

Update on the context and situation of children

1 Prior to the 2011 revolution, Libya was a high middle-income country which had made progress in meeting its Millennium Development Goals.^[1] The vacuum of effective governance since 2011 has contributed to the conflict, deterioration of security, the rule of law, basic service delivery, and economic recovery. Libya is divided between two governing authorities: the Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli and the 'interim government' backed by the House of Representatives and the Libyan National Army (LNA). The political stalemate that dominated Libyan politics since 2014 was characterized by a no-war, no-peace status quo, which dissolved into open warfare on 4 April 2019 when the LNA launched an offensive to take over Tripoli. The GNA and the LNA became entrenched in Tripoli's suburbs and other cities in Western Libya, with escalating armed conflict in December 2019. UNICEF shifted priorities to respond to the humanitarian needs in Tripoli as well as emergencies in Murzuq and Ghat. Libya has increasingly played host to competing geopolitical actors, interfering in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)-led reconciliation process.^[2]

2 Intensified conflict impacted Libya's oil production, the backbone of Libya's economy.^[3] Libya continues to suffer from a liquidity crisis – a combined result of inflation, black market currency exchanges and a general lack of cash. The state continues to pay high subsidies for fuel and basic foodstuff, and to pay state employee salaries across Libya. Though deteriorating, basic services remain functional and are essential to UNICEF's response. Smuggling and corruption are rampant. ^[4]

3 In 2019 the conflict had devastating humanitarian consequences for children and families. An estimated 893,000 people, including around 267,900 children (157,000 boys and 113,000 girls), were in need of humanitarian assistance by the end of 2019.^[5] There are 343,180 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and 447,388 returnees across Libya, including 140,133 displaced persons from Tripoli.^[6] Humanitarian access to some areas is limited and/or constrained.^[7] At least 284 civilians were killed and 363 injured by armed conflict in 2019.^[8] In August 2019, three United Nations (UN) staff were killed and three injured in a car-bomb attack in Benghazi. ^[9] These devastating attacks resulted in increased restrictions on UN staff movement.

4 There are 636,426 migrants and refugees (92 percent adults – 87 percent men, 13 percent women, 8 percent children) in Libya; 101,073 persons are living in conflict-affected Tripoli and 4,475 are held in detention in Tripoli,^[10] including 2,300 persons of concern for UNHCR.^[11] Migrants and refugees are at high risk of rights violations, including restriction movement, high levels of gender-based violence, systematic and arbitrary detention with inhumane conditions, unlawful killing, disappearances, kidnapping, extortion, robbery and forced labor. ^[12] Detained migrants and refugees, including children are held in inhuman conditions.^[13] In July the Tajoura detention centre was bombed, killing 53 persons, including 6 children.^[14] Since the armed conflict intensified, there has been an increased number of persons attempting to cross the Mediterranean sea to Europe, including Libyan youth.^[15] During 2019, there were 743 known deaths at sea.^[16]

5 Access to and quality of healthcare significantly deteriorated in 2019, with an increased risk of communicable and non-communicable disease. An estimated 525,992 people are in need of primary and secondary health services, including 210,397 children.^[17] More than 24 percent of health facilities have been closed and existing health services are frequently interrupted.^[18] By August 2019, there were 37 registered attacks on health facilities^[19] and health workers.^[20] Conflict-affected communities, migrants and refugees face particular barriers to healthcare. Inadequate information management systems, deterioration of supply chain systems and shortage of vaccines are evident, with sporadic small-scale diseases outbreaks.^[21]

6 Though primary and secondary school enrolment remains high, with a gross rate of 87 percent and no significant gender disparity, access and quality have been impacted. During 2019, nine schools were damaged as a result of conflict;^[22] many schools were used to shelter IDPs^[23], education of some 500,000 children in the western Libya has been affected^[24]. A one-month Teachers' Strike^[25] further disrupted the start of academic year 2019. At the end of 2019, approximately 893,000 children were in need of education support.^[26]

7 Child rights violations and protection needs are increasingly reported across Libya, resulting from deteriorating security, violations of international law, breakdown of the rule of law, and absence of quality child protection services. At the end of 2019, 219,877 children and caregivers require protection services, including GBV. Unaccompanied and separated (UASC) migrants and refugees children are particularly vulnerable in Libya. 97 percent of interviewed UASC felt in danger, including from kidnapping, robbery, sexual violence, labour exploitation, detention, and torture and extortion, and almost all reported limited access to basic services.^[27] Explosive remnants of war contamination continue to be a major concern.

8 Adolescents and youth are among the most vulnerable populations in Libya. Young people, especially girls, have limited opportunities for social, economic, and civic engagement.^[28] In 2017, the youth unemployment rate was 48.7 percent and 63 percent of youth reported that they were inactive, ^[29] partially because there has not been a mass public recruitment since 2013. Poor quality education, limited vocational training and employment opportunities, and a weak protective environment are push factors for young people's engagement in high-risk behaviors, including association with armed groups.

9 Libya is one of the most water scarce countries in the world.^[30] Approximately 242,000 people, including 85,000 children, are in need of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) assistance.^[31] Only 65 percent of households are connected to the public water network.^[32] Libya's water institutions lack essential operational maintenance, financial support and technical capacity. An estimated 10% of wells that feed the Man-Made River water system are fully out of service. Water infrastructure continues to be targeted and sabotaged. 90 per cent of waste-water is disposed, untreated, into the sea. Only 10 out of 24 wastewater treatment plants are at least partially functional. The alarming state of solid waste management in urban settings and subsequent increase in the rate of water and vector-borne disease has resulted in increased watery diarrhoea and Leishmaniasis. The possibility of a cholera outbreak remains high.

Major contributions and drivers of results

10 During 2018 the Libyan government and the Executive Board approved a new Country Programme for 2019-2020, after four extensions of 2013 – 2014 Country Programme. The Country Programme is fully aligned with the United Nations Strategic Framework 2019-2020, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the humanitarian, development and peace nexus framework. For the first time in four years, UNICEF was able to fully develop a holistic programme with its results framework and monitoring system to support the implementation of the SDGs. At the beginning of 2019, UNICEF also launched its Humanitarian Action For Children 2019 to respond to the humanitarian needs.

11 In line with the Country Programme and reflecting the humanitarian-development nexus approach, the UNICEF focused on a) support to basic service provision, including in health, nutrition, education and WASH; b) building a protective environment for children; and c) contributing to and building national capacity in evidence generation and evidence-based policy making and budgeting. Gender, youth, children on the move, and emergency preparedness and response are core cross-sectoral components of the programme. In addition, UNICEF focused on building programme effectiveness and operational effectiveness.

12 The onset of increased conflict in 2019 was met with stronger resource mobilization efforts, followed by two adjustments in the Budget Ceiling (from US\$40 million to US\$68,547,059 for 2019 – 2020 period). In 2019, UNICEF's total budget was USD\$20,356,493, including US\$5,530,135 for humanitarian programming, US\$11,706,806 for development/resilience building programmes, and USD\$3,119,552 of internal resources. In 2019, UNICEF received funding from the European Union, the European Union Trust Fund, Germany, Italy, Korea, the US State Department, Malta and CERF. During 2019, UNICEF expanded its human resources to 58 staff (a 46 percent increase) to support its country programme and its humanitarian action delivery.

13 During 2019, UNICEF strengthened its comprehensive approach to partnership building with key ministries, municipal councils, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies and donors. During 2019, UNICEF succeeded in developing 10 Annual Work Plans with its government counterparts,^[1] a remarkable achievement in the context. UNICEF partnered with 14 national organizations. ^[2] UNICEF worked closely with UNSMIL, Office of the Resident Coordinator and all of the UN agencies.

14 To ensure the delivery of programme results in the evolving security situation, UNICEF benefited from some flexible funding arrangements with key donors that allowed UNICEF to shift priorities as required in the context. Additionally, UNICEF prioritized increased monitoring and learning to ensure regular internal reassessment of priorities and programmes. The Rapid Response Mechanism was a key modality through which UNICEF reached the most-affected populations in a timely and adequate manner.

15 The escalation of armed conflict in April directly impacted UNICEF's operational modalities. In line with the Security Management Team requirements, UNICEF reduced the footprint of international staff in Tripoli. The UNICEF Tunisia Country Office generously hosted the Libya Country Office as a temporary measure. By the end of 2019, the conflict also displaced a number of UNICEF national staff members (as well as staff from other agencies) from their homes in Tripoli. The attack on UN personnel in Benghazi in August 2019, which killed three persons, also necessitated UNICEF and the UN system to rearrange its presence and reduce its footprint in Benghazi. However, UNICEF increased the number of its national staff in Benghazi to support programme delivery in the East. To compensate and support the staff during the constantly evolving situation in country, the office established Flexible Work Arrangements.

16 UNICEF has strengthened many of its monitoring, coordination, and implementation mechanisms to adapt to the current context. UNICEF continued to implement the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) framework. In 2019, UNICEF undertook 19 Micro-assessments (including annual assurance activities and programmatic visits) and 16 Spot-checks. Moreover, UNICEF contracted third-party monitors to monitor programme delivery in areas that were hard-to-reach for UNICEF staff. Two programme evaluations have been initiated in 2019, to be completed in 2020.

17 UNICEF increased its communication support to programme delivery in 2019. The country office constantly monitored the evolving situation and highlighted any attacks on children or grave violations of their human rights through statements, either at the country level, or through the regional office and headquarters. UNICEF focused on advocating for the promotion of child rights including celebrations for the Child Rights Convention's 30th anniversary, protection of all children and respect for the international law, as well as for an end to detention of children. UNICEF's social media platforms have continued to be a reliable source of information for children, repeatedly quoted by media and gaining new followers, especially during the peaks of the conflict. In 2019, UNICEF account was verified on Twitter, which strengthened its credibility and the average increase in followers of more 105 percent - with a 63 percent increase of Facebook followers, a 160 percent increase of Twitter followers and a 92 percent increase of Instagram followers compared to last year.

A. Support to Basic Service Delivery

18 During 2019, UNICEF supported basic service provision, including for health, nutrition, WASH, and education. Additionally, UNICEF prioritized the needs of the children in the second decade of their life, both through improved targeted service delivery and direct engagement of adolescents and young people. UNICEF focused on strengthening basic services through system strengthening, capacity building, rehabilitation of infrastructure, and provision of essential materials. To these ends, UNICEF signed ten Annual Work Plans with relevant line ministries to support basic service delivery. Where basic services provision was not available for the most vulnerable, UNICEF worked with non-governmental organisations to provide direct humanitarian assistance.

19 Contributing to the realization of SDG 3 and 2, during 2018 the health and nutrition program sought to bridge the gaps in preventative and curative health and nutrition services in Libya. In 24 municipalities, UNICEF started a comprehensive maternal, newborn and child health care package, in 24 selected health facilities respectively. The

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package is comprised of capacity building, essential supplies, data management, health promotion, monitoring and WASH in health facilities. In targeted municipalities, 670 health centres (approximately 50 percent of health facilities nationwide) are being equipped with packages of lifesaving equipment and data collection tools to strengthen lifesaving service delivery and evidence generation.

20 In coordination with WHO, UNICEF focused on strengthening the cold chain, capacity building relevant staff, and conducting awareness raising around childhood vaccination and quality assurance. During 2019, UNICEF contributed to strengthening the capacity of all 700 immunization centers in the country enabling their provision of quality immunization sessions. This will significantly contribute to vaccine preventable diseases outbreaks. Additionally, UNICEF strengthened cold chain capacities in 240 health facilities (capacity building 90 vaccine supervisors on vaccine and cold chain management) to ensure quality of vaccination services and the implementation of vaccine quality assurance measures. Additionally, UNICEF initiated the Nationwide Cold Chain Inventory to ascertain the current status of the cold chain system across Libya.

21 To prevent nutrition related morbidity and mortality among children and women (particularly including migrants and refugees) UNICEF provided High Energy Biscuits, Micronutrients and Emergency Food Rations and Ready to Use Therapeutic Food to 11,763 children, pregnant and lactating women in partnership with IOM, UNHCR, MSF, against an annual target of 11,000. The key challenge remains the lack of reliable data on the nutrition status of children and women. The Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) Nutrition Survey is planned for the first Quarter of 2020 to bridge the important data gaps.

22 Contributing to the realization of SDG 6 and the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2019, UNICEF strengthened national WASH systems and provided humanitarian support, as needed. In support of service delivery, UNICEF provided pumps and supplies, benefiting 48,000 people. Additionally, UNICEF and partners, rehabilitated WASH facilities in three health clinics, benefiting a total of 18,000 persons and reducing the risk of infectious disease. During 2019, UNICEF also provided the most vulnerable children and their families with adequate, safe WASH assistance in Ghat, Sebha, Tripoli, Zintan, Ajdabia and Benghazi. UNICEF reached a total of 290,582 people with WASH assistance, including the provision of safe drinking water to 93,371 people, sanitation services to 184,115 people and hygiene promotion through hygiene kits distribution to 42,196 people. UNICEF conducted the first National Assessment of Water Systems in Libya that will serve as an important knowledgebase for the government and partners' investment in water infrastructure development.

23 Contributing to the realization of SDG 4, during 2018 UNICEF continued to focus on improving equal access and quality of formal and non-formal education in Libya. UNICEF signed an Annual Work Plan with the Ministry of Education (MoE). In this framework, UNICEF built the capacity of 954 education personnel (355 males and 599 females), including teachers and members of the MoE in Education in Emergencies, Education Management Information System (Phase II), and Child Safeguarding. In partnership with the Arab Institute for Human Rights, UNICEF supported the development of the Life Skills Citizenship Education manual (including translating it into languages used by migrant communities) and capacity building of 140 education personnel and community members. The Life Skills Framework was piloted with 812 adolescents and young people in four municipalities. Based on the success of this programme, the pilot will be rolled out through the national education system in 2020. UNICEF provided education humanitarian assistance to children affected by the armed conflict. A total of 191,000 conflict-affected and migrant/refugee children received formal and non-formal education support through mobile teams and community services, 24,369 children benefited from school supply distribution, and UNICEF and the MoE supported a 'Back to Learning' campaign in October. UNICEF rehabilitated 20 schools across Libya (including fitting schools with gender-appropriate WASH facilities), directly benefitting 19,480 children (9,527 boys and 8,953 girls) in Tripoli, Aljara, Misrata, Murzuq, Sebha, Benghazi, and Zwara.

24 Contributing to SDG 10, 8, 4, 5 and 16, UNICEF aims to increase the resilience and social and economic inclusion of young people in Libya, allowing them to play an active and positive role in their society. UNICEF has two Annual Work Plans addressed to the unique needs of the second decade of children's live with the Ministry of Local Governance and the Authority of Youth and Sports, respectively. UNICEF developed a Youth and Adolescent Vulnerability Assessment Framework and completed a study in targeted municipalities, to inform

programming. During 2019, UNICEF advocated with local government officials for the prioritization of the needs of children and young people in their respective municipalities; the re-launch of the Child Friendly Municipality Award, in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government, sensitized 57 municipal councils on the importance of creating an enabling environment for children and adolescents. Within the context of the Generation Unlimited (GenU) strategy, UNICEF developed Youth Friendly Spaces in four municipalities that will continue. UNICEF and partners provided 2,299 youth with skills development trainings. 691 adolescents and young people participated in TVET short courses and 1,608 participated in sports and cultural activities. UNICEF supported 23 social entrepreneurial projects related to peacebuilding with small grants, proposed by young people after being trained. Based on the success of this pilot, UNICEF is currently expanding the project to 24 municipalities.

B. Building a Protect Environment for Children

25 Towards realization of SDG 16, during 2019 UNICEF strengthened its strategic approach to child protection. UNICEF signed three Annual Work Plans (2019-2020) with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the Higher Commissioner for Children, respectively. A Work Plan with the Ministry of Justice has been approved and is awaiting signature. UNICEF strengthened its integrated approach to programming and coordination during 2019. Increasingly, child protection interventions include contribution from several sections, including education, health and WASH. During 2019, UNICEF reached a total of 105,241 children with child protection services.

26 Towards the establishment of a child protection system, UNICEF and relevant national authorities finalized and agreed on a five-year National Action Plan to End All Violence against Children in Libya. Within this framework, UNICEF reached 862 child protection service providers (274 men and 588 women) with capacity development, including government, local partners and child rights actors. UNICEF and partners supported State Party and Shadow Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

27 In absence of a function child protection system, UNICEF worked with partners to provide psychosocial assistance to the most vulnerable. In 2019, UNICEF and its partners provided 89,270 children (44,608 boys and 44,662 girls) with community and school based psychosocial support. In addition, UNICEF continued to work with partners in the 6 targeted municipalities to provide specialized child protection and GBV services to the benefit of 7,808 children (3,508 boys, 4,300 girls). During 2019, 22,917 parents/caregivers and community members received psychosocial support and parental support and awareness on how to prevent key violations of child rights and violence against children. During 2019, UNICEF opened 10 multisectoral community centres, called 'Bayti Centre' (Bayti means 'home' in Arabic), throughout Libya. The Bayti centres are safe spaces, providing integrated child protection (including GBV), education and health support to the most vulnerable children and their families, including migrations, refugees, and conflict-affected communities. UNICEF started scaling up the Gender Based Violence programme in Misrata and Tawergha to support survivors of GBV. UNICEF also worked with partners to develop a coordinated, inter-sector GBV case management system (including case building relevant service providers), to roll out-GBViMS, and to support behavioral change regarding prevention and response.

28 In the framework of the 5-year Action Plan to End Violence against Children, UNICEF is in coordination with relevant line ministries to evaluate existing child protection and child rights procedures and mechanisms as part of its preparation for the development of a long-term strategy within the framework of the 5-year Action Plan to End Violence Against children, which will include support to Family and Child Protection Units in targeted municipalities. During 2019, UNICEF continued to work with relevant governmental authorities on the establishment of alternatives to detention for children in contact with the law, particularly transitional centers for detained migrant children. These centers will hold children for a short period of time, during which long-term solutions will be identified on a case-by-case basis by a Panel for Best Interest Determination (IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF). UNICEF received approval to establish the first transitional center from Mol but is still awaiting approval from municipal authorities.

29 Libya is a situation of concern for Children Associated with Armed Conflict (CAAC) and grave violations against children, although a formal SC1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism is not in place. Through the

informal MRM system, UNICEF was able to monitor, report and verify cases of grave violations (more than 100 cases reported and 50 cases verified) and contribute to quarterly Global Horizontal Notes and key annual reports.^[4] Cases were referred through UNICEF and UNSMIL for assistance, as appropriate. In 2019, UNICEF continued to advocate for all actors to abide by International Humanitarian Law and the CRC and its protocols, including at the UN Human Rights Council. UNICEF and its partner finalized a mapping of CSOs working in child rights and human rights. On this basis, UNICEF was able to establish a child rights network across Libya to enhance, promote and advocate for child rights and child protection and to monitor grave violations.

30 UNICEF also rolled out a Mine Action through strengthening the cooperation with the Libyan Mine Action Centre (LibMac) and coordination with UNMAS and other Mine Action actors. Through its partners, UNICEF directly reached 7,812 children and 3,630 caregivers and community members received community and school-based emergency Explosive Ordnance Risk Education. An additional 200 households received MRE material through the Rapid Response Mechanism and approximately 245,000 persons were reached with the MRE/ORE radio spots.

C. Evidence Generation and Support to Evidence-Based Policy Making

31 In 2019, UNICEF and its partners continued to build essential learning about children in Libya as well as to work with national counterparts to establish and strengthen national evidence generation institutions and mechanisms. During 2019, UNICEF has made progress on 10 surveys, assessments and evaluations related to WASH, child protection, access to justice, communications, nutrition, immunization, and youth. Three studies were completed during 2019, including a study following up on the protection gaps for children on the move in urban areas (outside of detention), a Public Perception Survey (regional) and the Education Needs Assessment (sector). UNICEF is working with counterparts to prepare for a national household survey.

32 UNICEF continues to work with national counterparts to develop and strengthen the national information system for health, education, justice for children, water management, and gender-based violence, including the following:

(a) District Health Information System (DHIS) is being implemented in a phased manner. In partnership with WHO, UNICEF is supporting the roll-out of DHIS in 24 municipalities (approximately 50 percent of national health facilities in the country). Procurement materials is under way. Reporting to begin in 2020;

(b) Support to the establishment of Education Management Information System (EMIS) continued; UNICEF provided the final batch of required hardware and trained 10 TVET department staff from Tripoli and Benghazi on managing EMIS. Reporting to begin in 2020;

(c) UNICEF is engaged in initial discussion around the development of a Justice for Children Information Management system;

(d) In coordination with the Gender-Based Violence Working Group, UNICEF is working with partners to rollout the Information Management System for GBV.

(e) UNICEF has begun preliminary discussions with government counterparts regarding the establishment of a Water Information Management System.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

33 Based on successful implementation, UNICEF will scale-up the following programme innovations in 2020:

(a) BAYTI centres are community-based child-friendly spaces. Bayti centres were designed as a comprehensive strategy to provide multi-sectoral service provision to all vulnerable children identified through community-led outreach and referral. Programmes at these centres are designed to promote and contribute to children and young

people's full development, addressing their physical, cognitive, social and emotional well-being. It links interventions in education (learning support services), child protection (psychosocial support services), adolescent and youth participation (life skills and innovation labs), and health services. During 2020, UNICEF will strengthen and expand services) in the 10 Bayti centres and other safe spaces across Libya, including through intersectoral coordination and strengthening partnership with other agencies (e.g. IOM and UNHCR)

(b) Rapid Response Mechanism – UN Delivering as One: This year, UNICEF spearheaded the establishment of the Rapid Response Mechanism to respond to the needs of conflict-affected children and their families (including migrants) in and around Tripoli. UNICEF, together with WFP, UNFPA and IOM managed to reach more than 40,000 individuals (8,000 families) with an integrated minimum life-saving package of assistance (Food, NFIs). This mechanism continues to be an effective example of the UN delivering as one in a humanitarian crisis, together with local partners and in coordination with municipalities and local authorities and during the spike of the conflict contributed to at least half of overall UN assistance to the affected communities.

34 There are strong indications that the situation in Libya may continue to be unstable and volatile for the near future. UNICEF began an external evaluation of its Country Programme at the end of 2019; the results of this evaluation will feed into a Mid-Term Review of its programme to determine what components need to be adjusted given the evolving context. Though continued support and system strengthening of the national basic service system will continue to be a priority, UNICEF recognizes the importance of strong and up-to-date internal risk assessment and contingency plans. Additionally, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its internal emergency preparedness measures during 2020, including (a) identifying solid partnerships that are able to rapidly scale-up response (including hard to reach/inaccessible areas); (b) ensure that pre-positioned essential stocks are available to allow for a rapid response; (c) strengthen its mechanisms for Accountability to Affected Population, including systematizing complaints and reporting mechanisms across its programmes; (d) build the capacity of partners and UNICEF staff to ensure emergency preparedness and response, including with regards to the humanitarian principles and Accountability to Affected Populations; (e) enhance the quality of emergency response, including through the diversification of the package of emergency response, expanding the targeted areas and beneficiaries, and introducing cash transfer interventions; and (f) secure flexible funding that allows UNICEF to respond to priority needs, as necessary.

35 Due to the uniqueness of the Libyan context, UNICEF faced a number of operational challenges, such as multiple office locations and multiple accommodations arrangements and constant staff movement back and forth between Tunisia and Libya. UNICEF Libya needs to maintain flexible operational arrangements to allow for flexible, rapid increase and decrease as need. In hindsight, the decision to push for the closure of the UNICEF Libya office in Tunisia in 2018 was not the best option. UNICEF Libya is currently in the process of exploring options to re-establish its office in Tunisia.

36 Evidence generation is essential in the Libyan context. UNICEF and its partners and national counterparts are acutely aware that without improved institutionalized information management systems across the social service system, significant and long-term improvements in basic service delivery is extremely difficult. For this reason, the development of the information management systems in education, child protection, the justice sector for children and water management will remain a central priority during 2020. National household survey is also essential to respond to the information gap and as such will be a priority for UNICEF and all national counterparts across Libya in 2020.