Executive Summary

There were significant achievements in advocating for and promoting child rights during 2014, as the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s signing and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 25th anniversary of CRC coincided. UNICEF took the opportunity to further promote understanding on child rights issues among policy makers, the media and the general public, and advocated for development of more child friendly policies, legal framework and implementation mechanisms. The Parliament took a strong initiative in reviewing the progress made on child rights during the last 20 years and addressing remaining and emerging issues along Kazakhstan’s “Strategy for 2050”. The central Government and some local governments also responded to these calls and organized meaningful reviews and child rights promotion activities.

There was substantive progress on socially sensitive and complex issue of youth suicide. The Government of Kazakhstan has taken a major step in implementing suicide prevention programme. The Government acknowledged UNICEF’s technical expertise, and in December launched a phased suicide prevention activities specifically targeting children and adolescents to be conducted as part of the National Action Plan for 2015-2020 on strengthening family relations, moral-ethical and spiritual values with support of UNICEF.

While the country moved forward to reaching a high income country status with continued economic growth and the donor interest gradually diminish, UNICEF took systematic approach in expanding partnerships and mobilizing resources to implement country programmes goals. The approach was based on a comprehensive partnership and resource mobilization strategy and a proactive action plan, which was periodically monitored by the Country Management Team and actively followed up. This has resulted in successful fundraising, achieving 128 per cent of the planned target, and securing funds for the current year and future operations, providing programmatic and operational stability and contributing to effective management and implementation of the country programme.

Through systematic analysis of the situation of children, it has become clearer that the disparity between the rich and poor has impacted on children’s lives and there are significant and widening regional disparities. While UNICEF took opportunities of advocating for social reforms by using available evidence and supporting the Government in becoming increasingly aware of the widening disparities, they did not result in visible improvements in social transfers.

The Government agreed to expand the successful model of UN Joint Programme in East Kazakhstan to two other regions with significant host government contribution through the UN Joint Programme funding mechanism. This demonstrates the increasing commitment of the Government to improving the lives of poor people in those regions acknowledging and using the technical expertise of the UN system. The partnership with the European Union (EU) in the area of legal reforms, resulted in a broad partnership for the justice for children programme and large funding from EU. The partnership with Brazil resulted in meaningful south-south cooperation in
the area of disaster risk reduction exchanging experience of the two governments in integrating
the Core Commitment for Children in emergencies.

Equity Case Study

At the end of 2012, UNICEF conducted an Assessment of Equity and Social determinants of
Health in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) which helped policy makers and health practitioners
to reach consensus on priorities and needed resources to better focus on equity issues in
assuring health of children and women of reproductive age. The assessment also provided
substantive evidence for policy makers to support their recommendations on health system
reform, including on MCH policy and practice.

In 2013, UNICEF supported partners in advancing these recommendations by raising the profile
of inequity in the health sector with the Government of Kazakhstan (GoK) and advocating
needed improvements in the area of maternal and child health, as identified by the assessment.
These include:

i) Improving multi-sectoral actions in implementing mother and child nutrition, and water,
sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions;

ii) Improving the supply of services, focused on ensuring access for all populations to a
minimum standard of inputs and services;

iii) Ensuring access to family planning to reduce morbidity and mortality for women, and;

iv) Addressing poor nutrition of the rural and the poorest population, which requires
additional attention of health workers.

The key findings were discussed in Parliament and among line ministries, and resulted in
adjustment of the State Programme on Health System Development. The adjustment
introduced a component on monitoring the nutrition status of children under-five and women of
reproductive age with allocation of State funding to support flour fortification and vitamin A
supplementation programmes.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Social Development (MoHSD) with the
introduction of WHO planning, quality assessment, and monitoring tools on antenatal, perinatal
and paediatric care into the existing Health Service Quality Control system, including with the
development related regulations and facilitation of capacity development for a core group of
MCH managers.

UNICEF’s on-going support to MoHSD has helped reduced geographical disparities in the
access of mothers and their children to MCH, through:

- The introduction of per capita financing at primary health care (PHC) level;
- The adjustment of the basic benefits package with targeted rehabilitation and/or
preventative MCH interventions for children with special needs (those diagnosed as
disabled or chronically ill);
- The introduction of a special coefficient to increase per capita financing of health services
for rural populations;
- Performance based payments for PHC workers’ contributions to the reduction of maternal
and child morbidity and mortality; and;
- The development of socially-oriented PHC services for all families in needs, where the cost
of special social workers at PHC level is covered by the basic benefit package.

As a result of continued UNICEF advocacy, the assessment was also used as a key input for
the development of a Roadmap to improve MCH services in East Kazakhstan oblast as part of
ongoing UN Joint Programme (UNJP). Within the UNJP, UNICEF focused on achieving improvements through interventions in different levels of the system which resulted in allocation of local budget for establishment of special MCH transportation unit for mothers and newborns with special staff assigned, helicopter and two specially equipped reanimation vehicle.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

BBP - Basic Benefit Package
BCP – Business Continuity Plan
CCC – Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action
CD – Capacity Development
CDC – Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFC - Child Friendly City
CMT – Country Management Team
CES – The Committee for Emergency Situations of the Kazakh Interior Ministry (former Emergencies Ministry)
CR – Children Rights
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO – Civil Society Organization
DCT – Direct Cash Transfer
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
DYP - Department of Youth Policy
ECHO - European Community Humanitarian Office
EKO – East Kazakhstan Oblast (Region)
EQA - External Quality Assessment
EU – European Union
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GoK – Government of Kazakhstan
GSSC – Global Shared Services Centre
HACT - Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HIV - Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT - Information and communication technology
IDD – Iodine Deficiency Disorders
IMCI – Integrated Management of Child Illness
IMEP - Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IRLI - International Resource Laboratories for Iodine Network
JCC – Joint Consultative Committee
JJ – Juvenile Justice
KAN - Kazakh Academy of Nutrition
LQAS - Lot Quality Assurance Sampling
LTA – Long-Term Agreement
MCH – Mother and Child Health
MDG - Millennium Development Goals
MMEIG - UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group
MMR – Maternal Mortality Rate
MoES – Ministry of Education and Science
MoH – Ministry of Health
MoHSD – Ministry of Health and Social Development
The joint MoHSD and UNICEF plan for strengthening MCH Quality Improvement System through introduction of the World Health Organisation (WHO) tools on assessment of antenatal, perinatal and paediatric care resulted in improvement of local health managers’ capacities in planning, implementation and monitoring of high effective interventions to MCH services. The local coordinators of Antenatal, Effective Perinatal Care and Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), as well as the Quality Assurance experts are now able to use these tools. These coordinators conducted cross–check monitoring visits to seven oblasts applying non-punitive peer-to-peer assessment to identify main gaps in the quality assurance system of maternities and PHC facilities resulted in development of the follow–up action plans.

The MoHSD’s capacity has also improved in documenting the introduction of social work at the PHC level to prevent child abandonment, which was presented at UNICEF’s Executive Board meeting in September 2014. In the last three years, this practice resulted in the decrease of the number of children aged below three in institutions by 18 per cent. In documenting the success, the Government officials referred to evidence and lessons learnt from the UNICEF-commissioned evaluation guiding the long-term vision in social services development.

In partnership with the Hague Conference on International Private Law, the country’s central authority was capacitated in procedures, key requirements and effective communication in ensuring full acceptance of Kazakhstan’s ratification of the Hague conventions on child abduction (1980) and inter-country adoption (1993) by other countries.

To strengthen data collection by applying new methods in interviewing caregivers and observation techniques, the Statistics Committee conducted the national household survey covering more than 9,000 children with a registered medical disability. It was supported by online webinars for 297 interviewers on interviewing children methodology, the social model of disability and child rights embedded in CRC and Convention on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities (CRPD). In addition to professional interviewers, the state and non-governmental service providers helped in identification and access to families as well as interviewing/observing the child during the interviews. The local level authorities, teachers and college students from Semey, Kyzylorda, Aktau and Astana cities strengthened their capacity in the Child-Friendly City (CFC) recognition and assessment model focused on equity-based child participation.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

UNICEF supported the Government of Kazakhstan in more efficient use of budgetary funds through per-capita financing in secondary education and MCH Basic Benefit Package (BBP) in health. The proposed adjustments to BBP relate to interventions for children-in-need, the introduction of a special coefficient for per-capita financing of the rural population, and the cost of social workers at PHC level and special incentive payments for PHC workers. As calculated by a 12-year cost-benefit model, the net benefit of implementing PHC network restructuring would be US$24.8 billion, with the largest proportion of benefits derived from better access and use of PHC services.

UNICEF finalised a comprehensive analysis of social protection for children and their families identifying several bottlenecks of the poverty reduction cash transfer programme. These included large exclusion errors, fragmented coverage of vulnerable groups, and limited effect on poverty levels. The follow-up with MoHSD and NGO partners will aim to enhance coverage and adequacy of targeted social assistance programmes, and improve comprehensive and inclusive social services.

To promote the rights and participation of adolescents and youth, UNICEF supported the Parliament with a Template Youth Law, based on analysis of youth law in 30 countries. Special Parliamentary meetings on youth mortality and evidence-based youth policy were framed by UNICEF-generated data and evidence. The assessment of suicide prevention in two Kazakhstan regions deepened understanding on ways to decrease suicide rates and demonstrated proven strategies in effective prevention of adolescents' suicidal behaviour. The youth resource centres (YRCs) organizational framework and youth policy indicators developed for East Kazakhstan Oblast (EKO) provided Members of Parliament (MP) with youth-centred and results-based approaches in implementation of youth policy at subnational and community level.

The Assessment of ‘2009-2011 Juvenile Justice System Development Concept’ and ‘Documentation of Kazakhstan Model of Children’ Courts found that some practices in the justice for children system may not be regarded as meeting international standards. For example, judges in Children’ Courts, as well as Juvenile Inspectors and prosecutors are not required to undergo regular in-service training specifically on child rights, juvenile justice or child protection (CP) issues. The majority of Children Courts’ judges had not recently received any specialist training for criminal, civil or administrative cases involving children. The reviews suggest that further efforts are needed in introducing social services for justice for children systems, adopting child-friendly procedures in police, prosecution, and the courts.

**Partnerships**

The partnership with ATF bank was documented demonstrating how issuance of UNICEF affinity cards for the bank clients and initiation of a communication campaign on reducing the stigma against families at risk of child abandonment led to fundraising for community-based preventive programmes. The funds were redirected to the MoH programmes aiming to prevent
the newborn babies’ abandonment, improvement of social work at the PHC level and timely referrals of families for professional counselling, social benefits, temporary housing and child rearing. The positive experience with ATF Bank triggered a partnership between MoH and BI group Construction Company aimed at temporary housing solutions for mothers at risk of child abandonment which expanded to eight Kazakhstan regions.

UNICEF and the EU strengthened collaboration for children of Kazakhstan including advocacy for development of a child-friendly justice system aligned with international standards by engaging in a Contribution Agreement on Improvement of the System for Justice for Children and Child Rights. UNICEF developed close partnership with the Kazakhstan’ Supreme Court, supporting the establishment of the courts on children’ issues. Agreement was reached to assess work of the children’ courts vis-à-vis compliance with international standards. The partnership strengthened the judiciary systems’ capacity to process cases in a child-sensitive manner by developing guidelines and protocols for judges and enhancing training mechanisms.

UNICEF leveraged funds from a local foundation to launch three-year partnership with the NGO coalition ‘For well-being of children and youth in Kazakhstan’, the largest network on child rights.

UNICEF continued to support Government in the implementation of the nationally-funded UN Joint Programme in EKO and new UNJPs in Mangystau and Kyzylorda. The mid-term evaluation of the UNJP in EKO revealed a number of good practices which were introduced in the region could be replicated by other regional governments, and beyond the borders.

In partnership with EKO Health Department and Kazkommertsbank, a universal progressive approach to Continuum of Care of Mother and Child was implemented in the Urdzhar Rural Hospital. It aimed at engaging private sector in provision of multi-profile service for a mother and a child, availability of necessary equipment for resuscitation of mothers and newborns, healthy child rooms and specially trained staff.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

In partnership with the Ombudsman, UNICEF supported the review of stigma-free terminology in laws and practice relating to children with disabilities. The review covered professional areas of functional disability, and were aligned with the WHO International Classification of Functional Disability language. This exercise engaged professionals working on child disability, language and human rights specialists. It resulted in revising their operational vocabulary in certifying the disability among children, and also strengthened their readiness to advocate with policy makers for legislative changes.

High-level strategic advocacy with Parliament on suicide prevention and youth mortality resulted in gaining Members of Parliament’ support for the programme and organizing two special Parliamentarian review meetings on adolescents and youth mortality due to traffic accidents and suicides. The assessment of suicide prevention in two regions of Kazakhstan, led by a world renowned expert, deepened understanding of Parliament and other State partners on suicide issues, and recommended certain strategies proven as the effective in the prevention of adolescent suicide.

The celebration of the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s ratification of the CRC gave the opportunity to raise awareness on current child issues, progress, and prospects for solving them jointly with state and civil society organisation (CSO) partners. A special photo-slide video was produced on the progress and challenges in the CRC realization in the country and was shown
at a high-level meeting at Parliament. UNICEF promoted the 20th anniversary of the CRC in Kazakhstan and its 25th global anniversary at all conferences, round-table meetings and TV and print media interviews. The active communication strategy to promote the CRC anniversaries resulted in other state and civil partners’ celebrating the dates.

The Administration of EKO, UNICEF’s main partner, also held a high-level conference devoted the CRC anniversaries to raise awareness on progress and challenges in child rights realization. The infographics on child well-being in the country were developed and presented to Parliament as an advocacy tool to raise awareness on the most vulnerable groups of child population. The social media was regularly filled with communication materials on and for children, and the number of the followers of UNICEF on Facebook increased by 30 per cent in 2014.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

Following an agreement with the Minister of Emergencies, UNICEF supported the exchange of experience between the Governments of Kazakhstan and Brazil on integrating Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in emergencies into the legal framework and practices. The former Member of the National Secretariat for Promotion of Child and Adolescent Rights of the Brazilian Presidency, with UNICEF Brazil support, shared experiences in the of the CCCs-based national protocol on integrated protection of children and youth as well, as the elderly and people with disabilities in emergencies.

Kazakhstan presented the 2014 Civil Protection Law covering issues of national and international emergencies, humanitarian assistance, citizens’ and refugees’ rights in emergencies. UNICEF international experts reviewed the Law and made recommendations on strengthening the disaggregation of the population system, enhancing coordination mechanisms, and ensuring the vulnerability and capacity analysis.

UNICEF contributed to the Regional Consultations for Central Asia and South Caucasus on the Post-2015 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Framework (Hyogo Framework for Action-2) with recommendations on school safety, bringing together authorities, experts, teachers and children.

During the 5th National Child Friendly City Forum in Kyzylorda city, the Belarus experience on an assessment system was shared with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) Child Rights Protection Committee and with cities participating in the CFC Initiative in Kazakhstan. UNICEF supported the East Kazakhstan region’s presentation at the Forum of Cities-Friends-to-Children in Russia.

UNICEF facilitated cooperation between the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kazakh Academy of Nutrition (KAN) through establishment in Almaty of the Sustainable Iodine Resource Laboratory and the External Quality Assessment (EQA) Service for Iodine Laboratories in the CEE/CIS region. UNICEF offices, CDC and the International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders provided technical support, funding and material resources to strengthen KAN capacities in communications, inter-laboratory networking, operational management, staff training and partnership development as well as in setting-up and operationalization of a bi-annual EQA service programme for iodine measurements. The key outcomes of the UNICEF-CDC-KAN collaboration included: establishment KAN of an up-to-date reference laboratory and resource centre for conducting reliable iodine measurements in salt and urine samples; strengthened capacity of the KAN iodine resource lab as a regional International Resource Laboratories for Iodine Network (IRLI)
Identification Promotion of Innovation

In cooperation with Parliament, UNICEF facilitated national consultations with children, adolescents and youth to inform the development of the State Law on Youth Policy. Thirty focus group discussions (with 510 participants) were conducted across Kazakhstan with mainly ethnic minorities, girls and women, repatriated youth, lesbians, gays and transsexuals, low-income families, disabled and working youth, adolescents in conflict with the law, university students, and school children. The design of discussions was based on peer-to-peer research and facilitated by specially trained young researchers to ensure a trusting environment and to allow a space for genuine feedback from participants. The online survey was held for 49 days with a remarkably high participation of 3,616 respondents. The outcomes of consultations were launched as part of the 2014 National Youth Report. Focus groups and the online survey explored six themes: education and employment; ICT and technology; physical and mental health; safety, security and justice; involvement and participation, and; housing and transport. The online survey included unique questions to calculate the Kazakhstan Youth Wellbeing Index. The assessment of wellbeing across six domains highlighted significant challenges in citizen participation, information and communication technology (ICT), and safety and security as well as weaknesses in traditionally strong areas of education, health and employment. The analysis also revealed young people’s relative optimism about their future, which helped Kazakhstan to achieve an indicative 10th rank out of 31 countries.

To improve quality of the home-visiting system to ensure integrated and continuous MCH care and close the equity gaps at community level, UNICEF and MoHSD introduced the systematic assessment of home-visiting system. The Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) method was applied to assess the quality of home-visiting services and to identify possible gaps. LQAS was successfully piloted in EKO through the household survey. The piloting results attracted special attention to priority indicators of patient’ satisfaction with the quality of MCH care at PHC level as an important pre-condition for improvement of home-visiting care quality. Conducting regular LQAS assessments will allow tracking progress in home-visiting care, replacing punitive measures in health care with modern effective methods of quality control.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF initiated a comparative analysis of local social protection policies in three target regions of Kazakhstan. The aim was to identify the role of local authorities in the administration, financing and delivery of social protection with a focus on cross-sectoral linkages between local service providers and available capacities, legislative and budgetary framework for integrated and coordinated response to multidimensional needs of children and families.

UNICEF provided support to the newly-formed MoHSD in integrating of social services for children below three years of age, focusing on strategic planning and the enhancement of the Ministry’s vision of the reform. In 2014, the assessment of cost-effectiveness, costs estimation and preparation of operational instructions for national scale-up of social work were initiated. The professionals in social protection, health and education systems were introduced to their new roles in case management, referral and gatekeeping. However, efforts are needed to reach a critical mass of professionals to ensure sustainable change in work practices and mind-sets.

UNICEF also supported the MoHSD to establish an integrated model on health and social
services at PHC level, with social workers officially introduced as MoHSD staff covering needs of about 200,000 vulnerable families with children in communities. UNICEF supported the strengthening of cooperation between health and social sectors. Prior to engaging with the new model, UNICEF support the assessment and mapping of the critical bottlenecks in the legacy system, leading to the development of a roadmap for the implementation of comprehensive health and social services provision to families.

UNICEF facilitated national consultations to obtain the views of children, adolescents and youth on a wide range of issues concerning them, and for development of the Youth Policy Law and the 2014 National Youth Report. The consultations targeted children in conflict with the law as one focus group and brought opinions of children and youth on justice and Rule of Law in Kazakhstan to attention of a cross-sectorial audience, demonstrating the multi-faceted nature of justice for children issues and the need for being addressed in a cross-sectoral manner.

Service Delivery

To respond to the evidence on assessment of the scale of violence in schools and residential institutions, a school-based programme on identification, reporting and response to violence from peers and staff was tested by East Kazakhstan State University with UNICEF support during the 2013/2014 school year. The programme had a significant impact in prevention of violence against children in the pilot schools. The number of reported and recorded incidents of school violence by school personnel increased by 48 per cent, and students’ reporting increased by 183 per cent. Ninety per cent of School Safety Teams reported they were investigating reported incidents. Violence prevention tools for children and staff of schools was certified and recommended for use by the National Education Academy. The response to violence in residential institutions was initiated and required additional consultations with institutions’ staff during the design phase of the violence prevention programme. The impact should improve with higher further enhancements to the gatekeeping, referral systems and overall family support system.

UNICEF continued collaboration with the Special Olympics in tailoring the early childhood sport and better parenting programmes for rural areas, identifying the existing barriers in communities for children with intellectual disabilities and developing an inclusive health curriculum for medical professionals. The programmes for children with intellectual disabilities were packaged and included a family forum for training of parents, young athletes play and unified sport for inclusive socializing with peers.

Diversion of children in conflict with the law is a relatively new concept in Kazakhstan’s justice system. It is implemented mainly through reconciliation and mediation. Police and prosecutors lack discretionary functions for diverting children. A cost-effectiveness analysis of diversion which was undertaken indicated that, in case of introduction, diversion of children who commit minor or medium gravity crimes could potentially produce 85 per cent savings to the justice system. Testing of diversion programme for children in conflict with the law in East Kazakhstan region generated further evidence on legislative gaps that need to be addressed during further legislative reform.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

Kazakhstan presented its report focusing on implementation of recommendations provided to the 2010 Universal Periodic Review national report and its 3rd Periodic Report to the Committee against Torture. UNICEF provided recommendations to highlight the growing inequity gaps and realised rights of vulnerable children left without parental care, with disabilities, in conflict with
the law, victims of violence, abuse and exploitation. UNICEF engaged the UN Country Team (UNCT) into a confidential submission to the pre-sessional working group meeting of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Government initiated a process of drafting new Criminal Codes aligned with CRC provisions, its Optional Protocols, UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, the UN Economic and Social Council Guideline on Justice involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime, amongst others. During this process, UNICEF advocated to include for children the 24-hour police custody and six month pre-sentence detention, to introduce pre-trial diversion, to mainstream social services in the justice for children process, to enhance probation, and to abolish disciplinary isolation of children. Some of these recommendations were not included into final documents, remaining as non-compliant with international standards: 72 hour police custody, 18 months pre-sentence detention, lack of police and prosecutor discretionary powers for diversion, lack of social services support. However, the new Criminal Codes introduced probation as educational measure as well as remand case for child suspects; require participation of a pedagogue during interview of child victims and witnesses of crime; introduce audio and video recording of interviews of child victims and witnesses of crime; substitute seven-days long disciplinary isolation of children with placement into a temporary isolation facility up to 72 hours with the right of educational activities attendance.

The GoK adopted a 2015-2020 National Action Plan “On strengthening family relations, moral and ethical values”. The plan focuses on prevention of suicides, development of family-based solutions for children without parental care, child and family reunification, development of family-support services, inclusive education, and establishment of the Children’s Rights Ombudsman. UNICEF contributed to the document, advocating that equity and international standards with respect to the care of children remain in focus. However, some child rights-unfriendly practices remain in the Plan, such as “baby boxes” for newborn abandoned children.

**Gender Mainstreaming and Equality**

Kazakhstan’s Gender Inequality Index, which measures gender inequalities in the areas of reproductive health, empowerment and economic status, worsened from 0.312 in 2012 to 0.323 in 2013. The country fell in the ranking from the 51st to 59th (hdr.undp.org). However, the 2013 Global Gender Gap Report (www3.weforum.org) which tracks progress and magnitude of gender-based disparities ranked Kazakhstan as 32nd out of 136 countries and the 5th among upper middle income countries.

The wage gap is gradually decreasing (70 per cent in 2012), however there is a high gap in access to credit. Although 38 per cent of women received loans from the national entrepreneurship development programme in 2013, the total amount they received via second-tier banks comprised only 12 per cent (Damu Fund, 2013).

Economic dependence increases women vulnerability for domestic violence and the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ Concluding Observations (2010) noted a high level of violence against women and children, impunity for domestic violence, lack of guaranteed protection and rehabilitation. In 2011, 38 per cent of all registered crimes were against women (National Post-2015 Report, 2013). Growing public pressure has resulted in a first large study on prevalence of domestic violence to be conducted by CSMNE in 2015.

UNICEF in Kazakhstan maintained a yearly updated gender mainstreaming action plan and all
studies and evaluations were designed with clear gender benchmarks. Thus, the Report on Evaluation of the Project on Developing Child Protection Mechanisms (2014) measured the extent to gender equality principles were addressed. The Evaluation emphasised the compliance of the project with the recommendations of UNICEF Global Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation (2007) in respect to the extent that UNICEF worked with men and boys as both agents and beneficiaries of gender equality. The report noted a need to build the capacity of key partners (e.g. Ombudsman and provincial inter-agency commissions) in further and better disaggregation of data in their progress reports to allow a more in-depth analysis of achievements at outcome and output level. It also noted a need for better disaggregation of complaints per gender and other dimensions to provide a better understanding of issues requiring attention from duty-bearers and building a better evidence-based response.

Environmental Sustainability

UNICEF continued to support National Commission on Women Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy, the Child Protection Committee and 21 cities implementing the CFC Initiative, including promotion of clean and safe urban environment. The Technical Working Group was established in 2014 to oversee the CFC Initiative. Collection of administrative data was tested according to 73 CFC indicators, including environmental sustainability (clean air and water, creating safe environments). A total of 177 children from Aktau, Astana, Kyzlorda and Semey cities as well as local government staff, schools and community members took part in the participatory research. Children drew their neighbourhood and their dream place, took photographs of their cities and described them, filled out a child friendliness survey and discussed their role to improve the city. Some groups of children took adults on guide tours of their city. The results from the research revealed that most children wanted their city to be safer and cleaner, dreamed for more trees, animals and fresh air. Only 46 per cent of children believed that their community is mostly a clean environment, free of garbage and dirty water, less than half (40 per cent) of the children surveyed felt their community air is clean, smoke-free and not smelly. Currently, the CFC indicators are being enhanced to identify the key ones based on the certain criteria (precise definition, reliable source, consistency over time and across the cities, unambiguous interpretation etc.). Subjective data collection will contribute to the analysis of the cities’ friendliness to children.

Due to diversity of landscape relief, climate conditions and industrial infrastructure, Kazakhstan is vulnerable to numerous earthquakes, landslides, flooding, avalanches, mudflows, storms, extreme low/hot temperatures, forest/steppe fires and outbreaks of animal diseases. Every year, Kazakhstan registers approximately 3,000-4,000 disasters, resulting in about 3,000-5,000 injuries and several dozen fatalities. In 2014, UNICEF documented the DRR in Education programme co-funded by the European Commission through ECHO and the GoK aimed at strengthening resilience of education facilities to disasters. In partnership with the National Education Academy, DRR was incorporated in 12-year secondary school curricula (e.g., Ecology, Geography etc.) being piloted in 44 schools and in primary school curricula (including Surrounding World, Literary Reading, and Self-Cognition).

Effective Leadership

The UNICEF CMT had two office management priorities in 2014. The first was the fundraising and leveraging of resources based on the results of Kazakhstan Office Risk Control and Self-Assessment (RCSA) that donor interest would diminish as Kazakhstan’s income level reaches the high income status. The CMT set up a clear and comprehensive fundraising strategy and developed proactive plans and closely monitored its implementation. This resulted in successful fundraising, achieving 128 per cent of the planned target, with major funding from EU for the
justice for children programme and the host government for UN Joint Programmes.

The second priority was the promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, taking the opportunity of the 25th global anniversary of the CRC. The office ensured that in all communication and media opportunities there was reference on CRC anniversaries. For example, in all his speeches, remarks and interviews, the Representative started with a reference to the CRC and linked issues to relevant child rights standards or UNCRC recommendations and observations. This consistent advocacy resulted in a very positive response of the Parliament, the Government ministries and the local government.

The office took a systematic approach in responding to audit recommendations of August 2013 and closed all of six recommendations during 2014 with satisfactory results. The conclusion of the MTR and agreement with the UNICEF Regional Office through the Programme and Budget Review held in March, resulted in an agreement on the change in the country programme budget and the staffing structure aligned to actual programme needs. The office has taken steps to further strengthen the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) operation during 2014 through revised risk assessment and increased spot checks.

The CMT set up office priorities through a participatory and comprehensive office management review and retreat. They closely followed up and monitored progress and implementation of the office, programme, and operations priorities using the Annual Management Plan (AMP) and the standard CMT agenda including the monitoring of AMP and all indicators. These resulted in substantial progress in engaging the Government in the next round of Multi-Cluster Indicator Survey, as well as the TransMONEE initiative towards improving the Government’s understanding and use of evidence related to the situation of children, progress in promoting justice for children and mainstreaming of inclusion of children with disabilities into the community, and continued promotion of the Child-Friendly City concept and development of assessment and recognition mechanism as well as continued efforts by the Government in improving child health and nutrition.

**Financial Resources Management**

During 2014, the office regularly monitored the status of accounts and acted to correct errors. All transactions in SAP were properly processed, financial closure activities were completed on-time. Bank reconciliation deadlines were met and open items cleared timely. A petty cash spot check was conducted quarterly. Receivables and cash receipts, including Value Added Tax, reimbursement for common services, income from disposed asset and cash refund were recorded timely and cleared. A physical inventory of plant, property and equipment was conducted and the Property Survey Board appropriately reviewed unserviceable and surplus assets for disposal. The Contract Review Committee and Programme Cooperation Agreement Review Committee ensured efficient, transparent and cost-effective utilisation of resources.

Cash flow forecasting and management of cash resources was unstable during the year, and despite of all the efforts made to ensure accurate planning, the office was not successful in maintaining optimal cash balance by the end of six out of 12 months. In some instances it was caused by receipt of Value Added Tax refunds, reimbursements from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for common premises expenditures and unclear understanding of new Forex Portal for ordering cash.

Budget utilisation was reviewed regularly at CMT, programme and section meetings. Utilisation of Regular Resources exceeded 99 per cent by the end of the year, 100 per cent of the grants
were used within validity dates, and all donor reports were submitted on time. Due to local currency devaluation, the office realized savings of the Institutional Budget against commitments payable in local currency. The released funds of approximately US$38,000 were spent for refurbishing and improvement of the office premises, which had not been entirely renovated since 2006.

By the end of 2014, and during the year, the office had no outstanding Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) over nine months. The status of DCT was monitored regularly. All the office staff received HACT refreshing training to get familiarized with revised Guidance. The audit observations were noted, acted upon and closed.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

UNICEF Kazakhstan has a two-year fund-raising strategy and action plan, which was monitored regularly. According the Funding Needs Monitoring Table, more resources than planned were raised for programmes (128 per cent).

Working relations were maintained with a number of corporates, such as ATF Bank. Others, such as Toyota Kazakhstan are considering funding proposals from UNICEF, once the automobile assembling factory in Kazakhstan reaches profit-making stage. UNICEF is exploring further potential cooperation with new financial entities in the country.

A grant agreement was signed with Kazakhstan’s BOTA foundation to transfer its remaining US$385,000 to UNICEF as BOTA wraps up operations in the country.

Based on the positive experience of UNICEF’s cooperation with the GoK and other UN agencies on the UN Joint Programme in EKO, at the Government’s request, the UN Joint Programme was expanded in two more regions (Mangistau and Kyzylorda) with a three-year co-financing commitments from the GoK of 80 per cent.

The strategic partnership negotiations with the EU resulted in raising US$2,758,944 for improving the Justice for Children system in the country, with the programme to continue until 2017.

**Evaluation**

The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) preparation and monitoring focused on critical studies and evaluations. Eight studies and two evaluations were selected for implementation in 2014, which were closely monitored throughout the year with 90 per cent accomplishment.

UNICEF supported two evaluations, namely: “Strengthening the Ombudsman’s Child Protection System in Kazakhstan” (supported by Norway) and the Mid-Term Evaluation of the UN-JP, entitled “Raising Competitiveness of the East Kazakhstan Region through Innovative Approaches to Regional Planning and Social Services”. These evaluations provided insight into current UNICEF programmes, as well as in UN-agency cooperation in joint initiatives.

The results of the Evaluation of the Child Protection System in Kazakhstan influenced the short- and long-term programming, with a shift from service delivery support to researching the social workers’ needs, documenting newly developed services and preparing budgetary and practical guides for national scale-up. Newly initiated strategic interventions in justice for children equipped with the stronger monitoring and evaluation framework as a result of the evaluation. A
specific agreement was reached with the Ombudsman office and the MoHSD on inclusion of the evaluation recommendations into 2015 action plans. The Ombudsman’s next annual report to the President will present more disaggregated information on child rights violations. Other steps on disaggregated data in monitoring and reporting of child rights violations will be ensured through the National Preventive Mechanism implementation. The strategic vision of the MoHSD anticipates integrated development and diversification of countrywide family support and community-based social services, contribution to the social inclusion of the most vulnerable children, and prevention of unnecessary family separation.

The Mid-Term Evaluation of the UN Joint Programme in EKO analysed the design, management, implementation, partnership, outcomes and alternatives for its continuation and replication in two other regions of Kazakhstan. The results of the evaluation confirmed that despite comprehensive outcomes, UN agencies tend to implement activities only within scopes of their mandates. It also underlined the poor overall monitoring and evaluation framework.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

The UNICEF Kazakhstan office has promoted a Green Information Technology policy that resulted in reducing the number of printing machines, adopting practice of less printing, and opting for duplex printing function, using recycled materials, timely and appropriate disposal of old and hazardous equipment and ICT accessories. There was a reduction in expenditures for office printing paper of 24.7 per cent and 70 per cent on cartridges as compared with 2013.

The wider use of Skype, Lync 2013 and videoconference facilities through available Internet package allowed to achieve cost savings in telecommunication. Expenditures for mobile telephony was reduced by 68 per cent as compared to 2013.

Whilst publications remained as one of the largest programme supply component, some were kept and disseminated in electronic versions.

For frequent, repetitive and small scale services, the office used Long Term Agreements (LTAs) created in VISION in 2013 with two year validity. In 2014, the office benefitted from rates negotiated with service providers in 2013 for translation, copying and transportation. At the same time, there was a benefit from the simplified process of engaging services and reduced transactional costs, since signed LTAs required no solicitation, and low value purchase orders were used instead of regular contracts.

The office renewed the local suppliers’ database, participated in the UN joint process for negotiating LTAs for conference packages with Astana and Almaty hotels, and attended to evaluation of proposals from printing houses.

**Supply Management**

There were no procurement services and emergency supply procurement in 2014. The GoK committed to procure vaccines, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies through UNICEF Supply Division, and the contacting process is ongoing, and expected to be finalized in 2015.

In 2014, UNICEF Kazakhstan mainly engaged institutional services, including contracting for conducting studies, surveys and research. These activities represent some of the highest direct programme support costs. Translating, designing and printing of programme communication materials, was another significant component. A large amount of printing of programme materials was delegated to partners within joint project cooperation and was administered through DCT.
Procurement of services and goods in 2014 reached US$1,178,152.00, including Purchase Orders for assets and services for US$1,058,329 (US$77,037-operational, US$981,292-programme) as well as consumables and low value purchases valued at US$119,823.

Procurement of services for conducting studies, surveys and researches represented one of the highest elements reaching 74 per cent of annual supply component (49.1 per cent-Institutional Contracts and 24.7 per cent-Consultant Contracts). Translation services composed 7.7 per cent of annual supply component; printing of programme materials - 3.5 per cent; contracts for holding programme events with hotels - 3 per cent.; reconstruction works in the office – 3 per cent. There was no procurement of ICT equipment by direct ordering and local procurement.

The office conducted 14 biddings (50 per cent increase as compared with last year) and three cases were reviewed by Contract Review Committee. The office used low value Purchase Orders against LTAs established in VISION with local vendors for small repetitive services such as translation, printing and transportation services, as well as for other small local procurement, with a value of 8.9 per cent of the annual supply total.

**Security for Staff and Premises**

With the reference to the existing Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) standards in 2014, the office planned and implemented necessary steps to ensure sufficient level of security and safety of staff and UNICEF property. Facilities and procedures were reviewed and revisited where necessary: the building evacuation plan was renewed and tested, old fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were replaced with new devices, and the contract for enhancing the CCTV system was signed for work to be accomplished in 2015.

All newly recruited staff completed the Security in the Field courses and received UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) orientation briefings. Two staff members attended UNDSS training on first aid delivery in the field and made presentations afterwards to all staff in the office. The Health and Nutrition Officer presented updated materials on Ebola and shared information on Kazakhstan Government preparedness actions. Early Warning Early Action training for staff was conducted with the knowledge focus on risk resilience to be incorporated into programme delivery strategies.

The office premises security was properly maintained and equipment and data are protected fully. VPN/Inter-Notes/Citrix remote access to office applications were supported as part of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP). All critical staff are equipped with VHF radios, as per the office BCP, and a radio check was conducted in June. Though country MOSS requirements do not require the use of VHF/HF communications, the UNICEF office continued to maintain previously installed VHF connectivity and conducted testing regularly. HF connectivity requires re-installation and preferably replacement of office- and vehicle-based equipment.

**Human Resources**

Upon finalisation of the 2013 MTR report, and the 2014 PBR approval of changes in organigram, the office completed local recruitment for two new positions, regularised changes in reporting lines and aligned staffing structure with country programme. Two General Service positions were vacated during the period and subsequently filled. The new staff members received induction, orientation and security training arranged by the office. Orientation briefings were also conducted for new Programme Assistant recruited for the Almaty office.

The Deputy Representative position was vacated in June due to rotation of the incumbent. The
Responsibilities were absorbed by the existing office capacity, and the programme coordination role was performed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer with support of Programme Officers. The office also stretched its General Service capacity during maternity leave and study leave of two Programme Assistants. The support to programmes was provided by the Executive Assistant. The country programme benefited from support of 15 volunteers who were working in the office during the year.

Office learning and training plan captured individual development plans and group training needs. Briefings and training for all staff were completed as planned, majority of them were designed and delivered by internal office capacity. Briefings on Green IT, UNICEF Programme Policies and Procedures, HACT, Early Warning Early Action, personal development training, VISION refreshing/orientation training were organised and conducted for all staff. The office took advantage of the presence of contracted international experts who, a part of their core responsibilities, agreed to make presentations and share experiences and findings with all staff. Staff with supervisory responsibilities accomplished on-line courses on leadership.

The HR Assistant working together with IT Assistant contributed in elaboration of terms of reference for the creation of a local recruitment page on the UNICEF Kazakhstan website with the purpose to automatize the process of screening applications and preliminary filtering against fixed requirements.

The staff performance and appraisal system was maintained and monitored. All performance appraisals and reports for 2013 were finalised on time, and 2014 mid-term discussions completed.

One Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting was convened in 2014. Staff concerns were about job security in view of post-2015 agenda and Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) prospects. In response, the office conducted a session for all staff on status of the GSSC development and steps that the office could start implementing in order to effectively cope with change. Staff participated in the 2014 UNICEF Global Staff Survey.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

Tasks scheduled for 2014 were completed successfully. The Backup server was upgraded RAID smart array was extended by installing additional 300 GB drives. The UNICEF country office in Astana continued to operate using unlimited connectivity 6Mbs bandwidth connection by ASTEL LLP that has proved to be a reliable service provider. Backup/public internet WiMax/WiFi connection by ISP AKSORAN was upgraded and its bandwidth now reaches 1.5Mbs. A video conferencing facility used regularly during the year.

Microsoft Office 2013 products were successfully rolled out, new features were introduced to the staff and appropriate trainings were conducted. Office365 cloud services such as Outlook (via desktop and webmail), OneDrive for Business were used during the work processes for greater data security and storage reliability. Lync 2013 was used for audio/video conferencing.

Remote access to systems was available through WiMax, Citrix, Cisco AnyConnect VPN, and Outlook Webmail. Staff had access to UNICEF e-learning training resources: iLearn, intranet resources and “Agora” learning portal with improved knowledge availability. The IT Assistant started implementation of local training video recordings for newly hired staff before the scheduled live training events were conducted.
Shared Outlook calendar was widely used to book office resources, such as office vehicles, conference facilities, resulted in optimisation of administrative processes and transparency of booking. The Microsoft Yammer social network for UNICEF was used for communication with peers from other UNICEF offices, for sharing experiences, best practices and creative ideas, and facilitated the induction of newly appointed IT Assistant.

The office land line telephony continued to operate on a basis of Internet Protocol telephony as the cost efficiency measure. Use of mobile telecommunication at organizational cost was limited to critical staff only, and the emergency satellite equipment BGAN device and satellite phones were used only in a testing mode to ensure the functionality.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 By end 2015, Kazakhstan addresses disparities in the realisation of children's rights, in line with the UNCRC Observations.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Kazakhstan has made considerable steps towards addressing disparities in children rights realization over last years. Standards of living of children in Kazakhstan have improved due to several factors, although overall social spending remains low compared to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average. The State expenditure in the social sector decreased slightly from 10.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2012 to 9.7 per cent GDP in 2013 (with spending health, education and social protection falling slightly).

Improved macroeconomic indicators and aggregate social gains mask growing inequalities and regional disparities that affects marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including those among children. Despite impressive levels of economic growth, and concurrent rise in overall living standards, children remain a particularly vulnerable group. National statistics show a worrying trend of child poverty. The share of children living in families with per-capita consumption below the subsistence minimum increased from 33.3 per cent (aged 0-14) in 2010 to 43.8 per cent in 2013 respectively. An analysis of social protection policies based on household budget data reveals the extent of children’s vulnerability to poverty in Kazakhstan: especially in rural, male-headed households; when carer’s have low education levels; in situations of unemployment or being out of labour force; in large households or households with many children, or; where a household member lives with disability. UNICEF continue to work closely with the GoK and other partners to address these critical trends.

The importance of child well-being was recognized within national development agenda and at the highest levels of Government. The National Concept of Social Development 2030 sets out the vision for social sector improvements, for the ‘full physical, mental and spiritual development’ of children, including income support, free health care for children, pregnant and lactating mothers, equal access to pre-school education, prevention and rehabilitation of childhood disability, and free universal secondary education. The policy’s priorities for social protection include the provision of income support to help people to maintain an adequate standard of living, social activation measures to enhance individuals’ reintegration into the labour market, and provision of integrated social services.
UNICEF was involved in series of public consultations with Members of Parliament and ministries on the revision of minimum social standards, and further development of an integrated model of social service. A comprehensive UNICEF study of social protection for children and their families provided further evidence to advocate with the Government a need to improve effectiveness of poverty reduction programs, and to develop closer linkages of social assistance schemes and comprehensive and inclusive services. Furthermore, UNICEF contributed to relevant sector implementation plans with a view to prioritise child’s rights and advocate for budget allocations.

OUTPUT 2 By end 2015, national authorities allocate and utilize sufficient public resources to prioritise child rights in health, education and social protection

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Kazakhstan has a mature and broad social support system that is geared towards the alleviation of poverty and vulnerability. It supports children and their families through (1) cash and in-kind transfers, (2) investments in education and health, and (3) social care services, including residential care, services for children with disabilities, and social work. Despite their generally pro-poor coverage, the UNICEF-supported analysis of social transfers for children and their families in Kazakhstan, concluded in 2014, identified several bottlenecks within the poverty reduction cash transfer programs which affect children, including large exclusion errors, fragmented coverage of vulnerable groups, and low transfers with limited overall impact on poverty levels. The analysis showed that entitled groups of marginalised and vulnerable children and families may be left out of, or not covered by, assistance programs. Moreover, minimum income benefit programs do not provide adequate support to poor and vulnerable families and their children in terms of basic subsistence needs, and require immediate policy attention.

UNICEF continued to engage with Government on the national per capita education financing model, which was piloted by Government in 63 schools in September 2013. According to the 2020 State Programme for Education Development, per-capita financing is a normative approach to financing secondary school education, which should contribute to improved quality and access of education services at mainstream schools across the country. However, the methodology does not yet consider children with disabilities or with special needs, nor children from other disadvantaged groups.

UNICEF continued to support the Government of Kazakhstan at national and local levels to strengthen child well-being, including by improving data management at local level. The planned introduction of the child well-being monitoring system at local level was further constrained as a result of local government reorganisation in 2014 leading to the abolishment of Child Rights Protection departments, which gave rise to challenges in coordination, analyses and decision-making. UNICEF took advantage of other opportunities to strengthen child rights monitoring at national level by supporting in the monitoring of the Child Well-being Index, which was introduced by the Government to assess progress on the implementation of the national Concept for Innovative Development.

Under the Child-Friendly City Initiative, UNICEF engaged local authorities to develop and test child-focused policy tools and processes, such as consultative planning and monitoring mechanisms involving children, municipality self-assessment and child-related administrative data collection and analysis. UNICEF also supported the establishment of a national Technical Working Group on Child Friendly Cities, comprising representatives from government ministries, NGOs and youth organizations, to oversee and guide cities in implementing the CFC Initiative. The city of Aktau joined the CFC Initiative in 2014, bringing the number of cities involved to 21.
UNICEF is supporting the optimisation of the number of CFC indicators and is developing clear instructions for their collection and calculation to enhance monitoring of the CFC Initiative in Kazakhstan. UNICEF also supported 20 cities in Kazakhstan to present baseline data at the Vth Kazakhstani Forum on Child Friendly Cities. In addition, Kazakhstan’s experience on CFC was shared by the representative of the National Commission on Women’s Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy at the 7th Child in the City Conference in Denmark and by the Family Support Centre staff with participation of children at the Forum of the Cities Friends to Children in Russia.

Jointly with the MoES and the Committee on Emergencies, UNICEF continued to help advance Kazakhstan’s disaster risk reduction programmes to strengthen the resilience of poor children and women living in areas prone to emergencies and natural disasters. Together with the National Education Academy and National Centre for Pre-School Education, UNICEF supported the systematic and continuous integration of DRR in education, and improvement in the quality of training and learning materials by sharing international experience and best practices and by developing the capacity of relevant specialists. The results and lessons derived from the DRR in Education programme implemented in three regions and co-funded by ECHO were captured on video and will be used in the coming year as information and advocacy with Government authorities and education experts in other regions and beyond borders.

In 2014, UNICEF supported horizontal exchange between the Governments of Kazakhstan and Brazil on integrating the Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies into the national legal framework and practices. Representatives from Brazil shared their experience with the GoK on the development of a CCC-based national protocol on integrated protection of children and youth in emergencies. The importance of ensuring better disaggregation of data related to vulnerable populations, particularly children, the enhancement of coordination mechanisms and risk-informed programming were also advanced by UNICEF.

UNICEF also contributed to the Regional Consultations for Central Asia and South Caucasus on the Post-2015 DRR Framework (Hyogo Framework for Action-2), bringing together authorities, experts, teachers and children and advancing consensus on schools safety.

OUTPUT 3 By end 2015, innovative alliances for children, representing the Government, the private sector, civil society and UNICEF, contribute to child- and youth-centred initiatives, the leveraging of resources and regular monitoring of children’s rights

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF’s engagement with the corporate sector in Kazakhstan during in 2014 focussed mainly on establishing new relationships in various areas of cooperation. An increased number of social projects were financed by companies in oil industry, mining, construction, banking sectors and others. While more companies represent themselves as being socially responsible, UNICEF’s recent market assessment indicates that many do not currently apply Corporate Social Responsibility principles entirely and that CSR activities of corporates are limited by and large to charity events.

Child-friendly Corporate Social Responsibility principles were shared among UNICEF’s existing and potential corporate partners (including AFTBank, Kazkommertsbank, Temirbank, Bakyrchik, Toyota Kazakhstan Branch Toyota, and Chevron), who are ready to adopt or considering applying child-focused CSR standards; and who might focus on CSR standards with UNICEF support.
UNICEF also continued important partnerships with: the Norwegian Government on strengthening the Ombudsman’s system as part of the overall child protection system; UniCredit Foundation and Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia, on the promotion of inclusion in society; and Penal Reform International, on Justice for Children. Ms. Olga Rypakova, an Olympic Champion from Kazakhstan partnered with UNICEF to promote exclusive breastfeeding in special Public Service Announcements. UNICEF gave special attention to the regional tripartite, of local government, UN and private sector partnerships such as the agreements with three local administrations to establish a child abandonment prevention system; and to promote an inclusive society for children with disabilities with UniCredit Foundation and ATF Bank financing (Akmola and Karaganda).

UNICEF initiated cooperation with a national alliance of NGOs (the BOTA foundation) supporting its members’ child and youth focussed activities in common areas of interest. The successful implementation of the UNICEF component of the UN Joint Programme in EKO, financed by the Government, resulted in expanding the UN Joint Programme in two more regions (Mangistau and Kyzylorda) with the Government funding 80 per cent of the joint programme through co-financing arrangements.

The strategic partnership negotiations with the EU resulted in its contribution of US$ 2.7 million for improving the justice for children system in the country.

OUTCOME 2 By the end of 2015, more vulnerable children, adolescents and mothers benefit from quality and effective care and preventive and protective services

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The under-five mortality rate has continued to decrease, measuring 16 per 1,000 live births in 2013 down from 53 per 1,000 live births in 1990. Kazakhstan was confirmed to have achieved MDG 4 (UN IGME Report, 2014). Slower progress was made on maternal mortality, which reached 26 per 100,000 live births in 2013, making the achievement of MDG5 by 2015 unlikely (UN MMEIG Report, 2014). Following the introduction of highly-effective lifesaving interventions supported by UNICEF under the RKLA6 agenda, improved neonatal care at maternities has helped push the annual reduction rate to 9.8 per cent. However further attention to maternal health and maternal care is needed to ease its contribution to about 40 per cent of foetal and infant mortality. UNICEF’s support focusses on income and geographical disparities, which factor greatly in the causal chain since poor and rural households more likely to be affected. This support increasingly involved multi-sectoral approaches to help enhance equitable access to a range of services, including quality MCH care.

Kazakhstan continues to reduce the rate of mother to child HIV transmission (MTCT) which in 2013 reached its lowest level of 2.1 per cent. To ensure that this progress is sustained and that virtual elimination of MTCT is achieved, UNICEF is helping to MoHSD to address key remaining bottleneck, such as introducing Early Infant Diagnosing using Dry Blood Spots.

The structure of the child protection system in Kazakhstan underwent reform in 201, with the merging of the ministries Health and Social Protection Ministries and the dissolution of local level child protection departments. As a part of the RKLA 7, UNICEF continues to support the evaluation of integrated approached to social services in the prevention of child abandonment which may have contributed to a 37 per cent decrease of children without parental care in residential care institutions from 14,753 in 2004 to 9,192 in 2014. The scale of the child protection system response to domestic violence still needs to be researched; noting that 10 per
ent of children in schools were identified with deep depression and anger arising from the family circumstances.

Reducing the vulnerability of adolescents and young people continued to be a prominent component of UNICEF’s partnership with the Parliament of Kazakhstan, resulting in the revision of a draft Law on State Youth Policy, which was evaluated against eight international standards of youth policy and informed by national consultations with children, adolescents and youth. The first Youth Wellbeing Index for Kazakhstan was also supported by UNICEF. Recommendations drawn from UNICEF’s Suicide Study (2013) and evidence of effective measures to tackle the problem, were presented at a special meeting of the Parliament devoted to adolescents and youth mortality due to external causes).

**OUTPUT 1** By the of 2015, national and local authorities plan, implement and monitor the quality and access of children and women, especially from vulnerable groups, to integrated MCH, ECD, HIV services

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2014, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Social Development with introduction of WHO planning, quality assessment, and monitoring tools on antenatal, perinatal and paediatric care into the existing Health Service Quality Control system, including with the development related regulations and facilitation of capacity development for a core group of MCH managers.

UNICEF’s on-going support to MoHSD has helped reduced geographical disparities in the access of mothers and their children to MCH, through:

- The introduction of per capita financing at primary health care (PHC) level;
- The adjustment of the basic benefits package with targeted rehabilitation and/or preventative MCH interventions for children with special needs (those diagnosed as disabled or chronically ill);
- The introduction of a special coefficient to increase per capita financing of health services for rural populations;
- Performance based payments for PHC workers’ contributions to the reduction of maternal and child morbidity and mortality; and;
- The development of socially-oriented PHC services for all families in needs, where the cost of special social workers at PHC level is covered by the basic benefit package.

UNICEF continued to support the cooperation between health and social services to move towards a progressive home-visiting (patronage) system with the objective of closing equity gaps in child health, development and protection of the most vulnerable children and families.

UNICEF also helped implement an integrated model of medical and social services at PHC level, by supporting the identification and assessment of critical bottlenecks of the newly established system. UNICEF assisted the MoHSD to start preparation on the introduction of a systematic assessment of the patronage system using the Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) method. LQAS was applied in East Kazakhstan oblast to identify gaps in patient satisfaction, which is an important indicator of the quality of patronage care services. At the same time, UNICEF continued to support the replacement of punitive measures in the health care system with modern and effective methods of quality control.

To increase the demand of vulnerable families for a continuum of care, UNICEF supported the development of communication packages, entitled Care for Development and Child Growth and
Development Monitoring, which consists of guides for health workers, mothers and seven video spots for families.

OUTPUT 2 By the end of 2015, the national social protection and child protection systems are better able to respond to the individual vulnerabilities of girls, boys and women, including children with disabilities, children deprived of parental care, in conflict with the law, and at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The structural reform initiatives of August 2014, which combined the ministries of health and social welfare, impacted on functions of health and social services at local levels. Local child protection functions were combined with the competencies of education departments, although they remain somewhat separate from social protection social services. According to administrative data, the reform appeared to lead to some staff reductions, lowering response rates to individual complaints about child rights violations, reducing monitoring activities and statistical reporting, including on disaggregated data on children in formal care, target groups and child labour.

However, the reforms also yielded new opportunities for responding to the needs of the most vulnerable children. UNICEF supports the MoHSD to implement initiatives to reduce child abandonment for children aged up to three years and introducing integrated case management protocols, which resulted in a reduction of new placements of children in residential institutions from 404 in 2011 to 234 in 2013. These initiatives paved the way to the transformation of infant homes and focussed social work targeted to vulnerable families. Unfortunately, the supervision mechanisms for social work have not yet been introduced into legislation nor practice.

UNICEF supported a situation analysis of Children with Disabilities for the Development of an Inclusive Society in the Republic of Kazakhstan, which influenced the formulation of inclusive education and early childhood development concepts by MoES. Barriers preventing systematic monitoring of children out of school were assessed and actions identified to revise national indicators on invisible and semi-visible children, and children at risk of dropping out. Collaboration with the Ombudsman for Human Rights and experts in child disability and linguistics raised the need for non-discriminatory language in describing children with disability and for improving related changes in approaches to services and related policy. An estimated 87 per cent of children with disabilities are home-based. Especially in rural settings, these children have limited opportunities to socialise and participate in sports. In 2014 UNICEF and Special Olympics Europe worked with EKO authorities to adapt Special Olympics early childhood programmes to better respond to the needs of 200 rural children with disabilities.

UNICEF continued to support the country in aligning child care legislation with the best interests of children, especially the most vulnerable, proposing equity-based changes to State Law on Social Standards. UNICEF-supported amendments to the criminal codes for juvenile offenders were introduced for remand foster care and court diversion. To comply with the international standards, the presence of a social psychologist was incorporated in the court procedure for interviewing child victims and witnesses of crime. A significant improvement was the removal of disciplinary isolators as a reprimand measure for children in post-trial detention. In partnership with EU, the documenting of the functioning of children’s courts provided a solid basis for future advocacy of the Government in development of the justice reform vision and mainstreaming child rights. The review included caseload, system access by children, and level of capacity and performance of the system. Pre-trial diversion, as per international standards, was not included into the legislative changes, but it was tested in EKO at community level which showed that
discretionary powers for diverting children in conflict with the law at pre-trial stage by police and prosecutors needs to be legally supported.

Since 2013, the school-based violence prevention programme in EKO has shown 62 per cent reduction in the number of students placed on the police inspector’s register and conflicts with 20 per cent of cases referred to out-of-school social support services. The programme consists of multi-disciplinary school safety teams who identify, respond to, and report on cases of maltreatment and promote positive relationships between peers and staff. However, the system is not yet ready to respond fully to cases of violence occurring outside of schools due to the continued absence of referral protocols.

UNICEF worked with the Government of Kazakhstan to initiate the revision of the procedures on child abduction and supported its communication with the permanent bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

In 2014 the OPCAT (a national preventive mechanism, in which the Ombudsman and civil society organisations monitor the closed and other institutions for children for prevention and response to torture and maltreatment) monitored 28 children’s adaptation centres and schools and three psycho-neurological facilities for children with severe disabilities. UNICEF also supported a practical toolkit on independent monitoring of child rights in closed institutions, which was used for monitoring and shared with professionals in Russia and Belarus.

**OUTPUT 3** By the end of 2015, national and local authorities implement strategies to address adolescents’ vulnerabilities and promote their social inclusion and participation.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF’s on-going support to Kazakhstan in 2014 significantly raised the profile of youth and adolescent development in the country, breaking new ground in addressing suicide among adolescents (as the ultimate manifestation of their vulnerability) and in institutionalising mechanisms at national and local levels to advance the greater participation of young people in decisions affecting their lives.

An assessment of suicide prevention in the two most affected regions of Kazakhstan deepened the understanding of Members of Parliament and the central Government on what does work to decrease suicide, and to recommended strategies proven as the last word in effective prevention of adolescents’ suicidal behaviour.

UNICEF worked in close partnership with the Parliament to promote the right to participation of adolescents and youth in policy development. UNICEF conducted an analysis and subsequent advocacy to highlight key areas of the Draft Law on State Youth Policy which did not meet international principles. Challenges included limited mechanisms to consult with young people; the narrow consideration of young people as economic assets; limited attention to the diversity of the needs of adolescents and youth; and low reliance on the evidence base. UNICEF worked with Parliament to raise awareness among Members of Parliament on international standards for youth policy, during a special session in April 2014. The session brought together Members of Parliament, local government, youth NGOs, and representatives of youth with vulnerabilities in an effort to advance a vision for Youth in Kazakhstan which enabled stakeholders to reflect on and articulate gaps in the Draft Law and young people’s actual needs and concerns.
In August, UNICEF and the Parliament launched national consultations with adolescents and youth to encourage their participation to inform the further development of a youth policy in the country, and to participate in the first-of-its-kind survey to establish a Youth Wellbeing Index in Kazakhstan. Over 6,000 young voices, including those from ethnic minorities, low-income families, girls and women, repatriated youth, LGBT, disabled youth and adolescents in conflict with the law, explored six themes: education & employment; information communication technology; physical and mental health; safety, security & justice; involvement & participation; housing and transport. The outcomes of the youth consultations were launched as part of the National Youth Report for 2014, and a special youth-friendly version of consultations is under development. UNICEF later provided the Parliament with a model Youth Law for Kazakhstan which reflected the best international research, analysis and experience on the topic from among 30 countries.

UNICEF supported two further special parliamentary meetings: in September 2014 on youth mortality due to traffic accidents and suicides, and in December on evidence-based youth policy. During the latter meeting, UNICEF presented a draft organizational framework for improving youth wellbeing outcomes through youth resource centres, and outcome-based indicators for identifying regional youth policy needs, which were developed as part of UNICEF’s on-going work in East Kazakhstan.

**OUTCOME 3** Cross-sectoral Costs - programme support, Area-Based Programming and support to UNICEF sub-regional activities.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Under the major inter-agency and cross-cutting UN Joint Programme “Raising Competitiveness of the East Kazakhstan region through Innovative Approaches to Regional Planning and Social Services for 2011-2015”, UNICEF continued introducing innovative approaches in delivering services to the most vulnerable children as part of the central level policy advocacy aimed to reduce the equity gaps. These approaches implemented in the local context with the existing infrastructure and enhanced capacities of local stakeholders then are translated to the evidence-based effective policies at the national level for addressing disparities across all the regions in the country.

The positive experience of the joint work of the UN with the Government of Kazakhstan in EKO resulted in the launch of the similar programmes in Mangystau and Kyzylorda oblasts in July 2014. The programmes, involving seven UN agencies (UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme/UNDP, United Nations Population Fund/UNFPA, United Nations Volunteers/UNV, UN Women, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation/UNESCO, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/UNHCR, and WHO) are dedicated to promote the economic, social and environmental development of disadvantaged regions facing environmental and developmental challenges.

In collaboration with the EU, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Emergency, UNICEF continued implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction in Education programme in pre-school, primary and secondary schools in Almaty, Eastern Kazakhstan and Southern Kazakhstan. The programme is aimed at strengthening resilience of children and their families living in disaster prone areas via integrating DRR/resilience aspects into the secondary school curricula, school emergency preparedness system and learning process.

**OUTPUT 2** Programme Support, including cross-sectoral area based programming.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
Within the framework of a UN Joint Programme, and as part of the overall strategic approach within the UNICEF-GoK country programme, UNICEF continued to accompany local authorities and service providers to develop the capacity of decentralised local level systems to better care for children, particularly the most vulnerable.

In 2014, this work focused in three regions, namely Eastern Kazakhstan Oblast (EKO), Kyzylorda Oblast and Mangystau Oblast, and resulted in tangible year-on-year achievements. These included:

- In Semey, 262 families in risk of child abandonment were supported by local health specialists, out of which 52 cases of child abandonment were prevented.
- In EKO, the number of students placed on the police inspector’s register fell by 62 per cent in each of 10 focus schools and institutions.
- In Ust-Kamenogorsk, 106 children in conflict with the law underwent social and psychological rehabilitation, as a demonstrated alternative to criminal penalty.
- In the cities of Semey, Kyzylorda and Aktau, more than 100 children aged 6 to 12 years and their parents, 60 volunteer-researchers and city-based school staff actively participated in assessing their cities with respect to standards under the CFC initiative.
- 228 mothers with children from three rayons of EKO (Ayagoz, Urjar, Katon-Karagai) participated in an assessment of the quality of patronage services.
- Having increased their knowledge and skills in IMCI and consulting parents of children up to two years old, 71 medical staff are ready to deliver enhanced patronage services in Semey and rural rayons.

A UNICEF-proposed methodology on suicide prevention among adolescents was applied in Kyzylorda and is likely to have contributed principally to a significant reduction in adolescent suicides in the region, equivalent to a five-fold decrease.

The mid-term evaluation of the UN Joint Programme in EKO conducted confirmed the potential of UNICEF’s work at regional level to inform public policy, for a number of practices and approaches to be replicated in other regions by the local governments, and eventually to share the experience beyond borders. These included the introduction of effective perinatal technologies which contributed strongly to reducing infant and child mortality reduction. Other areas of positive practice included school-based disaster risk reduction approaches, youth policy development based on careful analysis of youth needs, and support to the implementation of special social services.

OUTCOME 4 Management and Administration Results

OUTPUT 1 Effective and Efficient Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The office supervisory structure was clearly defined and agreed with staff. It included system of delegated authorities, office committees and teams. Set of management indicators was used to monitor performance, covering both programme and operational areas. Baselines, targets and responsible staff were clearly defined for each indicator, and actual performance was measured and reported against them. The office established and implemented adequate procedures in the delegation of financial controls, and staff followed prescribed procedures. The Representative had issued a table of authority documenting the roles/authorities delegated to staff, and the office accurately recorded this in VISION. The office formally notified staff of the roles/authorities
that had been assigned to them, and they acknowledged in writing their awareness of the responsibilities and accountabilities associated with exercising these financial authorities.

The office had conducted a risk and control self-assessment and developed its risk and control library, which was regularly updated and discussed in the CMT meetings. The RCSA was revised and updated in 2014 to include any new relevant risks and reassess the control status and rating of existing risks.

OUTPUT 2 Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship of Financial Resources

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The Contract Review Committee and Programme Cooperation Agreement Review Committee were both held regularly and their recommendations considered by approving authorities. The office regularly monitored the status of accounts and took action for correction. Bank reconciliations were conducted on time. A physical inventory of plant, property and equipment was conducted and the Property Survey Board appropriately reviewed unserviceable and surplus assets for disposal. Budget utilisation was reviewed regularly at CMT, programme and section meetings. Utilisation of Regular Resources exceeded 99 per cent at the end of the year. All grants were used within validity dates and all donor reports were submitted on time. Due to regular monitoring of DCT status, the office did not have outstanding DCT advances of more than nine months. Assessment and assurance plan was approved and its implementation including micro assessment and assurance activities was carried out as planned.

Document Centre

Evaluation

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**Other Publication**

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