together over 350 international participants, including experts, international professional associations, UN agencies, donors, and government authorities from seven countries to exchange knowledge and good practice.

Effective knowledge management is an essential component of the horizontal cooperation and exchange approach. UNICEF Kazakhstan continued to take steps to ensure the comprehensive packaging of programme information and knowledge to support this approach. In 2017, a particular emphasis was placed on documenting Kazakhstan's results in justice for children to be used for horizontal cooperation activities in 2018, including the review of sub-national pilot programmes on alternative measures, and the commission of a sector evaluation.

UNICEF continued efforts to systematize knowledge generation, validation and packaging for beyond-border exchange. A methodology is under finalization, which will allow effective documentation and validation of Kazakhstan’s experience. Three areas have been documented: UNICEF’s support to adolescent mental health and suicide prevention; in supporting justice for children; and in piloting universal-progressive home-visiting services.

Horizontal exchange was also supported to advance current programmes. Experience was shared by national authorities in Serbia and Moldova on SDG monitoring for children. Good practice exchange between Ombudspersons for Children was also facilitated, including with Uzbekistan, Armenia and through participation of the NCCR for Kazakhstan at the European Network of Ombudspersons. With Child Helpline International, UNICEF also supported knowledge exchange between Child Helplines in Central Asia and Asia Pacific Region.

**OUTPUT 3.2:** Strategies for ensuring that the 'best interests of the child' are considered in decisions on the distribution of official development assistance are adopted by KazAID.

**Analytical statement of progress**

The 2015 Law on Official Development Assistance (ODA) set out the conditions for establishing a national development agency with responsibility for identifying sources of and distributing the receipt of ODA. Given the working title of 'KazAid', the agency was not established by law, and in 2017 responsibility for ODA remained with the Department of Economic Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The absence of an agency with official responsibility limits resources for ODA and the scope to determine its purpose.

The country partnership with UNICEF supports KazAID to explore effective strategies that advance results in child-focused priorities when directing ODA to the region and beyond, particularly in Central Asia. Kazakhstan publically renewed its support for this objective, committing to ensure that its official development aid includes a clear focus on the most vulnerable children around the world, promoting child-friendly investments that contribute to social development, sustainable economic growth and security, including in UNICEF-supported children’s programmes in neighbouring countries. However, delays in establishing the
secondary legislation and a normative framework for KazAid (such as establishing terms of reference and work practices), which has been supported technically and financially by UNDP since 2015 (including in the provision of a secretariat), continued to limit opportunities in 2017 for the targeted transfer of resources to programmes for children.

Nevertheless, UNICEF Kazakhstan initiated support for establishing a mechanism, including methodology and guidance, to monitor the proportion of Kazakhstan’s ODA which is distributed for ‘child-friendly’ purposes, in a manner consistent with the core principle of the ‘best interest of the child’. This included the review of strategies used by other countries in the disbursement of ODA and of methodologies used to assess child friendly investments. In 2017, UNICEF also finalized a concept and strategy setting out its support to Government on child-friendly ODA, which may have learning value for other UNICEF offices in upper-middle and high income countries.

UNICEF Kazakhstan also advocated in favour of other opportunities for Kazakhstan to contribute to promulgating and leveraging policy actions in the best interest of the child. As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, in 2018, Kazakhstan has indicated willingness to adopt UNICEF values to build consensus around security and safety of children. In 2018, UNICEF will also support Kazakhstan’s membership in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, through which the country can also help prioritize a global focus on children in SDG progress reporting each year.

OUTPUT 3.3: A framework for an integrated Child Rights Monitoring system is endorsed by relevant authorities at national and local levels and civil society; social sector indicators for children’s rights are aligned with international standards.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF continued to support authorities’ ability to monitor the situation of the most vulnerable children, through the elaboration of a child well-being monitoring system, piloted in Mangistau oblast. That includes testing of MBD.kz, a data application which connects to local information management systems. A license for the MBD.kz is under acquisition to facilitate scale up in other regions of Kazakhstan. Linked to this initiative, the country programme started testing the regional level use of U-Survey to measure subjective wellbeing of children.

Under the coordination of the National Statistics Committee (under the Ministry of National Economy), a special intersectoral government task force developed and published the first Statistical Yearbook on Children of Kazakhstan with UNICEF support in early 2017. The Statistics Committee published a second Yearbook in later 2017, demonstrating national commitment to resource and publish statistics on children annually. Improvement to data collection and calculation methodologies and expansion of indicators will continue in 2018.

The Statistics Committee initiated a meeting of experts on SDG statistics together with UN agencies. With support from UNICEF, including engagement of Serbian and Moldovan expertise with experience in nationalization of SDGs, a set of priority SDG-related indicators for children were identified, including sources of information, methodology and reliable data collection mechanisms. Strong interest was noted for UNICEF-supported data tools such as MICS 6, TransMonEE, and the Inclusive Education module, currently under testing in Kazakhstan.

National partners were engaged in multiple UNICEF-supported evaluation and research activities, including a situation analysis on the Rights of Children and Women.
UNICEF continued to support 25 cities and districts under the Child-Friendly City Initiative (CFCI) to exchange experience on implementation: coordination, data collection, child participation in decision-making and in urban space planning. The initiative was incorporated into the multi-sectoral Dialogue Platform on Respecting Children’s Views at the second annual conference on ‘Child-Friendly Kazakhstan’ and contributed to the Parliamentary initiative to develop a law on social initiatives for children.

Cities and districts that were recognised as Child-Friendly Cities presented their good practices. It was decided to identify and support several reference centres on CFCI in 2017. UNICEF has also produced and placed Child-Friendly City banners in all cities and districts that participate in the Initiative.

In 2017, UNICEF developed a Minimum Package of Interventions for the Child-Friendly City Initiative in Kazakhstan to increase the status and visibility of the current interventions and reinforce linkages between their implementation and their contribution to making the cities child-friendly. The minimum package provides a standardized template, which the participating cities can use to structure their annual reports on the status of implementation of the Initiative. Training on the use of CFCI minimum package for the representatives of the most proactive cities was supported by UNICEF in April 2017.

At EXPO-2017, UNICEF facilitated a session for children and partners on child-participatory urban-planning, which resulted in better understanding on the needs of children and adolescents and in motivating children’s participation in school/city level initiatives in their cities and rayons.

**OUTPUT 3.4: Innovative partnerships, initiated by Parliament, civil society, the corporate sector and the media engage the public in discourse on priority issues affecting children.**

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF continued to re-orient and strengthen a range of strategic partnerships in 2017. These included government (at national and central levels, including ministries, departments and agencies), with CSOs across sectors and disciplines, with academia, with the business sector, and with influential individuals and international organizations, including UN agencies.

For example, UNICEF’s collaboration with the National Commissioner for Children's Rights continued to provide opportunities to accelerate implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Kazakhstan through the national dialogue platforms, convening Parliament, all branches of government, civil society and the business - and horizontal cooperation opportunities with Ombudspersons in other countries.

Parliament continues to be a key partner, working with UNICEF on implementation of several legislative initiatives and raising children's issues in public discourse. UNICEF continued direct partnerships with sub-national governments to broaden collaboration and responsiveness to initiatives for children.

Partnerships with academia, civil society and the business sector in 2017 are enabling UNICEF to work in emerging areas of importance. In 2017, new partnerships in the technology sector advanced three UNICEF initiatives. On blockchain, UNICEF engaged start-ups from Europe and Central Asia region, incubators and venture funding around the development of smart contracts for UNICEF business processes. On data science, UNICEF engaged academia and the business sector in establishing a collaborative hub for the analysis of data from multiple
sources, including around information poverty. With national partners, UNICEF commenced establishment of the first UAV testing corridor in Central Asia, primarily to explore their utility for disaster risk assessment.

In March 2017, UNICEF opened its first Innovations Lab in Central Asia, hosted by the International IT University. The Lab facilitates multi-stakeholder collaboration around innovative, technology-driven ideas focused on results for children, incubates and transforms those ideas into ‘market-ready’ products. In June-July 2017, the Lab ran a full-time residency programme for social entrepreneurs and innovators for children, including master-classes on project management, design, programming, and marketing. UNICEF and IITU continued to run hackathons, including at EXPO-2017 on ‘Innovation for Children in an Urbanising World’. From 2018, the Lab will focus on blockchain and data science.

UNICEF’s exhibition at EXPO-2017, which took place in Astana in June-September 2017, provided awareness raising on the impact of climate change on children and other issues including water scarcity, air pollution and urbanisation. Brand awareness and visibility for UNICEF was also raised through various events reaching over 100,000 people, including UN Day (June 13) and UNICEF’s dedicated keynote event (August) on ‘Advancing Children’s Rights through Innovation’.

Partnering with the business sector also revealed demand for UNICEF guidance on corporate social responsibility and on children's rights and business principles. In partnership with Eurasia Foundation for Central Asia, UNICEF is developing dialogue with the extractive sector, municipalities and local communities to strengthen and focus corporate social responsibility activities.

To engage media in the public discourse on issues affecting children, UNICEF partnered with CSOs and local authorities in two regions to train over 100 media, government and NGO representatives on ethical coverage of child-related issues, as well as thematic areas.

**Document centre**

**Evaluation and research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>METHODOLOGY ON ANALYSIS OF DISASTER RISKS AT LOCAL LEVEL WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION ON NEEDS AND VULNERABILITY OF CHILDREN</td>
<td>2017/004</td>
<td>Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN OF KAZAKHSTAN. STATISTICAL YEARBOOK</td>
<td>2017/003</td>
<td>Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARRIERS TO ACCESS SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SPECIAL SOCIAL SERVICES IN KAZAKHSTAN</td>
<td>2017/002</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of ECE/ECD Systems in Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2017/001</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other publications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A KEY ROLE OF A PATRONAGE NURSE IN IMPROVING PARENTING SKILLS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (VIDEO)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRE-SCHOOL PEDAGOGUES ON SAFETY MEASURES DURING EMERGENCIES

Lessons learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type/Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Learned</td>
<td>EVALUATION OF EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Programme documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference Documents</td>
<td>Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020</td>
<td>KAZA UN PFD.pdf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>