Executive Summary

In 2016, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Moldova continued its successful partnership with the Government of Moldova to implement the Country Programme of Cooperation 2013-2017. The socioeconomic situation in the country continued to be challenging given the security threats and a constrained economy driven by consumption and remittances, the latter accounting for a quarter of gross domestic product (GDP). After a recession, the economy grew at 1.3 per cent in 2016 but recovery was slow, and public finances remained limited. Such a situation left few possibilities for financing social sector reforms and slowed down their implementation.

Despite the challenges, the Country Programme achieved tangible results. Over the course of 2016, the number of children in residential care continued to decrease, from 3,000 in 2015 to 2,200 in 2016. A new shelter for children victims of trafficking and violence was opened with support from UNICEF Moldova.

According to results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), reported in 2016 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Republic of Moldova registered an improvement in test scores between 2009 and 2015. A proportion of pupils competent in science, reading and math increased by 5, 11, and 10 percentage points respectively. This is also attributable to the support of UNICEF Moldova for the development of the first competency-based curriculum and related training of teachers.

Several policy documents were developed and approved with the support of UNICEF Moldova in 2016: the National Action Plan for the Child Protection Strategy 2016-2020; the Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies 2016-2022; and the Plan of Action for supporting the Roma population 2016-2020. Regulations were amended allowing for better quality of service delivery to children and adolescents. For example, regulations on home visiting by nurses were drafted, quality standards for youth-friendly health services (YFHS) were revised, and regulations supporting early detection of developmental delays and relevant interventions were approved. The child-friendly school standards were adopted by the National School Inspectorate as a basis for quality inspection of all schools. Standard operating procedures for efficient vaccine management were adopted and antenatal care standards were aligned to the best international practices on the left bank of the Nistru River. Results from the evaluation of services for children under three, conducted with the support of UNICEF Moldova, were used to advocate for amendments to the Labour Code introducing a two-week paternity leave.

Evidence generated in 2016 supported further policy reforms. A costing exercise of early childhood development (ECD) services was completed and will be used as the basis for developing a needs-based funding formula for preschools. An assessment of the water and sanitation conditions in preschools was completed, providing information on significant needs in rural areas. Social protection-related reviews, including the mapping of social protection schemes and a socio-economic commentary on the social protection sector in Moldova in comparison to the European Union (EU) and OECD countries, will support efforts focused on alleviating child poverty. UNICEF Moldova contributed to the preparation of the EU Joint Analysis Paper, the United Nations (UN) Common Country Assessment, and the
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) nationalisation process.

UNICEF Moldova continued to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders in data collection. Specific efforts included: support for improved data collection on children with disabilities; support to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in completing a child poverty analysis; the finalisation of the area-based Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) for the left bank of the Nistru River; the annual update of the Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity (TransMonEE) database; and the development of the Children of Moldova statistical publication.

Continued support was provided to stakeholders for effective monitoring of child rights. UNICEF Moldova supported the Human Rights Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the preparation of alternative reports on realization of child rights as per the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by civil society organizations (CSOs) and adolescents, and it contributed to the preparation of EU-Government of Moldova Human Rights talks. A learning exchange with Lithuania and participation at the 20th Annual Conference of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children were organized for the Moldova Ombudsperson for Child Rights.

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova initiated the development of its new Country Programme of Cooperation 2018-2022. A Situation Analysis was conducted, resulting in the development of priorities for action for the new Country Programme of Cooperation and informing the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) draft. UNICEF Moldova supported SDG nationalisation to ensure that key child-related SDG targets are prioritised.

Humanitarian Assistance

NA

Emerging Areas of Importance

Early childhood development (ECD). A key achievement of the Country Programme in 2016 was the support for the development and adoption of the National Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competences, 2016-2020, encompassing key early childhood care and development principles that contribute to harmonious growth, development and the overall well-being of children.

UNICEF Moldova, in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers Audit SRL and the Ministry of Education, conducted a costing study proposing a viable “minimum service” package that will serve as the basis for developing a per capita funding formula for preschool education, which is an important contributor to ECD. UNICEF Moldova worked with the National Centre for Early Education and Family Information and developed pre- and in-service training curricula, guides and comprehensive modules on positive parenting that stimulate ECD. The package helps build the capacities of professionals from several sectors: education, health and social protection. The pre-service curriculum was approved by the Scientific Council of the Pedagogical University “Ion Creanga” and was being modelled by the University as of September 1, 2016.

The second decade of life. UNICEF Moldova accelerated its work on adolescents in Moldova. Adolescents were involved in multiple consultative forums and contributed to key processes such as: the review of Law 140 on Special Protection of Children at Risk and Children Separated from their Parents; the review of the Health Code bill; the development of the alternative CRC report by adolescents; and the consultation on UNICEF’s SP 2018-2021.
**Climate and children.** As part of a risk-informed Situation Analysis, UNICEF Moldova initiated a Climate Vulnerability Assessment providing information on key vulnerabilities and risks faced by children due to climate change. The results of the study are expected to become an integral part of the new Country Programme Document in 2017.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

- **CMT** Country Management Team
- **CRC** Convention on the Rights of the Child
- **CSO** Civil Society Organization
- **ECD** Early Childhood Development
- **EU** European Union
- **GAVI** Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation
- **ICT** Information Communication Technologies
- **IT** Information Technology
- **LTA** Long-term Agreement
- **MLSPF** Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family
- **MoH** Ministry of Health
- **NBS** National Bureau of Statistics
- **NGO** Non-governmental Organization
- **OECD** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- **SDG** Sustainable Development Goal
- **SP** Strategic Plan
- **UN** United Nations
- **UNDAF** United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- **UNDSS** United Nations Department of Safety and Security
- **UNICEF** United Nations Children’s Fund
- **UPR** Universal Periodic Review
- **WASH** Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- **WHO** World Health Organization
- **YFHS** Youth-friendly Health Services

### Capacity Development

In 2016, capacity-building efforts reached over 2,230 professionals from the justice, police, child protection, social protection, health and education systems across the country.

In child protection, efforts focused on capacity building for child-friendly interviewing during criminal investigations and on child-friendly legal representation. Over 400 professionals at the local level were trained to prevent and protect children from violence, neglect, exploitation and trafficking.

Building the capacities of health professionals enhanced their ability to promote healthy behaviours among adolescents and to communicate on the benefits of vaccination. Fifty professionals from YFHS were trained in communication for behaviour change. Representatives from five rayons (national administrative units) developed their own communication strategies with the support of UNICEF Moldova. The demand for vaccination increased due to a comprehensive communication for behaviour change strategy undertaken within the National Immunisation Programme.

A total of 1,300 school managers were trained to apply the child-friendly school standards for self-assessment of schools. At the preschool level, UNICEF Moldova supported 480 professionals to enhance their competencies on the use of the school readiness monitoring.
tool, including observation and recording of child skills development. This tool, along with its
practical application guide, became part of the child education portfolio in 2016, ensuring
children’s school readiness and transition.

A joint UN effort with participation from UNICEF Moldova supported the development of the
Strategy on Development of the National Statistical System, which was approved in 2016. A
statistical publication Children of Moldova was produced, providing comprehensive time
series data and short analyses of the situation of children in Moldova. UNICEF Moldova
supported the participation of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF)
and the NBS at a Regional Network Meeting Leaving No Child Behind, leading to an action
plan for improving the availability of disaggregated data on children in alternative care.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

Evidence generated through surveys and studies supported further policy reform. UNICEF
Moldova contributed to the preparation of the EU Joint Analysis Paper, the UN Common
Country Assessment and the SDG nationalisation process. A costing exercise of ECD
services was completed and will be used as the basis for developing a needs-based funding
formula for preschools. Social protection-related reviews, including the mapping of social
protection schemes and a socio-economic commentary on the social protection sector in
Moldova in comparison to the EU and OECD countries, will support efforts focused on
alleviating child poverty. An assessment of the water and sanitation conditions in preschools
was completed allowing several interested partners to address identified problems.

An assessment of prevention services for children in conflict with the law was completed in
partnership with Coram Children’s Legal Centre. The assessment was used to design cost-
effective and adequate prevention services at the sub-national level. In partnership with the
MLSPF, UNICEF Moldova initiated an assessment of family separation and abandonment in
early childhood that will inform relevant amendments in adoption regulations. The advocacy
efforts of UNICEF Moldova resulted in further revision of Law 140, extending the powers of
guardianship authorities for the protection of children left behind and introducing stricter
penal measures for cases of violence and neglect of children. Two new articles were
introduced in the Penal Code foreseeing criminal accountability for parents who intentionally
neglect their parental obligations.

Supported by UNICEF Moldova, the NBS began collecting disaggregated data on the
enrolment of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs in regular
schools and preschools.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF Moldova brought together civil society actors and government partners under a
movement to realise child rights. The Ministry of Justice, UNICEF Moldova and the Institute
for Penal Reforms signed a memorandum on modelling an improved approach for
implementing the inter-sectoral cooperation mechanism for protection of children in conflict
with the law and for developing a national prevention programme for children in contact with
the law.

UNICEF Moldova continued to partner with the World Health Organization (WHO),
supporting the Government to ensure access to safe and high-quality vaccines and raising
the demand for immunisation services – a GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and
Immunisation) graduation plan. A plan to strengthen the vaccine procurement system was
developed, and a communication for social change strategy was prepared with the
participation of key stakeholders, WHO, media and civil society.
UNICEF Moldova continued to support the National Alliance of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) active in the field of social protection. It provided NGOs with appropriate tools and knowledge on children’s participation in the policy process and strengthened their capacity to monitor child rights (including the implementation of the National Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020) and provide quality services.

Over 50 NGOs received support to develop their capacity to develop their own child protection policies. By October 2016, at least 25 of them had such policies and had advocated for prioritisation of child rights issues and monitoring.

UNICEF Moldova continued to cooperate with the World Bank Group and presented a webinar entitled The Road towards Quality Early Childhood Education - Experiences from Moldova and Zambia to the Global Partnership for Education Secretariat. The webinar was broadcast in 75 countries.

UNICEF Moldova further engaged adolescents in monitoring community needs and child rights. It partnered with information technology (IT) companies with an intention to support the Adolescent Digital Mapping project in 2017.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

External communication and advocacy efforts continued to prioritise child rights and equity, focusing on the most disadvantaged children and ensuring social engagement in the realisation of child rights.

Several key policy documents were developed and approved with advocacy and support of UNICEF Moldova: National Action Plan for the Child Protection Strategy 2016-2020; the Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies 2016-2022; and the Plan of Action for supporting the Roma population 2016-2020.

Following numerous advocacy visits to the left bank of the Nistru River to discuss the importance of child protection for children at risk of violence, abuse and neglect, UNICEF Moldova convened a meeting of child protection specialists from both banks of the Nistru. It resulted in the identification of clear steps for pursuing the implementation of child protection interventions at the civil society level and supporting the regulation of the child protection framework.

Roma children’s participation in education was advocated for with central-level institutions in the context of extending the minimum package for inclusive education.

UNICEF Moldova continued to use social media for visibility and engagement with the public. A partnership with the Centre for Investigative Journalism produced numerous articles highlighting different aspects of child rights.

The participatory Parenting Portal was launched, featuring a photographic documentary of families.

UNICEF Moldova also organised a Voices of Youth platform launch. Fifteen young bloggers were trained in digital film-making, skills they now use on the platform.

UNICEF Moldova used the opportunity provided by UNICEF’s 70th anniversary celebration to highlight its mandate and values. A thirty-panel exhibit of UNICEF’s global and national work was presented along with a local #IMAGINE song, which engaged high-profile Moldovan performers and children, including a child with special needs.
UNICEF Moldova continued to play a lead role within the UN Country Communication Team.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

To model a scheme for preventing young children from being separated from their families, UNICEF Moldova, in partnership with local NGO CCF Moldova, supported an exchange visit for Moldovan professionals, including deputy-heads of districts, and representatives of MLSPF and the Ministry of Health (MoH). The collaboration was facilitated by the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland, and provided necessary knowledge and best practices to be adapted to the Moldovan context. The next step is the adoption of regulations on preventing family separation and modelling in four districts to identify and involve new foster parents for children under three and children with special needs.

As part of the regional initiative on home visiting, UNICEF Moldova provided support to the MoH for strengthening the home-visiting programme following successful experiences in several countries in the region. The adjustments of the existing childcare and development standards ensure assessments of psychosocial development, child safety and the family environment in addition to health checks and counselling on health, nutrition and child development. UNICEF Moldova supported an exchange visit between the Ombudspersons for Child Rights from Moldova and Lithuania, to strengthen the cooperation and exchange of good practices in promoting child rights. Moreover, UNICEF Moldova supported the participation of the Moldova Ombudsperson for Child Rights at the 20th Annual Conference and General Assembly of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, which was focused on children’s right to education.

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova, with support from the Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States Regional Office, initiated discussions on possible cooperation between Moldovan and Turkish universities in social work. The initiative aims to improve the quality of university education for social workers, which will result in better quality of service delivery. Several Moldovan universities were identified and expressed interest in cooperating.

**Identification Promotion of Innovation**

The trends observed in recent data and the magnitude of child abuse and exploitation in the country prompted UNICEF Moldova to look at innovative solutions and expand the measures ensuring the protection of children victims and potential victims of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking. Taking in account the widespread use of social media and internet by young children, UNICEF Moldova raised the issue of protecting children from online sexual abuse and exploitation with the National Council for Child Rights Protection. The cause was strongly embraced by both government and non-government counterparts, and an inter-ministerial working group was formed and tasked to develop a National Action Plan to combat this phenomenon. In parallel, and in view of the Global Partnership to End Violence, UNICEF Moldova entered a partnership with the Ministry of Interior and the International Centre La Strada in order to consolidate efforts in raising funds and developing protection and prevention measures to combat online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

UNICEF Moldova took a further step in promoting mentoring as an innovative approach to teaching and learning for preschool educators by supporting the development of national regulations on mentoring, which cover all educational levels. These bylaws will further support the institutionalisation of mentoring within the education system and help education professionals gain practical knowledge and skills on working with children with disabilities, Roma children and children left behind.
UNICEF Moldova took steps towards further engagement of adolescents in monitoring community needs and child rights, and established a partnership with IT companies to support the launch of the Adolescent Digital Mapping project in 2017.

Support to Integration and Cross-Sectoral Linkages

UNICEF Moldova continued to support and build capacities of professionals within the inter-sectoral mechanism for identification and referral of children at risk or victims of violence, abuse and neglect and children in contact with the law, which is operational in two municipalities and seven districts. The uniform application of the operating procedures and the performance of the joint medical and social worker teams were monitored to support identification of good practices for replication in other rayons (national administrative units). UNICEF Moldova was instrumental in revitalising the inter-ministerial working group led by the Ministry of Justice to ensure a common inter-sectoral approach for child-friendly interviewing of children victims and witnesses of crimes. For children offenders, similar cross-sectoral local working groups were established in Ungheni (Centre), Orhei (Centre), Balti (North), Causeni (South) and Leova (South).

The convener role that UNICEF Moldova played in bringing together various line ministries (Ministry of Education, MoH and MoLSPF), CSOs, academia, the National Council for Child Rights Protection, the Office of the Prime Minister, and other UN agencies led to a clear result: the Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competences 2016-2020 was approved. It is a cross-sectoral instrument that commits to the improvement of Moldovan parents' skills so that they can ensure adequate growth and development for their children within a nurturing and violence-free environment.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova actively participated in promoting children’s rights through the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanisms. UNICEF Moldova supported the UPR submission and the preparation of alternative reports to the Committee from both CSOs and adolescents, and supported the translation of the Committee report by the independent Ombudsperson for Child Rights. UNICEF Moldova also ensured that child rights issues are prominently reflected in the agenda of the human rights dialogue between the EU and the Government of Moldova.

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova conducted a study to assess early childhood family separation and abandonment. Support was also provided to the Government to assess and review the latest national legislation on adoption and ensure its alignment with Article 21 of the CRC and the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, following concluding remarks of the UN Child Rights Committee in 2009.

In addressing Recommendation 63 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the new Plan of Action to support the Roma population 2016-2020 places particular emphasis on education as the key factor for breaking the cycle of exclusion.

UNICEF Moldova participated actively in the SDG nationalisation process by advocating for the inclusion of child-rights-related SDGs and targets among the highest national priorities. Children’s rights were also prominently featured in the new UNDAF 2018-2022. In the second phase of the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities project, continuous support was provided to state institutions for the development of the regulatory framework on inclusion of children with disabilities in schools.

Following the advocacy initiatives of UNICEF Moldova, the National Council for Child Rights Protection set up working groups on birth registration and online child safety, and took the
decision to fund social support services from the special budgetary fund.

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova continued its cooperation with the Ombudsperson for Child Rights. Specific actions were undertaken to strengthen the national dialogue with children, including requesting children’s and adolescents' opinions in all matters affecting their lives and advocating with state institutions to ensure qualified assistance to deal with the entire spectrum of children’s needs.

**Gender Equality**

The Strategy for the Development of Parenting Skills and Competences and the Action Plan for the Child Protection Strategy, developed with support from UNICEF Moldova and approved in 2016, highlighted the importance of women’s and men’s equal engagement in child upbringing and addressed issues of positive parenting by both parents. The policy documents will ensure efficient cross-sectoral cooperation and national action addressing issues of gender-sensitive social norms.

Following joint advocacy efforts of UNICEF Moldova, UN Women and civil society, the Labour Code was amended to incorporate a clause institutionalising fathers’ right to two weeks’ paternal leave.

Because of joint UN advocacy efforts, gender equality was effectively mainstreamed into the new Common Country Assessment and the UNDAF, and SDG 5 was successfully nationalised.

The new Plan of Action for the support of the Roma population 2016-2020, developed with the support of UNICEF Moldova, identified education as central to breaking the cycle of Roma exclusion. UNICEF Moldova initiated a new project with innovative solutions for the involvement of Roma children in education, with a focus on girls’ continuous education and changing social norms around Roma fathers’ engagement in children’s education.

Potential risks for adolescent girls left behind by their migrant mothers were discussed with the media at various events on diaspora issues. The aim was to sensitise decision makers on the difficulties adolescent girls might face when there is no trusted peer or parent that can answer questions sensitive for girls, such as menstrual hygiene and prevention of pregnancy. Discussions were held on opportunities to engage telecom companies to ensure free-of-charge communication links between adolescent girls and their mothers. Further actions will be implemented in 2017 under government leadership.

UNICEF Moldova advocated strongly with the MoH for stepping up actions to prevent the abandonment of newborns, especially by single mothers. Specific measures include prevention of abandonment through a home-visiting programme whereby nurses and midwives provide counselling services while preparing the mothers for delivery.

**Environmental Sustainability**

In support of a risk-informed Situation Analysis process, UNICEF Moldova launched a climate vulnerability assessment in 2016 with a focus on assessing the possible impact of climate change on child poverty. In addition, UNICEF Moldova participated in a joint project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women piloting the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) in Moldova. Both initiatives were supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), and funding was made available through the Regional Office.
UNICEF Moldova is highly committed to environmental sustainability and takes systematic measures to reduce its carbon footprint. The annual Environmental Footprint Assessment report was produced. Specific measures taken included the following: all IT equipment settings were kept on low consumption and environmentally friendly modes; and fluorescent bulbs were partially replaced with LED bulbs. UNICEF Moldova also reduced its air travel footprint and took part in a joint Delivering as One UN greening initiative. Bicycle parking was installed on UN premises, hot water boilers were switched off during the summer and separate waste collection containers were installed for recycling purposes. Staff members were encouraged to switch off air conditioning and office lights when stepping out of their office. A long-term agreement (LTA) for stationery was signed in 2016 with Forest Stewardship Council, a certified office paper supplier.

Effective Leadership

In 2016, relevant measures were taken to strengthen the governance, systems and internal control mechanisms of UNICEF Moldova. The country management team (CMT) continued to play a strong role in ensuring the effectiveness of programmes and the efficiency of operations. The business continuity and annual management plans were prepared, amendments to the travel policy for government counterparts made, procedures for the publications committee reviewed, and security management documents updated. The Risk Profiles and Early Warning Early Action portal were revised as well. Moldova’s security risk assessment map was shared with all staff with relevant advice.

The CMT and Local Staff Association Executive Committee worked closely to follow up on a staff survey organised in February-March 2016 by an external company. The 2016 survey used the same methodology and questionnaire as the 2014 Global Staff Survey. While the survey showed significant improvements compared with 2014, additional activities were implemented as a follow up.

To build staff capacities, a 2016 training plan was developed and approved. Additionally, the staff were encouraged to use various trainings available on Agora.

UNICEF Moldova successfully transitioned to working with the Global Shared Service Centre. The new talent management system ‘ACHIEVE’ and the My Case platform were introduced. The relevant adjustment of internal processes, including assignment of roles, was done.

Stronger technical evaluation criteria for selection of contractors and new trip request formats for international travels were introduced. Several stretch assignments were organised for the office, and support was provided to UNICEF Turkey. A mid-year and annual review of programme results were conducted with all staff and partners.

The key performance indicators and the Country Office Scorecard were discussed at programme and CMT meetings. Bottlenecks and potential risks to programme implementation related to procurement and contracting processes were identified and addressed in a timely manner.

Financial Resources Management

Effective use of available monitoring tools and regular review of financial indicators resulted in the sound financial performance of UNICEF Moldova. There were no outstanding direct cash transfers over six months, no partners receiving cash transfers of more than US$100,000 in the past 60 months without assessment, and no travel authorisations open for more than 15 days.
In 2016, UNICEF Moldova registered an overall expenditure rate of 100 per cent of the institutional budget and 100 per cent of regular resources. A Financial Management index of 1.0 on the Scorecard was achieved due to efficient review and monitoring of the Scorecard Key Performance Indicators and review of funds utilisation on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis during programme meetings and CMT meetings.

The transition of finance processes to the Global Shared Services Centre was carried out in compliance with all instructions and following standard operating procedures. Local finance focal points were designated in a timely manner and all relevant training was completed by involved staff. This ensured a smooth transition without any delays in payments or processing of other financial transactions.

Bank reconciliation was completed without delay and without outstanding unreconciled items. Monthly cash forecasting was strengthened and the schedules posted by the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM) were regularly reviewed on SharePoint. All the year-end financial closure certifications were finalised within deadlines.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

In 2016, programmes supported by UNICEF Moldova continued to benefit from funding provided by the Governments of Netherlands and Switzerland, contributions from the OAK Foundation, and thematic funding for education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and child protection. The Government of Switzerland remained UNICEF Moldova’s strongest supporter, funding the YFHS, the confidence-building measures and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) on the left bank of the Nistru River. Funding from the OAK Foundation supported deinstitutionalisation programmes. The joint UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WHO implementation of the maternal and child health project under the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund continued building systems and capacities on both sides of the Nistru River.

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova conducted a funding gap analysis and produced a document identifying funding gaps by sector that was shared with UNICEF resource mobilisation experts. Several concept notes were developed and shared with relevant donors. One, which supported actions in health, nutrition and WASH, was presented to the Permanent Mission of Poland in New York. Another, which sought funds for social inclusion and justice for children, was submitted to the Mission of Norway, as part of the European Economic Area funding initiative. A multi-year proposal aligned with the new EU strategy for Moldova was submitted to the EU Delegation, and applications to support initiatives preventing violence against children and justice for children were also developed. A concept note seeking funds for a climate vulnerability assessment was submitted to the United Kingdom Department for International Development, and the funding was granted.

Despite these efforts, donors’ interest and confidence in investing in social sectors remained limited, especially following a banking crisis and a freezing of direct budget support after the loss of about 13 per cent of gross domestic product from national banks.

**Evaluation and Research**

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova continued to work on strengthening the evaluation capacities of the country. The Internal Research, Studies, Evaluation Committee was established to provide guidance and oversight of the quality and status of all knowledge-generation activities supported by UNICEF Moldova. An orientation session was organised for UNICEF staff to ensure the required level of understanding and to clarify the monitoring and evaluation responsibilities of different staff members.
Key findings of the end-of-project evaluation of interventions promoting an integrated approach to the delivery of services to most-at-risk adolescents and youth were discussed with representatives of the Municipal Department on Child Rights Protection and with CSOs working in Balti (North) and in Ungheni, Orhei and Donduseni (Centre). An evaluation management response was developed in cooperation with the Municipal Department on Child Rights Protection and the MoH to further improve services and address gaps in service delivery. The results of the evaluation of services for children under three, piloted with UNICEF support, were discussed with decision makers at the central and local levels, and used for planning and advocacy purposes.

The status of research, studies and evaluations (including management response) was tracked online and reported at midyear and annual reviews.

An evaluation of the Country Programme of Cooperation 2013-2017 was conducted in preparation for the new Country Programme of Cooperation 2018-2022. It identified unmet needs and lessons learned, which were incorporated into the design of the upcoming Country Programme.


### Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

Internal business processes were improved and streamlined through the revision of activity logs and the introduction of standard templates for recurring processes. The table of authorities was updated, with appropriate delegation of authority signed as per the Financial and Administrative Policy.

In 2016, the business operations strategy under the Delivering as One framework was officially approved by the UN Country Team. UNICEF Moldova business processes were optimised and harmonised with those of other UN agencies in line with the provision of the UN Operations Management Team workplan. UNICEF Moldova continued to support common procurement efforts and benefited from seven institutional LTAs and 29 individual LTAs on fuel supply, stationery, equipment, internet services and translation services, resulting in financial and staff time savings and a lowered administrative burden. UNICEF Moldova contributed to the implementation of the Operations Management Team workplan by administering four shared institutional LTAs with translation and transportation companies.

Sustainable procurement was a priority in 2016, resulting in the establishment of the UN Country Team’s inter-agency Procurement Working Group, which was tasked with identifying common areas for increased efficiency and effectiveness. In order to increase the pool of qualified vendors that provide goods and services to the UN and to ensure a more competitive environment – ultimately ensuring lower costs – a large informative event with local companies was scheduled for early 2017 to raise awareness around UN procurement principles and procedures.

In 2016, inter-agency evaluation teams/selection panels were successfully established, contributing to efficiency gains in staff time and bringing specialised expertise to the benefit of the initiatives undertaken.
Supply Management

UNICEF Moldova is strongly committed to ensuring efficient procurement and the highest compliance with procurement rules. In 2016, stronger cooperation between programme and operations sections was established, which improved outreach to applicants/vendors and ensured a more competitive environment. Broader outreach to larger pool of applicants/vendors was ensured through local sourcing (calls for expressions of interest and widespread advertising in local media) and through international channels (international individual/institutional consultancy service boards, regional and global rosters, United Nations Global Marketplace and use of other UNICEF Country Offices’ sources and rosters). Global LTAs for communication for development, financial services and IT equipment were used for procurement of services.

UNICEF Moldova extensively used joint procurement under the Delivering as One Business Operations Strategy to improve efficiency and benefit from economies of scale due to common procurement of goods and services.

UNICEF Moldova provided vaccine procurement services through Supply Division financed by the MoH and GAVI totalling over US$ 960,000. Of this total amount, US$ 885,040 was channelled via regular procurement services and another US$ 75,408 via GAVI. Procurement with a total value of US$20,251 was undertaken for new information communication technology (ICT) equipment required for the implementation of LIGHT, a project enabling a mobile workplace, and for adequate functioning of the office via offshore procurement and through direct order under the existing LTA.

UNICEF Moldova does not have any construction projects or activities.

Value of all Supply Input (goods and services):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supply Input</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Supplies</td>
<td>US$960,448.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Supplies</td>
<td>US$20,251.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>US$179,148.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNICEF Moldova supported national authorities by providing international expertise for the assessment of the National Vaccine Procurement System and the development of the draft Country Vaccine Procurement Action Plan. Approval and implementation of the Plan is anticipated to increase national capacity for vaccine supply and improve the performance of the procurement system in 2017. In addition, 15 key personnel from relevant public institutions were trained, by an expert supported by UNICEF Moldova, on effective vaccine procurement mechanisms and interaction with the global vaccine market.

UNICEF Moldova does not have a physical warehouse or an inventory of programme supplies. In recent years, the latter were purchased and directly delivered to implementing partners.

Security for Staff and Premises

In a constantly changing environment with security threats at both local level (mass protests, political tensions, elections) and regional level (terrorist attacks and conflicts in neighbouring countries), UNICEF Moldova applied all necessary security measures and procedures and stayed vigilant throughout the year. All security advisories from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) were shared and strictly followed. Staff were also requested to obtain security clearance for personal trips, including for dependents.

During 2016, the UNICEF Moldova Representative carried out the responsibilities of Designated Official for extended periods, contributing to Security Management Team (SMT)
decisions and actions. SMT meetings included briefings on the security situation in the country and status of incidents, as well as updates on security risk management, the security plan and the minimum operating residential security standards. The security level 2 for Moldova and level 3 for the Transnistrian region remained unchanged.

UNICEF Moldova participated in security drills. It also carried out eight telecommunication drills (including satellite, a radio station connectivity check, and use of the mobile telephone tree), and two evacuation drills. Staff lists were regularly updated and shared with the Regional Office and the local UNDSS associate. The agency-based warden system was adopted by the SMT, and UNICEF staff members were assigned as wardens and participated in special training, including two warden drills.

Business continuity plans, including staff roles, were presented during the humanitarian action training.

Security on the premises was one of the priorities on the agenda of the UN House Management Committee. Following a security assessment of UN House conducted by the UNDSS Regional Security Adviser, an upgrade of access control, video surveillance and the fire detection systems was initiated. UNICEF Moldova applied for 2017 security funds in order to cover its share of contributions for procuring and replacing these complex systems.

**Human Resources**

In 2016, UNICEF Moldova successfully filled the vacancies in several key operations and programme positions. The recruitment of new staff (two general service staff, one national officer, two international professionals) with profiles matching the requirements and complementing those of the team, was a key factor in the office’s smooth functioning. Continued efforts to invest in capacity building, through training opportunities, participation in regional conferences, corporate webinars and coaching, strengthened staff commitment and their ability to perform.

The agendas of the CMT meetings, staff meetings and the staff retreat included the following issues: implementation of human resources (HR) reform, transition to the new talent management system ACHIEVE, and transfer of HR processes to the Global Shared Services Centre.

The application of new procedures and use of systems were ensured through efficient knowledge sharing and communication. All recruitment was done through the talent management system, and the practice was extended to individual consultants, yielding higher response rates and reaching more qualified candidates.

Performance planning in ACHIEVE was completed within the deadlines, and was preceded by constructive discussions between supervisors and supervisees. Providing regular performance feedback and documenting achievements using the new platform were encouraged.

As a follow up to the 2014 Global Staff Survey, a local staff survey by an external company was conducted using the same questionnaire. The results showed considerable improvements, many of which showed a two to three-fold increase in positive answers, proving the effectiveness of management actions in addressing staff issues. A staff retreat was organised to discuss the results, and a follow-up action plan was approved by the CMT.

A two-day humanitarian action training activity, including a simulation exercise, was organised jointly with the Regional Office to familiarise the staff with humanitarian principles, Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies, and improve knowledge of emergency tools.
Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

In 2016, constant and efficient support for office functionality was ensured through ICT services, which were effectively maintained and their infrastructure improved. System availability targets were met and disaster-recovery and business continuity requirements were followed.

An upgrade to the backup system (server operating system and backup software) was performed, in line with UNICEF Information Technology Solutions and Services objectives. The decommissioning of the Lotus Notes Server (old mail system) was handled, and the Lotus Notes application migration process was finalised (to reduce the ICT footprint on office infrastructure).

In 2016, an upgrade of all UNICEF Moldova office laptops to Windows 8.1 was done, aligning the office performance with the LIGHT Project implementation. Ten new laptops were purchased with funds obtained from the Regional Office, and another 15 are scheduled to be upgraded to Windows 8.1 compatibility. The transition to LIGHT increases efficiency and effectiveness by enabling a fully mobile workspace for staff members, with all corporate resources and systems available through an office laptop with an internet connection.

In 2016, the primary internet connection speed, which is shared among UN agencies in the UN House, was increased to 100 Mbps/100Mbps. This covers the increased bandwidth solicitation due to the migration of ICT services to the cloud (Office 365). A backup link with 70Mbps/70Mbps speed capacity was contracted and put in place to ensure business continuity.

As per a Local Property Survey Board recommendation, five functional laptops were donated to implementing partners. Used supplies and defective hardware were recycled or disposed of in a secure, environment-friendly and safe manner by a local recycling company contracted for this purpose.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Effective and efficient programme management and operations support programme delivery

Analytical Statement of Progress:
During the year, measures were taken to monitor and strengthen the governance systems and internal control mechanisms. The Rolling Management Plan and Risk Profiles, Early Warning Early Action portal were reviewed and updated. The key performance indicators and Country Office Scorecard were discussed monthly during programme meetings, and progress was presented quarterly at CMT meetings to ensure oversight of appropriate financial and budget management along with timely programme implementation. All the schedules for interim and year-end closure of accounts were monitored and uploaded on SharePoint within deadlines. The transition of financial and HR processes to the Global Shared Service Centre was in compliance with set deadlines, and all the internal workflows were adjusted accordingly. Bottlenecks and potential risks in programme implementation related to procurement and contracting processes were identified and efforts were made to strengthen and improve cooperation between programme and operations sections. As a result, the involvement of relevant operations colleagues at different stages of the process was included in workflows and logs, leading to improved efficiency and stronger collaboration towards achieving best results.
During the year, stronger cooperation between programmes and operations sections was established, which allowed staff to overcome bottlenecks in contracting for goods and services, especially in efforts to reach a broader pool of applicants/vendors and ensure a more competitive environment. The institutional budget was 100 per cent utilized according to office priorities and operational needs.

**OUTPUT 1** Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources and of other assets of the organization

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Effective use of available monitoring tools and regular review of financial indicators resulted in sound financial performance, with no outstanding direct cash transfers over six months, no partners receiving cash transfers of more than $100,000 in the past 60 months without assessment, and no travel authorizations open for more than 15 days. The transition of financial processes to the Global Shared Service Centre was done in compliance with all instructions and following the standard operating procedures. The designation of finance local focal points was undertaken in a timely manner, and all relevant training was completed by involved staff. This ensured a smooth transition without any delays in payments or processing of other financial transactions.

UNICEF Moldova reviewed regularly the UNICEF intranet inSight portal and dashboard to ensure all alerts were addressed in due course. At year end the Regional Dashboard showed all main indicators for the office being on track. Cash forecasts were compiled on monthly and quarterly bases for efficient cash planning and use of financial resources. Bank reconciliation was completed within the terms of the 2016 period closure and bank reconciliation deadlines without outstanding unreconciled balances. Monthly bank reconciliation reports were submitted within deadlines. As per year-end closure of accounts instructions, UNICEF Moldova completed the schedules and uploaded them on the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM) SharePoint by reviewing and updating balances on main General Ledger Accounts.

To optimise ongoing work processes and ensure they reflect all necessary requirements, the office workflows / internal business practices were reviewed for individual contractors, institutional contracts and travel. The review process took place with participation of staff, and information was circulated to all with appropriate guidance to links, templates and resource information.

**OUTPUT 2** Effective and efficient management of human capacity, including staff development and learning

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In 2016, UNICEF Moldova successfully overcame the challenge of capacity gaps in operations and programmes when several key positions became vacant. The recruitment of new staff (two General Service staff, one National Officer, two International Professionals) with profiles and competencies that matched requirements of the posts and complemented the team with missing skills and capabilities, was a key success factor in ensuring the smooth functioning of the office. Continued efforts to invest in staff capacity building through strategic training and networking opportunities, encouraging participation in many regional meetings and conferences, attending corporate webinars as well as coaching by supervisors and colleagues strengthened staff commitment and abilities to perform their functions. Implementation of HR reform and transition to new corporate systems, including the talent management system, Achieve, and the transfer of HR processes to the Global Shared Service Centre, was on the agenda for CMT meetings, staff meetings and the staff retreat.
The application of new procedures and use of systems was ensured through efficient knowledge sharing and communication. All recruitment was done through the talent management system and this practice was extended to individual consultants, yielding higher response rates and reaching more qualified candidates through external sourcing channels.

Performance planning in Achieve was completed in a timely manner within the corporate deadlines and following constructive discussions between supervisors and supervisees. The practice of having regular performance feedback was put in place, and staff were encouraged to document their achievements using the new corporate platform.

As a follow up to the 2014 Global Staff Survey, UNICEF Moldova undertook, in early 2016, a local staff survey to assess the progress made on 16 core dimensions of organizational performance. The results of the local survey showed considerable improvements on almost all dimensions, proving the efficiency of actions taken by management to address staff issues. A staff retreat was organized to discuss the results and follow-up actions, and a further action plan was approved by the CMT.

### Document Centre

**Evaluation and Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WASH assessment in pre-school</td>
<td>2016/003</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costing of ECD Services</td>
<td>2016/002</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Modelling of Services for Children under three</td>
<td>2016/001</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Publication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice for Children Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting website SUNTPARINTE.md</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly newsletter, 4 issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAGINE video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webpage YOU WERE BORN IN MY SOUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimonials YOU WERE BORN IN MY SOUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA YOU WERE BORN IN MY SOUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster YOU WERE BORN IN MY SOUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Publication &quot;Children of Moldova&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lessons Learned**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type/Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Learned</td>
<td>Advancing the child rights agenda through joint UN assistance to the Government on adapting the Sustainable Development Agenda to the national context and mainstreaming it into Moldova’s strategic development and monitoring frameworks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Programme Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference Documents</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>MLD_UNPF_FinalEvalReport_vol1_August2016.pdf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>2015 MTR revised Results Matrix</td>
<td>Revised Outcomes and Outputs_FINAL.pdf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>CPD Moldova Matrix 2015 MTR</td>
<td>CPD Moldova_Matrix_MTR_2015_FINAL.pdf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>