Executive Summary

The newly elected Government that came into office in November 2013 presented new opportunities for children, vulnerable groups and youth through new policies and reforms. The Ministry of Law and Gender was created with a strong mandate for the provision of rights and services for children, women and people with disabilities. Government policies on health and education for children were articulated and monitored. In addition, social protection measures were diversified to cover more vulnerable groups to reduce vulnerabilities from economic shocks and emergencies. UNICEF Maldives, in partnership with the Government and other United Nations (UN) agencies, capitalised on these opportunities to advocate for equitable realisation of rights.

In 2014, the Country Programme focused on addressing inequities in health, nutrition, child protection and education in alignment with the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Of particular interest were identifying the most vulnerable children in the country and the bottlenecks and barriers affecting realisation of their rights. UNICEF Maldives increased its evidence-based high-level advocacy with the Government to address these barriers. Bottleneck analyses in nutrition and child protection resulted in a Government commitment to pilot scalable models of interventions in nutrition and child protection in selected islands that are most deprived. Key bottlenecks identified included poor quality of services, limited capacity of duty bearers and inadequate resources and inter-sectoral coordination to implement policies and programmes. Another change from the previous years was the increased focus on issues affecting out-of-school children, with an emphasis on adolescents, and advocacy with Government on fostering a protective environment within the school system to enable children to stay in school and complete secondary education successfully. To this end, the Government, with support from UNICEF Maldives, worked to identify barriers to education, especially in the islands, and issues affecting children’s migration from islands to the capital Malé in search of education, as well as interventions to address the situation.

The evidence base for policy advocacy and programming for equitable realisation of children’s rights was strengthened by upgrading and updating the MaldivInfo database and linking up the Maldives Child Protection Database (MCPD) with the Police Information Management System. This effort enhanced reporting amongst partners and the use of information in programming. Public advocacy for child rights issues was increased using digital and social media including Facebook and Twitter and communication for development strategies.

Some critical capacity gaps of duty bearers were addressed. In education, 25 curriculum developers were trained, which resulted in the integration of child rights in the new curriculum, while 351 teachers were trained on implementation of the foundation and lower primary stage curriculum. In addition, 75 teachers were trained on delivery of life skills programmes in selected islands, affecting 3,760 students. Health care workers were trained in integrated management of childhood illnesses, newborn care and growth monitoring, and developed standard operating procedures and protocols. Further, national and subnational capacity in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency coordination was developed, in addition to provision of emergency water
supplies during the water crisis that affected Malé in December.

Under the stewardship of the Country Management Team (CMT), the Country Programme was implemented efficiently. Key performance indicators showed 100 per cent of Other Resources (OR) and 98 per cent of Regular Resources (RR) were effectively utilised and that the harmonised approach to cash transfers (HACT) and operational benchmarks were in place.

Shortfalls experienced included the delayed finalisation of the Bill on Child Protection and the Bill on Youth and the delayed launch of the Child Abuse Prevention Campaign. Additionally, delays in appointing the new board of the Maldives Media Council, a regulatory body of all broadcast media, led to postponement of the training of journalists on reporting on children in the media. Further, the abolishment of the Department of National Planning, the functions of which were transferred to the Office for Projects and Programmes, later also abolished, resulted in postponing the training of Government officials and local councils on results based management (RBM). The development of a school hygiene education programme was delayed due to limited local capacity.

Challenges in operations and in the relocation of the UNICEF Maldives office were addressed with the support of the Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) and other UNICEF Country Offices.

To accelerate results for children, UNICEF Maldives initiated key partnerships with:

1) the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Advocating for the Rights of Children (ARC) to improve nutrition for children under five through promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and infant young child feeding practices, and to undertake child abuse prevention campaigns and promote child participation;
2) the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) to develop resilience in communities in selected islands of Laamu Atoll and promote DRR and climate change adaptation;
3) the NGO Journey on drug abuse and prevention of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) among adolescents; and
4) other UN agencies under the One UN Programme on Low Emission Climate Resilient Development (LECReD).

Humanitarian Assistance

The capital city of Maldives, Malé, with a population of approximately 195,000, was adversely affected when the sole operating body supplying desalinated water to the capital had a fire incident on 4 December, 2014. The fire caused severe damage to the company’s control panels, resulting in water being shut off for the entire capital for more than a week. Ground water in Malé is heavily contaminated and its entire population has a heavy dependence on either bottled mineral water or desalinated water for drinking and other basic needs.

The Government made provisions to distribute drinking water at several locations around Malé throughout the entire period. Individuals were provided with approximately two to three litres of water. Long queues were observed at the distribution points, nonetheless the process was conducted in an efficient manner. From the second day, while the repair was ongoing, desalinated water was supplied intermittently for an hour, at 12-hour intervals for testing purposes. Nonetheless, because of the low pressure, only ground floor households received the water, and at very low speed. The majority of residents in Malé live in high rise buildings, where some apartments do not have ground / well provisions at all. For a number of apartments,
Desalinated water is used for flushing toilets. Overall, the task force and National Defence and Security reacted and responded to the water crisis in Malé efficiently, and quick measures were taken to ensure that all residents in Malé had sufficient, safe water for drinking as well as household use.

The situation did not normalise for a while, and continued well into a second week. UNICEF Maldives received a request from the Government to provide support, in particular to ensure that water at household levels was safe. This was a precaution to prevent any potential outbreak of disease.

The UNICEF Country Office, with support from ROSA and the UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen was able to provide water test kits (bacteriological field type), 300,000 water purification tablets, collapsible water-containers (18,000 containers of ten litres each) and pool tester kits (15 kits with 250 Chlorine/pH per kit). The items were provided to the Government at a time when normalcy was being restored, and the purification tablets and testing were used to ensure safety of stored drinking water. The remaining supplies were used to establish the emergency response stocks at hospitals and health centres at the central and atoll levels.

UNICEF also provided technical advice in the management of the emergency coordination process. Guidance was provided on developing Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials and messages to the public, and the draft health emergency response plan improved stakeholder coordination.

**Equity Case Study**

Promoting equity through evidence-based advocacy

Significant efforts went into the establishment of disaggregated data at island level and strengthening databases for evidence-based policy advocacy and programming for children, with a focus on vulnerable children. Support was provided to upgrade and update the MaldivInfo database (a customised version of UNICEF’s DevInfo database) from Version 1, which was based on DevInfo 5, to a faster and more user-friendly Version 2. This version is based on DevInfo 6 and can generate tables, graphs and maps. Island-level indicators on health, nutrition, child protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and education are now available, making data readily accessible to assess inequities and disparities. Efforts were also made to address existing data gaps in the MaldivInfo database through incorporation of key indicators into the Census 2014, while Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) indicators were incorporated into the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) planned for 2015. In addition, with Country Office support, the MCPD was linked up with the Police Information Management System. This effort enabled easy transfer of data between the databases, thereby updating the MCPD with real time data. These databases, now centrally hosted at the National Centre for Information Technology, enabled production of detailed disaggregated data by age, gender, geographic locations and patterns of crimes committed against children and by children and adolescents. This information will inform juvenile justice and child protection interventions.

**Bottleneck Analysis of Infant and Child Feeding Practices**

UNICEF Maldives, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, was a leading voice in addressing nutrition issues, particularly in the North Central Region of the country. The DHS (2009) showed that stunting (22.7 per cent), wasting (14.5 per cent) and underweight (22.4 per cent) rates were highest in that region, calling for an analysis of bottlenecks and barriers impeding nutrition of
children in the region. Hence, a bottleneck analysis on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) was done in selected islands of Raa and Baa Atolls in the North Central Region. Root causes identified included low level of awareness, inaccurate information, beliefs and practices held by mothers and caregivers on general health and nutrition, low exclusive breastfeeding, and poor complementary feeding practices, especially with reference to consistency, density and quality of food used. In addition, a preference for convenient foods such as imported and packaged foods and sugary drinks was identified as a major factor. Although the region is poorer than the rest of the country, affordability and availability of food did not come out as a factor that underpinned the issues. These findings resulted in the development of the IYCF Strategy, which underlies several interventions identified for implementation in 2015. They include formulation of a comprehensive maternal and child nutrition programme, an IYCF programme focusing on the first 1,000 days of life, revision of the Breast Milk Substitute Code and implementation of the Integrated National Nutrition Strategic Plan. In order to increase ownership and capacity of all the stakeholders in the programme, UNICEF Maldives took advantage of the timeliness of the Stop Stunting Regional Conference held in New Delhi in November 2014, by supporting the participation of a delegation led by the State Minister of Health consisting of Government officials and civil society representatives. Further, the country contribution from the Stop Stunting Conference was used at another high-level conference, the Second International Conference on Nutrition in Rome, at which a common vision for global action to end all forms of malnutrition was endorsed by all countries present. A comprehensive IYCF programme is now being designed by the Health Protection Agency with support from the UNICEF Country Office and will be implemented in the deprived regions in 2015 and incorporated in the next Health Master Plan (2016-2025), which was being drafted at the end of 2014. A national conference on child nutrition will be held in Malé in 2015 to formulate the national agenda for maternal and child nutrition.

Bottleneck Analysis on Violence against Children

The Situation Analysis conducted during the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of 2013 showed increasing incidence of child abuse in the country, including violence against children at home and school and in communities. Data suggested that these issues were most prevalent in the South Region of the country, which is made up of Gaaf Alif, Gaaf Dhaal, Fuah Mulaku and Addu Atolls. This region records the lowest proportion of registered births (85.7 per cent), the highest proportion of working children (52 per cent), the highest teenage child-bearing rate (3.2 per cent) and the second largest proportion of orphans (3.8 per cent), compared to other regions in the country. Moreover, findings from the community consultations held during the MTR suggested a high incidence of child abuse in Gaaf Alif Atoll. To address this situation, a bottleneck analysis was conducted in partnership with the local communities, the Ministry of Law and Gender and selected NGOs working in child protection in Gaaf Alifu Atoll to identify contributing factors and how they can be addressed.

Initial findings of the bottleneck analysis revealed gaps in the enabling environment, supply, demand and quality of care that are negatively affecting prevention and response to violence against children. The findings specifically showed that the victims of violence were often re-victimised due to beliefs strongly influenced by social and cultural practices. They also showed that victims have limited access to comprehensive and well-coordinated protection services. The findings also indicated that children and parents lacked the necessary knowledge and skills for prevention of violence, and that the communities lacked the skills and resources for establishment of a protective environment for children. Work is currently ongoing at the Ministry of Law and Gender to design a comprehensive programme to address issues at local and national levels. These include strengthening of the overall child protection systems, including
justice for children, and a community-based approach to identifying and addressing issues affecting children. In addition, plans are underway to establish a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism at national and local levels and capacity building of the local councils in child protection.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

ARC – Advocating for the Rights of Children (NGO)
BCC – Behaviour Change Communication
CCA – Climate Change Adaptation
CFS – Child-Friendly School
CMT – Country Management Team
CPD – Country Programme Document
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRC@25 – 25th Anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child
DCT – Direct Cash Transfer
DHS – Demographic Health Survey
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
EPI – Expanded Programme on Immunisation
GMP – Growth Monitoring Promotion
HACT – Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
HIV/AIDS – Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRBA – Human Rights Based Approach
ICT – Information Communication and Telecommunication
IEC – Information Education Communication
IMCI – Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IYCF – Infant and Young Child Feeding
JJU – Juvenile Justice Unit
LECRed – Low Emission Climate Resilient Development
LSE – Life Skills Education
M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation
MCPD – Maldives Child Protection Database
MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoE – Ministry of Education
MRC – Maldivian Red Crescent
MTR – Mid-Term Review
NDMC – National Disaster Management Centre
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
OR – Other Resources
PBA – Programme Budget Allocation
RBM – Results Based Management
ROSA – Regional Office for South Asia
RR – Regular Resources
SAARC – South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAIEVAC – South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence against Children
SEN – Special Education Needs
SHE – Society for Health Education
ToTs – Training of Trainers
UN – United Nations
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
Available evidence suggests that although children’s nutrition has improved over the past decade, the proportion of under-nourished children remains unacceptably high (18.9 per cent), as per the DHS 2009. The major contributing factor is low awareness of mothers and caregivers towards child nutrition. UNICEF Maldives provided financial and technical support to develop communication for development materials to promote positive behaviours on IYCF and mothers’ nutrition during pregnancy. A total of 86 healthcare providers were trained from 24 islands in two atolls on behaviour change communication (BCC) messages with specific BCC skills to deliver comprehensive nutrition information and enable positive practices in pregnant mothers and caregivers of children under five. Further, systemic, need-based training was provided to 36 health providers in two atolls on integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI). Growth-monitoring training increased skills on monitoring growth and providing timely interventions.

A total of 30 students from seven media clubs in Malé schools were trained on basic journalism, including interviewing skills and applying innovative writing techniques to better monitor their rights and increase their ability to participate. Moreover, 25 staff from the Government were trained to support integration of child rights into the revised curriculum. Students from grades one to three are now being taught elements of child rights through various subjects.

Learning outcome issues were addressed through teacher training on enhancing conceptual and analytical training, contributing to improved teaching and learning methodologies. The Life Skills Education (LSE) programme built capacity of teachers to deliver LSE to 3,750 students, increasing adolescents’ skills to protect themselves from high-risk behaviours.

Further, 29 investigation officers of the Maldives Police Service were provided family and child-centred investigation skills that improved child-friendly and efficient investigation of cases involving children. They also completed a pilot training on sign language, enabling them to engage with victims with hearing disabilities and improve the quality of investigation processes. This training will be institutionalised in 2015. In the area of disaster management, 25 staff from the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) were trained on emergency operations, and 20 Atoll Councillors and 2 staff from the Local Government Authority were oriented on conducting damage assessments post disaster or emergency.

Using the key findings from the updated situation analysis of the MTR 2013 and updated administrative data of the Government agencies, UNICEF Maldives engaged in high-level advocacy efforts with the Government, the Speaker of the People’s Majlis (the Parliament) and the Chief Justice on increased efforts for realisation of children’s rights. The UNICEF Country Office also advocated for special measures to be put in place to facilitate children’s participation in matters affecting them. These discussions facilitated open dialogue between the Country Office and policy makers with clear expressions of commitment from the Government. For instance, analysis of secondary data was used to show evidence of regional disparities in nutrition of children under five years of age. Advocacy with the Ministry of Health on addressing this issue resulted in higher focus on nutrition, with a large delegation from Maldives attending the “Stop Stunting” Conference in New Delhi in November 2014 and reaffirming the Government’s commitment to develop an integrated lifecycle-based nutrition programme.
Advocacy for a refocus on adolescents, based on the Study on Deprivations among Adolescents (2013), the National Drug Use Survey (2012) and administrative data, which all showed multiple vulnerabilities among adolescents of Maldives, was also successful. Policy dialogue on issues affecting adolescents in Maldives resulted in the initiation of a Bill on Youth, and agreement with Ministry of Education (MoE) to undertake an assessment of children and adolescents who migrate to Malé for education with a view to designing intervention programmes to reduce their vulnerabilities and foster a protective environment for them.

Partnerships

Partnerships with Government and local NGO partners continued throughout the year and proved to be strategic in the areas of nutrition, prevention of drug use and HIV/AIDS, and DRR. These partnerships were brokered to more efficiently reach out to right holders, as well as vulnerable communities and groups at the local levels. These NGOs also had the comparative advantage of the technical expertise and flexibility that was required to implement such programmes.

Maldives has no International NGOs working in child rights, however, the UNICEF Country Office partners with UN agencies in common areas. For instance, UNICEF Maldives partnered with UN agencies in the One UN LECReD project on community DRR, climate change adaptation (CCA) and resilience. The UNICEF component is being implemented through a partnership with MRC.

Through partnership with the NGO Journey, UNICEF Maldives supported “a reach out to adolescents” activity on prevention of drug use and HIV/AIDS. Journey’s collaboration is particularly valuable in reaching out to the at-risk young people as they have significant experience in outreach work. The partnership was instrumental in empowering local leaders in selected islands to form an alliance that will work to improve preventive behaviours among adolescents. Capacity building of other NGOs, training of trainers and engaging with local communities all contributed to increasing the sustainability of the project. A multi-component programme cooperation agreement with ARC, an NGO working on child rights, focuses on: (1) child abuse prevention through a national campaign; (2) creating platforms for child participation; and (3) promotion of child nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life.

UNICEF Maldives also partnered with the NGO Society for Health Education (SHE), to build the capacity of health workers on maternal child nutrition messaging, while a partnership was developed with the NGO Care Society on developing tools for early identification of children with learning difficulties and special needs. This NGO will also build capacity of teachers to carry out assessments, leading to a more inclusive class environment, and enable early identification of children who require special support.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF Maldives, in collaboration with the Maldives Media Council for the first time and as part of a new engagement with the wider media, supported a pool of media experts from established broadcast and print media to organise child rights advocacy sessions in five islands of three atolls. This resulted in 722 community members with increased awareness on child rights and the importance of child participation.

Building on work from 2013, further gains were made in developing communication for development materials on IYCF and mothers’ nutrition during pregnancy to adopt positive
behaviours under the maternal and child nutrition campaign. Leaflets, posters and a booklet on maternal and child nutrition for mothers, caregivers and health care providers were pre-tested for effectiveness and comprehension.

UNICEF Maldives, in collaboration with Unilever, marked Global Hand Washing Day, which provided a successful platform to engage with the local media for carrying the message of hand washing with soap to viewers and listeners across the Maldives. Reports and interviews from parents and children were broadcast before and after the event by the national and private TV channels. The UNICEF Country Office took the opportunity of the 25th Anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC@25) to develop two videos that showed progress in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the last 25 years in the areas of juvenile justice and special education needs (SEN). These were widely distributed in the country to relevant ministries, schools and use in community awareness campaigns. They were also put up on the Generation@25 website for a wider audience.

Digital media continued to provide opportunities to reach the broader public. Engagement on Facebook and Twitter resulted in better coverage of children’s issues. The UNICEF Country Office website was completely refurbished to increase and improve the visibility and profile of the work of UNICEF Maldives in the country. An advocacy strategy will be put in place in 2015 to expand UNICEF’s digital profile.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

To facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation, support was provided to the National Action and Coordination Group, a network of NGOs formed under the South Asia Initiative to end Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) to participate in the Technical Consultation on Violence against Children with Disabilities. It provided a platform for the countries in the region to learn about various measures taken to strengthen the legal and policy framework for protection of children with disabilities, and to monitor the commitments to the protection of children with disabilities based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols. Since the forum took place in December of 2014, follow up actions and commitments will be taken in 2015 and the Country Office will prioritise addressing protection issues of children with disabilities.

A well-represented delegation from Maldives, consisting of Government officials, civil society representatives and UNICEF country staff, attended the Stop Stunting Regional Conference in New Delhi. The forum provided state-of-the-art evidence and best practices from around the world on tackling child stunting. The platform was instrumental in accelerating networking and coordination among key national stakeholders. It also recognised the importance of focusing on the first 1,000 days of life in programming in child nutrition in Maldives. Following the meeting, members of the delegation continue to act as champions who advocate for the agenda on child malnutrition. The knowledge is being applied in the development of the child nutrition agenda in the country.

A multi-sectoral delegation from Maldives, including UNICEF, participated in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)-UNICEF Dialogue on Enhancing the Financial Sustainability and Effectiveness of Social Protection Systems in South Asia. It provided an opportunity to share country experiences in social protection initiatives and policies. The Maldivian delegation gained valuable knowledge to strengthen social protection policies. UNICEF Maldives stepped up its advocacy for social protection, including increasing the allocation of budgets for children.
Identification Promotion of Innovation

Maldives has a child immunisation rate of approximately 98 per cent (2011) for all routine vaccines. However, this high rate is achieved with numerous administrative challenges. While multi-year vaccine planning takes place, accurate forecasting has proved to be difficult, mainly due to the absence of an efficient vaccine stock management tool in the health facilities of the remote islands. These islands rely on nodal islands for distribution of stocks, which occasionally subjects the remote islands to delays in getting vaccines. A greater concern has been their inability to maintain the cold chain during transportation and storage in transit, compromising the potency of the vaccines.

UNICEF Maldives and the World Health Organization (WHO) recognised the need and collaborated to support the central and peripheral health facilities to establish a comprehensive Vaccine Supplies Stock Management (VSSM) system to accurately forecast vaccine needs and maintain existing stock and plan for buffers. WHO provided technical expertise to adapt the system to local needs while UNICEF Maldives contributed to build the capacity of health service providers at national and subnational levels and establish the system at health facilities.

The VSSM design was adapted to reflect local needs, and the systems are designed to meet the broad requirements of the community health facilities and the Government. The VSSM software was set up in two islands in Baa Atoll of the North Central Region and in Malé. To date, 80 per cent of health facilities are connected to the system, and are using the software for stock management and vaccine reacquisition. The remaining facilities will be connected in the first half of 2015.

The VSSM improved the efficiency and accuracy of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI). The facilities using the VSSM system avoided stock outs and minimised wastage of vaccines. The central EPI can view the usage/consumption in all connected facilities through the system. Users can forecast the annual vaccine needs for the country as well as at the atoll level. The system, which was established towards the end of the year, though not yet evaluated, is proving to be viable. A review may be considered near the end of 2015.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF Maldives supported the development of the Policy on Child Protection in Educational Settings in partnership with the Ministry of Law and Gender, the Maldives Police Service, the Juvenile Justice Unit (JJU) and MRC. The child protection programme and the education programme provided stewardship to the multi-sectoral core group. This partnership fostered closer collaboration and commitment of stakeholders and enabled access to technical expertise of agencies and their respective comparative advantages.

For instance, while UNICEF Maldives used its convening power, MRC led the training of trainers (ToTs) to equip the facilitators on the child protection policy and implementation of the tools accompanying the policy. The support from MRC was particularly strategic as they have prior experience in conducting similar programmes in school settings, such as the “Be Safe” programme. The Maldives Police Services, the JJU and Ministry of Law and Gender provided technical guidance in developing inter-agency referral guidelines. The lessons learned from this initiative was that early engagement with key agencies increases ownership and enables partners to build on each other’s strengths, with strong coordination.
**Service Delivery**

The Education Programme supported the establishment of a Braille Education classroom in a designated school in Malé as part of a demonstration to increase access for visually impaired children. The Disability Act (2010) of Maldives states that equal opportunities must be provided to receive education within the education system without any discrimination. The law specifically stipulates provision of facilities such as Braille and assistive devices. To enable the Government to implement the law, UNICEF Maldives provided support for the demonstration of a Braille facility in a mainstream school, facilitating the Government policy on inclusive education. Items procured include specialised Braille teaching and learning aids, and advanced information communication and telecommunication (ICT) equipment especially designed for visually impaired children. This Braille classroom in one mainstream school in Malé is now being used by four visually impaired children. The MoE plans to replicate the facility outside Malé.

UNICEF continued to facilitate the procurement of vaccines for the Government, including all vaccines under the EPI. Non-EPI vaccines or supplies procured in 2014 were travel vaccines such as yellow fever, the influenza vaccine, de-worming tablets, nutrition scales and Vitamin A tablets. Financial resources were provided by the Government.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

UNICEF Maldives applied the human rights based approach (HRBA) in its programming with the Government of Maldives, civil society organisations and communities. The major thrust of the partnership was to develop the capacity of duty bearers to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children, women and disadvantaged groups and be accountable to them. The UNICEF Country Office also entered into a partnership with an NGO through a project entitled ‘Advocating for the Rights of Children’. The aim of this partnership is to develop a platform for children to be given the knowledge and skills to express their views and participate in matters affecting them. The child participation strategy and platforms developed based on the strategy will be implemented in 2015. Additionally, support was provided to ARC to develop the Alternative Report on the implementation of the CRC in Maldives.

The situation analysis for the UNICEF-Government of Maldives Country Programme 2016-2020 was developed in consultation with rights holders, including children, and a wide range of duty bearers, including communities, local councils, and government and non-governmental organisations including academia and research institutions. This situation analysis identified issues of inequity and groups of deprived children and drivers of inequity. Thematic consultations held with partners reiterated inequities among children and adolescents. The situation analysis will inform the Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2020, which will also be developed based on HRBA principles.

UNICEF Maldives advocated through high-level discussions and one-on-one dialogues with policy makers, in particular with the Chief Justice and the Speaker of the Parliament, for the removal of corporal punishment, which is stipulated in the Penal Code of Maldives as a punishment for first degree murder. These discussions also emphasised the importance of upholding the best interest of children, especially those in conflict with the law, and adhering to the CRC and international standards pertaining to juvenile justice.

UNICEF Maldives programme staff received training on HRBA in 2014, which increased their ability to apply the principles in programming and in the development of the UNICEF-Government of Maldives Country Programme 2016-2020.
Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

Through the Child Protection Programme, the UNICEF Country Office provided financial and technical support to the Family Protection Authority to raise public awareness on addressing domestic violence and gender-based violence. To respond to the high incidence of domestic violence in communities, the Family Protection Authority disseminated information on gender-based violence and domestic violence using IEC materials. These materials were disseminated in rural islands as well as in Malé. Specific information was provided on the Domestic Violence Act and the services available to survivors of violence. As a result, Family Protection Authority records show an increase in reporting of cases of domestic violence from 19 cases in 2013 to 90 cases in 2014. These cases mostly included cases of violence against women. This increase in public awareness was a result of combined efforts of the Government, NGOs and UN agencies such as UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF.

Technical support was also provided to develop a training module on domestic violence and gender-based violence for law enforcement agencies, magistrates and social workers. Similar technical support was also provided to the Ministry of Law and Gender to deliver programmes on prevention and responding to gender-based violence and violence against children, especially sexual violence against girls. This effort was undertaken with Women Development Committees, island and atoll councils, magistrates and health professionals from selected islands in Raa Atoll in the North Central Region. The training activities sensitised them and enabled them to have a gender-sensitive approach to dealing with victims of such violence. The programme was also designed to enable a multi-sectoral response, thereby creating more ownership of gender issues by the sectors.

Environmental Sustainability

Under the One UN project LECReD, and in partnership with MRC and NGOs, UNICEF Maldives supported a scoping mission in 2014 in the largest and most populous six islands of Laamu Atoll in the South Central Region. This exercise enabled the development of a risk profile and assessment of vulnerabilities in the communities. Community-level dialogues were carried out with atoll and island councils, women's and youth groups and children, to establish platforms for stronger partnerships, improved coordination, participation, increased awareness and changes in attitude towards DRR and CCA. As a result of this initiative, the communities in the 12 inhabited islands will have increased resilience, including knowledge and skills in responding to emergencies and CCA.

Through the Education Programme, UNICEF Maldives supported the development of child-friendly story books on locally relevant environmental themes to support the implementation of the curriculum. A series of 12 story books for grades one to three were developed, printed and distributed to all schools and libraries in the country, making the books accessible to many children. The books are expected to raise the awareness of children on environmental issues.

Effective Leadership

The CMT regularly monitored programme implementation through a programme tracking system. Issues to be discussed at the policy level of the Government agencies were raised in the CMT and taken up with the Government. This improved the cooperation of the Government agencies and increased their internal coordination and reporting back to the UNICEF Country Office. For example, meetings held with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury led to identification of bottlenecks and the implementation of solutions in fast tracking implementation and liquidation of funds. Concurrently, the internal workflows of UNICEF Maldives were also
revised, improving efficiency in the implementation of the programme. Further, a HACT assurance plan for 2014 was developed and implemented to comply with audit recommendations. The CMT also steered the development of the next UNICEF-Government of Maldives Country Programme 2016-2020 in alignment with the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) development process. A consultative meeting was held with the Government, UN agencies, and civil society to better position the UNICEF Country Office for the next Country Programme. Moreover, the CMT utilised the UNDAF and CPD development process to further the equity agenda supported by evidence and high-level advice during the visit of the UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia to Maldives. This high-level advocacy emphasised the importance of equity with a focus on alleviating bottlenecks impeding the realisation of child rights.

The CMT also took effective steps to improve operations management of the office. Despite considerable delays in filling the Operations Officer post by the UNICEF Country Office, the CMT ensured continuity of the operations functions by securing support through staff from other UNICEF Offices on stretch assignments.

UNICEF Maldives moved offices three times in 2014 before securing appropriate premises. The CMT provided strong oversight to this process, initiated an office relocation plan with a task force and measures to ensure the Country Office property at the old UN building was secure. In addition, CMT ensured that the temporary office premises conformed to security standards for safety and security of staff and assets. Moreover, the business continuity plan (BCP) was activated for two weeks in May 2014, when the office first moved out of the UN Building. The BCP was also updated following the Ebola crisis, under the leadership of the CMT.

Key Performance Indicators were tracked regularly by the CMT using the VISION and performance management dashboards, and corrective action was taken accordingly. This effort increased compliance with organisational processes, leading to acceleration of programme implementation, increased utilisation of funds and action on the low level of emergency preparedness that was identified.

The UNICEF Maldives risk profile was updated by the CMT in 2014 to inform delegation of authority, authorisation limits and composition of the management committees. A major risk area was the delayed recruitment of an Operations Officer, which was mitigated as noted earlier. A New Operations Officer was recruited later in the year. Support was provided through remote guidance from the UNICEF Country Office, which has a collaborative agreement with UNICEF Maldives.

Financial Resources Management

In 2014, UNICEF Maldives achieved the highest utilisation of RR and OR compared to the past three years. This was achieved by initiating regular consultations and follow up with Government officials on implementation and timely monitoring of fund utilisation. Special focus was given to ensure full utilisation of OR funds with grants expiring in 2014. By the end of December 2014, the OR utilisation was 100 per cent, while the RR utilisation was 98 per cent.

UNICEF Maldives continued to monitor commitments, direct cash transfers (DCTs) and the implementation of the Annual Management Plan through monthly Programme and Operations Meetings and CMT meetings. Key Performance Indicators were monitored using the VISION performance dashboard. At the end of 2014, coding for activity and output level was at 100 per cent, all Travel Authorisations were closed, all donor reports were sent on time, all grants
expiring in 2014 were fully utilised, direct cash transfers in the six-to-nine month category showed one, and all staff contracts were extended to 2015.

A HACT Officer post was endorsed to strengthen HACT in the office, and recruitment is underway to address gaps over 2015-2016, mainly weaknesses in quality-assurance activities, and to ensure that funds transferred are effectively and efficiently used for the intended purpose. As a recommendation of the 2013 audit, a HACT assurance plan was developed. Based on this plan, micro-assessments were conducted and spot checks will continue into 2015.

UNICEF Maldives maintained the necessary internal financial controls during the year and maintained regular and effective cash forecasts and bank reconciliations.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

In 2014, UNICEF Maldives effectively utilised 100 per cent of OR available and 98 per cent of RR.

In the Country Programme cycle 2011-2015, with a ceiling of US$ 3,236,400 for the five-year programme, UNICEF Maldives has to date received US$ 2,552,928, of which 83 per cent of OR and 74 per cent of RR has been utilised. The balance of funds will be utilised in 2015.

UNICEF Maldives submitted two donor reports in 2014, which were the final reports for the Japan National Committee for Programme Budget Allocation (PBA) SC/2011/0232 and PBA SC/2012/0320. The reports were submitted on time. The CMT monitored the alerts on the manager’s dashboard regularly. As such, grant expiration and donor reports due were regularly tracked, and the CMT ensured that the reports were submitted in accordance with reporting guidelines and deadlines.

OR funds were used to support interventions in nutrition, environmental education and WASH. UNICEF thematic funds from previous years were used mostly to support child protection, education and social policy activities. In 2014, UNICEF Maldives was successful in obtaining set-aside funds for child protection (US$ 100,000); Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) funds for WASH (US$ 44,000); and UNICEF thematic funds for education (US$ 246,435.82), WASH (US$ 35,000.00), social inclusion (US$ 25,000.00) and health (US$ 61,917.62). Despite receipt of these OR funds, a funding gap of US$ 683,472.00 remains for 2015, which is the last year of the current programme cycle.

OR funds were allocated in compliance with the donor requirements and PBA specifications. To ensure optimal use of funds planned in the annual work plans, fund-monitoring mechanism were put in place, including monthly programme and operations coordination meetings, CMT meetings and in-house tracking tools. Strong consideration was given to ensuring all funds are utilised by the grant expiry date by reprogramming unused balances.

**Evaluation**

The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) for 2014 was prepared with technical input from ROSA and endorsed by the CMT. The CMT monitored the implementation of the IMEP quarterly and noted satisfactory performance. All of the internal programme planning milestones such as the monthly programme monitoring, Mid-Year Review and Annual Reviews and donor reporting were completed.
The bottleneck analysis on IYCF and on violence against children and the situation analysis for the next CPD were initiated along with an evaluation of the UNICEF Maldives strategies in addressing issues affecting women and children. An area of challenge faced during the year was field monitoring of interventions, due to the sparse islands and the high cost in sea transport. This will however be given priority in 2015, with a focus on strengthening the knowledge and skills of staff members in conducting evaluations and strengthening the Government’s institutional capacity in monitoring and evaluation (M&E), especially at the atoll and island levels.

It was deemed necessary to evaluate the UNICEF Maldives strategies to address issues affecting women and children as the Country Office develops the 2016-2020 CPD. The findings will provide key information and lessons learned, thereby informing the CPD. Furthermore, the evaluation will also provide key information on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the strategies and results achieved and how this can be improved in the next Country Programme.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

The agreement made with UNICEF Colombo Office to undertake some of the VISION transactions on behalf of UNICEF Maldives continued throughout the year. This made various processes like bank reconciliations, invoice payments and other supply-related processes more efficient and at the same time continued to drastically cut down office expenditure on staff-related costs, enabling the office to have one Operations Officer.

Since UNICEF Maldives is already outsourcing these transactions to UNICEF Colombo Office, the country office is expecting a smooth switch to the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC).

**Supply Management**

The total expenditure on supplies for 2014 was US$ 264,277.

**Security for Staff and Premises**

Since moving out of the common premises of the UN Building in 2014, all the agencies are now required to have their own security for staff and premises. Three office relocations were made since then and much consideration was given to ensuring that the new premises were made Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) compliant. Security measures taken in the new office included shatter-proofing of all the glass windows, installation of biometric locks in the entrance doors and installation of a steel door at the front entrance to strengthen safety and security. Staff participated in two fire drills while in temporary locations, and received security briefings from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) staff and the ROSA Security Advisor.

**Human Resources**

Following the MTR recommendations, the office was restructured in order to better deliver the results stipulated in the Country Programme. This resulted in the abolishment of the post of Senior Programme Specialist - Social Policy (NOD) and creation of the post of Social Policy and planning Specialist (P3). The post of Program Specialist Education/Health/WASH/Drugs and HIV/AIDS was split, creating a separate post for Education and WASH to provide adequate support to the programmes and fast-track implementation. UNICEF Maldives continued to uphold the principle of gender equality in the recruitment process. As of the end of the year, the
gender composition of the staff was 55 per cent male and 45 per cent female. Continuous efforts will be made in future recruitments to bridge the gender gap.

Staff performance appraisals were completed on time at mid-year. The completion rate of the 2014 performance appraisal system (PAS) phase two (mid-year review) was at 100 per cent within the global deadlines. Support was provided to staff on areas of further development.

Staff development initiatives were implemented as planned in the Human Resources Development Plan for the UNICEF Country Office. Training programmes on competency-based interviewing, ethics, RBM, HRBA and programme, policy and planning were held for staff. The Emergency focal point in the office received global UNICEF training on emergency preparedness and response. All the learning activities were completed according to the learning plan with an implementation rate of 100 per cent.

Special attention was also paid to staff welfare in order to increase their efficiency and to create a conducive work environment. As such, flexi-time was made available and utilised by most of the staff, who have the option to report to work at a pre-agreed time between 0800hrs to 0900hrs. This enabled staff with young children to balance work and family commitments. Male and female Peer Support Volunteers (one each) were elected to provide support to staff.

UNICEF Maldives also participated in the Global Staff Survey 2014. The findings and the recommendations of this survey are yet to be announced, hence no action has yet been taken.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

The office moved from the Common UN house at the end of April 2014, relocating to the WHO building temporarily. Only critical staff operated in the new premises while others worked from home, before relocation to the permanent site. For this reason, ICT implemented a new improved Internet connection with the bandwidth upgraded to 10Mbps speed.

Cloud-based Office Automation tools including Office 365, Outlook, Lync, OneDrive and SharePoint were installed in all the computers and training was provided to all staff on the use of Office 365. It allowed centralised data storage and online access to computer services and resources. Further, Cloud-based applications enabled staff to access official e-mails on their personal smart phones, making official communication more efficient.

The migration process was also timed with the physical move of the UNICEF Maldives Office, which resulted in continuation of regular work on the web-based application from remote locations, including temporary locations and home. The staff are increasingly using Lync to engage with other Country Offices, and also find this to be an effective tool for web-based learning.

UNICEF Maldives is also using the renovation opportunity to review the current communications setup and look for improvements, in particular searching for a new telephone system that could offer integrated services and seamless integration with Lync and Skype.

The new UNICEF Maldives website was revamped in early 2014, and the Country Office continues to engage with the public through Twitter and Facebook on new initiatives and key messages for children.
OUTCOME 1  By 2015, new or revised child-focused legislation, policies, guidelines and regulations are enacted to protect the most vulnerable boys, girls and women in Maldives

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, UNICEF Maldives continued its support to the Government to strengthen the legislative and policy environment for child rights. As such, technical and financial support was provided to draft the Bill on Youth, the Child Rights, Child Care and Protection Bill (CRCCP Bill) and the National Child Protection Policy for Educational Settings. Effective high-level dialogue with the Supreme Court, Parliament and the political heads of the ministry enabled a positive move forward with commitment being sought from the Attorney General for the submission of the Juvenile Justice Bill to the Parliament before the end of the first quarter of 2015.

With regard to the drafting of the Bill on Youth, UNICEF is seeking participation of a wider group, through the establishment of a multi-sectoral steering committee, which includes representation from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development, the NGO Journey and UNICEF. UNICEF in 2015 will provide additional technical support to accelerate the completion of the bill.

In order to reinforce the promotion of a protective environment for children, one of the major thrusts of the CRCCP Bill, UNICEF Maldives supported the development of the National Child Protection Policy for Educational Settings, which was approved and is now in force. The policy reinforces a multi-sectoral and coordinated system in schools for identification and assessment of risks, strengthening responses, and establishing of a reporting and referral system and provision of psychosocial support.

While UNICEF provided technical expertise to the Government in the drafting of the bills, consultations were carried out with wider stakeholders, including NGOs, youth, government agencies at national and local levels and civil society groups.

Keeping in line with the equity agenda, covering the most marginalised and vulnerable children and to ensure protection of all children at all times, UNICEF provided support in 2014 to strengthen capacity at the NDMC to better prepare and respond to emergencies and disasters. In this regard, a five-year action plan to set up an emergency operations centre was developed; a 2015 opening has been proposed. In addition, training of staff on emergency operations and assessing damages post emergency was conducted. UNICEF also invested in strengthening the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) for the health sector. Of the four sectoral emergency preparedness and response plans planned for the Country Programme (education, health, child protection, and water and sanitation), this was the third sectoral plan UNICEF assisted in drafting and/or strengthening. The EPRP for the education sector was endorsed and is ready to roll out. However, the child protection sector plan has yet to be endorsed.

Some implementation challenges hindered the work on the CRCCP Bill. These included limited local-level technical capacity for drafting, frequent changes in the political leadership of the responsible ministry, and lack of clarity in the policy directions on the proposed child protection system. In addition, the merger of the Ministry of Health with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Human Rights towards the end of 2013 greatly affected performance. For instance, the internal...
restructuring efforts, budget allocations, and lack of role clarity combined with high staff turnover significantly hindered programming work. The Ministry of Law and Gender, mandated for women and children, was formed in mid-2014, thus stabilising the frequent changes, and progress, though slow, became more systematised.

OUTPUT 1 By 2015, legislation, regulations, guidelines and policies for enhancement of children's rights are strengthened

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Based on the Issue Paper drafted in 2013, drafting of the Bill on Youth was initiated in 2014. Three consultations were held with stakeholders including adolescents and young people, resulting in the identification of key youth issues for consideration in the bill. The draft bill is expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2015. The initiation was delayed due to limited local technical capacity for drafting, and challenges were also encountered in convening and coordination of stakeholders. This was addressed through the establishment of a multi-sectoral steering committee to steer the drafting process. UNICEF will provide additional technical support to the steering committee to accelerate completion of the bill.

UNICEF Maldives continued to provide technical expertise to the formulation of the Child Rights, Child Care and Protection (CRCCP) Bill. Progress on this bill was severely constrained by a number of challenges. As noted above, the Ministry of Health and Gender, which was responsible for the drafting of the bill, underwent a series of political changes and restructuring. A new ministry, the Ministry of Law and Gender, was formed in July 2014 with a specific mandate for children and women. Frequent changes in the political leadership of the ministries concerned, lack of clarity on the policy direction on the proposed child protection system in the bill and changes in focal points responsible for the coordination of the work delayed the completion of the bill. To address these delays and enhance better coordination, UNICEF Maldives held high-level discussions with key ministries, Parliament, and the Supreme Court to promote the rights stipulated in the bill. Following these discussions, it was decided to complete and submit the bill by mid-2015.

To strengthen the enabling environment for child rights, UNICEF supported the MoE to develop the National Child Protection Policy for Educational Settings, which is now in force. This policy reinforces protection of children in line with the measures proposed by the CRCCP bill. The policy facilitates protection of children through identification of risks, improvement of schools' responses to child protection issues, establishment of reporting and referral guidelines and provision of psychosocial support. The policy formulation also fostered cross-sectoral linkages with the Maldives Police Services, the JJU, the Ministry of Law and Gender and MRC. In 2015, UNICEF will support the Government in operationalising and monitoring the application and effectiveness of the policy.

OUTPUT 3 Child and gender-sensitive emergency and response plans reviewed and updated by 2015

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF continued to support development of sector Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRP). In this regard, in 2014, UNICEF provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Health to update the existing health sector risk management framework to strengthen the functions and mandate of the sector to better respond to emergencies. This was done in wider consultation with stakeholders including key Government and UN agencies. The framework enables better coordination mechanisms between central and atoll/regional hospitals
and other relevant stakeholders within the health sector. The framework led to the development of a Health EPRP that stipulates key functions of the Ministry, including roles and responsibilities, to provide timely and effective response during an emergency.

UNICEF also provided technical support to the national coordination agency, NDMC to develop a five-year action plan for emergency operations functions that will support the physical establishment of an emergency operations centre to be opened in 2015. The plan defines the mandate and functions of the centre and links all relevant sectors through initiation of a technical emergency committee. A national regulatory framework for emergency funds to support a national independent budget for DRR and preparedness and response was developed along with a system for volunteer response force to ensure effectiveness and efficiency within NDMC to deploy trained volunteers to respond within the first 24 hours of an emergency. Twenty-five NDMC staff were trained on emergency operations and 20 Atoll Councillors and two staff from the Local Government Authority were oriented on conducting post-disaster damage assessments. NDMC benefitted from guidance and support provided by EPRP-trained UNICEF staff conducted globally in September 2014.

Furthermore, a National Early Warning System and National Emergency Operation Plan were tested with multi stakeholders for timeliness and effectiveness. These tests confirmed that both were fully functional.

Under the One-UN joint LECReD Programme, progress was made on the implementation of an environmental sustainability initiative focused on raising awareness and increasing resilience on DRR and CCA, in partnership with MRC and local communities, in 12 islands of Laamu Atoll.

Additionally, UNICEF Maldives continued regular updates on its preparedness status on the Early Warning/Early Action platform on the UNICEF Intranet.

Local communities and councils have a low awareness and inappropriate attitudes towards the need for planning and preparation of emergencies, which continued to pose challenges to the work undertaken. UNICEF Maldives together with NDMC will conduct specific advocacy initiatives both at policy and community levels in 2015 to address these challenges.

Outcomes 2

By 2015, disaggregated data and information that inform policies and programmes for the realisation of children’s rights is available, accessible, analysed and used.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Maldives UNICEF continued its support to policy advocacy for results-based programming and budgeting through its contribution to strengthening databases. The assistance led to the updating of the MaldivInfo database, a customised version of UNICEF’s DevInfo database, and the strengthening of the administration of MaldivInfo. Data gaps found in the MaldivInfo database were addressed through surveys such as the Population and Housing Census 2014, and plans are underway for the Maldives DHS in 2015. MaldivInfo will also be made more comprehensive from the use of administrative data such as the Education Management and Information System (EMIS), and the MCPD, and the development of the Health Information System (HIS). Limited capacity within the National Bureau of Statistics is a challenge to delivering results on time.

In 2014, a bottlenecks and barriers analysis was conducted in the areas of child nutrition and child protection. The findings and recommendations from these provide a stronger evidence base for equity-based programming in the respective areas.
Special emphasis was put on providing data in MaldivInfo, disaggregated by age, gender and urban/rural, which will contribute to a better understanding of the inequities and disparities within the population. The disaggregated data from the sectoral databases are fed into MaldivInfo, which serves as a database that can be accessed by all parties for policy dialogue and decision making. However, the database is not fully utilised by the counterparts, given the benefits. An evidence-based culture of policy and programming is still in the developing stage, hence promotion and advocacy of the use of the database will be increased in 2015.

Government capacity was increased by training four senior government officials on an advance module on data management and administration. Plans are also underway to develop AtollInfos by the government, and UNICEF is providing support to the development of LaamulInfo (further customised database at the atoll level) in partnership with UNFPA as a demonstration to scale up. This will ensure data gaps at the atoll level are addressed for evidence-based decision making.

In 2014, the RBM and decision-making capacity of government officials and island councillors were targeted, however this did not take place due to the abolishment of the Office for Projects and Programmes, paving the way for a Policy Planning Section within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. Capacity development will be further expanded in 2015 with the new partnership at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.

OUTPUT 1 By 2015, government M&E capacity established to track progress towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The need to strengthen Government capacity to develop an M&E mechanism was advocated with the Minister of Finance and Treasury so that MDG indicators can be regularly tracked and monitored. However, capacity development activities for M&E were not carried out during the year due to the abolishment of the government partner agency, the Department of National Planning under the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. The mandate was transferred to the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure (Office of Projects and Programmes – OPP) and a partnership was established to carry forward the agenda but did not materialise due to the abolishment of the OPP. A new Policy Planning Section within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury was created. A new partnership was established with this section to carry forward the agenda on RBM and M&E, which will be reflected in the 2015 work plan.

Capacity development of government executive-level staff was continued through the ongoing Masters course on Social Policy at Maldives National University. Reference materials and a visiting lecturer were supported by UNICEF Maldives to enrich the delivery and enhance the continuation and participation of students. However, high dropout rates were observed due to the delivery of lectures in block mode and the high cost of travel from the islands to Malé to attend the sessions. A review to identify reasons for the high dropout was carried out, which resulted in changing the mode of delivery of lectures and admission criteria. Maldives National University advertised the course for a new group of students with these modifications. UNICEF provided technical support for the completion of four study guides and will continue its support in terms of assisting with additional reference materials and guest lecturers from identified partner universities.
OUTPUT 3 Policy planning and advocacy are informed by high quality research and analysis generated from established information systems for children, adolescents and women by 2015

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To expand and further strengthen evidence-based policy making, two bottleneck analyses were carried out and completed on stunting in Raa Atoll (one of the northern atolls where stunting prevalence is highest) and child protection in Gaafu Alif Atoll (one of the southern atolls identified for a high number of cases of violence against children). The bottleneck analyses were based on the Monitoring of Results for Equity System (MoRES) approach and using the ten determinants framework.

The child protection bottleneck analysis carried out in the last quarter of 2014 looked at the main obstacles faced by children to live in an enabling environment that is supported by a culture evolving to support all children’s rights and facilitate their access to quality services. Initial findings revealed gaps in the enabling environment, supply, demand and quality of care, which are negatively affecting prevention and response to violence against children. The findings specifically showed that the victims of violence were often re-victimised due to beliefs strongly influenced by social and cultural practices. The theory of change informed by the findings from the bottleneck analysis will be the basis for the pilot project in Gaafu Alif Atoll. The planned project proposes a system to monitor progress made towards the set results together with key partners from Government and civil society at island and atoll level every six months.

Another bottleneck analysis looked at the root causes of the high stunting rate in Raa Atoll. They included barriers in IYCF practices, low level of awareness, inaccurate information, beliefs and practices held by mothers and caregivers on general health and nutrition, low exclusive breastfeeding and poor complementary feeding, especially with reference to consistency, density and quality of food used. In addition, a preference for convenient foods such as imported and packaged foods and sugary drinks was identified as a major factor. Although the region is poorer than the rest of the country, affordability and availability of food did not come out as a factor that underpinned the issues. These findings resulted in the development of the IYCF strategy, which underlies several interventions identified for implementation in 2015.

In addition, an analytical paper in education, health and nutrition, child protection, social policy and DRR, as well as a situation analysis (2014) were developed with an analysis of disparities and other social issues relevant to children and women to inform programme interventions and the next Country Programme (2016-2020).

The national budget review was initiated with an initial budget analysis to identify bottlenecks in Maldivian public finance and possible options for enhancement. This work will continue in 2015 and inform advocacy to increase investment for children to address existing inequities.

It is noted that the data collection process in these areas needs to be strengthened and a systematic monitoring of progress of the interventions needs to be carried out, which will be articulated in the 2015 work plans.

OUTCOME 3 By 2015, families enjoy quality health care, and practise improved nutrition and hygienic behaviours and are aware of the effects of drug abuse and HIV

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The DHS (2009) indicated that among children under five, 18.9 per cent were stunted, 17.3 per cent were underweight, and 10.6 per cent were wasted. Efforts have been made to address
these issues, including a BCC campaign on maternal and child nutrition, promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, and capacity development in growth monitoring promotion (GMP) and IYCF practices. The Ministry of Health will be undertaking a DHS in 2015, which will provide data on the progress made.

The BCC campaign on maternal and child nutrition targeted Raa Atoll in North Central Region and Kaafu Atoll in Central Region, where the prevalence rates of stunting is higher (22.7 per cent and 20.9 per cent respectively). The health staff from these islands were trained on messaging positive nutrition and hygiene behaviour to mothers and caregivers of children under five. Through partnerships with two local NGOs, training was delivered to 66 health care providers in 24 islands of the two atolls. Delays were experienced in consensus building on messages, especially on sensitive issues, which was addressed through a series of dialogue sessions with stakeholders. The training is helping these health providers deliver nutrition messaging to mothers.

Support to strengthen GMP was initiated in 2014, and a GMP assessment was conducted, standard operating procedures were drafted, and three resource tools were developed. GMP standards orientation was conducted in the North Central Region, targeting 31 health care providers in Raa and Baa Atoll, followed by a comprehensive GMP ToT-level training at the national level, where 18 health care providers were trained. The IYCF initiative was revived in order to better respond to improving the nutrition situation in the country. A national level IYCF training activity was conducted, and two exclusive breastfeeding workshops were conducted for 24 health staff in hospitals in Malé and 16 staff in Gaa Alifu Vilingili. Six technical staff from the health sector and NGOs attended a regional IYCF planning meeting, which will be instrumental for developing a local IYCF programme in 2015. Breastfeeding counselling training developed the informative counselling skills of 34 health care providers and student nurses. IEC materials on IYCF and breastfeeding were developed, and will serve as tools to impart information to mothers and caregivers. These training activities equipped the health workers to provide more effective nutrition interventions in the areas of IYCF, GMP and breastfeeding.

With the support of UNICEF Maldives and ROSA, Maldives also participated in the regional Stop Stunting Conference, which was instrumental in identifying directions for child nutrition in the Maldives. Following this, and to build on the Maternal and Child Nutrition Campaign, and IYCF and GMP efforts, “the first 1,000 days of life” nutrition programme will be designed and rolled out in 2015. The participation in the Stop Stunting Conference and the deliberations contributed to a high-level global platform on nutrition: The International Nutrition Conference in Rome. The Stop Stunting Conference created opportunities for nutrition work that UNICEF Maldives will utilise to continue the dialogue on the child nutrition agenda.

The advocacy, follow-up actions and the systemic capacity development support will contribute to achieving the outcome indicators of lowering the prevalence of underweight and stunting among children under five while increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates.

The localised integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) package was developed with the support of UNICEF Maldives, and training was conducted in two atolls in 2014. The Country Office supported several capacity development needs within the child health area, including training on IMCI, prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission and newborn care. As a result of UNICEF’s continued support to build capacity on child health areas, health professionals are better able to respond to common childhood illness and impart standardised information to communities. Strengthening of the monitoring mechanism and a review of practices is planned for 2015.
In promoting hygiene, groundwork on Wash in Schools (WinS) was completed in 2014. A way forward for WinS with a high focus on hygiene education was outlined and approved by the MoE. WinS and a hygiene programme will be fully developed and demonstrated in selected schools in 2015, for MoE scale up. In addition, as part of the WASH emergency response, UNICEF Maldives provided emergency supplies to minimise potential risks of disease outbreak. The support helped ensure that household water was safe.

UNICEF Maldives continued its partnership with Journey, a national NGO working on drugs and HIV/AIDS prevention, through which adolescents and youth in four selected islands were reached. Prevention among young people is a key programme strategic direction of the new National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV/AIDS (2014 -2019), and the support of UNICEF Maldives contributed to the set targets in the NSP. The partnership also included a component on capacity development of other NGOs in order to increase sustainability and scale up. The UNICEF Country Office also plans to lay out a strategy for its collaboration with the National Drugs Agency and the National AIDS Programme in 2015.

Capacity gaps and human resource constraints within the Government continued to be key challenges. UNICEF will engage with NGOs in nutrition, HIV/AIDS and drug prevention to address them.

WHO has been a close partner in contributing to improved health and nutrition of children, while UNFPA is a key supporter for improving maternal health. The collaborations with three NGOs, ARC, SHE and Journey, were instrumental for achieving results for children in nutrition and HIV. Strengthening of national and subnational capacity on child and maternal nutrition, child health, drug and HIV/AIDS prevention with a focus on the most deprived, contributed to improved access to adequately staffed services, and promoted survival and development of children most in need. Issues such as low birth weight, neonatal deaths, high under-five malnutrition rates in selected islands, combined with the emerging trend of obesity, require a focus on equity and policy and a strategic approach. Future support could contribute in these areas.

**OUTPUT 1** Pregnant women, parents and caregivers of children under five are knowledgeable of improved nutrition by 2015 (FA1, KRA 1, OT1)

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The support of UNICEF Maldives to the Ministry of Health on the Maternal and Child Nutrition National Campaign continued in 2014, paying key attention to the development of capacity of health care providers and the raising of awareness on maternal and child nutrition amongst mothers and caregivers of children under five. In partnership with two local NGOs, ARC and SHE, 66 healthcare providers were trained on comprehensive child nutrition in two atolls, Raa (North Central Region – 22.7 per cent) and Kaafu (Central Region 20.9 per cent), which have the highest stunting rates in the Maldives. In addition, 20 healthcare providers from eight islands in Kaafu Atoll were trained on specific BCC skills to deliver appropriate nutrition and hygiene messages and to enable mothers of children under five to practise positive nutrition and hygiene behaviour. The healthcare workers are using the knowledge gained to provide nutrition information to pregnant women, mothers and caregivers.

As a core element of the campaign, 4,500 pre-tested local-language maternal and child nutrition booklets were printed for dissemination to caregivers of children under five in 192 communities. IEC materials on IYCF practices were developed to mobilise healthcare workers to demonstrate
the economic and social impact of poor child nutrition. The booklets and IEC materials will be disseminated in January 2015 following the national roll out of the campaign.

The focus of the BCC campaign for maternal and child nutrition is to reach mothers and caregivers, especially grandmothers, who play an influential role in childcare and feeding. Gender roles in relation to childcare and feeding practices were considered when designing the IEC materials, and emphasis was placed on specific roles of fathers and mothers to support childcare and feeding practices.

There were challenges that delayed the national roll out of the campaign, which was initially planned for the last quarter of 2014. This was mainly due to arriving at a consensus on the BCC messages for the IEC materials and time taken to test the effectiveness of the messages. However, the campaign is now ready to be rolled out in January 2015.

OUTPUT 2 National and subnational capacity enhanced for improved quality of health care services for newborns and children under five by 2015.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The IMCI package developed in 2013 was finalised in 2014. It consists of 13 training modules and resources for health professionals on common childhood illnesses in the country. IMCI training was conducted in two atolls: Raa Atoll (North Central Region) and Faafu Atoll (Central Region). Interventions were targeted in Raa Atoll to enable convergence with nutrition activities in the same location, improving the capacity of staff to address and cure routine child health problems as well as promote preventive measures to maximise child survival.

ENBC training activities were a collaboration between WHO and UNICEF. The essential newborn care (ENBC) programme trained 132 health professionals, increasing their capacity to provide care and support to newborns. This is significant as Maldives has high neonatal deaths within the infant mortality rate. IEC materials were developed and disseminated with the support of UNICEF Maldives on care during pregnancy, detrimental effects to the unborn child, and common newborn illness. The materials serve as a useful resource to new parents and help provide standardised care and treatment to newborns and sick newborns.

UNICEF Maldives supported the standardisation of and capacity development on GMP. Standard operating procedures and resources on GMP were developed, and 31 health staff (North Central Region) were trained. A GMP training activity built the capacity of 18 health providers who will provide improved growth monitoring services, promotion and intervention in selected atolls.

Capacity development support to promote exclusive breastfeeding and IYCF practices in the health sector was provided. Breastfeeding counselling training was conducted for 68 nursing students in Maldives National University, as well as staff in urban hospitals and Gaafu Alifu Atoll. IYCF training resulted in improved knowledge and capacity of 24 healthcare providers on breastfeeding and IYCF counselling contributing to improved services on promoting breastfeeding and IYCF. The GMP tools developed will be used to collect data at the health-facility level, which will feed into the Health Information Management System at the central level to track progress of nutrition trends of children under five.

A delegation from Maldives participated in the Stop Stunting Regional Conference, which was supported by UNICEF. The conference proved to be a valuable learning and advocacy platform. UNICEF Maldives is supporting the conceptualisation of the programme for the Maldives.
Maldives later participated in an intensive regional training activity on IYCF programming, which helped improve key stakeholders’ knowledge in designing the IYCF programme for the country.

The challenge of human resource gaps continued at the national and subnational levels, and UNICEF will continue to address this systematically.

**OUTPUT 3** By 2015, national capacity enhanced to manage water and sanitation systems including in emergencies, complemented by increased capacities of schools to promote hygiene behaviour

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The output was revised to focus on WASH in Schools (WinS) in 2014. By the end of 2014, a way forward was finalized and documented, in which the scope for WinS was agreed and the design and implementation of a hygiene education programme were conceptualised. Key activities for 2015 include finalising the WinS programme and piloting in selected schools. School-level advocacy and a full demonstration of hygiene education in schools will also continue in 2015.

At the broader WASH sector level, new public-private utility companies (STELCO and FENAKA) provided operations and maintenance of sanitation services in the atolls. UNICEF Maldives supported the Ministry of Environment and Energy, responsible for monitoring the quality of services provided by these companies, to provide training to the companies on operation and maintenance of sanitation systems. The training is ongoing and will enable the new parties to effectively manage and provide improved water and sewerage facilities to the communities in selected atolls.

The Government requested UNICEF Maldives to support the water crisis situation that occurred in Malé, where over one third of the country’s population live. Water test kits (three), water purification tablets (300,000) collapsible water containers (18,000) and pool tester kits (15) were provided to the Ministry of Health. UNICEF’s support ensured that the household water was safe for use. It helped prevent potential disease outbreaks and thus minimised the impact on children, women and vulnerable groups. UNICEF provided technical inputs in the coordination and management of the crisis.

Challenges included competing priorities of a curriculum roll out that had a tight timeline. Limited technical capacity within the counterpart agency and at the national level in general also affected the implementation rate. These are being addressed through advocacy to increase capacity. Apart from capacity issues, data gaps also hinder effective monitoring of key indicators. There is a challenge coordinating among key players, such as the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the MoE and the Ministry of Health. There is a need for more clarity on changing roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies. This will be an area for UNICEF’s support in the 2015.

**OUTPUT 4** By 2015 most-at-risk adolescents are aware of safe behaviour against the effects of HIV (FA3, KRA 3, OT6)

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF Maldives continued its collaboration with the NGO Journey working on drugs and HIV/AIDS prevention, in order to reach out to adolescents and youth on five islands. By the end of the 2014, a five-pronged campaign consisting of awareness on prevention, drug education and preventive skills trainings, harm reduction, community alliance and parent awareness was
completed on two islands. This led to 53 young people being trained on drug education in 2014. The interventions provided these young people with appropriate skills to make informed decisions that will help them protect themselves from risky behaviour. Awareness and outreach support were delivered to an additional 56 young people.

In order to scale up and sustain past efforts gained through the partnership, a ToT activity of 25 participants was conducted that built the capacity of national- and island-level NGO members on facilitating drug and HIV/AIDS prevention training. Analysis of the pre-post questionnaires during the training revealed a 40 per cent increase in knowledge among the participants. Post-tests result is a proxy indicator, and this indicator will be measured more comprehensively in the DHS planned for 2015.

Journey’s collaboration is particularly valuable for reaching out to at-risk young people as they have significant experience in outreach work. The partnership has been instrumental in empowering local leaders in selected islands to form an alliance that will work to improve preventive behaviours among adolescents. This also an area where few agencies are working, even within the UN. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) provided technical support from the regional offices to the National Drug Agency and the National AIDS Programme respectively. WHO, UNFPA, UNODC and UNICEF supported the development of the new National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS.

The next step for this output is to continue with the education programmes, followed by an assessment of the HIV/AIDS knowledge gained by the end of 2015. Based on the assessment findings, there is a need to design focused programmes for general adolescents and a separate secondary prevention programme for at-risk young people. There is also a need to support the policy work on drug prevention. The challenge of human resources and capacity gaps within the government agencies responsible for drug and HIV prevention still persist, and this hindered efficient programme implementation. UNICEF Maldives sees working with NGOs in this area as a strategic and efficient way of achieving results for adolescents, and will continue to do so.

OUTCOME 4  By 2015, children enjoy learning in an inclusive child-friendly environment and are aware of sustainable environmental practices

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Education is available free up to grade 10, and has high enrolment rates, with equal rates for boys and girls. Primary net enrolment is 94.4 per cent (2013) with 95 per cent for girls and 93.8 per cent for boys. The data shows a slight decrease in enrolment in lower secondary education at 92.3 per cent, with little difference between girls (91.4 per cent) and boys (93.3 per cent). However, information on attendance rates is not systematically collected, and the limited data available suggests that it is an issue. Data is also lacking on children out of school and children who could be dropping out of school at different grades, or the reasons for drop out. Barriers include access to higher secondary education, where higher grades are predominately available in the capital and densely populated islands. A shortage of teachers, a reliance on expatriate teachers and teacher quality continue to be challenges to increasing learning outcomes. Again, these are prominent in the smaller islands.

Despite these achievements in enrolment and attendance, challenges exist in terms of quality of education. To address issues of quality, UNICEF Maldives and the Government supported the development of the child-friendly school (CFS) quality standards and indicators, surpassing the initial targets of training 100 school staff on CFS. However, monitoring for compliance with the
standards was met with challenges, including limited resources at the central and subnational level. Existing data suggest that while there is no gender difference in learning outcomes for children at all levels, attention needs to be given to reducing the disparities in learning outcomes between Malé and the atolls. Moreover, poor learning outcomes need to be addressed with a multi-pronged approach. Therefore, the support of UNICEF Maldives to the education programme in 2014 focused on improving equitable learning outcomes through improving curriculum implementation, building teacher capacity on delivering the curriculum and demonstration of inclusive education and promotion of life skills for adolescents.

Prior to the MoE’s roll out of the curriculum reform, a baseline study on the impact of the new curriculum was completed in 2013 and launched in 2014. This study highlights issues in children’s learning, and provides an evidence base for the curriculum reforms. Two key recommendations were supported in 2014 with the support of UNICEF Maldives: addressing common misconceptions students have acquired and continued to maintain from lower into higher grades, and improving reading with understanding. As such, a national reading campaign for children was conducted in Malé and selected islands with the participation of children, parents and schools. The campaign raised awareness on inculcating reading as a habit, critical reading and strategies for reading comprehension. Furthermore, 25 teachers were trained as trainers who would train teachers to address misconceptions in mathematics. This core pool of trainers represented schools from different atolls and Malé. The primary stage curriculum that is being developed addresses these issues, and reading with comprehension skills are included in the competencies.

UNICEF Maldives supported the development of the curriculum resource for the foundation stage, and training of trainers to orient teachers to deliver the foundation stage and lower primary stage curriculum to ensure complete roll out in 2015. A total of 350 preschool teachers were trained with skills to deliver the new preschool curriculum.

With support from UNICEF Maldives, a Braille classroom was established in a mainstream school in 2014 to demonstrate inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education. Items procured include specialised Braille teaching and learning aids, and advanced ICT equipment especially designed for visually impaired children. This Braille classroom is now being used by visually impaired children living in Malé. There are Government plans to replicate the model in a school on one of the islands. UNICEF Maldives also initiated a new partnership with a local NGO working on special needs, CARE society. This partnership facilitated the development of early identification tools for children with learning difficulties, special needs and giftedness and built the capacity of teachers on using the tools and carrying out assessments of children with special needs.

UNICEF Maldives increased advocacy with the MoE on expanding quality secondary education and to foster supportive mechanisms within schools to prevent students from dropping out of school at the secondary level. Truncated secondary education denies adolescents access to life skills and information they require to protect themselves from harm, make informed choices and make a smooth transition into adulthood. UNICEF Maldives supported the MoE to expand the LSE programme by training teachers to deliver LSE to adolescents in 36 schools around the country. As a result, 3,750 students benefited from LSE programmes. The target of the Country Programme was to enable 20 per cent of schools in the country to provide LSE by 2014. However, more than 50 per cent of the schools were delivering LSE by the end of 2014. The Government’s policy is to roll out LSE to all schools by 2015, and UNICEF Maldives plans to undertake an evaluation of the LSE programme to assess its effectiveness.
In addition to UNICEF, the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are supporting the Government in this sector. The World Bank supported improving access to education on the islands, large-scale teacher training projects and renovation of schools. UNESCO continued to provide technical support to the Government in achieving the goal of the Education For All initiative. Combined, the agencies' support for the Government’s continued efforts to strengthen the curriculum, inclusivity and expand access is contributing to achieving the result of inclusive and quality education for the children of Maldives.

OUTPUT 1 By 2015, national and subnational capacity enhanced to improve quality of education in line with CFS standards (FA2, KRA 3, OT7)

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Maldives continued to support the MoE in the national curriculum reform process, which contributed to improving quality learning. A Baseline Study on the Impact of the Curriculum (2014) generated an evidence base for the new curriculum reform and revealed issues in learning outcomes. Interventions for key recommendations were implemented, including the national reading campaign and capacity building of teachers on common learning misconceptions. The capacity of 25 teachers was built to explore the reasons for common mathematical errors students were making, clarify the concepts and identify ways to address these misconceptions through the teaching of appropriate pre-requisite skills.

A reading campaign that promotes the importance of reading with understanding was launched in 2014, and conducted in Malé and on five islands, where the importance of reading as a habit, critical reading, and strategies for reading with understanding were imparted to hundreds of parents and children. Digitalised books were uploaded to the MoE’s website to contribute to the supply gap. The campaign was led by the MoE, and stakeholders who contributed to the national campaign include UNICEF and the National Library.

UNICEF Maldives assisted the National Education For All (EFA) review process of the Maldives, and subsequently contributed to the global partnership on EFA. The report reviewed achievements to date in the country, explored challenges and identified a plan for the future education agenda. UNICEF’s contribution was instrumental in facilitating national stakeholder consultations, and making the process more participatory. The process enabled a stock-taking of the education sector and outlined the future education agenda for the Maldives. UNESCO is a key partner in the EFA process.

Competing priorities such as high focus on LSE, child protection in education settings and SEN decreased attention on CFS advocacy. The need will be revisited in 2015. Much of the set targets for CFS for the CPD have been achieved, hence a review of the CFS implementation can be the next step. CFS and support to enhance learning outcomes is an area that the World Bank is supporting. UNICEF Maldives interacted with the World Bank periodically to identify synergies and examine how the assistance of each agency can add value.

Challenges included the immense task of introducing the first phase of the new curriculum in 2015, which compelled the MoE to dedicate a high focus and hence the majority of staff time to meeting this target.
OUTPUT 2 By 2015, institutional capacity for teacher development in special education needs and early years education (foundation stage) strengthened and special education needs services available in selected schools

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The support of UNICEF Maldives support was instrumental in preparing the teachers to deliver the competency-based curriculum in 2015.

Key contributions included development of the curriculum resources for the foundation stage and capacity building at the national and subnational levels. A total of 351 preschool teachers from Male and two atolls were trained on delivering the competency-based framework curriculum for the foundation stage. ToT activities for key stage one (30 teachers) and foundation stage (31 teachers) were conducted. These teachers in turn conducted sessions for preschool teachers in their respective schools. Curriculum guides and learning resources were developed, piloted and finalised. As a result of this support, teachers will be better able to deliver the new curriculum in 2015. The new curriculum will be rolled out to all 210 public preschools in 2015, with the help of the guides, resources and by the trained teachers. UNICEF Maldives provided support to host the International SEN conference in Male, which enabled the SEN teachers on the remote islands to participate in the conference. The conference and networking meeting were instrumental in providing local teachers an opportunity to learn from experts in the field and gain information on emerging knowledge. It also promoted exchanges of experiences between SEN teachers working across the country, and the learning will enhance inclusive education in the classroom. UNICEF Maldives partnered with an NGO working on SEN, and is developing early identification and intervention tools for girls and boys with learning difficulties, autism and giftedness. Early identification will enable the teachers to provide interventions and adapt teaching for the children’s needs.

UNICEF Maldives demonstrated equity in inclusive education by supporting establishment of the Braille classroom, which led to increased access to education for visually impaired children. UNICEF Maldives plans to support the Government in strengthening and institutionalising the capacity in 2015. Plans also include policy-level work to systemise SEN. The World Bank’s education project also supports SEN work to some extent, and UNICEF plans to engage formally with the World Bank to explore areas that UNICEF can add most value.

Implementation of early years’ education activities were delayed due to other priorities related to curriculum roll out. For both SEN and early childhood development, capacity gaps persist as a challenge for efficient implementation and achievements of best results. Further, a situation analysis is needed in this area to identify emerging issues and strategies for multi-sectoral work on early childhood development.

OUTPUT 3 By 2015, school children participate in life skills-based education programmes and have appropriate knowledge and skills on sustainable environmental practices

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Maldives contributed to the roll out of the LSE at the subnational level through capacity building of teachers on LSE, resulting in LSE facilitators being trained in 23 schools in Shaviyani Atoll, Haa Alifu Atoll and Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll. This led to the introduction of LSE in 36 schools in 2014, benefitting 3,760 adolescent students (1,863 girls and 1,897 boys). Life-skills trained teachers are building students’ knowledge and ability on several preventive skills, such as peer pressure, gender roles, and communication skills, which are critical to promoting responsible and positive behaviour. LSE also includes gender sensitisation as a session and it is also
integrated in other modules. Anecdotal evidence reveals that girls are more engaged in LSE and find sessions such as “body image” and “close relationships” useful and relevant to their lives. The current challenge for the MoE to monitor LSE implementation in schools around the country is the staff constraints combined with the cost of travel to conduct regular field visits. An evaluation of the LSE programme is needed, which UNICEF Maldives plans to undertake in 2015. Other agencies supporting LSE include UNFPA, which focuses on curriculum integration of LSE and reproductive health.

The Education Programme supported the development of environmentally friendly story books. Environment education is a key theme in the new curriculum. A series of 12 story books on environment education themes for grades one through three were developed. The books were printed and disseminated to all schools and libraries in the country, and will prove to be an essential resource for the new curriculum, which will be rolled out in 2015. The child-friendly books provide children with opportunities to read and expand their knowledge on local environmental issues in an enjoyable manner.

While progress was made in achieving set results for children under this output, the challenge for the work on SEN and LSE remains capacity constraints and gaps.

OUTCOME 5 By 2015, women and children benefit from a responsive protection system and juvenile justice mechanisms

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF’s contribution towards the result focuses on capacity building on child protection, strengthening the MCPD, awareness raising on prevention of child abuse and juvenile crimes and strengthening community- and national-level mechanisms of the child protection systems, including justice for children. Prevention and responding to violence against children and children in conflict with the law are the two major areas of focus under this outcome. The most recent findings from the administrative data from the Ministry of Law and Gender and the JJU show that these two areas are still major areas of concern. There was a 51 per cent increase in the number of cases of juvenile offenders reported in the first six months of 2014 to the JJU compared to 2013.

Important decisions regarding a number of issues were pending until the Ministry of Law and Gender was created around July 2014. A training needs assessment and development of a training plan is ongoing to identify human resources, especially the social workers required for the system and their functions. Training on sign language and family and child-centred investigation training was provided to the Investigating Officers of the Maldives Police Service, to strengthen their capacity in interaction with children with disabilities. The Police Information Management System, which is the main online system at the Maldives Police Service, was revised to link up with the MCPD, making it easier to transfer and access data from a central point. This will strengthen generation of real time information, which is one of the main challenges for advocating for increased focus on child protection.

Work is underway to establish community-based rehabilitation (CBR) and diversion programmes for child offenders. By the end of 2014, 214 persons from a range of stakeholder agencies received juvenile justice training. The training was based on restorative justice principles and international standards for dealing with children in conflict with the law, which are also the basis of the draft Juvenile Justice Bill. The purpose of training was to create the sensitisation necessary for children in conflict with the law to benefit from the new CBR and diversion programmes. In addition, UNICEF is supporting the Government to establish diversion
mechanisms as an alternative option, and community-based rehabilitation for child offenders. These initiatives will give a head start to the implementation of the juvenile justice legislation, once it is ratified.

A bottleneck analysis looking at the main obstacles faced by children in accessing protective services at national and subnational levels was carried out in the last quarter of the year. The findings from the analysis will be the basis for pilot project in Gaafu Alif Atoll, one of the southern atolls identified as having a high number of cases of violence against children. The learning from this project will inform the model for community-based programmes for prevention and responding to violence against children as well as provide direction to the new Country Programme.

With regard to prevention of child abuse, print material, a social media platform and the website for the campaign were developed. Work is underway for the launching of the Child Abuse Prevention Campaign in January 2015.

**OUTPUT 1** Government and community capacity enhanced for reduction, prevention and response to child abuse and gender-based violence by 2015 (FA 4, KRA2, OT5)

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The mapping and assessment of the Maldives child protection systems identified “trained professionals with adequate remit and authority and experience” as critical for the system to function. A comprehensive training needs assessment and drafting of a training plan was initiated towards the end of 2014 and will be finalised in 2015. The findings of the assessment will provide details of the gaps in the social work capacity, and will also inform the development of the training plan.

UNICEF continued its support towards strengthening the capacity of Investigation Officers of the Maldives Police Service. Twenty-nine Investigating Officers were provided with basic sign language skills. An additional 29 Investigating Officers completed the family- and child-centred investigation (FCCI) course. Discussions were held with senior officers at the Maldives Police Service to revise their rotation policy to ensure that Investigating Officers with specialised FCCI training are available in each atoll to investigate children’s cases, one of the barriers for a positive outcome for victims of abuse.

Activities to raise awareness on child abuse and gender-based violence among NGOs, Island Councils, Women’s Development Committees, school staff and health professionals were initiated in 2014 in selected atolls. With the intention of building stakeholder understanding and awareness of the issues and their roles in preventing and responding to violence against children, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to develop IEC materials, social media platforms and a website for a nationwide campaign. When launched in January 2015, the Child Abuse Prevention Campaign will be the primary basis for raising awareness amongst communities. Launching of the campaign was moved from December 2014 to January 2015 due to the sudden water crisis in Malé that impeded functioning of Government agencies in the capital. The strategy for scaling up includes working with NGOs. In this regard, the recently signed programme cooperation agreement with ARC will focus on building awareness and capacity of stakeholders in 15 islands in five atolls.

In addition, the Police Information Management System was improved to link up with MCPD. This allowed the transfer of information of children as victims and offenders from the Police Information Management System to the MCPD, thus enabling access to a more complete set of
data on violence against children. Orientation sessions were provided for MCPD users at the Maldives Police Service and social workers at the Ministry of Law and Gender.

Frequent changes to the Ministry of Law and Gender, the main partner for this output, hindered the achievement of results.

OUTPUT 2 Community-based programmes are made available for juvenile crime prevention, diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile offenders, by 2015

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF in 2014 provided technical and financial support for the development and piloting of a “Whole Community Model” for juvenile crime prevention. The pilot was initiated in one of the islands identified with increased high-risk behaviour of children. Activities targeting children, parents, school teachers and management, local councils and other community-based groups on the island to promote positive behaviour and for the creation of a protective environment were carried out. To address the capacity gap at the island council, ongoing support was provided to assist it to work together with other institutions in planning, implementing and monitoring activities, contributing to an environment more conducive to children.

UNICEF Maldives together with the Government trained 419 persons, including 72 Judges and Magistrates, 226 Police Officers and 41 Social Workers/Case Workers. Based on the feedback received after the training, two judges from Juvenile Court were attached to Magistrates from Laamu Atoll (with high numbers of cases) to provide on-the-job training and to demonstrate application of the new skills and knowledge gained from the juvenile justice training. UNICEF is awaiting the results of the rapid assessment to measure the effectiveness of the training.

Work was initiated to establish diversion and community-based reintegration programmes for children in conflict with the law. The initial draft of the guidelines for diversion at the Police level and the Prosecutor General’s Office level were developed. Discussions are being held with the relevant agencies to finalise these guidelines. Towards the end of 2014, assurance from the Prosecutor General was sought to ensure a speedy application of diversion for children in conflict with the law. Implementation of the diversion programme will be further strengthened through M&E, the main focus for 2015.

Discussions were initiated with relevant agencies for establishing community-based rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile offenders. A major focus in 2015 will be to test, implement and advocate for institutionalisation of the proposed model for juvenile crime prevention and community-based rehabilitation.

Challenges include limited capacity among key government agencies and facilitating a consensus at different levels on the community-based models for crime prevention and community-based rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. After a series of multi-sectoral discussions, agreement was made to test out a certain model in an island setting. Close monitoring and review of the pilot models will be carried out in 2015, which will facilitate future scaling up.

OUTCOME 6 By 2015, child rights awareness enhanced through child participation and reporting by media
Analytical Statement of Progress:
Technical support provided by UNICEF to the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives and the Maldives Media Council in 2014 played a key role in increasing the capacity of the media to advocate with communities on child rights as well as providing platforms for children to improve knowledge and information on their right to be heard and participate in the development agenda. For the first time, a group of media experts came together from established broadcast and print media to form a child-rights advocacy pool and initiated advocacy sessions for communities on five islands. This resulted in increased awareness of 722 community members, consisting of parents, teachers, young people and adolescents, and island and atoll council members on child rights issues and the importance of children’s voices being heard and the need to respect the rights of children to participate in decision making on issues that affect their lives. To formalise child rights and create wider knowledge and understanding on the subject within the education system, 25 curriculum developers from the National Institute of Education and the Faculty of Education at pre-service and in-service levels were trained to integrate the developed child rights module into the revised national curriculum, which is currently being rolled out.

One year after the monitoring tool was developed for the Maldives Media Council, they started test runs of media reports to assess quality and coverage. Currently one staff member has been trained to generate and analyse reports; plans are underway to train ten more staff from the Council to begin monitoring of media reports on children in 2015. As a result of continued advocacy and training of media, two established print papers, Haveeru and Sun, regularly generated print media articles on child rights issues during the year.

The overall collaboration with the MoE and the independent institutions, the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives and the Maldives Media Council, continued to be very good throughout 2014. Child Rights Clubs were introduced to five more schools on five islands, and 30 new student members between the ages of 12 and 15 from seven media clubs from schools in Malé were trained on basic journalism.

Several constraints encountered during the year included media attention being occupied and engaged in the local council and parliament elections, which resulted in fluctuating interest in covering social/child rights issues. Internal challenges encountered by the Maldives Media Council in the transition between the two executive boards affected the planned initiatives, including training of journalists on ethical reporting. To address these constraints, discussions with the new board of the Maldives Media Council will be held to better plan and coordinate initiatives. UNICEF Maldives will also engage with independent media agencies in early 2015 to undertake training of journalists.

OUTPUT 1 Media has the capacity to report on child rights issues according to international standards by 2015

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In a continuation of UNICEF’s support to increase national media capacity, 71 journalists were trained on ethical reporting on children-at-risk issues, newsroom management and online journalism from Malé, Baa Atoll and Addu City through the Maldives Media Council. Eleven sessions on education and advocacy were conducted on media and civil society’s roles on child rights on five islands of three atolls. This resulted in increased awareness of 722 community members on the importance of child rights and participation. The advocacy initiatives were carried out by a pool of media experts who came together at the beginning of the year from established broadcast and print media in the country. The sessions covered media and civil
society’s roles in promoting child rights and participation, and ways opportunity and space can be provided for children to actively participate. Parents, teachers, young people, adolescents, and island and atoll council members were reached through half-day workshops, focus group discussions and door-to-door sessions. The increased knowledge motivated young people and adolescents to tell their stories and participate in issues that affect their lives. Parents and community members showed willingness to provide space for children’s voices to be heard.

Further training for 70 freelance and online media journalists was planned for the 2nd and 3rd quarters; however the delay in the election of the Maldives Media Council’s board impeded implementation. This setback also prohibited the monitoring activities that were planned by the Council for frequency, quality and coverage of children’s reports by the media. Despite this, considerable progress was made in terms of improved capacity of media on ethical reporting. Reviews of reported articles showed better compliance with ethical standards. Discussions will be held in early 2015 with independent media institutions to garner support to expand training of journalists as well as to advocate on wider promotion of child rights issues through regular reporting and further interactions with communities on child participation.

OUTPUT 2 By 2015, child participation is enhanced to promote and advocate children’s rights

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To raise awareness on child rights and child participation, 30 students from seven media clubs in Malé schools were trained on basic journalism, including interviewing skills and applying innovative writing techniques to better monitor their rights and increase their ability to participate. Furthermore, 25 staff from the curriculum department of the National Institute of Education and the Faculty of Education were trained on child rights modules developed in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives to support integration of child rights into the revised curriculum that is being rolled out. The integration of these modules will formalise child rights into the national education system whereby children will have the opportunity to build their capacity to share important perspectives through visual and verbal communication within their classroom settings.

In addition, more than 300 children had increased knowledge and information on child rights and participated in various platforms that improved their awareness on rights to participation. Children from 18 schools across the country participated in the child rights quiz competition; five islands in five atolls had new child rights clubs established; six children participated in the youth camp designated to promote rights and participation; and 120 students from seven schools participated in the theatre festival on child rights. Moreover, the theatre festival proved to be an innovative and effective strategy to motivate and educate children on their rights as it enabled them to express their views in different forms of art such as songs, dramas and storytelling. Four hundred storybooks with information and messages on rights and participation were also developed and printed for dissemination to 27 schools that have established or newly formed child rights clubs.

One of the biggest challenges faced in implementation was coordination with schools for various advocacy activities. With a heavy extra-curricular calendar for the year, schools had extreme difficulties in arriving at a consensus on dates and times to participate in the initiatives. One such example was the inability of the Media Clubs to hold the planned child participation forum, which would have been an excellent platform to create further awareness on rights and participation. Discussions with the MoE were held and it was agreed that if planned systematically the activity calendar for the year can actually provide the best opportunity to
engage with schools. As such, appropriate planning and engagement with schools at the beginning of the year will be priority in 2015.

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**Other Publication**

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