Executive Summary

The year 2013 was the first in UNICEF Moldova’s 2013-2017 Country Programme and the UN Partnership Framework. The UN in Moldova is “Delivering as One”, with a strong focus on UN coherence.

Despite the Government crisis in early 2013, UNICEF managed to further implement an equity agenda for the most vulnerable children. Children of Moldova will enjoy better protection due to significant legislative and policy changes, such as the new Law on Special Protection of Children at Risk and Those Separated from Their Parents which will introduce child protection workers at the community level from 2014 and an inter-sectoral referral mechanism to identify and timely support children at risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect, and those separated from their parents. Moreover, children who are victims of crime now have access to free legal aid and special child-friendly justice proceedings. Solitary confinement of children in detention was banned and alternatives to detention improved.

The finalized National Strategy on Child and Family Protection elaborates objectives related to deinstitutionalization and stopping violence against children. UNICEF’s partnership with civil society, media, and private sector resulted in massive communication campaign raising awareness of violence against children and virtually reached every household of Moldova. UNICEF’s advocacy on improving nutrition materialized with the Government’s decision to mandate flour fortification.

The number of children with disabilities enrolled into mainstream schools increased from 1,600 a year earlier to over 2,300 and inclusion became leitmotif of the new National Education Strategy 2020 and Code of Education. More than 100,000 youth benefitted from free health counselling or HIV testing at the Youth Friendly Health Centres nationwide. Desegregation of Roma children, their participation and improved access to services gained momentum with recruitment of Roma community mediators.

Renewed commitments by the government to quality inclusive education and justice for children were voiced at the two high-level inter-ministerial conferences led and organized by UNICEF regional office.

In 2013 Moldova and the European Union initiated an Association Agreement, following four years of negotiations. This reconfirms Moldova’s obligations in meeting highest standards of human rights, economic development and democracy. This is the only such Agreement to contain a chapter on protection of the rights of the children, resulting from UNICEF’s advocacy.

Activities in the breakaway region of Transnistria have been intensified, grasping the opportunities opened in 2012 as well as the findings of the UNSG special rapporteur for human rights. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey data collection and a first Child Care Assessment were completed with UNICEF’s support. Together with WHO and UNDP, the perinatal care system received capacity building support, bringing new opportunities for the children of Transnistria region to survive and thrive. Significant risks and challenges remain due to political volatility and limited capacity of local partners and NGOs active in the region, which continued to be of high priority for UNICEF’s action.

Donor attention to Moldova is in decline. The new EU programme for Moldova links to child-related issues tangentially, yet regional projects and some joint programmes with the UN country team received funding.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

Breakup of the ruling coalition in March brought implementation challenges and diverted the attention from child issues, yet the crisis was overcome in June, with a new cabinet in place and a renewed focus on human rights, poverty reduction, the rule of law and EU integration.

In 2013 the economy of Moldova started to recover; GDP growth in the first nine months was 8 per cent (in real terms) in comparison to the similar period in 2012[1]. The agricultural sector recovered after a sharp
drop caused by drought in 2012. Economic recovery nevertheless remains fuelled mainly by consumption and remittances. Dependency on consumption hampers the development of domestic supply, of the industry, job creation and competitiveness. This leads to massive labour-related migration - as a consequence, one in five children has at least one migrant parent.

Economic growth resulted in improved indicators of child well-being, but also made the inequalities more visible. While the incidence of poverty was progressively reduced from 17.5 per cent in 2011 to 16.6 per cent in 2012, the poverty profile remained unchanged. Rural areas face 3 times higher poverty than urban. Families with 3 or more children remain the most vulnerable, the poverty rate for this category being 34.6 per cent compared to 14.8 per cent for families with one child. The 2012 Moldova MICS results brought the evidence of other problems vulnerable groups are facing. Only 81 per cent of rural households use safe sources of drinking water, compared to 96 per cent in the urban areas. The situation with sanitation is even worse: 61 per cent of rural households use adequate sanitation versus 85 per cent in urban areas.

UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights concluded after her September visit that the most outstanding challenges for children living in poverty are school enrolment and attendance, access to health care, nutrition, marginalization and discrimination, trafficking, the negative impact of emigration, lack of effective support for families, and adequate human rights-compliant care services. Infant and under five mortality rates remain far lower than in other countries with similar GDP level and continue to decline: IMR declined from 10.9 to 9.8 per 1,000 live births and USMR from 13.4 to 12.1 per 1000 live births between 2011 and 2012. At the same time, child deaths remain higher than in most European countries, mainly due to accidents and injuries. Children from poor families, from large families and Roma children face higher risk of mortality.

The share of children under 2 years of age vaccinated against measles reached 95 per cent (92.8 per cent in 2011). According to MICS results, families with high level of education and welfare are more reluctant to vaccinate their children. Bottlenecks in accessing immunization services for children from certain groups (Roma population, certain religious groups) persist, due to vulnerability or limited access to reliable information.

The incidence of HIV/AIDS among the general population and young persons (15-24 years old) reached 18.5 per 100,000 people in 2012.[3] Mother-to-Child Transmission rate was 2.3 per cent. Further adverse effect for the HIV-affected population (especially children and adolescents) is social exclusion, due to intolerant societal attitudes and wide-spread stigma.

Anaemia remains a problem - 2012 MICS data shows that one in five children age 6-59 months had some degree of anaemia and 6 per cent moderate to severe degree. The prevalence of anaemia in women is even more pronounced than in children. One in four women of reproductive age (15-49 years old) is anaemic - 28 per cent in rural and 22 per cent in urban areas respectively.

Moldovan children are still far behind their European peers and educational standards which the country aspires to. One in five young children does not have access to ECD programs in rural areas.

The number of children with disabilities in regular schools increased to over 2,300. Yet poor children, Roma children, children with disabilities, children living with HIV face significant barriers in accessing quality education in mainstream schools. Improved regulations, institutional capacity and addressing the social culture of intolerance remain priorities for the Government and UNICEF alike.

Gross primary education enrolment rates remain stable at 93.8 per cent with a slight decrease for lower secondary from 87.5 per cent in 2011 to 86.7 per cent in 2012. Discrepancies between enrolment in rural and urban areas remain large at all levels of education, with rural children being worse-off.

The on-going reform of the childcare system has registered continuous improvement - out of the total number of children under the public care around 35 per cent were in the residential institutions and 65 per cent in family-based care. At the beginning of 2013 there were 4,889 children in residential institutions - an annual decline of 14 per cent. The de-institutionalization process continued throughout 2013, with at least
293 children re-integrated into family environment from the residential institutions. Significant problems remain, however, with deinstitutionalising children under three and those with disabilities.

Children of Moldova continue to suffer from abuse. According to Moldova MICS data, 76 per cent children aged 2-14 were subjected to violent forms of discipline by their parents or caregivers and 48 per cent were subject to corporal punishment.

Children in contact with the law remain high on the Government’s agenda. Although the number of minors who have committed a crime has grown from 1,586 in 2010 to 1,975 in 2012, only half ended up being sent to Court, with a declining number of convictions (410 in 2010 to 344 in 2012). Probation and unpaid community work were used as alternatives to detention in 76 per cent of cases in 2011 and 77 per cent in 2012.

Moldova remains exposed to a number of natural disasters and hazards, including earthquakes, floods and droughts. Progress achieved towards the MDGs could be easily reversed by the adverse impact of natural hazards on the most deprived communities and families and UNICEF continues support on the Disaster Risk Reduction.

Significant political changes that took place in the breakaway region of Transnistria opened new possibilities for cooperation and assistance, but slow implementation of international standards remains a major concern. The MICS exercise initiated in 2013 will address lack of data and facilitate relevant programmatic development.


Country Programme Analytical Overview

The new 2013-2017 Country Programme, approved by the Executive Board in September 2012, came into effect on 1st of January 2013. It supports government and civil society in ensuring full social inclusion of children and their families who are at risk of exclusion due to geographic disparities, poverty, ethnicity, disability, gender, and lack of or poor parental care. It incorporates wider international, European targets and benchmarks, and recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review of Moldova performed in 2011.

The key envisaged results of the programme are: equal access to quality education, health, protection and justice services for disadvantaged children and families; and child-sensitive and equity-oriented governance structures and social attitudes.

The office uses a number of strategies and approaches in addressing critical bottlenecks. Advocacy, communication for development and creating an enabling environment aimed to remove stigma, discrimination and to ensure access to services for children living with disabilities, from poor families and rural areas, children living with HIV or those from ethnic or other minorities.

Capacity development, convening and partnerships aim to bring together both duty-bearers and rights-holders into dialogue and to ensure availability of quality services and promote awareness about them. This is especially true for the CSOs, who are both supporters of the right-holders and the duty-bearers and whose capacity is critical in ensuring wide availability of quality services in the future. Involvement of the civil society organisations at national and local level, initiative groups of parents and children in development of legal and regulatory frameworks plays a crucial role in increasing the sense of ownership and accountability.
at the implementation phase.

UNICEF’s convening role helps the National Council for Child Rights Protection (NCCRP) to ensure collaboration between the health, social protection, education, police and justice systems at the national and local levels to identify, refer and provide additional services and support to disadvantaged children and their families. The inter-sectorial coordination remains weak and is a critical bottleneck in the effort.

The office initiated innovative approaches into programmatic activities, such as accelerated monitoring of results for Youth, in partnership with the UNCT.

Relevance of the Programme remains strong, as per approved country programme document and Government priorities. Nevertheless, the PCR and IR scope and focus could be revisited and fine-tuned in-line with the new Strategic Plan and Results-Based management principles, especially as national partners gain strength and capacity to manage the cross-sectorial issues more effectively and gradually take over more ownership of the broad-range of activities currently supported by UNICEF and other international partners.

The new country programme contributes to “Delivering as One” model and to the 2013-2017 United Nations-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework (UNPF). The new partnership framework puts emphasis on use of the national systems and mechanisms for monitoring of results, and UNICEF together with other partners and UN agencies continues strengthening the capacity of state institutions in collecting, interpreting and using data for policy and decision-making, but also strengthening sectorial and cross-ministerial sharing of information and their coordination.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

Attention to disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness was given in all programmatic activities, as per principles of the Core Commitments for Children (CCC). In 2013, as part of the regional DRR programme covering Moldova, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina, UNICEF led the efforts on putting in place disaster risk reduction measures and mechanisms, particularly focusing on protection of children both in communities and at the national level. Based on the assessments, two successful pilots in the Ungheni and Stefan Voda districts and 22 communities were completed in October, resulting in integration of DRR into local strategic plans and the cross-sectorial work. A set of user friendly informative packages was produced and distributed in the pilot districts. UNICEF plans to continue work in this emerging regional leadership area and ensure scaling up of practices nation-wide, in cooperation with national partners and UN agencies involved in the DRR.

**Effective Advocacy**

*Fully met benchmarks*

The office has extensively used advocacy to address the bottlenecks at the policy, service delivery, and population levels. Using the State Party reporting process to the UN Committees, UNICEF flagged a number of important issues relating to children under the CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and CEDAW, both to the Government during the report preparations and through briefing the Committees on important issues. These were subsequently flagged in the deliberations and concluding observations, such as: international co-operation among Governments on investigating sexual crimes against children; collection of evidence in sexual crimes against children; criminalising the attempt, complicity and participation in sexual crimes against children; protection of all child victims throughout the entire criminal justice process; developing and standardizing community services for victims and their families and improving the data collection and management system.

UNICEF Moldova uses a variety of advocacy methods to obtain and impart information, such as providing technical experts to crucial actors (Deputy Speaker of the Parliament), partnering with leading Think Tanks, and participating in sectorial (social welfare) and inter-sectorial groups. UNICEF actively supports the inter-sectorial National Council on the Protection on Child Rights chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, using this platform to advocate for improved inter-agency collaboration, to highlight important child rights issues and to
strengthen the understanding of members on human and child rights principles and considerations, including the concept of proportionality and respect for the view of the child. Extensive advocacy with the Parliament and Ministry of Justice efforts in 2013 ensured continuing independence of the Child Rights ombudsperson under the new legislation, and in-line with the CRC recommendations.

Following UNICEF-supported high-level regional conference on justice for children in June 2013, the Government of Moldova prioritized this area of work agreeing to shift from a punitive towards a restorative approach.

Flour fortification, addressing the problem of anaemia, was made mandatory from 2014, following extensive advocacy with the Government and technical support provided to the association of millers and flour producers.

Advocacy extended to the public-private partnership to promote an anti-violence campaign. Utility bills, TV, social media and celebrities were used to inform general public of the positive parenting techniques and dangers of violence on child’s development. Anti-discrimination advocacy efforts are done in close cooperation with the UNCT: Roma inclusion and desegregation of Roma children was successfully promoted involving advisor to the Prime Minister on social issues (including the Roma).

Successful initiation of the MICS survey in the breakaway region of Transnistria came as a result of extensive multi-year advocacy.

Stemming from UNICEF’s active advocacy, the Chapter on Child Rights of the recently initialled EU-Moldova Association Agreement, the only such chapter in any AA, provides a platform for further advocacy for high commitment to fulfilment of child rights.

**Capacity Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

In 2013, the office extensively used Capacity Development to address a number of bottlenecks and ensure improved and quality supply of services for children and women.

UNICEF provided capacity strengthening, through trainings and workshops, to the health professionals at the Youth friendly Health Centres to apply new YFHS regulations and provide and monitor quality services to young people, especially MARA and EVA. Services to these marginalized and vulnerable groups were further strengthened through capacity building of CSOs to provide support unavailable from the public services. UNICEF contributed to capacity building of 396 teachers to apply learning outcome standards; 115 local trainers, 1,200 teachers and 75 district-level staff responsible for prevention of violence in school and pre-school were trained to identify, address and refer cases of violence. Child-centred methodology implementation through capacity building of educational professionals and introduction of mentoring concept resulted in 50 skilled key mentors who trained further 260 local mentors to support professional development of 7,000 pre-school teachers and ensuring a sustainable professional support network. A training package was developed for teachers on inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools.

Training packages on justice for children, developed by the National Institute of Justice and the Policy Academy, were piloted and finalized in 2013, certifying 15 criminal investigators, 5 judges, 10 prosecutors and 5 defence lawyers in child-friendly methodologies. Additional 40 public defence lawyers and 40 probation counsellors were trained using the new training packages.

Twenty journalists were trained in ethical principles on reporting on children in contact with the law. Youth Media Centre expanded the number of young bloggers and another 35 boys and girls were trained in applying innovative writing techniques to better monitor their rights and report infringements. Communication capacities of the line ministries were strengthened as well. Regulations on effective communication with media for health, education, social assistance and police were developed and will be officially approved in 2014. Further capacity building of central and local level specialists to apply the
regulations and act in the best interest of the child will result in fewer cases of child rights infringements in the media and their better monitoring.

Implementation of MICS 4 and MICS 5 (in Transnistria) has also contributed to an increased national and local capacity in data collection, processing and data entry techniques. National systems have benefitted from collaboration with international experts, trainings and mentoring in the field of household data collection and analysis.

**Communication for Development**

*Fully met benchmarks*

UNICEF used communication for development extensively in support of families and professionals to adopt positive child care practices. Three communication strategies have been adopted by the line Ministries with support of UNICEF: prevention of violence against children, better parenting, and adolescents’ sexual health.

Two communication campaigns have been launched, promoting inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools and prevention of violence against children. The campaigns included nation-wide information and awareness-raising activities targeting parents, teachers and children, such as: broadcast of anti-violence video spots involving Moldovan and Romanian celebrities, informative classes in all schools, mass media promotion of the campaigns including a popular talk-show organized in primetime by the Moldova 1 TV channel accessible in all areas of country. These also encouraged parents of children with disabilities to enrol them into mainstream schools and showed all parents how to establish non-violent relations with their children. A partnership with the private sector has been successful - *Gas Natural Fenosa*, a utility company disseminated positive parenting and anti-violence leaflets with electricity bills to more than 700,000 households in Moldova, while Orange Foundation committed to further support the broadcasts of anti-violence video clips during the primetime at public and commercial TV channels.

Children from all regions of the country were empowered to express their views on prevention of violence through drawing and video clips contests. Flash-mobs in the capital and the regions captured media attention on the issues of inclusive education and violence against children. A group of 55 young bloggers were trained and active in debating children related issues in the social media.

**Service Delivery**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF, with support from the IKEA Foundation funds helped establish Community Centres (CCs) as an alternative form of ECD services. Social partnerships built around the ECD at the local level responded well to needs of parents and children alike to gain access to early education and development. As a result, 2,400 vulnerable children (Roma, children with disabilities, children with migrant parents and in the Transnistrian region) from the poorest 46 rural communities gained access to early education and care services. Thanks to another public-private partnership with the LEGO Foundation, 57,000 children in 530 pre-schools located mostly in the rural areas benefited from cognitive Lego toys. The newly created services made a real difference in the life of these children by engaging them at an early age into fun, learning and high quality participatory activities, which contributed to their development and school preparedness.

With UNICEF’s support, a Youth NGO from Balti has developed a “Circle of solidarity” - an integrated care model of services delivered to marginalized adolescents by a network of public institutions and NGOs. This model was extended to other 5 locations (Balti, Ribnita, Donduseni, Orhei, Ungheni), where the target organizations were identified, existing services for MARA and EVA in each community were mapped and capacity of partners and the referral system were developed. As a result, 1,069 MARA and EVA benefited from counselling services, 493 were referred to health and social support services including 289 to HIV counselling and testing services. This approach contributed not only to HIV-related risk reduction, but also
served as an “entry point” to address broader issues of drug use, sexuality, teenage pregnancies, violence, depression, substance abuse and suicides.

### Strategic Partnerships

**Fully met benchmarks**

UNICEF’s unique efforts combining high-level advocacy with technical assistance to law-making bodies have proven successful in 2013. UNICEF maintained strong partnerships with key partners and donors: the Parliament, Prime Minister’s office and line ministries, civil society, EU Delegation, World Bank, SDC, private sector and others. A new strategic partnership with a leading think-tank was established to support the Parliament in evidence-based policy making and child focused budgeting. It will also strengthen capacities of the civil society in public policy design and financing.

UNICEF successfully convened discussions between the legislative and executive bodies. Strategic dialogues were supported between the Parliamentary Commissions, the Ombudsman institution, the office of the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and the line ministries.

A public-private partnership with a leading utility company (*Gas Natural Fenosa*) produced a communication campaign to end violence against children in the last quarter of 2013 and will continue in the future. UNICEF takes an active role in convening relevant national and international partners to ensure cross-fertilization of ideas. It supports and cooperates with a number of civil society actors to achieve common objectives: with the Child Rights Information Centre on child participation and child protection in education sector; with the National Centre for Child Abuse Prevention on violence against children; with the Institute for Penal Reforms on improving access to justice and justice for children. UNICEF works closely with other UN agencies on improving the rights of persons with disabilities, the rule of law and justice sector reform.

As a lead agency, UNICEF contributed to building public-private and social partnerships under the Global Partnership for Education. This joint cooperation proved to be so successful and efficient that some sector indicators exceeded the initial targets - the gross enrolment rate of pre-school education reached 82.1 per cent compared to the 75 per cent target and the gross rate of enrolment in pre-school education in rural areas is 71.4 per cent, exceeding the 68 per cent target. A study on the implementation of ECD child-centred policies reveals that 50 per cent of educators generate new knowledge, master the newly acquired skills and create a deeper learning environment at the classroom level. The sustainability of newly set up Community Centers is ensured by the Local Public Administrations.

The partnerships built around flour fortification agenda helped revising and approving the technical regulations. To ensure the quality production of fortified products, cooperation was initiated with the line ministries, academia, National and International Associations of Millers, and Flour Fortification Initiative to contribute to development of necessary by-laws, strengthen capacities of professionals, ensure knowledge transfer and exchange of best practices.

Partnership around inclusive education was consolidated with relevant national and international NGOs and development partners, including LUMOS and the French Embassy in Romania.

Partnerships also played an important role in advancing the child care reform in the breakaway region of Transnistria: an assessment was carried out in collaboration with a local NGO, and dialogue is continuing within the UN, with the EU, the Council of Europe as well as the World Bank on the best ways to carry the reforms forward.

### Knowledge Management

**Partially met benchmarks**

UNICEF continued to use and share evidence generated through UNICEF-supported surveys, studies and demonstration models for advocacy, programmatic and policy purposes.
The Country Office strengthened linkages between knowledge management and advocacy. A more dynamic platform for the UNICEF Moldova website (www.unicef.md) allows better and more efficient sharing of knowledge with external audiences. Knowledge Management Focal point is responsible for overall coordination and technical support to programme staff on knowledge management related activities, including (i) generation of data and statistics to keep the office updated on the situation of children; (ii) quality control and timely submission of studies, surveys and evaluations to share Moldovan experience globally; and (iii) ensuring accuracy and quality of data used for programming, advocacy and external relation purposes. In 2013, four thematic sessions have been organized during the Programme meetings, to share the knowledge and discuss key programmatic cross-sectorial issues related to MoRES: Nutrition, Piloting and Modelling, and Social Protection.

UNICEF Moldova actively participates and shares knowledge within the CEE/CIS Knowledge Leadership Agenda and multi-country evaluations through separate focal points appointed for each KLA. At the country level, key line ministries (MoJ, MoLSPF and MoE) are using recommendations from the highly-rated evaluations conducted with UNICEF support when developing sectorial strategies and action plans, namely: Strategy on Family and Child Protection, Action Plans on Inclusive Education and Out of School Children.

**Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation**

*Fully met benchmarks*

A human rights-based analysis performed in preparation for the new 2013-2017 country programme identified underlying determinants of the major issues affecting children as part of a consultative process with the Government, NGOs, and Parliament. The country programme hence focuses on addressing inequalities and strengthening rights of disadvantaged groups of children and people, including persons living with disabilities, the poor, and people from ethnic and other minorities. UNICEF particularly targets children living in institutions, Roma, children of migrant parents, MARA and other vulnerable groups.

UNICEF flagged a number of important issues related to CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and CEDAW, both to the Government during the report preparations and through briefing the Committees on important issues. Throughout next year, UNICEF will be providing assistance to the Government in preparations for the CRC full periodic reporting due in 2015. UNICEF continues utilising international human rights conventions to promote human rights and support the right-holders in demanding fulfilment of rights through stronger engagement with the civil society. Intensified work with the Parliament in 2013 aims to bring right-holders and duty-bearers closer together in a continuous dialogue.

Although Moldova has in place a number of inter-sectorial groups, committees on protection of human rights (including on the rights of children and persons with disabilities), much remains to be done to make these bodies effective in their work and move them from reactive approach in response to international requirements, to fully engaging and listening to the rights-holders and providing effective protection of everyone’s rights.

The capacities of NGOs as service providers, policy and budget decision-makers, and human rights advocates require strengthening, as does the key oversight role of Parliament in child rights monitoring and the Parliamentary Advocate (Ombudsperson) institution. Improvements are also needed in media coverage of children and their rights. The office has integrated these capacity building, advocacy, policy and technical assistance activities into its programme and work-plans and progresses with implementation.

**Gender Equality**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF implements its programme with gender equality as cross-cutting approach in all activities. The office
Chapter 27 of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement. Cooperation on child rights issues between Moldova and the EU will be needed as per requirements of the New perspectives for collaboration with EU countries opened in 2013 as further acceleration of horizontal international policy settings.

Structuring a coherent strategy on disaster risk management, climate change adaptation, and resilience across different scales (local, national and regional), as well as at integrating them with national and chapeau, the office joined the regional initiative on developing a road map in this area. It is aimed at In line with the new Strategic Plan 2014-2017, which identifies DRR as a key pillar under the resilience chapeau, the office joined the regional initiative on developing a road map in this area. It is aimed at structuring a coherent strategy on disaster risk management, climate change adaptation, and resilience across different scales (local, national and regional), as well as at integrating them with national and international policy settings.

New perspectives for collaboration with EU countries opened in 2013 as further acceleration of horizontal cooperation on child rights issues between Moldova and the EU will be needed as per requirements of the Chapter 27 of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.

Inequalities remain and require, apart from addressing the systemic and policy issues, a mind-shift of predominantly traditional and patriarchal society. C4D is used extensively for this aim. Joint work with the UNCT addressed the issues of domestic violence, women access to employment and political representation. Role of men and boys in preventing violence and ending gender-based discrimination is particularly important and remains an important strategy for the future.

The office actively participated in supporting preparations of the periodic review of Moldova by the Committee on the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which took place in October 2013.

Environmental Sustainability

*Initiating action to meet benchmarks*

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

UNICEF promoted and successfully initiated, with support from the Regional Office, several innovative horizontal cooperation arrangements.

Ministries of Social Protection of Moldova and Lithuania have started cooperation on social assistance reforms which is expected to enter into a long-term cooperation agreement from 2014 onwards.

The dialogue started between Moldovan and Kazakh millers and flour producers to collaborate and exchange experiences and technical expertise on flour fortification with iron and folic acid, in order to enable Moldovan producers to meet mandatory flour fortification gradually entering into force in 2014 and 2015.

Inclusion of Roma children into mainstream schools will be advanced by learning about Serbian and Bulgarian experiences due to negotiations initiated in 2013.

Moldova office benefitted from a close cooperation with UNICEF Ukraine through sharing of experiences and visit of partners from Ukraine on HIV prevention among the MARA and EVA. Within the global ENDViolence campaign, Moldova partnered with the neighbouring Romania office to produce video clips and public messages on violence against children, involving well-known celebrities in both countries.

In line with the new Strategic Plan 2014-2017, which identifies DRR as a key pillar under the resilience chapeau, the office joined the regional initiative on developing a road map in this area. It is aimed at structuring a coherent strategy on disaster risk management, climate change adaptation, and resilience across different scales (local, national and regional), as well as at integrating them with national and international policy settings.

New perspectives for collaboration with EU countries opened in 2013 as further acceleration of horizontal cooperation on child rights issues between Moldova and the EU will be needed as per requirements of the Chapter 27 of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.
Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results

Moldova - 5640

PC 401 - Social inclusion and protection of children

**On-track**

**PCR 5640/A0/04/401** The Government addresses disparities in access to quality education, health, protection and justice services for disadvantaged children and families.

**Progress:** Disparities in access to quality services have been addressed through a combination of policy support, advocacy, capacity building and communication for development activities aiming to further remove the bottlenecks of stigma and discrimination, particularly for children with disabilities.

The new *Law on Special Protection of Children at Risk and Those Separated from Their Parents* adopted in 2013, and the *National Strategy on Child and Family Protection*, which were awaiting approval at the year’s end, have improved the legal and policy framework. Their implementation will facilitate identification, referral of and response to children at risk of abuse, exploitation and family separation and create opportunities to strengthen prevention.

In 2013, advocacy, awareness-raising and capacity strengthening of the justice sector actors increasingly showed a shift in mind-set from focusing on children in conflict with the law to children in contact with the law, with the development of child-friendly interviewing rooms, the concept of a one-stop-shop for child victims and the call for improved services for all children at risk of or being in conflict with the law, including improved collaboration between the justice and social sectors.

UNICEF supported the Government to make quality perinatal care services accessible to the most vulnerable children, adolescents, and their families. Timely access to antenatal care, improved assistance during delivery, and proper implementation of the Child Growth Monitoring Standards will improve the quality of services delivered to rural population and people from the Transnistrian region. YFHS and NGOs cooperate and will complement each other effectively, so that both general adolescents and youth and MARA benefit from health education and HIV prevention activities.

UNICEF advocated for increased access of vulnerable communities and children to pre-school and school education. Around 2,300 children, including children with disabilities and Roma children in 46 poorest communities, gained access to early education. However, though Gross Enrolment Rate to pre-school education reached 82.1 per cent, urban-rural gap increased to 29.1 p.p. and warns that even more attention should be paid to vulnerable groups. Inclusion of children with disabilities into regular schools is on-going and it is estimated that around 20 per cent of children with disabilities of 1-9 grades attend mainstream schools. To ensure financial sustainability of inclusive education coefficients for inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools were developed and considered in the revision of the general education financing formula.

**On-track**

**IR 5640/A0/04/401/001** By 2017, child and social protection system have a functional continuum of services and cash assistance, focusing on prevention of family separation, violence and exploitation, response and treatment of victims.

**Progress:** The main challenges are due to gaps in the child protection system, those being: legislative, continuum of services, capacity of social welfare and constructive attitudes of and towards families who struggle raising their children. The “Law on Special Protection For Children At Risk and the National Strategy for Child and Family Protection” increasingly address child protection in a comprehensive manner. One crucial mechanism introduced is the referral mechanism between social welfare, education, health and police at local levels, which after post-piloting evaluation has been submitted to Government for nationwide adoption. In the meantime, five districts have already started implementing the inter-sectorial mechanism. Moreover, the education sector has approved their internal protocol and trained coordinators and teachers in all districts to improve identification of abuse and referral. The remaining three ministries are currently finalizing their protocols.

The evaluation of the child care reform was finalized. A follow-up study on foster care arrangements, an assessment on child care in Transnistria, a quick assessment of local budgeting for social protection services and a case study on case management in residential institutions were carried out. They generated evidence of remaining challenges in child care on both banks of the Nistru river, including for children under three years and those with disabilities.

Gaps in attitudes were addressed through a partnership between the MoLSPF, NGOs and private sector, embarking on a communication strategy to end violence against children, which includes an awareness-raising campaign consisting of video spots, leaflets, media and social events.

These achievements will form the basis for continued efforts to improve budget allocation and accountability of local authorities for the identification of children at risk, including through gate-keeping and periodic review of their situation, and for the replication of promising family- and community-based mechanisms and services in partnership with NGOs.

**On-track**

**IR 5640/A0/04/401/002** By 2017, child friendly procedures and treatment applied for all children in contact with the law in 5 raions, including diversion for children in conflict with the law regulated at national level and functional in 5 raions.

**Progress:** The understanding of the importance of a child-friendly justice system for victims and offenders is increasing and
commitment relatively strong, although progress is not yet sufficiently systematic and inter-sectorial collaboration remains a challenge. The law banning solitary confinement of minors, the expansion of free legal aid to victims of crimes and an inter-sectorial resolution on child-friendly interviewing are clear examples of the former.

The legal basis for applying child-friendly procedures and alternatives to detention is relatively good, and criminal investigators, prosecutors, defence lawyers, judges and probation counsellors are being trained in child-friendly methodologies to implement these provisions. Moreover, in five districts, representatives of the police, justice, social welfare, health and education got better understanding of the needs of children in conflict with the law, and are increasingly collaborating to divert, rehabilitate or reintegrate children who came in conflict with the law.

However, the way cases are assigned to prosecutors, judges and public defence lawyers remains arbitrary, resulting in many children not benefiting from specialized court proceedings. Moreover, services to support diversion remain scarce and the assessment of the child to find the best solution for the child’s rehabilitation and reintegration limited.

UNICEF will continue its assessment of the legal framework on justice for children to identify gaps and provide better focus for the ongoing reform, including services for children below the age of criminal responsibility (14) and the role of social workers and psychologists in court. Evidence gathered from research on torture against children, has already been welcomed by relevant Ministers, and measures are currently being put in place, such as the installation of video cameras in all police stations.

With UNICEF’s support, a law governing Moldova’s independent human rights institutions was adopted by Parliament, maintaining an independent children’s Ombudsperson.

**Progress:**

UNICEF used several strategies in promoting integrated quality health services: initiating high level advocacy with decision makers and governmental officials, building partnerships, strengthening capacities, and empowering the right holders to demand their rights.

With UNICEF support, 200 primary health care professionals now apply new Child Growth Monitoring Standards (CGMS) and the Child Development Cards to improve communication with parents. Compliance of children’s supervision with the CGMS provisions will be assessed through a study in 2014.

UNICEF supported 30 health professionals from the Transnistrian region in enhancing their capacities to provide obstetrical emergencies care and 28 health professionals to improve their skills in neonatal resuscitation. This joint project was implemented together with WHO and UNDP under the EU funded Confidence Building Measures Programme.

UNICEF assisted the Government in revising the Technical Regulations on flour fortification which were approved. However, to ensure the quality production of fortified products, partnerships need to be strengthened with the line ministries, academia, Associations of Millers. UNICEF works closely with the Flour Fortification Initiative to contribute to development of by-laws, strengthening the capacities of professionals, and ensuring knowledge transfer.

The Regulation on Early Detection and Intervention Services is now pending Government approval and will facilitate access to integrated services for children with developmental disorders to protecting them from developing avoidable disabilities. A leaflet for parents on autism symptoms and referral details was developed and disseminated nationwide and used to identify early autism signs. The change in parents’ practices will be captured during the assessment of CGMS in 2014.

The Rate of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV was 2.3 per cent in 2012. Though ARV treatments are available and all HIV positive pregnant women are entitled to access them freely, it is yet unclear why many did not benefit from those services. UNICEF plans to assess this problem in 2014.

**Progress:** UNICEF addressed availability and quality of services for young people through development of the legal framework and capacity building of Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHCs) – these are available in all 35 districts and 2 municipalities. Over 112,000 adolescent boys and girls benefited from 152,000 interventions, including 57,000 consultations, 5,700 outreach activities, and 20,000 tests (including 1,835 HIV tests).

Although YFHCs are welcomed by the general population, current lack of disaggregated data does not show the extent to which the most at risk and vulnerable adolescents (MARA & EVA) are reached. UNICEF is supporting development of software for the YFHCs to collect and analyse data and allow for high-level of disaggregation. Disaggregated information per vulnerability level will be available from mid-2014.

In-service curricula on Youth Friendly Health Services was developed and integrated into the Medical University curricula.
UNICEF continuously addressed the needs of MARA through a regional EU-funded project "Strengthening Capacities of Non-State Actors for HIV Testing and Counselling of Most-at-Risk Adolescents and Young People". A number of legal amendments were prepared aimed at reducing minimum age for mandatory parental consent for accessing HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Services from 18 to 14 years. In addition, NGOs have been empowered to provide rapid VCT to vulnerable groups. As a result, 77 professionals from VFHS and NGOs working with adolescents improved their capacities in provision VCT and other services to MARA&EVA. Around 2,000 adolescents were involved in community mobilization events on promotion of VCT and HIV prevention services for MARA&EVA in Balti, Orhei and Donduseni. 155 MARA&EVA from Balti were counselled and tested for HIV.

Activities implemented under the project were highly appreciated by an independent evaluator in 2013. UNICEF was encouraged to continue working with MARA, as they are less likely to be targeted by the public health services.

**On-track**

**IR 5640/AO/04/401/005** Families, professionals and other community members apply positive child-care practices and support inclusion of most vulnerable children and adolescents.

**Progress:** UNICEF supported the Government in promoting inclusive education of children with disabilities and addressing the issue of violence against children. A media campaign stimulated debates around importance of inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. TV and radio shows and public events called parents of children with disabilities to enrol children in mainstream schools, and communities to create a supportive environment for every child.

Traditional and social media presented good practices of inclusion of children with disabilities, while six TV and radio spots raised population’s awareness on inclusive education. As a result, there is a better understanding and acceptance of inclusive education, more children with disabilities being enrolled in mainstream schools. A survey conducted in 2013 demonstrates that public acceptance of children with disabilities is constantly increasing, with 19 per cent of caregivers accepting a child with disabilities in mainstream school (5 per cent in 2009) but efforts will have to be sustained and children’s voices brought-in to continue this upward trend.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family in implementing a communication campaign on child violence and abuse prevention. The campaign promotes positive parenting practices and encourages citizens to report all cases of violence. TV spots and informative materials were produced and disseminated nationally. More than 700,000 households learned about how to communicate non-violently with their children through dissemination of leaflets within a public-private partnership with the largest electricity company in the country.

Representatives of education sector from all districts are now better able to recognize, register and refer cases of child abuse, after being involved in training activities. Children from all communities are better informed whom to address if they become victims of abuse and encouraged to report any case they witness after attending a special hour dedicated to prevention of violence.

**On-track**

**IR 5640/AO/04/401/006** By 2017, the government at all levels in close coordination with other stakeholders has and uses clear mechanism for enrolment and retention in pre-schools and schools of all children, with special focus on children in disadvantaged situations.

**Progress:** UNICEF supported the Government in improving children’s access to education, with special focus on reduction of disparities and inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools.

To address the bottlenecks for inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream school - the lack of financial mechanisms, availability of policy documents, teachers, parents and pupils’ attitudes and teachers’ preparedness for inclusion, a combination of strategies were applied: policy advocacy, knowledge management, capacity development, C4D and community mobilization and strategic partnerships.

Studies were carried out on the profile of children out of school; impact of financing reform on equity in access to education and learning outcomes; gaps in legislation for social inclusion of most marginalised; demand and supply for child care facilities from the perspective of women employability; pupils, teachers and parents’ attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools.

To address the lack of financial mechanisms for inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools, coefficients were developed and included in the revision of general education financing formula.

The Programme and Plan of Action on School Drop-out Prevention were developed and strategic partnership consolidated to promote inclusive education.

About 46 poorest communities were mobilised to create early education services for 2,300 children, including children with disabilities and Roma, and 6 other communities promoted inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools, supported by a national communication campaign. As a result, the number of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools had increased by 29 per cent.

The efforts are constrained by the government’s limited capacity for data collection, disaggregation and use for policy development and monitoring insufficient services and capacity for inclusion and support of children with disabilities. Public, private and social partnerships also need to be further consolidated for the promotion of inclusive education.

**On-track**

**IR 5640/AO/04/401/007** By 2017, education authorities at national and local levels apply new quality education standards for improved teaching skills, learning environment and learning outcomes in ways which reduce disparities.
Progress: UNICEF supported the Government in improving quality of education through a mix of strategies: policy advocacy, knowledge management, capacity development, and C4D and community mobilization.

The office provided inputs and advice to the draft Code of Education, Education Decentralization Strategy and sector strategy Education 2020.

A functional review of the Ministry of Education and subordinated structures identified gaps in the functions and roles of education administration and provided recommendations for improvement of effectiveness and efficiency.

New management and mentoring concepts were developed. Quality education standards for general school from the perspective of Child Friendly School (CFS) were adopted, standards for monitoring school readiness developed and hygiene and sanitary norms for pre-school reviewed. Capacity of staff was developed to support children with disabilities in regular schools, prevent and refer cases of violence.

As a result CFS standards were tested in 15 schools; 396 teachers apply the learning outcome standards; 1390 education staff are able to prevent violence in school and pre-school; 50 key mentors mastered new knowledge and trained further 260 local mentors to support professional development of 7,000 pre-school teachers through mentoring and collaborative learning.

To address limited capacity and mechanisms for development of professionals, monitoring the impact of education reform on the quality of education and lack of a unified vision of the line ministries on the parenting, UNICEF will promote capacity development through government structures and use the convening role to create a sustainable dialogue between line ministries.

Further efforts will be made to consolidate partnerships for teachers’ policies, implementation of the functional analysis recommendations, standards, mentoring, curricula development, improvement of education management and quality assurance.

Indicators regarding proportion of institutions corresponding to quality standards, percentage of children competent in PISA, proportion of fund saved and reinvested in education quality need revisiting to ensure relevance and periodic monitoring.

IR 5640/A0/04/401/008 Civil protection, line ministries and local authorities are better able to identify the disaster related risks and develop child focused risk reduction strategies

Progress: UNICEF supported national and local authorities in building country's resilience to disasters and in reducing the risks and impact of disasters on the most vulnerable population. In January 2013, UNICEF in consultation with the Government (National steering committee) selected two most vulnerable districts, Stefan Voda and Ungheni to model Disaster Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Methodology. As a result, 16 professionals from Stefan Voda and 18 from Ungheni conducted a Disaster Risk Assessment in their districts. Two districts and 22 communities now have DRR included into their local strategic plans, based on the assessments reports and on the cross-sectoral work performed.

During the year, almost 1,700 people were informed about DRR, including 120 children. A set of user friendly informative packages was produced and distributed in the piloted districts. During October 2013, children and adults learned about DRR, their potential role in preparedness and resilience towards disasters through a range of communication activities. Meetings with national steering committee were held to report on the progress of the project and transmit the existing good practices and knowledge.

PC 402 - Governance and social change for child rights

On-track

PCR 5640/A0/04/402 By 2017, governance structures and social attitudes are more child-sensitive and equity oriented

Progress: In 2013, the Government continued its efforts towards the improvement of the situation of children in Moldova and fulfilment of child rights by the development and approval of key normative and policy documents, which also addressed funding and budgeting issues.

National Decentralisation Strategy (NDS) and the Action Plan were adopted. UNICEF supported the line Ministries, through experts and advice, in elaborating sectorial decentralisation strategies for Education and Social Services. A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the NDS was also developed to measure decentralization progress and its impact on the most disadvantaged population.

Government capacity in the area of public finance management has been continuously strengthened. UNICEF provided technical support to help line Ministries prioritise and defend actions that benefit the most marginalised children for their budget negotiations with the Ministry of Finance (MoF). As a result, the Inclusive Education Programme was included in the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and co-payments for visits to physicians (including children) were abolished by the MoH.

UNICEF and the World Bank jointly advocated for maintaining the current level of budget allocations for family and child allowances in the context of the consolidation of the cash assistance programmes. This mitigated the risk of a decline in the remaining safety net available to families with children who have lost access to other payments due to ongoing social protection reforms, leading to reducing inequities.

UNICEF supported the Government in addressing the CRC committee observations on implementation of the Ootional Protocol from
UNICEF helped children and youth to generate discussions during the post-2015 consultation process. Media (One Minute Junior films, radio and TV shows) and on-line platforms (blogging and social media) were used to promote voices of the vulnerable children.

On-track

**IR 5640/A0/04/402/009** By 2017 Central and Local authorities and Parliament develop, implement and monitor evidence- and result-based policies (including budgets) for all children, especially disadvantaged ones

**Progress:** Awareness raising and public debates were promoted on child rights in 2013, including support to the Deputy Speaker’s office on legal and communications matters. Significant child-related legislation in this period includes: adoption of draft law amending the Criminal Code to provisions of the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; adoption of Law on Special protection of children under risk and children separated from their parents; the law on Ombudsperson for Children’s rights.

A new partnership was established with a leading Think-Tank, in providing capacity for the Parliament, Civil Society and line Ministries, on the child-friendly, evidence-based policy and budgeting.

In 2013 UNICEF supported generating evidence on the most vulnerable children, making disaggregated data available for policy-makers: “Situation of Roma” report launched by UN Agencies; 2012 Moldova MICS Summary report is finalised, and final report will be published in early 2014. Another MICS survey is being successfully implemented in the breakaway Transnistria region, where statistical capacity of local public authorities has been strengthened and data collected from more than 3,000 households.

Social Protection (RKLA 8) Determinant Analysis was initiated in May and finalised in July, and is now under discussion with partners. Strengthening the social assistance safety net through improved redistribution and referral mechanism, as well as introducing flexibility for emergency situations is under way. UNICEF convened collaboration between the Ministries of Social Protection of Moldova and Lithuania in reforming the social assistance system, as well as building resilience of the social assistance to the most vulnerable in case of exceptional situations.

Limited capacity, staff turnover and general workload of Government institutions remain issues in timely implementation of planned activities. Data disaggregation to monitor the situation of the most disadvantaged children is still weak and will be further addressed to close existing data gaps.

On-track

**IR 5640/A0/04/402/010** Children, families, media, civil society organizations and state institutions, through a national dialogue initiate change on key social norms around violence, child labour, separation of children from family environment and discrimination

**Progress:**

UNICEF addressed prevailing social norms leading to institutionalisation, violence, child labour and exclusion of children with disabilities or from minorities, through advocacy and communication at the State, community and family levels - with decision makers, Ombudsman institution, civil society, families, private sector and working directly with children and youth.

A UNICEF-supported nationwide study assessed the attitudes of teachers, parents, care givers and children towards inclusion of children with disabilities (CWD) into mainstream school. It revealed low levels of acceptance by both caregivers (<20 per cent) and teachers (<50 per cent) and the need to advance the social norms change.

The death of a 5 year old girl in early 2013 as a result of domestic violence triggered a public outcry and allowed UNICEF to convene the civil society, private sector, media and the Government in promoting zero tolerance towards violence against children, but also to address the systemic weaknesses in identifying and referring the cases of violence.

UNICEF continued its support to C4D strategies implementation at national and local levels, and in strengthening implementation monitoring of legislation on prevention and response to cases of violence. UNICEF also organized public events and round tables with media representatives to improve their understanding of issues such as immunization, inclusive education and child abuse.

The legal and policy reforms and introduction of protocols and referral mechanisms in the area of child protection, combined with capacity strengthening of professionals working with and responsible for children has borne visible results: teachers and school principals are increasingly aware of their responsibilities and ways to deal with children victims of abuse. With the introduction of a protocol for the education sector, the number of child abuse cases reported through the school system reached 4,000 in the first 6 months of implementation and 300 of them referred further.

On-track

**IR 5640/A0/04/402/011** NGOs, media, private sector and children are actively engaged in a public dialogue for the development and monitoring of child related policies and promotion of child rights
Progress:

The Ministry of Education, with UNICEF support, developed a successful child participation mechanism in 2013 - the National Pupils’ Council. In September and October, 15 boys and 16 girls from 26 districts of Moldova have presented their views on the right to education in general and on the school curriculum. They also monitored access to education and physical conditions of schools in their communities and shared their findings with the Ministry of Education and at the National Children’s Forum.

UNICEF-supported School of Young Bloggers became a vibrant network of 55 young bloggers (up from 35 in 2012), including from Transnistrian region, constantly monitoring child rights and reporting about them. In 2013 young bloggers actively participated in the press clubs, meetings with high level decision makers, and organized flash-mobs leading to higher country awareness on issues affecting children’s lives, such as violence, social exclusion of marginalized children and others.

UNICEF continued to support Child Friendly Journalists Network and improved media’s capacity to report on child rights and respect ethical standards. Nine press clubs and two public debates were organized, resulting in more than 60 stories and 8 investigations on child rights infringements.

UNICEF’s advocacy efforts materialised in adoption of a new Law on the protection of children from the negative impact of public information, mandating all broadcasters to protect child-victims’ identity in the news and media. The Press Council and Broadcasting Council (BCC) strengthened their cooperation and BCC issued its first public warning to a private broadcaster for violating the rights of a sexually abused child.

UNICEF promoted children’s voices during the post-2015 national consultations. Fifteen children produced one minute videos expressing their concerns and priorities for the future. A young girl represented Moldovan youth at the Regional Youth Consultations and a high-level ministerial conference on Education in Turkey.

PC 403 - Cross-sectoral

**On-track**

PCR 5640/A0/04/403 The component will support effective operations, country office management and administration, cross-sectoral and United Nations system activities, including monitoring and evaluation, as well as midterm reviews and programme documentation.

**Progress:** Cross-sectoral activities have supported UN Moldova common activities in the areas of promotion of human rights and joint communications. UNICEF contributed to work of the Human Rights advisor assigned to the Resident Coordinator’s office through OHCHR. Notable achievements of the joint work in 2013 include UNSG’s Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Transnistrian region report and action plan; UNICEF-led successful joint advocacy on maintaining independence of the Ombudperson for children’s rights; support to UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty during her visit and making children’s rights and issues highly visible to the public and the Government; a joint visit to one Roma populated community and successful advocacy to end segregation of Roma children and enrol them into school; support to preparations of the periodic review of Moldova by the Committee on the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) including, for the first time, the breakaway region of Transnistria, thanks to partnership with a local NGO.

Joint communication activities resulted in elaboration of joint advocacy messages on human rights and equity for the UNCT under Delivering as One and Communicating as One modality; organisation of the UN Human Rights Gala annual event in December, recognising individual activists and civil society organisations’ contribution to improvement of human rights in Moldova in 2013. The bilingual “UN Magazine” publication, issued quarterly, promoted UN’s joint work with the general public, including UNICEF-led national END Violence campaign.

**On-track**

IR 5640/A0/04/403/001 The component will support effective operations, country office management and administration, cross-sectoral and United Nations system activities, including monitoring and evaluation, as well as midterm reviews and programme documentation.

**Progress:** The office performed a mid-year review of the progress achieved in 2013 emphasizing stronger focus on data collection and use for policy-making, advocacy in changing the social norms causing exclusion or discrimination, and further support to strengthening national inter-sectoral mechanisms to address the needs of vulnerable children and families. Joint team-building activity in 2013 ensured immersion of a number of new colleagues who joined the office in 2013 and strengthened internal cooperation between the equitable services, child protection, communications, C4D and social policy and monitoring sections. Cross-sectoral activities also supported participation of staff in the regional PPP training, where the impact and operationalization of the new UNICEF Strategic Plan and QCPR recommendations were analysed and actions agreed.

**On-track**

PCR 5640/A0/04/800 Effective and efficient programme management and operations support programme delivery

**Progress:**

UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigation (OIAI) conducted an off-site audit of Moldova Country Office during the period 17 to 28 June 2013. The audit assessed the governance, programme management and operations support over the Office’s activities during 1 January 2012 to 16 June 2013.

The report issued in September 2013 does not contain high-priority issues and concluded that overall the controls and processes were generally established...
and functioning during the period under the audit.

The Office sent an update on the status of actions taken to address all recommendation along, with all supporting evidence on 24 October 2013.

**IR 5640/A0/04/800/001 Effective and efficient governance structures and systems to adequately manage risks and achieve programme results**

**Progress:**

Table of Authority was revised in 2013 and last updated on 05 November 2013 with appropriate delegation of authority signed by all staff as per Financial & Administrative Policy.

Following the 2013 audit observations, a number of improvements were made to ensure effective functioning systems in the country office, such as update of the 2013-2014 Rolling Management Plan, review and update of the 2013 Risk profile, changes of the 2013 statutory committees’ composition and review of their TORs for effective functioning. Preliminary audit report was issued on 19 September 2013 and Office has responded on 24 October 2013.

With regard to security, the Business Continuity Plan and the Early Warning Early Action portal were updated in 2013. UN security phone tree and radio checks were conducted five times with UNICEF participation, including two satellite phones checks.

Internal communication has improved through wrap-up and planning meetings every Friday, bi-weekly programme meetings and monthly CMTs with clear agenda and minutes with responsibilities and deadlines for actions, signed and circulated to all staff.

Throughout the year, IT local system operated well. A review of IT equipment took place at the end of year resulting in procurement of new laptops and flat screens for staff.

**IR 5640/A0/04/800/002 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources and of other assets of the organization**

**Progress:**

The Bank Optimisation portal was updated on at least quarterly basis and cash forecast on monthly and quarterly basis compiled for efficient cash planning and use of financial resources. Bank reconciliation was completed by end-month following 2013 period closure and bank reconciliation deadlines. DCTs outstanding over 6-month period were not recorded at the year-end.

As per Year-End Closure of Accounts Instructions, the Office completed the schedules and uploaded them on DFAM SharePoint by reviewing and updating balances on main General Ledger Accounts.

Following audit observation, purchase orders for consultants were monitored on monthly basis at CMT and recorded accurately in SAP.

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, travel and DCT. Following this revision, the information was shared with all staff with appropriate guidance to links, templates and resource information.

**IR 5640/A0/04/800/003 Effective and efficient management of human capacity, including staff development and learning**

**Progress:**

A number of recruitments took place in preparation for the new country office structure and 2013-2017 Country Programme: IT assistant post (GS6), Youth & Adolescent Development Officer (NOA) and Chief Child Protection (L4).

With regard to staff-wellbeing, a staff retreat was organised in Lasi (Romania) during 09-10 November 2013 with a mixed agenda of team-building activities and an abridged PPP training.

The Office completed required 2012 PAS/e-PAS and preparations and discussions of 2013 PAS/e-PAS through-out the year ensuring all are completed and properly filed.

In terms of work-life balance, arrangements for flexi-time were reviewed and Memorandum was issued for action as of 01 January 2014 with participation of local staff association representatives.

All staff were informed on the policy and use of flexi time, working from home and learning days (4 out of 26 staff used 10 learning days).

The Office revised and updated the travel monitoring reporting and attendance practice by introducing internal memo with clear guidelines and links to required instructions and forms. Management is reviewing regularly the annual leave balances of staff to ensure staff is taking holidays and avoid high AL balances.
**Effective Governance Structure**

Moldova Country Office makes use of clear and strategic planning and oversight processes to ensure involvement of all staff in identifying priorities, setting goals and monitoring progress.

In 2013 the office had signed rolling two-year work plans with the Government based on new Country Programme 2013-2017. The 2013 Office Management Plan, also produced on a rolling basis, incorporates key workplan objectives and office priorities, as well as outlines regard organisation-wide statutory procedures, noting staff responsibilities, frequency of meetings, and including collaboration within the UN family in Moldova. From these instruments annual team goals and staff work and professional development objectives are derived and incorporated into individual performance assessments. Emergency preparedness, risk profile and business continuity plans are also updated annually with participation of all staff, both to identify risks and to ensure that everyone knows their respective roles in case of an emergency.

Country Office priorities and progress are discussed and monitored through bi-weekly programme meetings, monthly all-staff and Country Management Team (CMT) meetings, and through regular discussions and field visits with counterparts and partners, as well as through the mid-year and year-end reviews. Statutory committees are in place in line with UNICEF rules to provide oversight on contracts, recruitment and management of assets. All statutory Committees met regularly and functioned well in 2013. Use of risk management approaches are also an important feature of Country Office management and are described in the next section.

In light of the new InSight system, regional monthly reports and office management indicators are reviewed on regular basis within units, programme meeting and CMT to ensuring quality assurance, monitoring and reporting on timely basis of results.

Intra-office communication improvements continued in 2013 including weekly wrap-up and planning meetings where key events, tasks and priorities are shared and incorporated into a weekly office calendar.

Staff leave and travel are approved in advance on a quarterly basis with modifications made through agreed and well-communicated channels. CMT meeting summaries were shared with staff promptly and systematically, so that the whole office is immediately aware of any important office developments or decisions.

UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigation (OIAI) conducted an off-site audit of Moldova Country Office during the period of 17 to 28 June 2013. The audit covered the governance, programme management and operations support over the Office’s activities during 1 January 2012 to 16 June 2013. The report issued in September 2013 did not contain any high-priority issues and concluded that overall the controls and processes were generally established and functioning during the period under the audit.

**Strategic Risk Management**

The Country Office makes systematic use of risk management techniques. Each year the risk profile is updated and an action plan developed to mitigate the key risks. The Risk Profile Action Plan also serves to address changes in the external environment and provides a clear indication of individual and team accountabilities. Progress against all activities in the action plan was reviewed for quality and progress quarterly by CMT.

Weekly unit meetings were used to reinforce and apply risk management principles. Focal points were established for key functions, such as emergency, Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) etc. Weekly senior management meetings of the Representative, Deputy Representative and Operations Manager were used as necessary to further discuss strategic concerns including those raised in these meetings or statutory bodies. Programme meetings and senior management meetings are used to identify, discuss and respond to changes in the internal and external operating environment. Weekly wrap-up and planning meetings helped to agree on the office and section priorities, identify risks and opportunities and act on them early.
A new office table of authority came into effect in January 2013, complying with required segregation of duties between the authorising, certifying, approving, receiving and paying officers. Delegation of authority letters were co-signed by responsible staff members and the Representative and updated as new staff members were joining the office.

The business continuity plan was updated and uploaded into the EWEA portal. Information on the portal was updated twice in 2013 and comments from the Regional Office were incorporated. All staff were involved in the process, ensuring awareness of their roles and UNICEF's priorities and processes in case of an emergency.

**Evaluation**

The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) is an integral part of the new Country Programme. The 2013-2014 IMEP is included in the Rolling Management plan, and relevant activities, surveys and studies are properly planned and reflected in Rolling work plans, signed by UNICEF and key line ministries. Status of IMEP implementation updated during mid-year and annual review with further adjustments during the planning process.

During 2013 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) function in UNICEF Moldova CO has been continuously strengthened. The workflow on Evaluation Management process has been developed and institutionalized at country level, key control points and staff involved are assigned to ensure quality of evaluations and improvement of UNICEF programming. In 2013 internal communication with regard to tracking progress and status of IMEP has been continuously improved through regular edition of one-page E-bulletin (once in two months) shared with Programme staff, with special attention to the status of implementation of actions in Evaluation Management Response Tracking System as well as all MoRES studies and assessments.

As this was the first year of new Country Programme, UNICEF Moldova did not plan any major evaluation in 2013. There was one Evaluation of the Joint UN project on Strengthening National Statistical System finalised in 2013 and rated as “highly satisfactory” by GEROS (Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System).

Moldova is a part of several multi-country evaluations initiated by UNICEF CEE/CIS RO in 2013 within Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA 1, 2, 3 and 6) as well as Global Formative Evaluation of MoRES, where Moldova is a part of Light Touch Country Case Studies. The latter is aimed to enhance understanding of how MoRES has been operationalized in Moldova, generate evidence of effect on UNICEF and development partners and programmes in country and provide perception data on the views of in-country stakeholders with regard to MoRES, its implementation and future development.

In September 2013 Moldova hosted the annual conference of the International Programme Evaluation Network (IPEN) focused on Evaluation in public sector. IPEN Conference brought together representatives of the Government, civil society, as well as independent experts from EvalPartners, IPEN and CEE/CIS countries. UNICEF Moldova was actively involved in the process and shared the experience of Moldova in conducting evaluations of programs targeting children with focus on partnership, UNICEF technical assistance and management response.

In 2013 UNICEF Moldova shared with national and international partners important evaluations in the areas of: A child's right to a supportive and caring family environment; A child’s right to access to justice; and A child’s right to inclusive quality education. All mentioned evaluations were rated as highly satisfactory.

In 2013 MICS data analysis has been finalized and 2012 Moldova MICS report elaborated by partners with support of UNICEF Moldova and Regional Office. Launch of survey results is due in Q1 2014. Under the fifth round of MICS, this exercise has been initiated in the breakaway region of Transnistria where data collection has been finalized in Q4 2013 with results to become available in Q3 2014.
Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) provided quality, reliable services and collaborative support to Office activities. It helped information exchange, emergency preparedness and external dissemination of information on child rights and UNICEF’s work.

Major interventions in 2013 included deployment of the DHCP Server that allows client computers to automatically receive IP settings and Class A Private IP addresses allocation for the Office, fixing the issue of limited assigned pool of public IP addresses; migration of the Office backup system, software and hardware, from DPM 2010 Backup System to a new VEEAM 6.5 Backup System - data will be stored on external hard drives instead of magnetic tapes; Windows Server 2008 R2 Hyper-V OS Upgrade to Service Pack 1 and installation of cumulative fix for server cluster machines.

The office maintained required IT emergency preparedness and security standards. Nine VHF radio stations were reprogrammed in accordance to the country security “tree”, five VHF Radio and Mobile security checks and two Satellite Communication checks were done during the year. Inmarsat Thrane Explorer 700 BGAN high-speed data satellite terminal was successfully verified.

More than 90 new vendors were introduced into the Vendor Master Data in 2013, and the Office provided assistance on vendor registration to UNICEF Georgia and Romania Offices. More than 45 queries were raised using Service Management System solving different issues related to Vision, VISA and APPROVA systems.

Lotus e-mail system Inter-Notes replication solution was deployed for the office staff. This solution simplifies e-mail replication without the need to connect via IPSEC/VPN client. It provides more flexibility, while maintaining UNICEF levels of security.

The Office performed equipment and inventory evaluation and completed the relevant needs.

To facilitate distribution of UNICEF’s VISION ERP training materials to end-users and to overcome the dependency on the bandwidth, a local network-based training system, uPerform content is updated regularly. Users are also able to access course materials from outside UNICEF network and complete the trainings at their convenience.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

The Country Office continued positive engagement with current donors and attracted the new ones in 2013. Donors providing OR (direct grants) in 2013 were the Governments of Switzerland, Sweden and the USA, the European Commission, and UNICEF Netherlands and Germany National Committees. The Country Office received additional global thematic funding for Education and set-aside funds to support horizontal cooperation proposals on social policy, resilience building, inclusive education and flour fortification.

A new donor to UNICEF Moldova, the Government of Romania, provided some funds at the end of the year which will be used in 2014 to address justice for children issues. The office has pioneered globally direct fundraising with the OAK Foundation. As a result, in December 2013, the donor has approved a project proposal submitted by UNICEF Moldova in the view of supporting the on-going reform of the national childcare system over the period 2014-2016.

Good donor relations were maintained through appropriate management and use of funds, ensuring donor visibility, timely reporting, and dialogue and information sharing about our activities. All donor reports were submitted on time and, the Country Office provided ‘human stories’ in addition to formal reporting to help donors better communicate the impact of their funds on children’s lives to taxpayers, private contributors and customers.

The Country Office continued to benefit from funds raised globally from IKEA to support pre-school education initiatives in Moldova as project was extended at the request of the office until the end of 2013.
The office had a number of bilateral meetings with the donor community, including EU Delegation in Moldova. The latter has not yet yielded planned results, due to delays in approval of the EUD’s strategic plan 2014-2017, but office will continue the efforts to fund-raise locally, particularly in view of the “more-for-more” funds from the EU approved for Moldova and provisions of the Association Agreement on Child-Rights related actions.

Opportunities for 2014 include further funding from the Swiss Development Corporation on “Healthy Generation” project.

The office has been discussing extensively joint fundraising thought an MDTF instrument together with other UN agencies, to address the needs of the Transnistria region, in response to report of the UNSG special rapporteur on human rights. This would complement the ongoing donor support through the Confidence Building Measures in the Transnistria region, implemented jointly by UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and other UN agencies.

Management of Financial and Other Assets

In terms of financial resources management, the Country Office has achieved programmatic and operational results within the planned resources, registering an overall expenditure rate of 98 per cent against regular resources and 82 per cent against other resources (considering that part of multi-year grants will be utilised in 2014). All expiring PBAs were 100 per cent expended.

The office used Vision tools such as the InSight portal, Management reports, RAM, Country and Regional Dashboards as well as SAP-generated reports for regular monitoring of financial and other assets. These mechanisms, together with clear accountabilities and good on-going communication with partners resulted in having no outstanding direct cash transfers (DCTs) over 6 months, in line with UNICEF financial management standards. Trainings provided to the counterparts on DCT reporting requirements, regular on-site reviews, such as spot checks and planned monitoring visits have continued to be successfully applied as financial and administrative control systems.

The Country Office extensively uses the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) and, together with UNCT, assesses the risks and applies mitigating strategies, provides capacity building to partners and performs regular assurance activities through programmatic monitoring and field visits.

Regular weekly, monthly and quarterly review and monitoring of management indicators and funds utilisation reports by the Country Management Team and budget focal point remain an important mechanism for timely and responsive management of funds and identification of corrective measures to be taken.

Improved monthly cash forecasting resulted in better planning in terms of funds availability and streamlining of payment process, as well as on-time reporting and bank reconciliation.

Supply Management

The Office updated its internal business process with regard to procurement of goods and institutional services, in order to ensure full compliance with IPSAS standards.

Following internal revision of Office’s ICT compliance, it procured new ICT equipment through off-shore arrangements under the Long Term Agreement (LTA) with the Supply Division in Copenhagen. Although local procurement of ICT equipment has the advantage of quick delivery and availability, its use in the future would depend on compatibility with UNICEF’s ICT standards, warranties and conditions.

Good functioning of the supply component was also assured through several LTAs. In 2013, the common LTAs for transportation and translation services have been extended for a period of 2 years, following positive feedback from other UN Agencies. These LTAs ensured effective, efficient and good functioning of the supply
component as well as significant reduction of time required to respond to urgent demands.

In accordance with the Moldovan law and relevant procedures, the Office had to apply for humanitarian status and tax exemption for each import of programme/emergency supplies, which took significant time.

As part of procurement services, UNICEF Moldova continued to provide in-country support related to the procurement of vaccines through the Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative (GAVI) on behalf of the National Centre for Public Health. The 2013 procurement of vaccines totalled US$ 628,263.18. Medications were also procured by UNICEF Supply Division for the Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring Unit of the Health System Restructuring Project under the Ministry of Health. Additionally the Ministry of Health requested support in procuring antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to meet 2014 needs.

Throughout 2013, five Contract Review Committee (CRC) meetings took place and all requests were submitted for review on time. Three CRCs amounted to US$ 162,492.58, whereas two CRCs were time-bound and included the review of LTA’s for transportation and translation services. Signed minutes with recommendations were submitted for review and signature within three working days.

### Human Resources

Following an extensive recruitment process for the new country programme structure in 2012, the office successfully filled the remaining vacant posts: two GS, one IP and one temporary post. Competitive, open recruitment for all vacant posts included competency-based selection processes.

Performance management review is undertaken systematically, with clear deadlines for Performance Appraisal tasks set and monitored by the CMT. All staff had at least two performance-related discussions during the year.

The Office applied UNICEF Human Resources policies on learning days (four out of 27 staff used regional practice of 10 learnings days). Flexi-time, compressed working hours and working from home arrangements yielded positive results.

The Office revamped the practice of attendance focal points and strengthened the leave and travel planning system to ensure timely approvals and arrangements for backing up critical functions and roles.

The Office continued the policy of investing in staff through strategic training and networking opportunities. Staff participated actively in regional networks, through virtual media and participation in Webinars and WebExes with focus on VISION and Year closure of accounts and Regional RKLAs. This allowed staff, especially from the general service category, to learn and share experiences and ideas with other offices as part of roll-out of the new system.

Six senior and new staff participated in the regional PPP training and subsequently provided the PPP training to all office staff during the retreat in October. Other staff benefitted from improved knowledge and skills on the Leadership Development; Health Economics; Surveys Techniques; Quality Care for Mothers, New-borns and Children and Equity, Quality and Leadership in Education. All staff completed the online training on Integrity Awareness as well as new Basic Security in the Field on-line course and several participated in security trainings organised for the UN agencies in Moldova.

### Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

Following the 2013 planning retreat and review of the first year of the VISION roll-out, the office adjusted its main internal business processes and granted access to SAP to all programme staff, in accordance with the updated Table of Authority and ensuring appropriate segregation of duties.

Throughout the year, the Office continued to benefit from UN-agreed LTAs for in-country transportation, fuel supply, institutional translation and printing services, as well as extensive use of common rosters for
individual translation, editing, photography, travel and events. These arrangements helped increase efficiency and reduce the lead time and transaction costs through economies of scale.

UN Moldova is one of the first corporate pilots for harmonised business practices – these were being implemented since throughout 2013 in accordance with the 2013-2017 Business Operations Strategy. Through this process the office has been quick to address operational requirements of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, approved by the General Assembly in December 2012. The QCPR requirements have been translated into annual Work Plan by UN Moldova Operations Management Team under UNICEF’s leadership. The Plan is focused on optimising current business practices by using LTAs, rosters and One UN platform to share information and data, strengthen cooperation between UN agencies, especially in supporting and assisting specialised agencies with limited presence and resources.

Changes in AMP & CPMP

The office uses a two-year Rolling Management Plan (2013-2014). The plan was last updated in Q4 2013, in response to audit recommendations and the annual review process. The risk profile was updated as well.


No significant changes to AMP are envisaged for 2014.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

Acronyms
API – Association of Independent Press
CC – Community Centre
CCFM – NGO “Copil, Comunitate, Familie Moldova”, a local branch of Hope and Homes for Children
CEDAW – Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against the Women
CEECIS – Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States
CIJ – Centre for Investigative Journalism
CCC – Core Commitments for Children
CCM – Child-Centred Methodology
CMT – Country Management Team
CPA – Central Public Authorities
CoE – Council of Europe
CSO – Civil Society Organization
DCT – Direct Cash Transfer
DTP – Diphtheria, tetanus toxoids and pertussis
EVA – Especially Vulnerable Adolescents
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTI – Fast Track Initiative
GDP – Growth Domestic Product
GoM – Government of the Republic of Moldova
HACT – Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HIV/AIDS - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICT – Information Communication Technology
IMCI – Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IMR – Infant Mortality Rate
IOM – International Organization for Migration
LPAs – Local Public Authorities
MARA – Most-At-Risk Adolescents
MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMR – Maternal Mortality Rate
MICs – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
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MMR – Mumps, Measles and Rubella
MoE – Ministry of Education
MoF – Ministry of Finance
MoH – Ministry of Health
MoI – Ministry of Interior
MoJ – Ministry of Justice
MoLSPF – Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family
MTBF – Medium-Term Budgetary Framework
NBS – National Bureau of Statistics
NCHM - National Centre for Health Management
NCPCR - National Council for the Protection of Child Rights
NGOs – Non-Government Organisations
OIAI – Office of Internal Audit and Investigation
OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OR - Other Resources
PFM – Public Finance Management
RKLA - Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda
RR - Regular Resources
SitAn – Situation Analysis of Vulnerable, Excluded and Discriminated Children in Moldova
STI – Sexually Transmitted Infection
U5MR – Under-five Mortality Rate
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Fund
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
UNPF – United Nations Partnership Framework
UNSG – United Nations Secretary General
WB –World Bank
WFP - World Food Programme
WHO - World Health Organization
YMC – Youth Media Centre
YFHS – Youth Friendly Health Services
Evaluation

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<td>3 MAPPING OF THE SITUATION ON THE CHILD VICTIMISATION THROUGH SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA</td>
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Other Publications

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<td>1 Leaflets to encourage positive parenting and reporting of cases of violence against children (within the ‘Protect my childhood’ anti-Violence Campaign)</td>
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<td>2 #END Violence Video featuring celebrity person - Mr Pavel Stratan</td>
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<td>5 Poster community resources to assist children victims and witnesses of violence</td>
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<td>7 Posters on HIV testing and counselling for adolescents</td>
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<td>8 Family Guide to disaster preparedness</td>
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<td>9 Set of information materials on disasters and preparedness for disaster (calendar, bookmark, leaflet and brochure)</td>
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<td>10 Brochure on surviving in risk situations</td>
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<td>11 Brochure - Guide on safe traveling through adolescent life</td>
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<td>12 Set of information materials on HIV testing and counselling services (visit card, flyer and leaflet)</td>
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<td>13 Monitoring Report: Child rights in criminal trials (Bălți, Ungheni, Orhei, Căușeni, Leova)</td>
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<td>14 Guide on identification and protection of the vulnerable children below the age of criminal liability</td>
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Lessons Learned

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