Executive summary

Data released in 2017 for Tuvalu, Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands contributed to a growing body of evidence that showed alarmingly high rates of stunting in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). Six of 14 of these islands and territories showed high rates of stunting (data was unavailable in five of them.) Evidence on disability from Palau, Kiribati and Solomon Islands showed disparities among children and persons with disabilities related to education, access to basic services and economic opportunities. The evidence informed evidence-based prioritization of interventions for UNICEF Pacific’s 2018–2022 Multi-Country Programme (MCP), including efforts to reduce stunting in the Pacific Island countries and territories.

The 2018-2022 Multi-Country Programme Document (MCPD) was finalised and approved by the UNICEF Executive Board. It places an emphasis on equity and the SDGs principle of ‘leaving no one behind’. This will allow the country programme to address issues affecting children across countries and territories in the Pacific.

UNICEF Pacific stepped up advocacy efforts to address gaps in early childhood development (ECD). In collaboration with the World Bank and the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education, UNICEF organized a first-ever high-level conference on early childhood development (ECD) bringing together 150 senior government officials and development partners from 15 PICTs. The conference culminated with a “Call to Action” for ECD in which governments committed to improving ECD through increased financial investment and multisectoral approaches. Several PICTs subsequently took steps to advance ECD, including, for example, Kiribati, which established a multisectoral ECD steering committee.

UNICEF supported the Governments of Kiribati and Vanuatu in a cost and financing of an Early childhood care and education (ECCE) exercise that was used to engage policymakers. Evidence from the exercise facilitated approval of the Early Childhood Education Bill by Parliament in Kiribati and supported a government decision in Vanuatu to provide tuition-free education, fund the salaries of ECCE teachers and introduce for the first time a formal ECCE sector.

UNICEF Pacific responded to emergency needs following tropical cyclones in Vanuatu (2015 and 2017) and Fiji (2016), an earthquake in Solomon Islands (December 2016), a tropical depression in Fiji (December 2016), and a volcano in Vanuatu (September 2017). UNICEF provided humanitarian assistance in 2017 to address needs for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education, health and nutrition and child protection, reaching more than 9,300 people (4,750 females). Access to safe water was provided for approximately 5,800 people and 4,650 people (2,370 girls) were enabled to continue schooling.

Emergency recovery activities in Fiji and Vanuatu reaching 89,700 people and ensured children and women had protected and reliable access to sufficient and safe WASH facilities. To bridge the emergency and development nexus in Fiji, the WASH in Schools approach, which was
trialed and tailored for emergencies in Fiji, was taken to scale by the Government with support from Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Progress was achieved in 2017 in creating an enabling environment for the realization of children’s rights. Solomon Islands passed an overarching child protection law, bringing to four the number of PICTs that have enacted such legislation. Kiribati passed its Early Childhood Education Act and Cooks Islands approved a National Policy Framework for Children.

UNICEF Pacific supported climate action in schools in Fiji. Two Fijian children represented children globally at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in November in Germany. One of the children was invited by the President of France to attend the One Summit in France, providing an opportunity to further amplify the voice of children advocating world leaders to take decisive action on climate change.

A Pacific Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Roadmap was approved in September. UNICEF, through the SDGs working group, contributed to the development of a set of regional indicators to monitor progress.

UNICEF Pacific took steps to improve sustainable behaviour change to address social norms. Actions that have been implemented to engage families and communities to address WASH, health and child protection concerns often lacked follow-up or the means to measure impact.

UNICEF established a partnership in 2017 with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to introduce three new vaccines in Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu, and with Rotary Clubs of Australia and New Zealand in those four countries and Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Nauru and Tokelau. UNICEF worked with the World Bank to support the Republic of the Marshall Islands in addressing high stunting rates in the broader context of early childhood development.

**Humanitarian assistance**

UNICEF Pacific provided humanitarian assistance to Vanuatu in response to the Monaro Volcano eruption in September and Tropical Cyclone (TC) Donna in May 2017. Activities continued in 2017 related to responses to two emergencies that occurred in December 2016 – a 7.8-magnitude earthquake in Solomon Islands and a tropical depression that resulted in flooding that triggered landslides in Fiji. The earthquake struck near Makira Province on 9 December 2016, damaging homes, schools and health clinics in the Provinces of Makira, Guadalcanal and Malaita and affecting an estimated 10,000 people in Solomon Islands. Widespread flooding in December 2016 affected the Northern, Central and Eastern Divisions of Fiji. Tropical Cyclone Donna, the strongest off-season cyclone on record, affected more than 1,000 people in the Torres Group of Islands in May 2017. The Monaro Volcano eruption forced the evacuation of all 11,600 residents of Ambae Island in September.

All four small-scale emergencies required UNICEF Pacific to utilize existing internal resources. Technical support was provided to affected governments through various ministries, clusters and/or committees related to damage assessment, planning and execution of emergency response. In-country prepositioned supplies were mobilized and funds were made available to support the immediate response activities of the governments and partners.

The Solomon Islands earthquake response focused on Makira Province, which was the worst affected. The distribution of water containers, soap, water purification tablets and water,
sanitation and hygiene (WASH) information materials benefited more than 600 residents. Tents were set up as temporary learning spaces in 13 schools damaged by the earthquake enabling 1,950 students (1,031 boys and 919 girls) to continue school. Four UNICEF tents and tarpaulins were used as temporary health clinics that served more than 2,000 residents.

In response to the December 2016 floods in Fiji, UNICEF released 13 tents, 50 tarpaulins, 4 school-in-a-box kits, ECD kits, 2 recreation kits, 10 teacher kits, 96 student backpacks and 3 school WASH kits to the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts in time for the start of the 2017 academic year, which facilitated the return to school of 242 children (130 boys and 112 girls). WASH and dignity kits were also distributed, benefiting 3,500 people in affected communities.

In response to Tropical Cyclone Donna, UNICEF chartered an aircraft to transport relief supplies and government officials in charge of the WASH cluster to Torres Group of Islands in northern Vanuatu. WASH hygiene and dignity kits were distributed to the 179 families inhabiting the Islands. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MOH) in nutrition screening and distribution of ready-to-use-supplementary food to approximately 100 children aged 6–36 months who were at risk of malnutrition. Three tents and three ECCE kits were delivered to support the immediate resumption of schooling of more than 200 ECCE and primary school students.

In response to the Monaro Volcano eruption, UNICEF provided 600 immediate response WASH and dignity kits, installed eight 6,000-litre water tanks and arranged for water trucks that provided access to safe water for 2,220 evacuees at seven evacuation centres in Luganville. Eight UNICEF tents were put up at the evacuation centres to serve as temporary learning spaces. UNICEF also provided 66 ECD kits, 54 school-in-a-box kits and 1,200 storybooks in Bislama language to the Ministry of Education and Training to help ensure continuous schooling of 2,260 primary school students during their displacement as well as upon their return to Ambae Island. UNICEF, together with relevant ministries, mobilized peer support volunteers to conduct psychosocial activities in 30 evacuation centres that reached a total of 732 children (396 boys and 336 girls) and 660 adults (387 women and 273 men). UNICEF also supported the deployment of MOH medical teams and provided nutrition supplies for evacuees, along with medical services. The teams helped re-establish regular medical services in health facilities in Ambae Island. Integrated health messages on handwashing, nutrition, immunization and psychosocial support were developed and shared via radio and SMS.

UNICEF activated a contingency programme cooperation agreement (PCA) with World Vision to ensure availability of safe water following repatriation of residents in West and South Ambae districts, which rely on rainwater for their water source. Cleaning of old water tanks, installation of six new 6000-litre water tanks and water trucking were undertaken in 30 communities in those districts. A total of 235 WASH and dignity kits were distributed, benefiting 1,175 people, including 482 children aged 0–14.

UNICEF Pacific received funds from the Governments of Korea and New Zealand and global humanitarian thematic funds for the Monaro volcanic eruption response.

**Equity in practice**

A three-tiered approach was used in delivering UNICEF Pacific's 2013–2017 Multi-Country Programme (MCP). PICTs were grouped in tiers per their overall human development status. PICTs with the lowest gross national income (GNI) per capita and the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) values were grouped in tier one. The tier one countries included Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. UNICEF provided those countries with dedicated
support. Targeted support was delivered to the tier two countries of Samoa, Tuvalu Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Nauru. Limited support was provided to the tier three countries of Palau, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau.

Lessons learned from the tier approach informed the development of the targeting approach that will be used in the delivery of UNICEF Pacific’s 2018–2022 MCP to provide effective support to all 14 PICT governments.

Planning of UNICEF Pacific’s 2018–2022 MCP, completed in 2017, was guided by principles of equity and the Sustainable Development Goal commitment to “leave no one behind.” Individual country data on key child indicators, where available, was analysed as key parameters in determining support in favour of GNI and HDI data, which will allow UNICEF to address specific issues of children across the PICTs.

Sector-specific indicators revealed key deprivations, significant demographic disparities and overall development challenges in some PICTs. Through the application of the equity approach, an analysis of key indicators for health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and protection in countries of the North Pacific, particularly the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), revealed the need for UNICEF to increase programmatic attention in those countries.

In preparations for the new multi-country programme (MCP), UNICEF worked to re-establish contacts with its networks in North Pacific countries, which were not deemed as high a priority under the previous programme. In the Marshall Islands, UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Health and National Statistics Office, completed an integrated child health and nutrition survey and updated key indicators to support evidence-based prioritization of interventions for the 2018–2022 MCP. The results also were used to promote nutrition-sensitive interventions with the Government of the Marshall Islands and leverage anticipated increases in World Bank investments.

In 2017, UNICEF Pacific began equity mapping of the 2013–2017 MCP. The MCP footprint at the subnational level was overlaid with key indicators for children to identify pockets of deprivation that had not previously been addressed. The results of the mapping exercise also were used in programme convergence and 2018–2022 MCP targeting exercises at subnational levels, to ensure the most deprived children are reached and adequately supported.

UNICEF Pacific stepped up efforts to support routine generation of equity-focused data. In partnership with the UN Population Fund and Pacific Community, UNICEF supported the establishment of a coordinated framework for improved availability of social statistics from key surveys such as Population and Housing Census, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Demographic Health Survey (DHS), and Household Income and Expenditure surveys. Collection and reporting of data disaggregated by disability through routine and established surveys was also emphasized. Previous data collection activities, especially related to MICS and DHS, were carried out on an ad-hoc basis, which limited the availability of up-to-date data on key indicators to inform equity-focused programme planning. The coordinated framework will improve the predictability of data availability through the establishment of a regional calendar for data collection and ensure that standard technical support and funding is provided to all 14 Pacific Island countries and territories to follow through on items on their respective data collection calendars.

**Emerging areas of importance**
Accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD). In 2017, a high-level conference on ECD was convened for the first time in the Pacific region. The conference was organized by UNICEF in collaboration with the World Bank and the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (PRC4ECCE) as part of advocacy efforts to increase investment in ECD in the Pacific. Approximately 150 senior government officials and development organization representatives from 15 PICTs across the sectors of health, education, finance, child and social protection attended the event, which culminated with the endorsement by participating governments of the Pasifika Call to Action for ECD. The Call to Action outlines strategic post-conference steps for improving ECD through a multi-sectoral approach at the national level.

The ECD conference generated momentum to advance ECD in PICTs and among development partners who are demonstrating greater support for ECD. Conference delegates from Vanuatu committed to establishing a national ECD steering committee and task force with clear terms of reference, endorsed by the Cabinet, to strengthen intersectoral coordination by the end of 2017. Delegates from Cook Islands resolved to formulate and submit to the Cabinet a policy aimed at formalizing an ECD mandate for children aged 0–3 years. Tuvalu indicated plans to develop a road map for early childhood care and education of children aged 0–8 years and to consider budget allocation for ECD across Ministries of Education, Health and Social Welfare. These initiatives were echoed in the commitments of other PICTs, which also were preparing to undertake comprehensive reviews of ECD programmes, establish intersectoral ECD task forces and/or coordinating committees, and disseminate to stakeholders and the general public key ECD messages through advocacy activities. In the coming months, UNICEF Pacific will monitor and support efforts in PICTs to follow through on commitments made at the conference.

More than 40 children with disabilities, their parents and caregivers from four communities continued to benefit from a UNICEF-supported early intervention programme implemented by the Vanuatu Society for Persons with Disability. The programme prepares children for integration into mainstream schools and sports activities, while equipping parents and caregivers with nurturing and learning stimulation skills. An expansion of this partnership created synergies and valuable collaborations with other agencies and ministries to improve the situation of children with disabilities.

Climate change and children. To increase environmental awareness and help cultivate a culture of disaster risk reduction and resilience among children and school communities, UNICEF Pacific supported Fiji’s Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts in organizing a national celebration to mark the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. All schools in Fiji organized activities around the themes ‘Leadership, Action and COP23’ and ‘Institutionalizing Climate Change Adaptation’. The Minister of Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management officially launched the Education in Emergencies and School Safety Policy in Fiji and the school-based disaster risk resiliency preparedness programme, which will be implemented by UNICEF in targeted Pacific countries in 2018.

Fiji presided over the COP23, which took place in November in Germany. Two Fijian children were selected to travel to Germany to represent children globally at COP23. One of the children was invited by the President of France to attend the One Summit in France, providing an opportunity to further amplify the voice of children advocating world leaders to take decisive action on climate change.

Guidelines were developed to strategically mainstream climate and disaster risk in planning
related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Governments were supported through capital and technical assistance programmes to enable communities, schools and health care facilities to assess and manage risks to water and sanitation systems, improve overall preparedness and facilitate the construction of resilient communities at scale. In Fiji, UNICEF supported the integration of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures into a national water and sanitation policy. Existing WASH policies in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu were reviewed to determine how to incorporate CCA and DRR.

As part of a UNICEF Pacific greening initiative, the Kiribati Field Office installed solar panels to reduce fossil fuel use by switching over to renewable energy sources.

**Summary notes and acronyms**

| CMT       | UNICEF Country Management Team |
| CRC       | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| DCT       | direct cash transfer           |
| DHS       | Demographic and Health Survey  |
| DWSSP     | drinking water safety and security planning |
| ECCE      | early childhood care and education |
| ECD       | early childhood development    |
| EENC      | early essential newborn care   |
| GAVI      | Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization |
| GNI       | Gross National Income          |
| GSSC      | Global Shared Services Centre  |
| HACT      | harmonized approach to cash transfers |
| HDI       | Human Development Index        |
| Hep B     | Hepatitis B                    |
| HIV       | human immunodeficiency virus   |
| ICT       | information and communication technology |
| IMCI      | integrated management of childhood illness |
| IP        | implementing partner           |
| MCO       | multi-country office           |
| MCP       | multi-country programme        |
| MCPD      | multi-country programme document |
| MCPMP     | multi-country programme management plan |
| MHM       | menstrual hygiene management   |
| MOH       | Ministry of Health             |
| MICS      | Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey |
| OPV       | oral polio vaccine             |
| ORE       | Other Resources – Emergency    |
| ORR       | Other Resources – Regular      |
| PICs      | Pacific Island Countries       |
| PICTs     | Pacific Island Countries and Territories |
| RESEC     | Research, Evaluation, Studies and Ethics Committee |
| RMI       | Republic of the Marshall Islands |
| RMNCAH    | reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health |
| RR        | Regular Resources              |
| SDG       | Sustainable Development Goal   |
| SOWC      | State of the World’s Children  |
| TC        | Tropical Cyclone               |
UNICEF, in collaboration with Emory University in the United States and the Pacific WASH Coalition, facilitated distance learning on WASH in Schools for government and non-governmental partners. To strengthen cluster coordination, UNICEF provided capacity development on WASH cluster coordination and contingency planning to WASH cluster lead and focal persons at national and subnational levels in Fiji, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. Best practices from the region were captured in WASH Resilience Guidelines and a WASH Cluster Toolkit.

In targeted provinces of Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, primary school teachers were supported through school-based professional development and head teachers were supported through instructional leadership. Activities for early childhood community facilitators strengthened their capacity to deliver, through monthly home visits, parenting support in early childhood related to early learning and school readiness. A subsequent survey of parents revealed that 85 per cent of families read to their children and interacted with them using children’s storybooks.

UNICEF Pacific partnered with the Pacific Community (SPC) and national statistics offices in Kiribati and Palau to provide training on measuring disability for ministry and civil society stakeholders. Government and civil society representatives applied knowledge gained from the training to produce disability reports from their respective 2015 population and housing census data, which included Washington Group Disability Questions.

A poverty analysis workshop jointly organized by UNICEF Pacific, Tonga Department of Statistics, SPC and Bristol University brought together government statisticians from six Pacific countries for basic technical and analytical skills training on poverty analysis that will help them adopt more critical approaches to both unidimensional and multidimensional poverty measurement. Technical support was provided to Tonga and Tuvalu to process data from Household Income and Expenditure Surveys and to institutionalize reporting on child poverty for national poverty reports. Tonga’s national poverty report included data disaggregated by age and multidimensional child poverty measures.

Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy

UNICEF supported the Governments of Kiribati and Vanuatu in a cost and financing of ECCE exercise that was used to engage policymakers. Evidence from the exercise facilitated approval of the Early Childhood Education Bill by Parliament in Kiribati and a government decision in Vanuatu to provide tuition-free education, fund the salaries of ECCE teachers and introduce for the first time a formal ECCE sector.

UNICEF supported a 2017 survey of integrated child health and nutrition in the Republic of the Marshall Islands that identified stunting as a major public health concern affecting 35.3 per cent
of children under the age of 5 years. Survey results provided clear guidance for programming and informed decision-making. Advocacy to address stunting through evidence-based high impact interventions following the release of survey contributed to government actions to mobilize resources for nutrition and early child development.

UNICEF hosted the Pacific ECD Conference in September 2017 that brought together government representatives and other key stakeholders to deliberate on strengthening ECD in the Pacific. They discussed evidence published in The Lancet on brain development and cost-benefits analysis of early intervention. The conference culminated in a Pacifica Call to Action for ECD that establishes a blueprint to advance ECD using a multisectoral approach in all 15 countries.

Based on a 2013 regional analysis and positive results of Three Star Approach to the WASH in Schools pilot in Fiji, UNICEF Pacific successfully lobbied Fiji’s Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts to develop a first-ever WASH in Schools policy. The policy institutionalizes the scale-up of cross-cutting WinS activities across the nation.

UNICEF supported a gap assessment of community engagement and supportive supervision in health care that contributed to improvements in primary health care services in Kiribati and Solomon Islands.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF, World Health Organization and UN Population Fund, through a joint UN programming approach, continued to collaborate with Ministries of Health (MOHs) in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to establish plans and budgets for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) at national and provincial levels, with the aim of improving outcomes through improved coordination, planning, budgeting and streamlined technical assistance. This initiative brought diverse stakeholders together under a single RMNCAH service delivery platform led by MOHs, which has demonstrated increasing capacity to coordinate and capture development partner inputs in national plans and budgets and manage activities through MOH financial and procurement systems.

An innovative partnership with Fiji's University of the South Pacific (USP) resulted in the development of an app that converts children's books into talking books that can be listened to on mobile phones, tablets and computers. The initiative was piloted by families in Guadalcanal Province of Solomon Islands. Collaboration with UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) resulted in the design of an Early Childhood Care and Education Teacher Competency Framework for the Pacific. Following a consultative workshop with Pacific stakeholders, the framework will be presented for endorsement at the next Forum of Education Ministers Meeting.

UNICEF was grant agent of the Global Partnership for Education in Vanuatu and engaged with Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (Gavi) in providing technical support on accelerating the expanded programme on immunization in Solomon Islands.

UNICEF partnered with the Asian Development Bank to introduce new vaccines and with the World Bank to address stunting and ECD. Partnerships with academic institutions, including USP, the International Water Centre, the University of North Carolina, the Environmental Science and Research Institute and the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and University of
Bristol, supported evidence generation to improve understanding about the situation of children for targeted interventions.

**External communication and public advocacy**

Campaigns and communication activities were implemented in line with global and regional priorities on key advocacy issues, including elimination of violence against children, ECD, water, sanitation and hygiene and child survival. High-level advocacy events that were coordinated included COP23 and World Children’s Day. Digital platforms improved content and increased audience reach, with 3,620,964 people reached as of November 2017. Eight million people were reached by COP23.

Global advocacy campaigns included the #flipclimatechange challenge, #earlymomentsmarter, #eatplaylove, #endviolence, and #climatechange. Both traditional media outlets and social media platforms were used to highlight key advocacy messages and reach audiences during these campaigns.

Social media engagement increased in both audience reach and engagement, particularly through Facebook, which had 45,000 followers, and Twitter, which had 13,500 (6 and 23 per cent increases, respectively, from last year).

2017 featured several high-profile advocacy events such as the Pacific early childhood conference, climate celebrations in Fiji, Global Handwashing Day, COP23 in Germany, World Children’s Day and the State of the World’s Children (SOWC) report launch. The COP23 communication plan was integrated into disaster resilience activities in schools. The digital communication plan brought attention to the impact of climate change and children in the Pacific. Two children from Fiji were selected to travel to Germany for COP23 participated in advocacy events in Bonn, including with the Prime Minister of Fiji, German Chancellor, French President and UN Secretary-General. One of them was invited by the President of France to participate at the One Summit in Paris.

Highlights from field offices included: the SOWC launch linked to the Queen’s Baton in Vanuatu; World Children’s Day takeover in Solomon Islands featuring the Prime Minister as chief guest; Kiribati World Children’s Day; and Ambae Island volcano emergency response in Vanuatu.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

UNICEF Pacific’s Multi-Country Office encouraged South-South cooperation and cross-learning across all Pacific Island countries and territories through regional conferences, learning missions, electronic courses, stretch assignments and expert visits.

Building on the success of a 2016 twinning of Fiji and Vanuatu water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster coordination mechanisms, UNICEF trialed community-based drinking water safety and security planning as a systematic, scalable and build-back-better approach to cyclone recovery in Vanuatu and Fiji.

Government, local and international partners who participated in an online course provided as part of UNICEF WASH programming were partnered with WASH in Schools stakeholders from other regions to share lessons and best practices.

UNICEF Pacific shared with the East Asia and Pacific Region Office a one-page summary of the role women had in improving water supply in Vanuatu.
Missions were facilitated that resulted in partners from Kiribati and Tonga traveling to Fiji and Cook Islands to learn about the poverty and child-focused social cash transfer programmes that have been established in the two countries.

A stretch assignment was arranged for the Director of Nauru’s Child Protection Division to serve as senior welfare officer in Fiji’s Eastern Division, to learn about minimum standards for children’s homes in Fiji and engage in face-to-face information sharing about child referral processes and care and protection provisions under domestic laws.

UNICEF facilitated the secondment of an expert Fiji police officer to the Tuvalu Police Service to strengthen the capacity of the Tuvalu Police to handle the investigation of offences involving children who are victims, witnesses and/or offenders and to ensure their special protection in compliance with international principles. However, the activity is postponed to 2018.

The vaccine independence initiative continued to serve as a regional coordination and communication platform for information sharing on vaccine forecasting, cold chain management and waste disposal.

Identification and promotion of innovation

To address bottlenecks in supply chains in Vanuatu that hinder the delivery of essential supplies to health facilities, especially in remote areas due to geographical challenges and poor infrastructure, UNICEF launched an innovative pilot that explored the use of drones for vaccine delivery to remote islands. The first phase of the trial was completed in 2017 and the second and third phases will be carried out in 2018.

Fiji’s National Disaster Management Office and Ministry of Youth and Sports tested U-Report technology in surveys, real-time monitoring and training. In 2018, RapidPro will be trialled in a Solomon Islands school census and school leadership monitoring and U-Report will be piloted in youth engagement activities in Kiribati.

An innovative partnership with Fiji’s University of the South Pacific resulted in the development of an app that converts children’s books into talking books that can be listened to on mobile phones, tablets and computers. Books developed for Solomon Islands were converted into talking books and saved on memory cards that were distributed to families with smart phones and/or tablets in Guadalcanal Province.

Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages

The Pasifika Call to Action for ECD was adopted by the Ministers of Education, Health and Finance from 15 countries, including Papua New Guinea, during the high-level regional conference organized by UNICEF Pacific in September 2017. The Call to Action provides a platform for strengthening multisectoral collaboration on ECD. The ECD conference also generated momentum among PICTs and development partners to foster multisectoral coordination for ECD.

Efforts were made to work with the Ministries of Education to include WASH in Schools and early childhood education centres, and with Ministries of Health in promoting WASH in health care facilities in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati. The WASH Reach for the Stars programme in Fiji ensured access for children with disability in the design of WASH facilities in schools in a partnership with the Pacific Disability Forum and CBM Nossal.
The Solomon Islands Child and Family Welfare Act passed in 2017 afforded opportunities for leveraging resources and improving coordination for child protection. Although the Social Welfare Department was tasked with most of the responsibilities related to implementation, the Act mandates multisectoral coordination in child protection service delivery. UNICEF will provide support to the Government in 2018 in costing a multisectoral plan for implementation.

**Service delivery**

National information systems provide data that is used in analysing service delivery. UNICEF developed partner capacity on data collection, analysis and reporting and introduced innovative digital data gathering techniques.

PICTs endorsed the Healthy Island Monitoring Framework that includes health indicators against which national health management information systems have agreed to report progress quarterly. UNICEF contributed to national role delineation and essential packages of services in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, rationalizing accountability structures and creating benchmarks against which ministries of health measure health service delivery performance.

Health sector assessments directed UNICEF’s support to focus on supportive supervision, thereby strengthening accountability structures for safety, quality and equitable coverage.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) baseline surveys carried out using mobile technology in Vanuatu, Fiji and Solomon Islands informed programme design for improved service delivery.

Community child protection committees in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands referred nearly 700 children to coordinated child protective services. Because quality and demand generation was weak for primary health care services, UNICEF assisted ministries of health in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati in developing communication for development strategies for maternal and child health.

Partner capacities were strengthened for WASH, enabling key partners to use data and information more effectively, identify gaps and formulate policies and strategies. The delivery of training to community leaders, parents and early childhood teachers on supporting families led to improved early stimulation of and learning among children aged 0–5, and 85 per cent of families reported they read to their children. Support to health workers resulted in improved integrated management of acute malnutrition, maternal and infant young child feeding, integrated management of childhood illness, immunization and supply chain management. To ensure continuity of immunization services, the Vaccines Independence Initiative ensured no stock-out of vaccines in 13 PICTs.

**Human rights-based approach to cooperation**

Ten PICTs were on track to meet obligations for reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Three PICTs with outstanding reports (Tonga, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia) made progress in submitting the required State Party reports.

Following submission of the Vanuatu State Party Report in 2016, UNICEF facilitated a second periodic dialogue between the Committee and the Vanuatu Government that reviewed progress of implementation and the Government’s initial report on two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee’s concluding recommendations will guide
efforts to advance commitments for children.

In support of the Committee’s preparations for constructive dialogues with Solomon Islands, Palau and Marshall Islands, UNICEF Pacific attended a pre-sessional dialogue in Geneva. Priority issues and recommendations discussed will inform the Committee’s constructive dialogues with government delegations from the three PICTs scheduled for January 2018.

In response to the Committee’s recommendations, UNICEF supported Cook Islands in developing a first-ever National Children’s Policy that was endorsed in 2017, and the country’s Cabinet approved the creation of the National Coordinating Committee on Children to coordinate and monitor implementation of child rights. Fiji continued targeted annual budgetary allocations for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Tuvalu endorsed in its Education Act removal of corporal punishment.

In partnership with Vanuatu Society for Persons with Disabilities, young children with disabilities were provided with early stimulation, support integrating into mainstream schools and referrals for medical needs and/or assistive devices. UNICEF provided financial support for events highlighting the rights of children and adults with disabilities in Tuvalu on International Day of People with Disabilities.

UNICEF continued to apply a human rights-based approach in WASH programming that was responsive to the needs of children with disabilities and adolescent children, including menstrual hygiene management in school.

**Gender equality**

Gender equality was championed across the UNICEF Pacific-supported programmes. Staff members were equipped to mainstream gender in programming. UNICEF took a systematic approach to awareness-raising, advocacy and development of gender-friendly communication materials and tools, which was particularly evident in Sports for Development activities.

As a result of gender assessment work completed in Vanuatu and Kiribati and ongoing work in Solomon Islands, the issue of gender was more prominent in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities. Menstrual hygiene management (MHM), which is mainstreamed in all WASH in Schools and emergency programmes to promote adolescent health among boys and girls, was buttressed by the formative research on MHM in Fiji and in Kiribati. Gender-based evidence-generation on women’s participation in water committees resulted in a call by the Vanuatu Minister of Lands and Natural Resources for women to make up at least 40 per cent of the membership of registered water committees.

Gender issues were prioritized in child protection programming through the provision of community facilitation packages that promote gender equality in more than 900 communities in Fiji and communities in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Child protection programmes also strengthened legal frameworks for women and girls who were victims of violence to access social services.

A gender-sensitive child development parenting programme was rolled out in Solomon Islands. UNICEF strengthened efforts to generate evidence on why stunting rates were higher among boys than girls.

**Environmental sustainability**
UNICEF Pacific supported climate action activities in 36 Fijian schools and launched a disaster risk resilience school programme in four countries in the region to mark the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Students in the PICTs participated in climate action advocacy during World Children’s Day.

Interdisciplinary research on typhoid in Fiji was conducted in partnership with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and led to further discussions on the emerging concept of planetary health aimed at improving understanding about and addressing the human health implications of accelerating anthropogenic change in the structure and function of Earth’s natural systems.

Community-based drinking water safety and security planning was trialed as a systematic, scalable and build-back-better approach to cyclone recovery in Vanuatu and Fiji. UNICEF Pacific’s water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and education programmes initiated climate change mitigation efforts in Solomon Islands by using solar panels for electrification under the Three Star Approach to WASH in Schools.

Child protection in emergencies training and mobile birth registration activities were carried out in the Marshall Islands on four drought-affected atolls. Information was disseminated on strengthening children’s resilience and coping skills to mitigate the effect of emergencies.

A child-centred risk assessment was undertaken to prioritize support under the new Multi-Country Programme. A review of climate, disaster risk, and WASH policies was undertaken to facilitate the strengthening of resilience of WASH systems and services in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

Support was provided to adopt environmental-friendly technologies to run cold chain systems in remote PICTs that had relied on kerosene or gas for vaccine refrigeration.

The Multi-Country Office invested in a solar panel system in the Kiribati Field Office as a greening initiative, which reduced electricity bills by 70 per cent.

**Effective leadership**

The country management team (CMT) monitored the implementation of priorities stipulated in the annual management plan (AMP) and actions for high risks identified in the enterprise risk profiles, which was updated during the annual programme and management review and planning meeting. Key progress on targets and priorities set for 2017 AMP included the development of a Multi-Country Programme Document (MCPD) 2018–2022 aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan, Sustainable Development Goals and UN Pacific Strategy, which was approved by the UNICEF Executive Board. A Multi-Country Programme Management Plan 2018–2022 was developed with full staff participation that was approved at a UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office Programme Budget Review. UNICEF Pacific mobilized approximately US $49 million (96 per cent of the Other Resources ceiling for the 2013–2017 MCP cycle)/ The UNICEF Pacific Staff Association was developed, with participation from staff, and an action plan was implemented based on the results of the Global Staff Survey, endorsed by the joint consultative committee. A harmonized approach to cash transfers plan was implemented and there was a marked reduction in errors in funding authorization and certificate of expenditure (FACE) forms submitted. As part of greening efforts, the Kiribati Field Office installed solar panels, which yielded a 70 per cent reduction in electricity costs.
Acknowledging the new guidance note on preparedness for emergency response, UNICEF Pacific took steps to fulfill the minimum preparedness actions through the provision of training on emergency preparedness and response to staff based in Suva and field offices in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati.

UNICEF Pacific worked closely with implementing partners to respond to financial audit recommendations in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Standard operating procedures and work processes related to human resources and finance were adapted in response to Global Shared Services Centre improvements.

**Financial resources management**

The country management team tracked progress of the programme and operation management dashboard. The Multi-Country Programme Management Plan took into consideration efficiency and effectiveness based on previous experiences and new dynamics expected under the Multi-Country Programme 2018–2022.

In 2017, US$21.9 million was available to UNICEF Pacific: Regular Resources (RR) totalling US$9.4 million; Other Regular Resources (ORR) totalling US$9.4 million; and Other Resources for Emergency (ORE) totalling US$3.1 million. Overall financial utilization was 96 per cent, including 100 per cent of RR, 95 per cent of ORR and 91 per cent of ORE. In 2017 UNICEF Pacific reduced its use of regular resources to cover operational costs.

All targets under a harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) implementation plan were achieved except the number of spot checks, which were slightly lower than targeted. The country management team and HACT committee monitored progress and addressed issues that emerged from the implementation plan. Training was provided for both partners and staff, including at the field office level. UNICEF Pacific was active on the inter-agency HACT committee and conducted a joint spot check with the UN Development Programme in Samoa.

UNICEF Pacific continued to make progress in clearing up outstanding direct cash transfer (DCTs) but the lack of adequate monitoring and weak capacity of implementing partners (IPs) remained an issue. UNICEF Pacific took the following measures to address outstanding DCTs: the country management team endorsed specific responsibilities within UNICEF Pacific for tracking DCT; letters signed by the Representative were issued to implementing partners who had not liquidated DCTs after three months; regular ongoing training was provided; and there was frequent follow up with partners. During the fourth quarter of 2017, UNICEF Pacific met DCT key performance indicators, with no DCTs outstanding for more than nine months and less than 5 per cent of DCTs outstanding for more than six months.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

As of December 2017, US$48.8 million of the US$50.8 million ceiling (96 per cent) had been mobilized for the UNICEF Pacific Multi-Country Programme 2013–2017. Main funding sources included the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, thematic funds, the European Union (EU) and the UNICEF New Zealand National Committee.

A costed extension to 2019 was approved by Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the UN Joint Programme for Reproductive Maternal Newborn, Adolescent and Child Health in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati of which UNICEF is administrative agency. UNICEF leveraged government funds secured from the EU to address sanitation issues in
Solomon Islands.

Funds utilization was 100 per cent for 12 of 18 grants that expired in 2017 and ranged between 80 per cent and 99 per cent for the others. Only 4 of 51 grants managed in 2017 required donors’ agreement for extensions and all 48 donor reports were submitted by agreed deadlines, with quality assurance in place.

Fundraising for the new programme cycle began on a positive note and efforts were underway to widen the pool of donors beyond those that have traditionally supported UNICEF Pacific. By the end of December 2017, UNICEF Pacific’s funding pipeline of other resources totalled approximately US$21 million against a ceiling of US$67 million for the new programme cycle. Partnerships were strengthened with the Asian Development Bank to introduce new vaccines and with the World Bank to address stunting in the broader context of early childhood development.

All programme outcomes were highlighted in two-page fundraising concept notes that were produced in anticipation of the new country programme. The concept notes, which summarize the key situation of children and how UNICEF Pacific programme areas will address needs, were shared with potential donors and partners as part of fundraising for the 2018–2022 programme cycle.

Evaluation and research

In 2017, the Research, Evaluation Studies and Ethics Committee (RESEC) worked to further strengthen UNICEF Pacific’s research and evaluation functions. The RESEC provided technical support for all activities listed in integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP). Technical support was provided by the monitoring and evaluation function for activities valued under US$30,000. The full RESEC was activated for activities valued more than US$30,000. The reference group, including regional office and RESEC colleagues, was activated for research activities that exceeded US$100,000. The IMEP was developed following careful review by the RESEC of every proposed activity and was presented to the country management team for approval during the first quarter of 2017. The 2017 IMEP included 40 new and rolled-over research activities. The 2017 plan included 26 major research and studies, one evaluation, five programme reviews and eight external publications. Thirteen studies, one evaluation, two programme reviews and four external publications were completed. Two activities from the plan were abandoned because they were no longer considered relevant and the remaining are ongoing and will be rolled over to 2018. Complete independence was respected during evaluation of the Solomon Islands WASH programme. RESEC managed the evaluation and technical support was provided by the UNICEF Regional Office at critical stages of the evaluation. A delay was experienced in finalising the management response to the evaluation, which will be implemented in 2018. UNICEF Pacific also utilized a regional peer review process in the development of other research activities.

Efficiency gains and cost savings

Operational costs in 2017 were contained to 2016 levels despite increases in rental rates in all UNICEF Pacific offices and utilities costs in some countries. This was achieved through regular monitoring of operational costs to rationalize expenditures. No major capital investments were effected in 2017.

UNICEF Pacific reduced costs through three major long-term agreements for Internet, mobile phone and travel, which resulted in discounts from the two travel agents of nearly US$50,000 in
ticket costs. With additional tasks shifted to Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC), UNICEF Pacific workloads for finance colleagues were reorganized and revised, allowing them to devote more time to programme finance tasks such as quality assurance of submissions to GSSC by programme assistants and harmonized approach to cash transfers activities, including spot checks and follow-up on recommendations from financial audits.

Substantial improvement was noted in the processing of payments and direct cash transfers throughout the chain. Tracking tools identified bottlenecks and appropriate responses to those challenges were subsequently devised.

An investment in a solar panel system as a greening initiative in the Kiribati Field Office contributed to a 70 per cent reduction in costs for electricity. UNICEF chaired the UN Operations Management Team, and its participation was instrumental in several initiatives, including preparation of UN common premises in collaboration with respective UN agencies, which should lead to efficiency gains and savings in operational costs.

**Supply management**

Given the Pacific region’s high exposure to natural disasters, UNICEF continued to provide support for emergency preparedness, response and recovery activities related to emergency supplies. In 2017, UNICEF delivered emergency supplies to populations affected by flooding and landslides in Fiji, an earthquake in Solomon Islands, Tropical Cyclone Donna and the Monaro volcano eruption in Vanuatu. Supplies included: school’s tents, schools-in-a-box, early childhood development recreational kits, water, sanitation and hygiene and dignity kits, soap, water containers and tanks, latrines slabs and health-related items. UNICEF procured emergency supplies to replenish prepositioned supplies.

In response to an outbreak in the Republic of Marshall Islands in late January 2017, 3,550 vials of hepatitis B vaccines were procured. Following a request from the Government of Palau for prepositioned emergency supplies, UNICEF Pacific collaborated with UNICEF Philippines to deliver the following supplies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water containers (20 litres)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water purification tablets (NaDCC, 33mg 50/pkt)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand washing soap - 80 gm</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water floc. and disinfectant, powder/Box-240 – (donated by the Philippines office)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tents – 24 sqm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The top 10 supplies and services procured during 2017 were tents, vaccines, vehicles, computers, printing, photocopying machines, Samsung tablets, therapeutic milk and HIV kits.

UNICEF Pacific supported governments in 13 PICTs to purchase vaccines, syringes and safety boxes valued at US$1.8 million under the Vaccine Independence Initiative, including a Gavi co-financing obligation in Solomon Islands. Procurement services were provided to UN Development Programme and the Ministries of Health in Kiribati and Solomon Islands for medical supplies, vaccines, syringes, safety boxes and refrigerators.

A breakdown of the supplies in UNICEF Pacific warehouses follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Emergency (USD)</th>
<th>Programme supplies (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>590,531.16</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>590,531.16</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fiji cold room for vaccines</td>
<td>133,752.89</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>133,752.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>21,545.81</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21,545.81</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>220,388.20</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>220,388.20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>148,433.91</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>148,433.91</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,114,651.97</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>980,899.08</td>
<td>133,752.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of total supplies</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total value of supplies was US$831,213, of which offshore procurement was valued at US$686,346 (83 per cent) and local procurement was US$144,867 (17 per cent).

The total value of supplies and services for 2017 was as follows:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
<td>US$753,731.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations supplies</td>
<td>US$77,481.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional services</td>
<td>US$1,221,292.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventeen long-term agreements were established in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.
Security for staff and premises

The Vanuatu Field Office was relocated early in 2017 after it was discovered that the previous office did not have appropriate anti-seismic features to withstand earthquakes. The Vanuatu Field Office is a United Nations Joint Presence Office (UNJPO) and UNICEF managed common services, including security. Measures were taken in the new office to ensure its compliance with UN minimum operating security standards, including establishing a security/receptionist assistant post.

Given the reliance on informal boat hire for transport between and around islands, UNICEF Pacific provided boat safety training for UNICEF staff in Vanuatu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands field offices. The course, structured around the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Marine Safety Guidelines, provided practical orientation and familiarized staff with small boat operations. UNICEF Pacific procured inflatable life jackets for UNICEF staff, which are more convenient and likely to be worn in the field. Personal location beacons were procured to augment InReach devices.

In Vanuatu, a customized first aid training was delivered for staff by the Vanuatu Red Cross on general first aid practices and use of the automated external defibrillator equipment within the UNJPO. Given the PICTs are very vulnerable to natural disasters, UNICEF Pacific provided additional satellite phones to enable communication by wardens in the event they were required in an emergency.

Since the office in Fiji is in a building that was not cleared during seismic assessments in 2016, efforts were undertaken in 2017 to identify an alternative location for the office. Unfortunately an appropriate new building has not yet been identified, given the tight office rental market.

In collaboration with UNDSS, two women’s personal safety training courses were carried out for female staff in Fiji to learn self-defence during an attack/threat and avoidance and awareness strategies.

Human resources

In 2017, consultations between management, human resources colleagues from regional office, staff members and the staff association were held in preparation for the MCPMP. The planning process resulted in the abolishment of some staff positions. Mitigation measures were put into place to support all affected staff. The MCPMP was approved at a UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office Programme Budget Review in July.

UNICEF Pacific also developed a recruitment strategy to fill 33 anticipated new positions. Recruitment processes were launched for 23 of the positions and nine were completed. The average recruitment time was reduced by 15 days in 2017.

Marked improvements were achieved in the speed of recruitment of international staff (from 75 days to 51 days) and of national staff (from 55 days to 37 days) with the use of new tools, reforms, improved planning processes, and availability and commitment of members of recruitment panels. Performance assessments were completed by April 2017. Staff leave was monitored regularly and to promote work-life balance, staff were reminded monthly of their outstanding leave days. This resulted in staff taking leave days in a more evenly distributed pattern.
Training sessions were provided and information was shared with staff on changes to human resources processes. The number of consultants recruited reached 65 in 2017, with no major delays thanks to improved planning from section teams and the human resources unit. The human resources development team met five times and achieved 60 per cent of its planned activities. Some activities, such as peer support training, remained on hold pending DHR review of the effectiveness this support structure.

### Effective use of information and communication technology

Several information and communication technology (ICT) challenges persisted, including high costs of bandwidth. Despite this challenge, UNICEF Pacific continued to use cloud-based applications and Skype for Business for online communication needs. Improvements were noted in the performance quality of the applications. Staff increased their usage of Microsoft OneDrive for Business, which was useful in sharing files with colleagues, especially documents that were too large to share by email.

Online collaboration tools were used successfully during a video conference that was convened to carry out a Convention on the Rights of the Child dialogue between members of Vanuatu country delegation in Fiji and the CRC Committee in Geneva. Three other PICTs have approached UNICEF to facilitate similar video conferences for their respective CRC dialogues. This contributed to huge cost and time savings for the delegations.

UNICEF chaired the Joint UN ICT Working Group, which was comprised of ICT officers from UN agencies. The Working Group consolidated ICT services and negotiated costs with service providers on behalf of all UN agencies, which has resulted in joint UN Internet and mobile service delivery.

Several initiatives were undertaken under the business operating system initiative, including installation of a photovoltaic solution for the UNICEF Kiribati Field Office, which has yielded impressive results. UNICEF Pacific increased awareness of programme initiatives through the use of social media. Bandwidth for the Kiribati and Solomon Islands Field Offices was increased to improve connectivity, communication among colleagues and access to online resources.

### Programme Components from RAM

#### ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

**OUTCOME 1 HIV&AIDS PCR 6 IR6.1:** By 2017, at least six PICs have PPTCT, HIV Testing & Counselling and ART policies/guidelines and services in line with the international and global recommendations.

**Analytical statement of progress**

More than US$1.5 million worth of vaccines and immunization devices financed by national budgets were supplied to 13 of 14 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) through UNICEF’s Vaccine Independence Initiative (VII). The VII was initiated by UNICEF in 1991 to provide a mechanism to ensure a systematic, sustainable vaccine supply for countries that can afford to finance their own needs but may require certain support services. No national level vaccine stock-outs were reported in 2017. PICTs have had the option since 2016 of securing their cold chain equipment needs through the VII. This, coupled with technical and financial assistance provided by UNICEF in immunization system strengthening to the three target countries of Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, resulted in the vaccination of 55,460
children across the Pacific. This translates to a Pacific-wide coverage rate of 88 per cent for the third dose of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccine (DPT3), indicating an upward trend compared with 2016. Eight of 14 PICTs reached the DPT 3 target of 90 per cent of children vaccinated.

No outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases lasting more than six months were reported in 13 of the 14 PICTs collaborating with UNICEF on immunization. Outbreaks of hepatitis A and mumps were reported in the Marshall Islands (RMI). UNICEF provided vaccines and immunization devices in response and coordinated with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Rotavirus vaccine was introduced in Kiribati with funding from the Australia National Committee for UNICEF through an integrated health and water, sanitation and hygiene approach. Preliminary results from an impact analysis indicated a significant reduction in acute gastroenteritis among children under the age of 5 years since the vaccine was introduced. The success of this initiative led to the development of a partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to introduce vaccines for rotavirus, pneumococcal conjugate, and human papilloma virus in Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu. A partnership with Rotary Clubs of Australia and New Zealand in those four countries and five additional PICTs (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Nauru, Tokelau) also supported introduction of the new vaccines. The design phase of a New Vaccine Introduction Project was completed in 2017.

Evidence on stunting in Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands increased the number of PICTs experiencing high rates of stunting to six. UNICEF’s new Multi-Country Programme makes reducing stunting a high priority. (No evidence on stunting is available in five PICTs.)

Only Kiribati tracks vitamin A supplementation in its health management information system (HMIS). UNICEF has advocated for vitamin A coverage to be an integral component of data reporting and succeeded in convincing Solomon Islands to report on vitamin A supplementation commencing in 2018. UNICEF procured vitamin A for five PICTs (Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, RMI, and Federated States of Micronesia), in an amount sufficient to fully supplement 21,000 children aged 6–59 months.

UNICEF initiated the collation of existing maternal, neonatal, child health and nutrition policies and strategies in all 14 PICTs. Once compiled, it is anticipated that the information will help identify gaps in these policies and strategies and will help to guide the alignment of policies and strategies to evidence-based global best practices.

UNICEF, World Health Organization and UN Population Fund, through a joint UN programming approach, collaborated with ministries of health (MOH) in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to establish plans and budgets for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) at national and provincial levels with the aim of improving RMNCAH outcomes through improved coordination, planning, budgeting and streamlined technical assistance. This initiative brought diverse stakeholders together under a single RMNCAH service delivery platform led by MOHs. The establishment of positions in the MOHs to supervise the maternal and child health service delivery component demonstrates the commitment of government partners to the approach. RMNCAH plans and budgets were informed by evidence. Assessments carried out in 2017 noted that the three MOHs demonstrated increasing capacity to coordinate and capture development partner inputs in national plans and budgets and manage activities through MOH financial and procurement systems. Cohesive MOH annual operational plans were used (rather than disparate agency workplans) to guide the
implementation of activities supported by development partners. In 2017, UN Joint Programme for RMNCAH partners finalized several foundational policies, strategies and guidelines that will be implemented in 2018.

The adoption by all PICTs of a Health Island Monitoring Framework at the Health Ministers Meeting in Cook Islands in August 2017 formed the policy foundation for UNICEF’s success in lobbying for changes in HMIS tools that allow for expansion of up-to-date RMNCAH data that can be reported on and collected.

UNICEF provided technical guidance to Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati to review and update national supportive supervision and community health strategies to strengthen quality service delivery.

A significant bottleneck prevented further distribution of essential medicine from the central levels to service delivery levels. Issues persisted related to stock-out, oversupply and expiration of drugs. UNICEF’s new Multi-Country Programme will emphasize a health system strengthening approach that will include strengthening supply chain management.

**OUTPUT 1 H&S PCR 1 IR 1.1 Multi-Country T2-T3: Sustained maintenance of polio-free status and enhanced progress towards the achievement of the global twin goals of measles elimination and hepatitis B control.**

**IR: 1.1:** By the end of 2017, sustained maintenance of high coverage for immunisation and other child survival interventions.

**Analytical statement of progress**

This section refers to 11 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). Details for Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu can be found in sections that correspond to outputs for those countries. Polio-free status in 11 PICTs was maintained, with an average of 87 per cent coverage for the third dose of polio vaccine and 88 per cent coverage for the third dose of pentavalent vaccine (containing diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, Haemophilus influenza type b, and hepatitis B). There was no measles outbreak in 2017, with an average first dose coverage of 86 per cent. Hepatitis B birth dose coverage was 85 per cent.

There was no stock-out of pentavalent vaccine in 2017 at the national levels, which ensured supplies were available, thereby achieving an essential first step in guaranteeing uninterrupted immunization services. Approximately, 29,000 of 33,400 children under the age of 1 year were vaccinated with three doses of pentavalent vaccine. UNICEF’s Vaccine Independence Initiative (VII) monitored supply security through regular country-based stock-take reports. Cold chain coverage remained incomplete in PICTs. On-the-job training during annual forecasting for vaccines and cold chain equipment focused on increasing the capacity of national expanded programme on immunization (EPI) managers to carry out quantitative forecasting, stock and cold chain management and temperature monitoring, resulting in observable improvements in quality and timeliness of country forecasts. All countries participating in VII submitted their respective annual forecasting tools by the agreed upon timetables.

Twenty-five officials including immunization officers and health workers from Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands were trained on immunization supply chain management, effective vaccine management, cold chain maintenance, the Reaching Every District strategy and supportive supervision. Short refresher training courses were provided to Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu national EPI officials (one in each country).
In 2017, UNICEF commissioned and installed 15 solar power packs for selected unelectrified health facilities to provide power for primary health care services in the hard-to-reach areas in Fiji where solar direct drive (SDD) refrigerators had been installed in 2016. The installation of solar panels was aligned with disaster risk resilience principles and fortified structures for solar panels were designed to resist high cyclonic winds and rain. The installation of SDD cold chain refrigerators and electrification package spurred Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services to adopt more sustainable, environmentally-friendly and disaster resilient technology in the maintenance their national immunization cold chain.

During supplementary immunization activities that were carried out to meet measles elimination goals, an estimated 170,000 children aged 1–10 years in Fiji and 48,000 children aged 1–12 years in Samoa were vaccinated against measles and rubella. Initial estimates in Fiji indicated a coverage rate of 95.7 per cent. UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) provided technical guidance in the planning of and financial contributions to nationwide campaigns.

Very few PICTs had approved EPI policies. UNICEF and WHO advocated for the acceleration of processes to approve EPI policies.

OUTPUT 2 H&S PCR 1 IR 1.1 KIRIBATI: Sustained maintenance of polio-free status and enhanced progress towards the achievement of the global twin goals of measles elimination and hepatitis B control in Kiribati.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, Kiribati Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) maintained measles-free status, with coverage of first dose of measles-rubella (MR1) reported at 75 per cent from January to September (compared with 69 per cent in 2016). There has not been a measles outbreak in Kiribati for at least a decade. Through the Reaching Every District strategy, with UNICEF’s technical and financial assistance, the MHMS reached 361 more children in 2017 than in 2016, increasing the coverage of third dose of pentavalent vaccine (from January to September) to 64.7 per cent (compared with 54.5 per cent in 2016). Hepatitis B birth dose coverage in 2017 (January–September) was reported at 64.7 per cent compared with 54.5 per cent in 2016. UNICEF provided technical assistance and procurement services for vaccines and immunization devices through the Vaccine Independence Initiative, resulting in no reports of vaccine stock-out.

The MHMS introduced a Reach Every Child strategic approach that provided microplanning and supportive supervision to 47 per cent of health clinics in nine low performing islands. Health staff worked in a more integrated manner in delivering services related to water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition. Nurses created a list of non-attendees at vaccination sessions and conducted home visits to improve coverage. The quality and accuracy of data reported through the MHMS monthly reporting system (MS1) improved per spot comparisons of register records and MS1. The nine initial visits and five follow-up visits to nine outer islands made by the MHMS national integrated programme team, accompanied by UNICEF, strengthened relationships and communication with Island Councils, boosting their role in reducing the burden of diseases.

Vaccine security was guaranteed in 2017 through several planning, capacity-building, and cold chain maintenance interventions. Thirty-four medical assistants from 22 of 24 islands were trained on immunization supply chain management and applied basic measures to maintain cold chain systems on their islands. To maximize MHMS resources for children, a tool was
introduced to monitor vaccine wastage rates, which was an important first step in establishing measures for improved vaccine security at the health centre level.

UNICEF collaborated with the MHMS, Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the World Bank and the World Health Organization to examine the effects of Kiribati’s transition away from Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance. The results of this collaborative analysis will inform domestic models for financing the EPI programme and the introduction of new vaccines.

Preliminary results from a rotavirus vaccine impact assessment suggested promising gains from a new MHMS integrated approach to introducing vaccines that was adopted with UNICEF’s assistance.

Challenges persisted relating to improving immunization coverage and eliminating vaccine-preventable diseases in the context of GAVI transition related to the high cost of reaching children on scattered hard-to-reach islands. UNICEF advocated for increased government and donor contributions to the immunization programme.

**OUTPUT 3** H&S IR1.3: Sol - EPI Plus maintenance of polio-free status and enhanced progress towards the achievement of the global twin goals of measles elimination and hepatitis B control in Solomon Islands.

**Analytical statement of progress**
Solomon Islands maintained its polio-free status. Uninterrupted supplies of vaccines and immunization devices were maintained through the Vaccine Independence Initiative (VII) mechanism. There was a 5 to 10 per cent increase in vaccination coverage for various antigens, with the rate of three doses of oral poliomyelitis and pneumococcal conjugate vaccination at 89 per cent. Coverage of third dose of pentavalent vaccine containing diphtheria /pertussis/ tetanus vaccine was 94 per cent for children under the age of 1 year, exceeding the national target of 90 per cent by 2017. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) completed the first step in scaling up the use of hepatitis B vaccine birth dose outside the cold chain (OCC) by drafting standard operating procedures with financial and technical assistance from UNICEF. This followed a 2016 study in the Provinces of Malaita, Makira and Western that found a two- to three-fold increase in coverage of hepatitis birth dose OCC.

To improve immunization coverage and vaccine security, health workers for more than 100 health facilities in Guadalcanal Western and Isabel Provinces developed microplans as part of a Reaching Every District strategy, with capacity-building provided on proper vaccine management to safeguard vaccine potency. Microplanning identified gaps in immunization coverage, enabling services to be delivered to children who are unable to access static health facilities.

To reach more children with life-saving vaccines, funds were mobilized from the GAVI vaccine alliance for second dose of measles-rubella vaccine and scale-up of nationwide human papilloma virus and rotavirus vaccination. Working with the Government and other stakeholders, UNICEF’s technical assistance in proposal development contributed to securing US$3.15 million for health system strengthening and US$1.87 million for a cold chain equipment optimization platform that will ensure all clinics in the country are equipped with vaccine storage fridges (100 per cent cold chain coverage).
With UNICEF’s technical guidance the MHMS finalized a costed cold chain maintenance plan that outlines steps to improve vaccine security and coverage. UNICEF also provided support for cold chain maintenance and repair. A GAVI transition plan for Solomon Islands was developed by the MHMS that details the steps needed for the country to sustain immunization services beyond GAVI graduation, which is slated for 2021. UNICEF provided critical inputs to the plan on projected vaccine costs, the VII, and the need to conduct a vaccine wastage assessment.

A gap analysis on community health and supportive supervision showed weakness in both supportive supervision and community engagement by the primary health care (PHC) system. Findings from the gap analysis informed an integrated supportive supervision checklist and draft guidelines that aims to strengthen programme oversight and quality assurance. UNICEF provided valuable inputs into an initial damage assessment and analysis that resulted in a more effective response to the Tinakula Volcano emergency.

**OUTPUT 4 H&S IR1.1: Van - EPI Plus**

**Analytical statement of progress**
No vaccine stock-outs were reported in 2017 at the national level. This was achieved through timely vaccine forecasting and good stock managements by the Ministry of Health (MOH) with technical guidance provided from UNICEF. Pentavalent third dose (containing diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, and hepatitis B) vaccine coverage was reported at 85.3 per cent (5,544 of children under the age of 5 years), falling just short of the 90 per cent coverage target. The positive routine immunization coverage result was largely due to the MOH’s implementation of the Reaching Every District (RED) strategy. With UNICEF’s technical and financial inputs, two rounds of outreach in six provinces and supportive supervision occurred, resulting in improved data management.

One hundred per cent of reports were completed at the national EPI office, with UNICEF providing support related to coaching, mentoring and placement of an EPI data officer at the EPI unit. UNICEF also assisted the MOH in monitoring immunization coverage using geographic information system software.

EPI supportive supervision guidelines and tools were adopted by the MOH at national and provincial levels. Training was delivered to nine MOH EPI staff (national and provincial) on the guidelines, vaccine management, and mobile phone reporting. The use of mobile phones for supportive supervision increased the quality of and accountability for supervision. Immunization officers and health workers were trained on immunization supply chain management, effective vaccine management, cold chain maintenance, the RED strategy and supportive supervision.

Supportive supervision visits from provincial EPI supervisors were carried out to 66 of 125 health facilities (52.8 per cent) during the first half of 2017. The supervision visits focused on management of cold chain equipment and vaccines, injection safety, and planning and monitoring of EPI programmes. During the visits, 59 health facilities (89 per cent) were found to have working cold chain equipment; 41 (76 per cent) monitored refrigerator temperature regularly; 64 (97 per cent) applied safety injection practices, and microplans were available at 46 (70 per cent) of health facilities. Stock-out was observed in 17 health facilities (29 per cent). Supervisors intervened with corrective actions and the provision of on-the-job training where necessary.

Supply chain challenges such as geographic remoteness and weak infrastructure constrained
efforts to reach health facilities, especially in the remote areas. To address this, UNICEF launched an innovative pilot of drone deliveries of vaccines to remote islands. The second and third phases of the pilot are expected to be carried out in 2018.

**OUTPUT 5 H&S PCR 1 IR 1.2 MultiCountry T2/T3: Strengthened national capacity to deliver quality and timely Newborn, maternal and Nutrition interventions at health facility and community levels.**

**Analytical statement of progress**

Close to 9,900 children aged 6–59 months in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Federated States of Micronesia benefited from twice yearly supplies of high dose vitamin A supplementation. A lack of key nutritional indicators, including vitamin A, in the national health information systems of all PICTs except Kiribati was a constraint because information about the numbers of children who received vitamin A supplementation was not regularly reported.

The RMI Integrated Child Health and Nutrition Survey 2017, conducted by the Ministry of Health and Human Services in collaboration with the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office with financial and technical guidance from UNICEF, identified stunting among children under the age of 5 years as a public health concern. The survey results provided clear guidance on the focus of programming and enabled informed decision-making by planners, policymakers and programme implementers. Advocacy to address stunting through evidence-based high impact interventions following the release of survey results contributed to government actions to mobilize resources for nutrition and early child development. The Government requested support from UNICEF and the World Bank in addressing high rates of stunting issues in the broader context of early childhood development. A joint mission of the two agencies will take place early in 2018 to identify the scope of support.

UNICEF provided technical guidance to RMI to review and identify gaps in maternal and child health and nutrition policies. As a result of the gap identification exercise, 101 health staff in hospitals and health centres in Majuro Atoll and Ebeye Island were trained on optimal infant and young child feeding practices. Testing indicated a 26 per cent improvement in the knowledge of 10 national-level trainers and nearly 23 per cent improvement in the knowledge of 91 health workers to counsel caregivers on appropriate maternal and child feeding practices.

Fiji’s Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) reviewed and updated national guidelines on the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition in line with the latest World Health Organization recommendations. MHMS scaled up the management of severe acute malnutrition in four subdivisions and reviewed and updated data collection and reporting forms and registers to improve reporting of acute malnutrition. Once collected, this information will inform MHMS on actions that should be taken to improve the quality of care, treatment and management of severely malnourished children and reduce mortality rates.

UNICEF initiated collation of maternal, neonatal, child health and nutrition policies and strategies in 14 PICTs. This process will identify policy gaps related to newborn, infant and maternal health and the nutrition and health of children under the age of 5 years. This is the first step in strengthening the policy and legislative environment and providing recommendations to help PICTs align with evidence-based global best practices.
OUTPUT 6 H&S PCR 1 IR 1.2 KIRIBATI: Strengthened national capacity to deliver quality and timely Newborn, maternal and Nutrition interventions at health facility and community levels in Kiribati.

Analytical statement of progress
Through its integrated child health activities, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) provided outreach services to children on nine low performing islands. Services included the provision of vitamin A, which contributed to a 67 per cent coverage rate (two doses). During outreach sessions, the MHMS delivered training that improved the knowledge of six district principal nursing officers, 30 medical assistants, 40 public health nurses, 64 nurse aids and 120 volunteers. Testing post-training showed improved knowledge on integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) including treatment of diarrhoea with oral rehydrating salts, zinc and nutrition; infant and young child feeding (IYCF); and use of anthropometric measures to determine the nutrition status of children.

As a result of outreach services and improved knowledge, 2,136 children under the age of 5 years (80 per cent of children under the age of 5 on six islands) were examined physically and anthropometrically and treated when necessary. Awareness among parents of the children treated was raised about the importance of immunization, breastfeeding and proper IYCF, and, for the first time, island councils from six islands included child health in their respective island council plans.

Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) guidelines on the IMCI, job aids, a combined register and separate under-five health cards for boys and girls were finalized. Putting these tools in place was a critical first step in improving the quality of services provided to mothers and children.

The MHMS, with guidance and supply support from UNICEF, piloted micronutrient powder distribution on the two low performing islands of South Tarawa and Beru. The pilot sites were selected based on high under-five malnutrition and anaemia rates first identified during integrated visits and reported through monthly MS1 reporting form. The pilot was completed over two months, involving 503 children under the age of 5 years. Results showed increases in appetite, weight gains of 0.5 to 1.0 kg in one month of 65 per cent of participating children, less sick times and an improved diet that included vegetables and fruits at least once a day compared with a diet strictly of rice and fish.

With UNICEF’s guidance and funding assistance, the MHMS assessed the BFHI status of four hospitals and recommended steps to improve on or maintain their status. High staff turnover creates a need for frequent capacity updates. Monitoring and supervision is weak within the MHMS system. The quality of data is an issue that requires frequent and consistent feedback to improve. Community engagement efforts can be expensive due to the expectation that participants be remunerated for community development activities, including health. Funding delays at all levels are a frequent challenge.

OUTPUT 7 H&S PCR 1 IR 1.2 SOLOMON: Strengthened national capacity to deliver quality and timely Newborn, maternal and Nutrition interventions at health facility and community levels in Solomon Islands.

Analytical statement of progress
With support from the Nutrition Technical Working Group, of which UNICEF was a member, MHMS drafted a policy guideline on integrated management of acute malnutrition. Training was provided for 34 health workers at the National Referral Hospital. According to pre- and post-training test results, understanding improved from 46 per cent to 73 per cent.

UNICEF, in partnership with University of Melbourne, provided technical guidance to strengthen the early essential newborn health component of Reproductive and Child Health and Nutrition Action Plans for 2016–2020. The plans are designed to improve timely and quality antenatal and newborn care. The gaps identified in a newborn situational analysis included the absence of a multi-year newborn plan and lack of availability at health facilities of essential newborn supplies. Action points from the newborn assessment will be prioritized in a 2018.

Internal assessments of a Mother Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative carried out in six hospitals in four provinces indicated critical gaps in awareness of the ‘Ten Steps of Breastfeeding’, lack of written breastfeeding policy and limited knowledge due to staff turnover. UNICEF recommendations to address the identified gaps included capacity-building of health workers. The assessment found that 145 of 352 health facilities (41 per cent) provided neonatal services covering 10 EENC standards.

UNICEF provided MHMS with essential nutritional supplies, including therapeutic foods, ReSoMal, vitamin A, albendazole, oral rehydration salts, antibiotics and anthropometric equipment to reach approximately 2,621 children under the age of 5 years with vitamin A. Fifty seven severely malnourished children benefited from UNICEF-supplied ready-to-use therapeutic food.

UNICEF successfully advocated for inclusion of a core set of nutrition indicators, including vitamin A and deworming data, into the DHIS2 reporting platform. (41 per cent) Data will be available starting in 2018.

As part of a UNICEF partnership with Melbourne University, the 2009 edition of the National Paediatric Standard Treatment Manual was revised and 2,000 copies were printed and distributed with UNICEF financial support. An emergency paediatric algorithm was operationalized, making the management of childhood emergencies more efficient and improving life-saving assistance.

Maternal child health and nutrition interventions including awareness-raising sessions, identification and management of malnourished children and referrals for immunization services were implemented in 11 remote islands of Temotu Province as part of the UNICEF partnership with World Vision International. The capacity of 22 village health volunteers (VHVs) to promote infant and young child feeding was strengthened through refresher training and 21 of 22 volunteers. The village health volunteers subsequently conducted community nutrition promotion activities, including home visits to counsel caregivers of malnourished children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. The efforts developed the capacity of the volunteers, village health communities and health workers in health clinics, as observed during monitoring visits, and helped achieve sustainable behavioural change.

Solomon Islands is susceptible to frequent disasters including cyclones and drought. Disaster preparedness was strengthened with UNICEF’s prepositioning of emergency supplies and signing of a contingency partnership agreement with World Vision to be activated during disaster response.
OUTPUT 8 H&S PCR 1 IR 1.2 VANUATU: Strengthened national capacity to deliver quality and timely Newborn, maternal and Nutrition interventions at health facility and community levels in Vanuatu.

Analytical statement of progress
The Ministry of Health approved national maternal and newborn health care guidelines that were developed with technical inputs from UNICEF Pacifica and WHO and UNFPA as part of the UN Joint Programme for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) partners WHO and UN Population Fund. The guidelines for health workers included antenatal care, intrapartum care, Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC), Early Essential Newborn Care (EENC), neonatal resuscitation, prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV and maternal and infant nutrition. Capacity-building activities were provided for health workers and management to improve service quality related to EMONC and EENC and 20 professionals were trained as trainers on EMONC/EENC practices. They in turn trained 45 provincial frontline health staff from two provinces.

The 2017–2022 Health Sector Strategy was finalized, re-emphasising mother and child health as government priorities to be addressed through the operationalization of a comprehensive RMNCAH strategy that was finalized in 2017. It is anticipated that implementation of this strategy will be constrained by shortages in health care human resources.

A costed communication strategy for RMNCAH with a focus on the first 1,000 critical days was approved by MOH for implementation in 2018. The strategy provides detailed guidance to the MOH on how to improve positive individual and family behaviours related to maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition. The implementation of these guidelines is anticipated to be constrained due to shortages in MOH funds.

The MOH also approved comprehensive maternal, infant and young child feeding and integrated management of acute malnutrition guidelines that provide clear procedures for health workers on the delivery of nutritional services. Forty national and provincial staff members were trained as trainers on the new guidelines, who in turn trained 45 frontline staff on putting the guidelines into practice at the service delivery level.

UNICEF and its UNJP for RMNCHA partners worked with the MOH to institutionalize bottom-up, decentralized planning and budgeting that included provincial MOH staff and community health committees and aligned with the national health planning cycle. This approach created opportunities for provincial planners to include their programme priorities in the national health business plan. It is anticipated that resource allocation for these priorities will be constrained.

A recent Public Service Commission decision to adhere to mandatory retirement age rules is expected to further burden an already understaffed health care system at all levels. An estimated 144 MOH staff members are 55 years of age or older, 60 per cent of whom are frontline nurses/midwives, all scheduled to have left their jobs by end of year. Shortages in human resources are expected to impede efforts to achieve MOH maternal and child health targets and create urgency among government, UNICEF and other development partners to find innovative solutions to the health sector human resources crisis.

Another significant constraint was the fact that key nutrition indicators, including vitamin A, were not included in the national health information system.
UNICEF advocated for improved forecasting, budgeting and procurement of nutrition supplies such as vitamin A and deworming tablets in national budgets.

**OUTCOME 2** H&S PCR 2: Children and families benefit from equitable and sustainable access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene within communities that are increasingly resilient to the impact of climate change and natural disasters.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Approximately half of the population in the Pacific region used improved drinking water sources and one-third used improved sanitation facilities. While efforts continued in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), most PICTs were unable to keep pace with the WASH needs of growing populations.

Given the need to strengthen the WASH enabling environment for improved access, technical assistance was provided to develop and implement WASH sector policies in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. A policy review of climate, disaster risk, and WASH policies was undertaken in these countries to strengthen the resilience of WASH systems and services. Key positions were created within governments and country offices to strengthen sector coordination and linkages between WASH initiatives and government plans.

WASH in Schools (WinS) programmes were strengthened in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu with financial support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), through the New Zealand National Committee. Training was delivered to teachers and hygiene promotion activities such as handwashing and menstrual hygiene management were carried out. Minimum standards were developed and WASH facilities were constructed. These efforts were supported through government-led calls to action in these three countries and were implemented through an approach to strengthen hygiene practices in schools and provide safe access to water and sanitation and ensure that schools met essential criteria for providing healthy environments for children. Private sector engagements with the Starwood/Marriott and Colgate Palmolive companies supported WinS activities in partnership with the Australia National Committee. The WinS Reach for the Stars programme in Fiji advanced equity in WinS programming through partnerships with the Pacific Disability Forum, CBM Nossal and Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA) that will benefit an estimated 453 schools and strengthen WinS capacity within the MEHA.

Sanitation remained an issue of significant importance in Kiribati and Solomon Islands, which have high rates of open defecation, diarrhoea and stunting. Community-based sanitation approaches were introduced in these countries through community-led total sanitation initiatives that while much-needed behavioural change was fostered through participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation methods. UNICEF leveraged government resources secured from the European Union to address open defecation in 200 villages in Malaita province. The drinking water safety and security planning (DWSSP) approach in Fiji, and Vanuatu incorporated sanitation surveys to identify sanitation options best suited for communities and ensure the integration of water and sanitation risks in the plan.

To strengthen informed decision-making, technical support was provided in partnership with the University of North Carolina to Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in carrying out baseline surveys on rural WASH and WinS, utilizing innovative mobile phone data collection platforms such as Akvaflow and completing data analysis. Support was provided to government efforts to strengthen sector coordination through the formulation and review of policies and legislation,
which, in turn, bolstered planning processes and the determination of subsequent steps. Baseline study results in Vanuatu suggested a growing recognition of the need to address gender in the WASH sector, including engaging women in water resources management. The Water Resource Management Act was revised to provide for a minimum of 40 per cent women’s representation on water committees, based on UNICEF baseline analysis.

The evidence base for WASH interventions was strengthened through collaborations with international and regional science and research institutes, including the University of the South Pacific, the International Water Centre, the University of North Carolina, the Environmental Science and Research Institute, and the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute.

Since PICTs face increased exposure to natural hazards and climatic extremes, the integration of climate and disaster risk into service delivery programmes for children is required. As the regional WASH lead in emergencies, UNICEF provided direct support to Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati to strengthen cluster coordination and information management. Continued recovery support was provided to the Governments of Fiji and Vanuatu in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclones Winston and Pam to ensure children and women had protected and reliable access to sufficient and safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, reaching a total of 89,716 beneficiaries.

Community-based DWSSP was trialed as a systematic, scalable and build-back-better approach to cyclone recovery programmes in Vanuatu and Fiji. UNICEF provided support to government in the design of capital and technical assistance programmes that enabled communities, schools and health care facilities to assess and manage risks to their own water and sanitation systems, improve overall preparedness and facilitate the building of resilient communities at scale. The WinS approach was trialed and redesigned for emergencies in Fiji during the Tropical Cyclone Winston response, which led to the scaling of WinS in Fiji through the Reach for the Stars programme, with support from Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Lessons learned and best practices were considered in the development of knowledge products on WASH resilience, which were shared through the Pacific WASH Coalition and Cluster, WASH resilience guidelines and a WASH Cluster Coordination Handbook were being developed.

Output 1

Output 2.7: Multi Country - WASH Communities, schools and health centers use improved water and sanitation facilities with a focus on outer islands, rural and peri-urban villages

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF supported efforts to scale up the WASH in Schools (WinS) programme in Fiji following the completion of a successful pilot in 15 schools as well as the incorporation of WinS into an emergency framework to help schools return to normalcy during emergencies. Support was provided to 67 schools during the Tropical Cyclone Winston response and recovery effort and additional funding increased the number of school on Fiji’s main island to 453. Work was ongoing to strengthen the Government’s enabling environment through formulation of a draft WASH in Schools policy to support the implementation and monitoring of WASH activities at all levels.

A baseline survey of WASH in health care facilities in Fiji was 93 per cent complete. The aim of the survey is to support the Government in strengthening supply, demand, quality and
monitoring of WASH at all levels of health care service delivery. Data also was collected for a rural WASH baseline survey that will provide a snapshot of status of WASH in Solomon Islands. Survey data revealed gaps in and low access to WASH services in health care facilities. A pilot WASH in health care facilities project was underway on the outer islands and in the capital city of Kiribati using modified WinS criteria for health care facilities that were approved by the Government. The pilot will inform the development by the Government of Kiribati, with support from UNICEF, of a WASH in health care facilities policy that aims to ensure WASH services are provided sustainably, especially in facilities on outer islands.

UNICEF bolstered support to the Government of Solomon Islands in delivering community sanitation through community-led total sanitation initiatives and introduced WinS activities to Guadalcanal Province. The WASH enabling environment was strengthened at all levels of the education sector and collaborations with school management teams, communities and children, increased access to WASH and positive behavioural change. Vanuatu commenced implementation of a WinS project known as VanWinS. A Kiribati WinS project is expected to be completed early in 2018.

Work began in the Federated States of Micronesia on identifying the baseline information and networks required to carry out a successful WinS programme. Concepts were introduced related to the Three Star Approach for WinS and key bottlenecks were identified at a workshop that was held with key government and non-government stakeholders.

OUTPUT 2 Output 2.1 By 2017, communities, schools and health centers use improved water and sanitation facilities with a focus on outer islands, rural and peri-urban villages in Kiribati

**Analytical statement of progress**

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities increased and hygiene practices improved in Kiribati due to collaborations between UNICEF and the Ministries of Education (MOE); Health and Medical Services (MHMS); and Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (formally known as Public Works and Utilities).

Results are linked to efforts to create an enabling environment that sustains WASH, including policy development and re-engaging committees to develop standards, monitor WASH activities and respond to emergencies. The MHMS approved and launched a policy for WASH in health care facilities that will result in improvements to and/or construction of water and sanitation facilities in all Kiribati’s clinics as well as improved hygiene practices. With funding from New Zealand, the Kiribati WinS programme (KWIS) benefited 4,562 students (2,360 boys and 2,425 girls) in 32 schools on four islands and ensured that 100 per cent of targeted schools had developed school improvement plans, which include provisions for cleaning and maintaining toilets, water supply sources and school environments (through recycling activities). The WinS programme increased access to safe drinking water sources and adequate toilets and improved hygiene practices. WASH committees were functional in all schools, ensuring facilities received the regular maintenance required to ensure their sustainability. Hygiene behaviour linked to menstruation has not improved as expected. UNICEF commenced an assessment of menstrual hygiene management in some schools.

To increase the take-up of improved hygiene behaviour, UNICEF and the Institute of Environmental Science and Research developed a menu of options for the Pacific Community (SPC) to use to engage communities in making risk-informed decisions about sanitation. To sustain behavioural change at the schools and ensure these good practices spill over into
surrounding communities, additional advocacy and awareness materials such as videos, handwashing pledges and brochures were developed and distributed to the MOE. Schools that were not part of the KWIS also benefited from the materials, which extended the benefits of the programme beyond the targeted 32 schools.

With support from UNICEF, MHMS completed an assessment of 22 health clinics in 36 villages servicing 79,248 people (38,628 female and 40,616 male) to identify required improvements to WASH facilities. MHMS staff were trained on how to conduct bottleneck analysis and collect data using mobile technology to complete the assessment. Information from the assessment subsequently informed the development of health care facility plans for community action and WASH facility rehabilitation.

After it was discovered that some households had reverted to open defecation practices because the toilet they had constructed malfunctioned, UNICEF supported the development of a WASH safety planning tool that included a checklist for assessing open defecation risks and a menu of options for suitable toilets. UNICEF partner SPC used this tool to trigger community trials of compost toilets. Efforts were ongoing to raise awareness about the risks associated with constructing toilets too close to ground water sources as well as community consultation approaches to addressing these risks.

**OUTPUT 3** Output 2.3: SOL - WASH health centers use improved water and sanitation facilities with a focus on outer islands, rural and peri-urban villages in the Solomon Islands.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF provided high-level strategic support to the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) to advance the Wash in Schools (WinS) agenda. New initiatives were designed, the policy environment was strengthened and WinS assumed greater prominence in education sector priorities.

School-based interventions were modelled in 10 schools under the WinS agenda, and capacity-building on various WASH aspects was provided to 84 teachers and approximately 700 students, which improved WASH-related leadership of teachers and WASH clubs, evidenced by improvements in handwashing practices in schools and the management of WASH facilities. With UNICEF’s support, a high-level technical working group (TWG) was established at the national level to provide advisory support to MEHRD on WinS programming and policy. National standards for WinS were developed for Solomon Islands, validated by the TWG, and were in the process of being finalized. The standards will provide a platform on which schools and the MEHRD will set benchmarks to measure progress in increasing access to WinS for children.

Ongoing engagement with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services resulted in a new strategy to address sanitation and end open defecation that built upon previous efforts in Solomon Islands to curb high rates of open defecation, diarrhoea and stunting. Strategic support and technical advice was provided to the rural WASH department to develop a national sustainable sanitation plan that calls for the use of the community-led total sanitation approach as an entry point at the community level, complemented by appropriate institutional capacities, systems and designs, to take sanitation activities to scale. The plan is based on an analysis of multilevel barriers and enablers of WASH services in Solomon Islands. Operationalization of a 2017 sustainable sanitation plan addressed constraints such as non-systematic post triggering processes and inadequate monitoring of communities triggered in 2016. UNICEF successfully leveraged the government fund of an estimated US$640,000 secured from the European
Union to implement the open defecation free plan in 200 villages in Malaita province over a period of 30 months.

To strengthen national monitoring systems, UNICEF, in partnership with WaterAid, supported government efforts to align data, strengthen the MEHRD rural WASH indicators and carry out three population-based surveys, which are expected to improve reporting on WASH-related Sustainable Development Goal targets. UNICEF convened two high-level inter-ministerial consultations to build consensus on the need for WASH-related data alignment. A national urban and peri-urban WASH baseline survey was completed, in partnership with University of North Carolina, which will be used to establish a database to support future WASH programming. UNICEF further supported the Government in establishing gender guidelines and carrying out capacity-building aimed at mainstreaming gender in Government plans and policies.

OUTPUT 4  Output 2.5 By 2017, communities, schools and health centres in the Pacific use improved water and sanitation facilities in rural and peri-urban villages

Analytical statement of progress
Support was provided for WASH facilities in 64 primary schools, 15 secondary schools, 119 early child care education centres and five health care facilities in six provinces, covering a total of 20 islands. Working closely with the Government and local partners, support also was provided for ongoing WASH improvement activities and WASH-related needs of affected populations during emergencies.

Low levels of financing for the WASH sector remained a challenge, with only 0.26 per cent of Vanuatu’s gross domestic product spent on WASH expenditures. The recurrent budget was only sufficient to cover staff and operational expenses. Funds were not available for the installation of new and/or rehabilitation of existing WASH systems.

UNICEF helped strengthen the enabling environment through the development of standards and procedures, completion of a comprehensive national water policy, and drafting of the national hygiene and sanitation policy. In addition to standards for the implementation of WASH and key milestones for achieving targets in the national sustainable development plan, these policies set priorities and explain how to leverage the resources needed to meet the priorities.

Community-based sanitation was improved through improved access to appropriate toilets, the delivery of training on participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation and implementation of drinking water safety and security plans. Water committees were trained on retaining capacity within communities to manage and sustain water and sanitation systems and promote hygiene practices. An assessment was completed of WASH-related menstrual hygiene management (MHM) challenges with the aim of determining the barriers menstruating girls face accessing MHM materials and facilities. The assessment results will inform ongoing WASH in Schools (WinS) activities and support the inclusion of key gender indicators at the national level.

Building on lessons learned and best practices from the emergency response to Tropical Cyclone Pam, UNICEF leveraged support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to strengthen sectoral coordination, identify needs, develop the standards, procedures and policies as described above, and broaden the evidence base and relevant information management systems. UNICEF, with support from MFAT, endeavoured to strengthen the evidence base by building on existing WASH data and sector information sharing
activities, using limited government resources more efficiently and effectively and increasing the number targeted interventions by sector partners. Further progress is expected on these initiatives in 2018.

Additional funding support was obtained from MFAT to implement a WinS programme in Penama Province. Baseline data on WASH was collected from 100 early childhood care and education centres, 67 primary schools and 14 secondary schools throughout Penama Province to support evidence-based planning and the implementation of those plans in 2018.

OUTPUT 5 Output 2.8 Multi Country: Communities and Government have the capacity in coping with disasters and adapting to the climate change in relation to WASH Sector

Analytical statement of progress
Advocacy for strengthened resilience culminated in 2017 in the formulation and integration of both climate change and resilience frameworks into national policies and guidelines. In Fiji, UNICEF supported the integration of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk resilience (DRR) measures into a national water and sanitation policy and provided technical assistance for the incorporation of relevant WASH indicators into an ongoing national integrated vulnerability assessment. Existing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) policies in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu were reviewed to determine how to incorporate CCA and DRR and relevant next steps were suggested outlining how this could best be achieved.

Drinking water safety and security planning (DWSSP) was carried out in Fiji and Vanuatu. In Fiji, UNICEF supported the delivery of training and development of templates and standard operating procedures to strengthen government mechanisms at both the national and district levels. Efforts were underway to determine how to carry out DWSSP in Solomon Islands and develop a guideline to implement and decentralize DWSSP in Vanuatu.

Cluster and sector emergency capacity-building and support reinforced country coordination mechanisms in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga. Ongoing support was provided to Solomon Islands and Kiribati. Networking and agreements with regional partners ensured key support roles were put in place in countries where UNICEF does not have presence. A regional WASH in emergencies coordination handbook was drafted following consultations with national, regional and global government and non-governmental partners to ensure the inclusion of practical information and examples. The handbook features information about key issues, practices and templates in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

Ongoing capacity-building was provided to partners to carry out WASH in emergencies using consolidated best practices to ensure Pacific Island Countries and Territories are prepared for and capable of responding to emergencies. These exercises also improved understanding of outstanding needs related to targeted activities.

UNICEF continued to stress the importance of being at the forefront of climate change and maximizing opportunities within countries to leverage discussions on climate change. UNICEF explored with the Vanuatu Government opportunities to tap into the Green Climate Fund through existing accredited partners.
OUTPUT 6 Output 2.2: Communities and Government have the capacity in coping up with disasters and adapting to the climate change in relation to WASH Sector in Kiribati.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF continued to support the Government as part of ongoing consultations and preparedness activities. Mapping of water, sanitation and hygiene activities in Kiribati was undertaken to support government planning efforts and to identify vulnerable areas in order to better target resources.

Ongoing discussions took place with local and regional partners about building island council capacity through the delivery of training and integration of climate change and disaster risk reduction activities within relevant reporting structures.

OUTPUT 7 Output 2.4: SOL - CCA-DRR ment have the capacity in coping up with disasters and adapting to the climate change in relation to WASH Sector in the Solomon Islands.

Analytical statement of progress
As a member of the health cluster, which was led by Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), UNICEF helped develop the National Disaster Operation Centre-led Makira earthquake disaster response plan. UNICEF provided inputs for water, sanitation and hygiene related to budgets, coordination mechanisms and strategies for implementation. UNICEF provided an estimated 6,000 ten-litre water containers to the MHMS in January 2017, which were distributed to the affected families. One 1500 litre water tank was used to provide safe drinking water, and 3,000 pieces of soap and two cartons of purification tablets were distributed to affected families as an immediate response to the earthquake. This support also ensured that affected people had access to storage facilities that improved access to water for drinking, cooking and maintaining personal hygiene. With UNICEF’s support, Solomon Island Red Cross (SIRC) reached out to affected communities with messages about hygiene promotion, household drinking water safety and safe disposal of child faeces. Training was provided to SIRC health promoters on the use of communication materials.

For the Tinakula volcano response, UNICEF engaged with the National Disaster Management Office and MHMS, which requested from UNICEF 3000 ten-litre water bottles as an immediate response to water scarcity when volcanic ash contaminated drinking water sources.

Capacities and resources to respond to disasters were limited at the provincial level. Strengthened sector/committee coordination is needed to bring together both government and non-government partners and better align planning and response activities. UNICEF supported the Government in planning national and provincial training opportunities to build the capacity of provincial officers. These training sessions were undertaken specifically with the aim of strengthening coordination and providing simple planning tools that support the formulation of standard operating procedures, cluster standards and contingency plans.

OUTPUT 8 Output 2.6 By 2017, communities and government have the capacity in preparing and responding to disasters and adapting to climate change in Vanuatu.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, Vanuatu experienced an emergency triggered by volcanic activity on Ambae Island and was affected by Tropical Cyclones (TC) Cook and Donna. UNICEF co-led the WASH cluster
with the Department of Water Resources (DOWR). Significant improvements in cluster and inter-cluster coordination capacity were achieved in the country since TC Pam, including a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster website and shared drive for key documents, situation reports and other information. The cluster captured lessons learned from TCs Donna and Pam at an event on 29 June 2017. Lessons included: developing an inter-cluster task force to improve rapid assessment and coordination of information management; ensuring gender and equity considerations are clearly stated in the cluster standard operating procedures; clarifying approval and financing processes with National Disaster Management Office; and ensuring non-food items (e.g. hygiene kits) that are most likely necessary given the circumstances of the situation are deployed immediately rather than awaiting information from initial rapid assessments.

The WASH cluster demonstrated increased capacity and improved coordination during the Ambae Island evacuation and repatriation through regular coordinated cross-sectoral meetings, frequent updates, messaging on water safety and hygiene before, during and after the emergency, and immediate dispatch of an assessment team and engineers for rehabilitation. A total of 5,051 people (2,822 male and 2,679 female) in South and West Ambae benefited from direct UNICEF support for Ambae Island repatriation in partnership with the DOWR and World Vision. Emergency efforts supported 61 schools on the Islands of Ambae and Santo and 2,699 students were supported as part of the Ambae Island volcano evacuation and repatriation. Early childhood care and education kits were provided to 33 Ambae Islands schools, benefiting 431 students; and school-in-a-box and school WASH kits were provided to 28 Ambae Island primary schools, benefiting 2,268 students and 8 secondary schools, benefiting 938 students. Host schools were earmarked to receive WASH rehabilitation support and child-friendly spaces were equipped with handwashing facilities during the evacuation phase.

The DOWR, supported by CARE and UNICEF, conducted a series of small business development training sessions for 48 community members, of whom 44 per cent were women. The training improved the capacity of community members to sustain WASH services and increased the availability of WASH technology and supplies in communities.

Vanuatu ranked first on the World Risk Index and emergencies were an ongoing risk. There was a need to ensure that appropriate government support mechanisms were in place for an efficient and effective emergency response. A position was created within the DOWR to specifically support emergency coordination. This, coupled with UNICEF’s support in strengthening sector/cluster coordination at the national and provincial level, has greatly increased the response capacity of the Government and sector. The Government will continue efforts to build provincial structures and capacity in 2018.

OUTCOME 3 ED PCR 3: An increased percentage of children aged 3 to 5 benefit from quality early learning and development opportunities.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF’s 2017 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Status Report in the Pacific shows that while some countries have made progress in increasing access of children aged 3–5 years to quality early learning and development opportunities, a majority of countries were still without them. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for pre-primary education in UNICEF-supported countries improved compared with the results of the 2015 status report, even though overall coverage levels remained below the GER target of 80 per cent.
The highlight of 2017 was the convening of a successful high-level conference on early childhood development (ECD), organized by UNICEF in collaboration with the World Bank and the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (PRC4ECCE). Approximately 150 delegates – including senior government officials and representatives from development organizations from 15 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) across the sectors of health, education, finance, child and social protection – attended the event, which was held in September in Fiji. The conference presented compelling evidence on the importance of investment in a holistic ECD approach and culminated with the endorsement by participating governments of the Pasifika Call to Action for ECD. The Call to Action outlines strategic post-conference steps for improving ECD through a multisectoral approach that can be adapted and implemented at the national level.

Following the conference, the Government of the Republic of Marshall Islands requested a collaborative partnership with UNICEF and the World Bank to address the country’s high prevalence of stunting in the broader context of ECD. To maintain momentum and ensure ECD remains a Pacific region priority, ongoing discussions with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat were held regarding including ECD as an agenda item at the 2018 Forum Economic Ministers’ Meeting. The Government of New Zealand indicated a keen interest in engaging in ECD initiatives in the Pacific. Finding the best mechanism for an intersectoral approach in the new UNICEF Pacific Multi-Country Programme ought to be explored country by country in 2018.

UNICEF hosted the 2017 meeting of the PRC4ECCE executive board, which made a strategic decision to broaden the Council’s mandate to cover ECD (as opposed to merely ECCE) to align with the outcome of the ECD conference organized in September by UNICEF and to provide more comprehensive support to the PICTs that have committed to intersectoral and holistic approaches to early childhood. UNICEF Pacific will remain as Council Secretariat.

In 2017, UNICEF published a report on the status of ECCE across the Pacific that provides a broad snapshot of progress related to ECCE provision in the region, citing commonalities among countries and identifying gaps and areas of improvement.

UNICEF commissioned a first of its kind study on the relationship between attendance in an ECCE programme and academic performance in Year 4, using results from the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment. Results indicated that ECCE attendance positively correlates with higher literacy and numeracy performance. The study strengthens the argument for increasing investment in ECCE.

Partnerships with the World Bank were forged related to regional advocacy and data collection for ECD. UNICEF Pacific initiated an innovative partnership with the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to develop talking books for young children. More than 20 participants from the region received training on how to make talking books using an app that allows participants to transform any book into a talking book that can be downloaded and listened to on mobile phones, tablets and computers. Books developed for Solomon Islands also were converted into talking books and were saved on memory cards that were distributed to families with smart phones and/or tablets in Guadalcanal Province. Collaboration with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization resulted in the design of an ECCE Teacher Competency Framework for the Pacific. Following a consultative workshop with regional stakeholders, the framework will be presented for endorsement at the next Forum of Education Ministers Meeting.

Weak enabling environments posed the most significant bottleneck in most PICTs, which UNICEF addressed through robust advocacy and policy and legislation support to increase demand for investment in early childhood education. This resulted in the enactment of ECCE
legislation in Kiribati and inclusion of early childhood education (ECE) in the Solomon Islands Education Act, which mandates universal pre-primary education and a fee-free policy directive for five-year-olds attending ECCE centres attached to primary schools. UNICEF also supported two ECE cost and financing studies to inform decisions by Ministries of Education on policy and financial commitments to ECE.

Innovations were introduced that improved access to quality ECE. In Solomon Islands, a parenting support programme resulted in 85 per cent of parents/caregivers reading to their young children – an increase of 19 per cent for mothers and 9 per cent for fathers compared with 2016 data. A mobile kindergarten reached 300 children in Fiji’s most disadvantaged areas.

While the high-level regional conference was a success, concerted efforts are still required to ensure that the commitments made translate into tangible improvements in ECD in the PICTs. UNICEF, working alongside governments and development partners in the region, will implement a strong and consistent monitoring plan and strategy to ensure the provision of adequate support to countries where gaps have been identified and momentum gained from the conference is maintained throughout the PICTs.

OUTPUT 1 ED PCR 3 IR3.1: By 2017 young children in targeted areas in the Pacific benefit from increased access to quality ECD programmes through regional and country interventions including during emergency.

Analytical statement of progress
The fact that Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) generally do not allocate financial resources for early childhood care and education (ECCE) in national budgets due to funding shortages and the competing priorities and weak financial investment poses the main challenge to advancements in ECCE.

UNICEF strengthened its advocacy efforts on behalf of increased ECCE investment. A high-level conference on early childhood development (ECD) was organized by UNICEF in collaboration with the World Bank and the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (PRC4ECCE), of which UNICEF is Secretariat. Approximately 150 delegates – including senior government officials and representatives from development organizations from 15 PICTs across the sectors of health, education, finance, child and social protection – attended the event, which culminated with the endorsement by participating governments of the Pasifika Call to Action for ECD. The Call to Action outlines strategic post-conference steps for improving ECD through a multisectoral approach that may be adapted and implemented at the national level.

The 2017 PRC4ECE executive board meeting approved a decision to broaden the Council's mandate to cover ECD and not merely ECCE, to align with the outcomes of the ECD conference. The executive board’s decision also allows for the Council to provide more comprehensive support to PICTs that have committed to intersectoral and holistic approaches to early childhood.

UNICEF also produced an ECD video featuring Pacific Island children making a case for increased investment in ECD. The video successfully raised the awareness of policymakers at the conference and of the public, who viewed it more than 12,000 times via UNICEF’s Facebook page. Advocacy initiatives reached 1,000 followers through the PRC4ECE’s Facebook page (compared with 774 in 2016). Three ECD newsletters were distributed to 243 subscribers.
A new study was commissioned on the relationship between attendance in an ECCE programme and academic performance in Year 4. The study showed that ECCE attendance positively correlates with higher literacy and numeracy performance, and provided evidence that was used to convince senior officials at the ECD conference about the importance of ECCE.

UNICEF collaborated with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to design an ECCE Teacher Competency Framework for the Pacific. The framework, which will be presented for endorsement at the next Forum of Education Ministers Meeting, is expected to contribute to improved quality of early learning among young children.

In Fiji, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Education to produce 10 broadcast-quality educational animations for young children to be distributed to families and schools. In partnership with the University of the South Pacific, 20 regional participants were trained on an application that converts children’s book into talking books for use on mobile phones, tablets and computers. UNICEF-supported mobile kindergartens provided services to 300 vulnerable children in Fiji.

**OUTPUT 2 ED PCR 3 IR3.2: By 2017 young children in targeted areas in the Kiribati benefit from increased access to quality ECD programmes through regional and in-country interventions, including during emergencies**

**Analytical statement of progress**
Kiribati had a gross enrolment rate for early childhood care and education (ECCE) of only 33.7 per cent. UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to create an enabling environment that facilitates greater access to ECCE for young children. UNICEF advocacy contributed to Kiribati’s ECCE legislation, which was enacted and assented by the President. This was achieved in spite of a reshuffling of Cabinet that resulted in the appointment of a new Minister of Education prior to the second reading of the bill in Parliament. The MOE, with support from UNICEF, conducted a workshop for the new Minister of Education and the Parliamentarians to familiarize them with the contents and significance of the ECCE bill before it was tabled in Parliament for second reading.

The enactment of the ECCE legislation was a significant milestone in the advancement of ECCE in Kiribati and set the stage for further development of the early childhood education subsector in terms of legislating and regularizing registration of ECCE centres, establishing minimum quality service standards and qualification requirements for teachers and putting in place an ECCE curriculum framework. UNICEF provided technical support to a cost and financing study that explored a variety of ECCE options and will continue to provide support to implement the ECCE Act.

UNICEF, the World Bank and ChildFund coordinated their efforts to collect data on children under the age of 5 years. UNICEF carried out a caregivers’ knowledge, attitude and practices study that focused on school readiness. Results of the study will inform the design of an early childhood development (ECD) parenting support programme. The study results suggest a multisectoral coordination approach to ECD is best and that parenting programmes ought to be built into existing delivery platforms across health and education sectors to strengthen scale-up feasibility and sustainability.

UNICEF and its partner New Zealand followed up on the study’s recommendations by
consulting with the MOE, Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, parents and communities on the design of a positive parenting programme. UNICEF and relevant ministries subsequently began work with two communities on South Tarawa on the development of a positive parenting programme and parenting resources that will combine traditional and evidence-based practices. An intersectoral steering committee was formed to address the holistic development of young children following the high-level ECD conference organized by UNICEF in Fiji in September 2017.

OUTPUT 3 ED PCR 3 IR3.3: By 2017 young children in targeted areas in the Solomon Islands benefit from increased access to quality ECD programmes through regional and in-country interventions, including during emergencies

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF’s targeted parenting support in early childhood development (ECD) contributed to increased access to early learning and development opportunities for young children in Guadalcanal Province. The ECCE net enrolment rate increased from 22 per cent in 2015 to 28 per cent in 2016.

UNICEF Pacific supported the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MOEHRD) in developing an evidence-based roadmap to inform policy directions for the early childhood education (ECE) subsector serving children aged 3–5 years. This roadmap will allow the MOEHRD to make informed decisions regarding its commitment to and direction in ECE, particularly for children aged 3–4 years. With the commitment of the MOEHRD to a universal pre-primary education for all five-year-olds in Solomon Islands, UNICEF provided financial and technical support to the MOEHRD team to develop, as per the Ministry’s request, a new curriculum for pre-primary education that focuses on virtues and peacebuilding. A working group was established that will identify the modality for delivering both pre- and in-service teacher training on the use of the new curriculum and a draft pre-primary curriculum framework was developed.

Twenty-one early childhood community facilitators (ECCFs) were trained on monitoring the utilization of children's storybooks that were produced jointly by UNICEF and several stakeholders. The ECCFs subsequently carried out regular monitoring activities with families. A monitoring report highlighted the challenges faced in implementing the parenting support programme, including low levels of literacy among families, which contributed to their hesitancy to use the books with their children. Parents also cited 'being busy' as a main factor that prevented them from reading to their children. Surveys also found an increasing number of grandparents reading to and interacting with their young grandchildren. Fathers were not fully engaged with their youngest children, especially during infancy. The survey, conducted in June and September 2017, revealed that 85 per cent of parents/caregivers were reading to their children (61 per cent of whom were mothers and 26 per cent of whom were fathers) and that 45 per cent of parents reported their children aged 3–5 could recognize some letters of the alphabet. Further training of ECCFs will address the barriers that prevent parents from reading to their children. UNICEF presented a session on violence against children at the last training delivered in 2017.

Additional children’s storybooks were printed for distribution at targeted primary schools and early childhood care and education centres and to families with children under the age of 5 years in remaining wards in Guadalcanal Province, benefiting an estimated 3,000 additional children.
OUTPUT 4 ED IR3.5: By 2017 young children in targeted areas in the Vanuatu benefit from increased access to quality ECD programmes through regional and in-country interventions, including during emergencies

Analytical statement of progress

UNICEF provided support for early childhood care and education (ECCE) in Penama Province, which contributed to increased access to early learning and development opportunities for young children. The ECCE net enrolment rate in Penama Province increased from 40.2 per cent in 2012 to 46.6 per cent in 2015.

With technical support from UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) developed a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for national ECCE quality standards (known as VQS) with (self) monitoring tools and compliance mechanisms. The framework was reviewed at a national workshop attended by representatives of the MOET senior management team, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, and development partners, including donors. As a result of the workshop, in October 2017 MOET officially endorsed the VQS for ECCE and the M&E framework. The standards and framework, with M&E tools and compliance mechanisms, will allow MOET to better regulate the quality of ECCE centres through the standardization of the ECCE accreditation processes. The (self) assessment tools will assist preschool coordinators, school improvement officers, ECCE teachers and community members in supporting ECCE centres meet VQS for ECCE.

Ongoing UNICEF advocacy resulted in a commitment from the Government of Vanuatu to support fee-free ECCE for all five-year-old children in Vanuatu in ECCE centres attached to government primary schools. A national ECCE grant system is to be initiated in 2018. UNICEF supported a cost and financing study and development of an ECCE improvement planning manual that will help ECCE management committees develop, implement and monitor costed ECCE improvement plans. The MOET received funds from UNICEF to collect data from all ECCE centres in Vanuatu, which will contribute to the rollout of ECCE improvement grants.

To address the lack of holistic care Vanuatu, especially as it relates to early stimulation, UNICEF provided technical support for the design of parenting support materials and a manual to further strengthen positive parenting practices. A parent support technical working group consisting of members from the MOET, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Justice and Welfare, non-governmental organizations supporting ECCE and children with disabilities and ECCE teachers developed parent support materials during a one-week workshop in Port Vila. The manual includes nine workshops for parents to be delivered monthly by ECCE teachers. The parent support programme will guide parents at home in promoting holistic development and ensuring healthy development and early learning of young children through everyday activities such as reading stories and play.

The Ambae volcanic emergency affected 481 kindergarten pupils. UNICEF released to the MOET 5 tents and 76 early childhood development kits for distribution to ECCE centres in host schools on Ambae, Maewo, Pentecost and Santo Islands, benefiting nearly 1,100 children. Since tracking the distribution of education in emergencies supplies proved challenging, UNICEF assisted MOET in developing a tracking table to monitor all emergency supplies, including water, sanitation and hygiene materials. UNICEF also supported the education cluster in developing a repatriation plan for displaced families to return home.
OUTCOME 4 ED PCR 4: By 2017, an increased percentage of girls and boys access schools that uphold minimum national quality standards and support student achievement to the end of the primary cycle in at least four Pacific Island Countries.

Analytical statement of progress
The latest Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) showed progress in the numeracy scores of Year 4 and Year 6 students in the region compared with 2012 PILNA results. However, only 62 per cent of Year 4 and Year 6 students in the Pacific region were meeting the expected level of proficiency in literacy. Stark differences existed among Pacific Island countries.

UNICEF’s three-pronged strategy to address literacy and numeracy performance supported development of national quality standards; promotion of reading to children from infancy and in early childhood at home; and professional development of primary child-centred teaching methods, particularly for literacy and numeracy. Four countries developed national quality standards because of UNICEF support. In Guadalcanal Province of Solomon Islands, teachers applied with increasing competency the Do-Talk-Record methodology, which promotes child-centred teaching methods in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing number of teachers in Vanuatu’s Penama Province participated in teacher study groups to improve lesson planning, based on Vanuatu’s new syllabi for Year 4–6 students, with clear learning outcomes and active learning activities such as Do-Talk-Record and small group work. Seventy-three per cent of the teachers targeted by UNICEF reported that the improved teaching in schools resulted in increased student attendance. In Kiribati, UNICEF’s pre-service teacher education activities supported teachers in multi-grade classrooms.

UNICEF promoted the continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers by providing capacity-building support to head teachers on instructional leadership, mentoring, delivery of feedback to teachers and conducting school-based CPD activities related to literacy, numeracy and effective teaching methods. In Solomon Islands, a CPD handbook was developed based on a self-learning module for teachers. Eleven head teachers were trained on and are using the CPD handbook as part of a pilot. Provincial education authorities will consider expanding this initiative in 2018 pending the results of the pilot. In Vanuatu, a manual was developed to assist primary school principals in better understanding their roles and responsibilities as educational leaders and managers to strengthen knowledge and skills related to working with teachers, students, and communities and improve school operations and student learning achievement. An initial monitoring report following the activity suggested that principals developed more respectful professional working relationships with teachers and improved how they provided development feedback and conversed with teachers about teaching and learning.

A key challenge for principals was finding time for teacher study group sessions, coaching and teacher observation because they were often expected to teach in addition to their school management duties. UNICEF raised this challenge with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, which expects to address it through a school leadership course.

In 2017 UNICEF continued a regional primary teachers’ code of ethics (CoE) initiative to reduce teacher absenteeism and corporal punishment in classrooms. Support was provided to Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati and Solomon Islands to pilot and implement the CoE, which also aims to improve learning environments for children by strengthening the professional commitment of teachers to children’s rights. This initiative reduced teacher absenteeism, which was a key challenge affecting quality of education, and decreased corporal punishment in classrooms by
as much as 34 per cent. The initiative increased the involvement of communities in developing school improvement plans to address these issues.

Intersectoral collaboration on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and child protection (CP) continued to improve school learning environments. In Solomon Islands, a baseline survey was carried out of WASH facilities in schools in Guadalcanal Province that provided critical data that will be incorporated into the Education Management Information System to inform education authorities about the state of hygiene facilities in schools. The convergence of education and WASH facilities was underway in 42 schools in Guadalcanal Province and the same schools were to be targeted for the introduction of CP policies.

UNICEF continued capacity-building efforts related to education in emergencies in selected Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) and supported the attendance of representatives from four PICTs to regional capacity-building workshops for emergency preparedness, planning and response. Support to children affected by Tropical Cyclone Winston that struck Fiji in 2016 continued in 2017. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts for school feeding activities that benefited 549 children in six schools. UNICEF also supported provision of tents to schools that had to be rehabilitated or reconstructed, benefiting approximately 3,094 children (1,518 girls). UNICEF also established temporary safe learning spaces and helped repatriate children and their families who were forced to evacuate Vanuatu’s Ambae Island because of a volcanic eruption. These activities benefited 5,290 children (2,811 girls). UNICEF, as co-cluster lead, was instrumental in drafting with the Vanuatu’s Ministry of Education and Training a repatriation plan.

While few opportunities existed for partnerships in education in the Pacific, UNICEF maintained its engagement with regional education development partners and contributed to the development of a new regional education framework. Through collaboration with the Global Partnership for Education and Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2017, funds were secured for an education sector analysis and development plan in Vanuatu, with UNICEF named grant agent. Results of World Bank Early Grade Reading Assessments provided baseline data for some of UNICEF’s key interventions in Kiribati and Solomon Islands.

**OUTPUT 1** ED IR 4.5: By 2017 children in Vanuatu including those living with disabilities in targeted benefit from increased enrolment and retention rates as well as from improved literacy & numeracy outcomes

**Analytical statement of progress**

To improve school operations and student learning achievement, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and UNICEF Pacific collaborated on developing a manual for primary school principals aimed at strengthening their capacity to be education leaders. The primary education net enrolment rate has remained constant since 2013 in Vanuatu, but survival rates had increased to 79.1 per cent in 2015 compared with 70.8 per cent in 2013. Approximately 33 per cent of teachers were certified but did not have specialized post-secondary teacher training and only 37 per cent were deemed qualified. UNICEF addressed this constraint by strengthening instructional leadership and school-based in-service teacher training.

UNICEF continued efforts in 2017 to strengthen student literacy and numeracy learning outcomes by bolstering the instructional leadership skills of primary school principals and professional development habits of teachers in Penama Province. An instructional leadership
A refresher training workshop was conducted for 64 school principals (21 female) and a Vanuatu school-based in-service teacher training (VanSBITT) workshop was organized for 142 teachers (60 female). An assessment of instructional leadership and VanSBITT interventions over the past three years revealed that more than 90 per cent of participating teachers completed respective modules and application activities. More than 90 per cent of teachers who participated in teacher study groups said they found peer support very useful in preparing effective lesson plans. Teachers also reported spending more time on lesson preparation, which correlated with improved student learning and attendance.

An instructional leadership assessment found that 91 per cent of school principals had developed a more respectful professional working relationship with teachers and had commenced providing developmental feedback. Principals said school improvement officers (SIO) and provincial trainers should visit schools more often to monitor progress and provide supportive supervision. SIOs were inadequately equipped to provide supportive supervision and report to the MOET. Capacity-building support to SIOs is required to strengthen the quality of education in schools. Sixty-six per cent of the principals indicated that they had difficulty finding time to fulfil all their job duties, including coaching and observing teachers, teaching and school management.

UNICEF supported the attendance of the MOET Director of Policy and Planning and two team members at a Sustainable Development Goal 4 sector planning workshop in Malaysia. The workshop resulted in the MOET’s successful submission of an application to the Global Partnership for Education for funds to develop an education sector analysis and development plan, with UNICEF named grant agent.

A volcanic eruption emergency on Ambae Island affected 2,269 primary school students (1,123 girls) and 938 secondary school students (489 girls). Temporary learning spaces and school supplies, including psychosocial materials, were provided to more than 4,200 children (2,268 girls). Additional psychosocial support was provided to nearly 200 students who completed year-end exams. UNICEF assisted the education cluster in drafting a repatriation plan.

OUTCOME 5 HIV&AIDs PCR 5: PICs have and use sound strategic information/data for effective gender and equity focused HIV advocacy, policy development, planning and programming.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, UNICEF provided financial support to 13 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) in the preparation of the Global Aids Response Progress Reporting (GARPR). Thirteen PICTs submitted 2016 GARPR reports, which are globally accessible.

In Fiji, UNICEF provided technical and financial inputs for a prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV policy review that will improve the quality of services by equipping the Ministry of Health and Medical Services staff with much-needed knowledge, capacity and skills.

In the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), UNICEF, with the Pacific Community and World Health Organization, provided technical support in the development of five guidelines on antiretroviral therapy for HIV, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, HIV testing services, sexually transmitted infections, routine surveillance and a national strategic plan. These five
guidelines will allow FSM to provide standardized HIV care that is aligned with WHO HIV guidelines for 2015. Procurement plans will be reviewed to include new drug regimens and testing kits.

**OUTPUT 1** HIV&AIDS PCR 5 IR5.1: National stakeholders’ capacity to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor & evaluate studies/ surveys and HIV & AIDS programmes is strengthened by 2017.

**Analytical statement of progress**
Guided by their respective National Strategic Plans on HIV, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands, with technical support from UNICEF, planned for and requested the timely procurement of HIV drugs and testing kits, which ensured continuity of services to people living with HIV and minimized to a negligible rate the risk of mother-to-child transmission.

UNICEF provided to the Federated States of Micronesia a comprehensive technical assistance package, using a team approach, that covered antiretroviral therapy, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, testing services for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, routine surveillance and a national strategic plan that included orientation on hepatitis B. The team approach included technical staff from the Pacific Community, World Health Organization and UNICEF, who provided 10 days of in-country technical assistance. This approach ensured that all guidelines developed were standardized and coordinated with country support.

In Fiji, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to train health care providers in the Western Division, Northern Division and Central Eastern Division on a prevention of parent-to-child transmission policy. The training included strengthening of stock management, monitoring and routine data collection, counselling on stigma and discrimination and opt out strategy. This training developed the capacity of health care workers to provide quality care to HIV-positive mothers and equipped them with knowledge and skills required to respond to stigma and discrimination.

**OUTCOME 6** HIV&AIDS PCR 6: Pregnant women and adolescents aged 15-19 years, particularly those who are at higher risk to HIV exposure, have increased access to relevant information, skills and services to prevent and reduce impact of HIV.

**Analytical statement of progress**
Regional data provided by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) found that in 2017, 83 per cent of pregnant women knew their HIV status; 100 per cent of pregnant women who tested positive for HIV were receiving antiretroviral therapy to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission; 100 per cent of infants born to HIV-positive women were tested within two months of birth; and 87 per cent of pregnant women were tested for syphilis during antenatal visits.

Women and adolescents in Fiji and Vanuatu had access to HIV-related information and services through UNICEF-funded community outreach activities. This improved communication between women and adolescents and their health care providers, which is the foundation for improved health care decision making before and during pregnancy and eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Awareness-raising topics included teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, testing and referral for treatment.
Women and adolescents in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Kiribati, and Vanuatu benefited from improved HIV services through the integration of prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV (PPTCT) into maternal and child health services. UNICEF will continue to provide technical guidance to ministries of health on the integration of PPTCT services into the maternal and child health programmes.

The Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) multi-country programme in the Pacific provides funding to 11 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) -- Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Tonga and Samoa -- with UNDP as principal recipient. The World Health Organization took the lead on developing HIV-specific guidelines with technical and financial inputs provided from the Pacific Community, Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, UN Population Fund and UNICEF. Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tokelau received country-specific GFATM funding through national principle recipient arrangements.

In 2017, UNICEF provided technical guidance for the development of national PPTCT guidelines that were adopted in Vanuatu, Fiji and Solomon Islands, bringing to 13 the total number of countries in the region that have adopted PTTCT guidelines.

OUTPUT 1 HIV&AIDS PCR 6 IR6.1: By 2017, at least six PICs have PPTCT, HIV Testing & Counselling and ART policies/guidelines and services in line with the international and global recommendations.

Analytical statement of progress
Five targeted Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) – Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa – have developed national HIV/AIDS strategies that include proven high-impact evidence-based interventions to address HIV among adolescents. Sixty eight of 130 targeted health facilities in five PICTs – Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati, Sol, Vanuatu – provided quality integrated HIV testing and counselling and prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV (PPTCT) services.

With technical support from UNICEF Pacifica, a series of consultations with key Ministry of Health (MOH) personnel, civil society organizations, faith-based leaders, positive people’s networks and the grassroots community were carried out, resulting in the endorsement and adoption by the MOH of PPTCT guidelines for Vanuatu. The policy will allow health sector leaders to plan accordingly for human resources, testing services and care and treatment services.

Three PICTs – Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands – fully integrated PPTCT into maternal and child services (MCH) based on UNICEF’s recommendation and following the provision of technical input from UNICEF. The integration of services is the first step in improving uptake, initiating treatment and following up with women who require HIV treatment. Through this integration strategy, Fiji distributed a man’s pack to women in the antenatal clinic containing information, communication and education materials designed to encourage the inclusion of men in HIV care and reproductive health decisions. This integrated service provides an entry point for testing and counselling of other family members. The participation of men in the MCH programme is expected to increase the uptake of PPTCT among males in the future.
The MOH provided community outreach activities in Fiji and Vanuatu with funding from UNICEF focused on teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS awareness, testing and referral for treatment.

UNICEF also provided HIV rapid testing kits to Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati to increase accessibility of pregnant mothers in antenatal care to testing.

OUTPUT 2 HIV&AIDS PCR 6 IR6.5: By 2017, at least six PICs have strengthened capacities to deliver HIV prevention and services for adolescents (10-19) including adolescents at higher risk to HIV exposure.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF provided technical inputs in the development of guidelines on youth-friendly health services (YFHS) in the Solomon Islands. The guidelines are part of an effort to provide comprehensive quality services and coordinated responses to adolescents’ and young people’s reproductive health needs.

In Tonga, Sports for Development (S4D) provided an entry point for awareness-raising on HIV among 344 adolescents (45 per cent girls). UNICEF, in collaboration with the Oceania Football Confederation, developed a S4D programme model for participants aged 13–16 years.

OUTCOME 7 Child protection systems (including Justice and Police, child and family social services, health and education and communities) provide improved quality of and access to services for the prevention of and response to violence, abuse and exploitation of children at all times.

Analytical statement of progress
With UNICEF’s support, significant progress was achieved over the past five years in strengthening legal and policy frameworks in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). This is the first step in establishing a child protection system. Four PICTs have passed an overarching Child Protection Law – Kiribati in 2013, Nauru in 2016, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) in 2015 and Solomon Islands in 2017. Three PICTs have elaborated child protection bills that are expected to be enacted in 2018 (Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu). In 2016, Vanuatu adopted a Child Protection Policy and Implementation Plan. Fiji and Samoa have national child protection policies in place. Kiribati and Solomon Islands have costed child and family welfare system policy implementation frameworks and human resources plans. Tuvalu drafted a multisector Child Protection Bill Implementation Plan. Nauru has a social welfare system implementation plan. Three PICTs have adopted, developed or revised legislation around juvenile justice (Fiji in 2016, Kiribati in 2015 and Nauru in 2015). This legislation and related policies provide a framework to protect children from violence, abuse and neglect by promoting the well-being of children, providing a more comprehensive framework for child welfare services and better guidance on preventing and responding to all forms of child abuse.

Challenges remained in ensuring implementation of this legislation and related policies. UNICEF will assist countries in developing costed multisector multi-stakeholder national child protection plans of action and provide technical and financial assistance to build the capacity of relevant partners.
Four PICTs – Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon and Vanuatu – established inter-agency operational coordination mechanisms responsible for coordination of prevention and response interventions and case management and referral at the subnational level. Only Fiji adopted Inter-Agency Guidelines on Child Abuse and Neglect. Other countries recently established subnational mechanisms and their inter-agency protocols were not yet fully functional. In Fiji, establishment of these mechanisms and application of inter-agency guidelines contributed to improving management and referral of 795 child protection cases between January and October 2017. In other PICTs, elaboration of inter-agency guidelines and strengthening of inter-agency group members will continue to be a key strategy for improving child protection case management and referrals.

Social welfare sectors in every PICT except Fiji were characterized by inadequate human resources and shortages in social workers. Personnel did not have relevant academic backgrounds and/or professional experience. In Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, UNICEF temporarily funded the salaries of child protection and/or social welfare officers, an expense that will gradually be absorbed by the governments.

Personnel in the justice, police, health and education sectors had not received adequate training on child protection, which posed a major obstacle in the provision of quality services to children in need of protection. To address the issue of qualifications in a sustainable manner, under its 2018–2022 Multi-Country Programme (MCP), UNICEF will develop child protection modules for each of the five sectors, to be embedded in existing pre-service and in-service training programmes and institutions, as well as child protection tools to be embedded in existing supervision, performance evaluation, review/planning and information management systems. UNICEF began discussions with the University of South Pacific (USP), USP/Technical And Further Education and an international non-governmental organization (NGO) concerning a child protection training module for social workers.

Only Fiji included child protection in its social welfare standard operating procedure (SOP). Six PICTs developed SOPs and training manuals for police (Fiji, Kiribati, Vanuatu, FSM, Palau and RMI) but they have not been fully implemented. In most PICTs, the judiciary bench books had incomplete child protection procedures. Four PICTs had policies for child protection in schools (Fiji, RMI, Samoa and Tuvalu) and three had codes of conduct for teachers that included safeguarding child protection (Kiribati, Solomon, Vanuatu). Fiji was the only PICT with child protection guidelines for health workers. Under UNICEF’s 2018–2022 MCP, a regulatory framework for each of the five sectors will be systematically developed and integrated into training curriculum and supervision and monitoring systems.

Birth registration rates in the PICTs increased significantly in the past five years, surpassing the target of 60 per cent for children under the age of 5 years in most PICTs. Remaining challenges, which will be addressed in the 2018–2022 MCP, include revision of legislation, strengthening of information management systems and ensuring services reach remote islands and atolls. UNICEF continued to play an active role in the Brisbane Accord Group to coordinate, facilitate and support investments in civil registration and vital statistics in the region, including through an annual meeting of the Pacific Civil Registrars Network that in 2017 focused on disaster preparedness and response.

UNICEF partnered with the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation through child protection systems strengthening, including normative framework and services, and social behavioural change. UNICEF worked
closely in 2017 with teams from DFAT-supported law, justice and police programmes in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. UNICEF collaborated with the Pacific Community and UN Women on activities related to violence against children and violence against women. Strategic partnerships with Save the Children, World Vision and other NGOs improved coordination of child protection activities at national and community levels in several PICTs.

OUTPUT 1 CP PCR 7 IR7.1: By 2017, PICs children are better protected by strengthen legal, regulatory and policy frameworks at national level, including in emergencies.

Analytical statement of progress
Fiji: The 2012 Children in Need of Protection Bill and 2012 Children in Conflict with the Law Bill were revised with UNICEF’s technical assistance, following six consultations with stakeholders (54 female and 16 male) in every region, and consultation with children (12 female and 18 male) aged 14–18 years from secondary schools in five regions. UNICEF provided technical assistance to respond to questions from the Parliament Select Committee on the 2016 Adoption Bill and 2016 Community Based Corrections Bill. Parliament is expected to adopt all four bills in 2018, which will bring national legislation in line with key international standards. UNICEF will then provide technical assistance to finalize a child protection policy and develop a costed operational framework to ensure the four laws are implemented.

Nauru: UNICEF provided orientation on the 2016 Child Protection and Welfare Act for 10 newly-recruited personnel of the Child Protection Division and representatives of other sectors (13 female and 3 male) regarding mandatory reporting, response to child abuse and prohibition of corporal punishment in schools. This contributed to improved management of cases handled by the Division in 2017. The next step will be to develop regulations to accompany the Act and to cost an implementation plan. This will provide an opportunity to consult widely with stakeholders and communities, which was not done prior to the adoption of the Act.

Samoa: UNICEF provided technical assistance to ensure the quality and relevance of a planned national consultancy to develop a Child Care and Protection Policy and Operational Framework to support the adoption and implementation of the Child Care and Protection Bill currently under review by the Attorney General. The Policy will define the child protection system, including respective mandates and roles of formal, informal and traditional community structures, taking the country’s cultural and social specificities into account, which will result in improved handling of child protection cases. UNICEF supported a national conference on family violence that brought together for the first time 120 representatives from the judiciary, government sectors, community leaders, non-governmental organizations and churches to openly discuss this sensitive issue. Participants drafted a multisector multi-actor action plan that they committed to implement.

Tonga: UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice in the areas of adoption, birth registration and child justice. In 2018, an adoption policy and legislation will be revised with a view to resolving issues related to customary, domestic and intercountry adoption.

Tuvalu: UNICEF provided technical assistance for the drafting of the Child Protection Bill and Child Protection in Schools Policy and accompanying implementation plans. Consultations on both were conducted with key stakeholders and communities on all nine atolls, involving 359 children and 427 adults. The next step will be to conduct research to establish a child protection
baseline against which progress will be measured, and to support implementation of the two plans.

**OUTPUT 2 CP PCR 7 IR7.2:** By 2017 Kiribati, develop and strengthen legal, regulatory and policy frameworks at national and sub-national levels for the protection and participation of children, adolescents and youth including in emergencies.

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF provided assistance in the development of an implementation manual for the 2013 Children, Young People and Family Welfare Act. The manual contains the national legal framework, definitions of child protection issues, care and protection principles, and respective roles in prevention and response of parents, families, communities, police, court, social welfare and other stakeholders and service providers. The manual also contains implementation process and referral protocol and a monitoring and evaluation framework. The manual will serve as a reference and will be used during orientations for all personnel responsible for child protection prevention and response across social sectors. UNICEF will provide technical assistance to revise and update the Children, Young People and Family Welfare System implementing framework, human resources plan and costing developed in 2012. The costed plan will be used to coordinate and monitor implementation of child protection interventions, avoiding duplication and gaps and maximizing resources. The costed plan will also be used to mobilize resources from the Government and other sources and will strengthen the child protection sub-group and improve intersectoral collaboration.

**OUTPUT 3 CP PCR 7 IR7.3:** By 2017 Solomon Islands develop and strengthen legal, regulatory and policy frameworks at national and sub-national levels for the protection of children, including in emergencies.

**Analytical statement of progress**
Following six years of UNICEF-supported advocacy, Solomon Islands passed the Child and Family Welfare (CFW) Act in February 2017. The Act provides a definition of abuse, exploitation and neglect, reporting and response procedures and assigns to the social welfare workforce the legal mandate to provide a continuum of care for children, in collaboration with other Government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations. The Act also reinforces the traditional roles of families and communities in the care and well-being of their children.

Throughout 2017, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children, and Family Affairs (MOWYCF) and Ministry of Health Social Welfare Department (MOH/SWD) jointly carried out several activities to disseminate information about the CFW Act and its implications. Target groups for information dissemination included the Public Solicitors’ Office, members of the National Advisory and Action Committee for Children and key stakeholders and service providers, including international and national NGOs, faith-based organizations, provincial governments, police, teachers and health personnel. A UNICEF-supported five-day national workshop for 13 national and provincial social welfare officers and 17 MOWYCF national level officers acquainted participants with the CFW Act, highlighted its intersection with the 2014 Family Protection Act, and provided simple guidelines to establish a multisector coordination mechanism in each province. Key messages on the CFW Act also were developed to be disseminated during Just Play programme games and sports festivals. An estimated 1,600 children were expected to participate in festivals that will take place in the beginning of 2018 in the capital city of Honiara.
and three provinces. Children will learn to identify various forms of abuse, how to protect themselves and where and how to seek help if needed.

UNICEF provided technical inputs for a Juvenile Offenders Bill that was being drafted by the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs under Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade-supported justice programme. The bill’s main features include raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12 years and introducing non-custodial sentencing measures such as diversion. The Court Protocol for Children in Contact with the Law developed with UNICEF support will be implemented as soon as the Juvenile Offenders Bill is enacted in early 2018. The implementation of these measures will greatly improve the treatment of all children in contact with the law.

The birth and death registration legal framework was being revised to make birth registration compulsory within six weeks of birth and to decentralize birth registration services to provincial level.

**OUTPUT 4 CP PCR 7 IR7.4:** By 2017 Vanuatu develops and strengthen legal, regulatory and policy frameworks at national and sub-national levels for the protection of children.

**Analytical statement of progress**

After adoption of the National Child Protection Policy 2016–2026, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its September 2017 Concluding Observations, called on the Government of Vanuatu to develop a comprehensive child protection bill. Although the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MOJCS) and UNICEF agreed to commence work on child protection legislation, no action was taken due to the emergency response to the evacuation of Ambae Island that was triggered by the threat of a Manaro Voui Volcano eruption. The elaboration of a comprehensive child protection bill and its costed implementation plan will be a priority for 2018.

A Judiciary Practice Directive was developed to ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of children victims, witnesses and offenders in criminal court proceedings. For children victims and witnesses, the Directive provides for child-sensitive courtroom settings and evidence-taking procedures designed to reduce victimization and emotional trauma. For children offenders, the Directive calls for age determination, diversion, procedures and sentencing options and separation from adults when detention is needed. The Directive was to be validated during provincial consultations, but it was postponed after members of the Judiciary raised concerns that a juvenile justice legal framework was required to provide the legal authority for implementation of the Directive. A National Juvenile Justice Working Group was established as part of a justice sector-wide approach supported under Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Policing and Justice Programme. UNICEF will advocate and provide technical inputs for the development of a juvenile justice legal framework through this forum.

In August 2017, the Vanuatu Cabinet approved a National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Policy, which allowed the State Law Office to resume work to finalize proposed amendments to the Civil Status Act that had been put on hold pending approval of the national CRVS Policy. A public awareness campaign will be carried out to inform the public about the new provisions. The objectives of the newly-adopted CRVS Policy include universal civil registration of births and deaths, provision of legal documentation as proof of identity and access to services for all in the production, dissemination and utilization of accurate vital statistics. The policy also includes a framework for national and provincial CRVS coordination.
mechanisms to achieve these objectives. The Civil Status Registration Act 2006 was being revised to strengthen the compulsory nature of CRVS registration, include reregistration of births occurring overseas and recognize the use of information and communication technology in registration and birth record maintenance.

**OUTPUT 5**
CP PCR 7 IR7.6: By 2017, governments and civil society have strengthened capacity to provide children and families with improved access to child and family welfare and child justice services to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation, including in emergencies.

**Analytical statement of progress**

**Fiji:** The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MOWCPA) trained 94 personnel (51 female) from social welfare and other sectors in application of the 2015 Inter-Agency Guidelines on Child Abuse and Neglect and the 2010 Child Welfare Decree revised the Child Protection Notification Form. Implementation of inter-agency guidelines resulted in improved management and referral of 795 child protection cases in 2017. A revised Child Protection Notification Form includes detailed information on types of cases and responses. Through its implementation, information on cases reported to social welfare, police, courts, health and education are now compiled by MOWCPA Child Services Division. UNICEF provided technical assistance to the judiciary for revision of a bench book on handling children in contact with the law, anonymization of judgements to preserve confidentiality and design of bench screens to protect the rights of child victims and improve the treatment of children in courts.

**Nauru:** UNICEF conducted a workshop with 16 personnel from the Child Protection Division and other sectors on respective roles of sectors and inter-agency coordination under the new Child Protection Act. The director of the Child Protection Division interned with Fiji’s Social Welfare Department to learn best practices from a more developed social welfare system.

**Republic of Marshall Islands:** Training on child protection in emergencies (CPiE) and mobile birth registration was carried out in 4 out of 11 remote drought-affected atolls. Each atoll developed an emergency contingency plan. A total of 182 adults (108 female) and 129 students (49 female) were trained on CPiE and births were registered for 37 children (21 female).

**Samoa:** On an experimental basis, the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development contracted a non-governmental organization (NGO) to provide social support services to five vulnerable families for three months. The NGO’s social workers counselled the families, prepared care and protection plans and linked them to agencies to access further services. The NGO continued to follow up with families on a volunteer basis. The work of UNICEF-funded child protection officer, case manager and court officer from the local NGO Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) resulted in improved support provided to victims of abuse and improved access to justice. The cases handled by SVSG employees were taken to court faster and more perpetrators were sentenced. In 2017, SVSG supported 1,106 children (917 female). Police officers and others participated in a workshop to finalize standard operating procedures on police warning, which will result in children who commit minor offences receiving formal warnings by police rather than their cases being taken to court. UNICEF is planning to develop child protection modules for each of the five sectors.

**OUTPUT 6**
CP PCR 7 IR7.7: By 2017 Kiribati government and civil society strengthen quality of and access to child protection services
Analytical statement of progress

Intersectoral: A 2013 Children Young People and Family Welfare Act implementation manual was produced with UNICEF’s financial support. Fifteen members of a provincial child protection working group provided inputs during a consultation for the manual. The manual contains the national legal framework, definitions of child protection issues, care and protection principles, and respective roles in prevention and response of parents, families, communities, police, court, social welfare and other stakeholders and service providers. It also includes implementation processes and referral protocol and a monitoring and evaluation framework. The manual will serve as a reference and will be used during orientation of all personnel responsible on child protection prevention and response across social sectors.

Police: Forty-three police officers (5 female) from two islands were trained on the application of police standard operating procedures to handle all children in contact with the law, including victims, witnesses and offenders. With bicycles provided by UNICEF, police officers from four stations in urban areas conducted spot checks and awareness-raising activities in 15 schools, reaching 6,714 students (3,510 female), which led to a better understanding of risks and knowledge of reporting mechanisms and built student trust in the police and other service providers. As a result, 88 male students were brought back to school.

Police officers from three urban stations and Alcohol Awareness and Family Reunion (a Catholic non-governmental organization that provides counselling services to young offenders), jointly conducted diversion panels involving 23 young offenders, who, as a result, benefited from alternative measures including counselling, curfew and apologies. The police conducted awareness-raising activities reaching 190 people (707 female) in 10 communities, to help parents and communities tackle youth issues and raise children in a nonviolent environment. As a result, an increased number of communities took measures to tackle youth issues such as establishing curfews and neighbourhood watch, thereby helping to keep youth safe.

Birth registration: According to civil registration and vital statistics routine data, as of December 2017, the percentage of children under the age of 5 years whose birth has been registered was 78 per cent (calculated by dividing the cumulative number of children registered since 2012 by the projected total number of children under the age of 5 years in the country). UNICEF trained personnel in charge of civil registration, including Island Council clerks, medical assistants and assistant social welfare officers.

Remaining gaps and challenges to achieve full birth registration coverage included a lack of awareness about the importance of birth registration on the part of families; accessibility (there is only one registration office on each island); lack of computerization of the process; the lack of data and records security; insufficient personnel training and the need for legal reform. UNICEF will address these challenges in the Multi-Country Programme that commences in 2018.

OUTPUT 7 CP PCR 7 IR 7.8: By 2017, in Solomon Islands government, civil society and communities have strengthened capacity to provide children and families with improved access to child and family welfare and child justice services to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation, including in emergencies.
**Intersectoral:** Following adoption of the Child and Family Welfare Act in 2017, Provincial Advisory and Action Committees for Children were established in two provinces with terms of reference and a workplan to coordinate interventions. The Act provides the social welfare workforce with a legal mandate to ensure a continuum of care for children in collaboration with other government agencies, non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations, while reinforcing traditional roles of families and communities in the care and well-being of their children.

**Social welfare:** The Social Welfare Department had only one social welfare officer in each province. UNICEF will provide temporary financial support to employ one additional staff person in each province to support implementation of the Act, the cost of which will be gradually taken over by the Department.

**Justice:** UNICEF provided training on the rights of children in administration of criminal justice to 12 correctional services officers who were in direct contact with juvenile offenders in a detention facility in Honiara, and was asked to replicate this training at two other juvenile detention facilities. UNICEF provided technical inputs to a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade-funded Justice Programme contractor on ensuring new Juvenile and Family Court buildings comply with child-sensitive, privacy, accessibility and gender criteria.

**Health:** UNICEF provided technical inputs to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services on guidelines for minimum standards of care for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence developed with World Health Organization (WHO) and adopted in 2017. The guidelines include provisions regarding children, including mandatory reporting of child abuse cases from health personnel to social welfare officers or police officers, and standards for treatment and care for child survivors.

**Emergencies:** The Protection Committee, which is responsible for preparedness and response to child protection in emergencies, finalized terms of reference and standard operating procedures following provision of technical inputs from UNICEF. Preparedness was strengthened with the conclusion of contingency programme cooperation agreements with World Vision and Save the Children for the provision of psychosocial support and child protection monitoring and pre-positioned recreational kits.

**Civil Registration:** Despite a significant reduction in government funding to Civil Registration Offices (CRO), progress was achieved in increasing birth registration rates. Between January and October 2017, an additional 10,447 children under the age of 5 were registered in the Promadis information technology system, which brought the overall rate of birth registration for children under the age of 5 to approximately 44 per cent (40,261 births out of 91,954). In fact, the birth notification rate is higher, but a backlog of notifications was not yet entered into the system. To address this bottleneck, UNICEF provided computers to three provincial hospitals whose civil registration focal points will be trained to enter data directly into Promadis. Direct data entry and eventual issuance of birth certificates at provincial hospitals will further increase the rate of registration. A birth and death registration communication strategy was finalized by CRO, WHO and UNICEF.

**OUTPUT 8 CP PCR 7 IR7.9:** By 2017, in Vanuatu government, civil society and communities have strengthened capacity to provide children and families with improved access to child protection services to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation, including in emergencies.
Analytical statement of progress

Intersectoral: Provincial child protection committees (PCPC) in two provinces played active roles in ensuring that 27 children were provided with coordinated child protective services. These children were referred by five UNICEF-supported community child protection committees (CCPC).

Social Welfare: UNICEF support to five child protection officers – one at national level, two at provincial level and two at community level – was crucial in supporting the work of PCPCs and CCPCs and ensuring provision of services to 104 children (33 male and 71 female) in need of protection in 2017.

Children with disabilities: In support of children with disabilities, more than 40 children with disabilities and their parents/caregivers from four communities continued to benefit from a UNICEF-supported early intervention programme implemented by the Vanuatu Society for Persons with Disability. The Programme prepared children for integration in mainstream schools and sports activities, while equipping parents and caregivers with care and learning stimulation skills.

Emergencies: In September 2017, due to an imminent threat of eruption of the Manaro Voui Volcano on Ambae Island, approximately 11,600 people were evacuated, including an estimated 5,220 children. A total of 732 children (336 female) received psychosocial support while being temporarily accommodated in evacuation centres on other islands. A total of 660 adults (387 female) received psychosocial support. UNICEF monitored the repatriation process and ensured that it took the needs of vulnerable groups into consideration, including prevention of family separation. Children resumed their normal lives upon returning to their home island in November 2017. The emergency response diverted human and financial resources from regular UNICEF programme activities planned for the last quarter of the year.

Civil registration: As of October 2017, approximately 82 per cent of the population (229,822 of 278,726 people) and approximately 88 per cent of children under the age of 18 (109,122 of 124,406) had their births registered by the Civil Registration Office (CRO). Approximately 69 per cent (27,335 of 39,832) and 62 per cent (4,277 of 6,853) of children under the age of 5 and 1, respectively, had their births registered by CRO. This rate was similar to that of a 2016 mini census that found that approximately 83 per cent of the population and approximately 86 per cent of children under the age of 18 had birth certificates. The sustained birth registration rate was the result of intersectoral coordination between health, education, youth and sports development and CROs at national and provincial levels. UNICEF support, which included renovation of the national CRO, the provision of equipment to provincial CROs and the provision of temporary funding for additional Civil Registration Officers, was also a key factor. A UNICEF-supported study was being conducted to examine the current birth registration process and bottlenecks to improve the process and accelerate the rate of registration.

OUTCOME 8 CP PCR 8: 8 Parents, caregivers, and children demonstrate skills, knowledge and behaviour enabling children to grow up in caring homes and communities, including schools that are free from violence, abuse and exploitation

Analytical statement of progress
Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) carried out in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu suggested high rates of violence against children and women. Survey data on violence against
children and women was not available in Fiji and Kiribati. The 2012 DHS in Solomon Islands found that 68 per cent of children aged 2–14 years had experienced physical punishment, which was similar to 2008 child protection baseline research (CPBR) that found 72 per cent had experienced physical punishment. The DHS 2012 in Solomon Island also found that 86 per cent of children aged 2–14 years had experienced some form of violent discipline, 22 per cent had received severe physical punishment, and 77 per cent of women and 57 per cent of men considered wife-beating justified in certain circumstances. The 2013 DHS in Vanuatu found that 72 per cent of children had experienced physical punishment, which was also similar to 2008 CPBR data that found 78 per cent of children had experienced physical punishment. The 2013 DHS also found that 84 per cent of children aged 2–14 years had experienced some form of violent discipline, 36 per cent had been severely punished physically and 60 per cent of women and 56 per cent of men considered wife beating justified in certain circumstances. The 2017 Family Safety Study in Samoa found that 69 per cent of girls and 63 per cent of boys had experienced physical or emotional abuse in the year prior to the survey.

Violent discipline and other forms of violence against children such as sexual abuse that persisted in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) were linked to entrenched social norms about the concept of childhood, gender and social organization. The prevailing concept of childhood in PICTs dictated that children obey without questioning, do not talk back to adults or speak in the presence of adults unless they are invited to do so, and refrain from expressing their opinion. It is believed that children will not learn how to behave properly without corporal punishment and/or psychological and emotional aggression. Women did not enjoy equal rights or status in PICTs and were expected to obey men. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that a significant percentage of women and men believe that domestic violence is justified in certain circumstances. In traditional social organization, family and community honour, harmony and cohesion ought to prevail over individual well-being, welfare and rights.

Several stakeholders, including UN Women, are working to address harmful social norms in the Pacific, especially related to violence against women and domestic violence. Few efforts have focused on violence against children, including boys. UNICEF identified this gap and has worked with stakeholders to curb harmful social norms linked to violence against children and explored partnerships with faith-based organizations.

UNICEF Pacific’s Multi-Country Programme’s behaviour change component focused on the development of a community facilitation package comprised of a facilitator’s manual and supporting information, education and communication materials to carry out community dialogues on these issues. The community facilitation package was widely introduced in Fiji, reaching 46 per cent of communities, and the Government of Fiji funded introduction of the package to other communities. No activities were carried out to measure the package’s impact in Fiji.

The package was piloted in Kiribati and Vanuatu and was adapted for use in Solomon Islands. In 2018, an implementation strategy will be developed for each of these countries, as well as a facilitator training module and monitoring tools. A pre- and post-intervention knowledge attitudes and practices questionnaire will be developed and implemented. To ensure the sustainability of interventions, community-based child protection mechanisms will be established and training will be provided on detecting, responding to, reporting and referring child protection cases.
UNICEF’s 2018–2022 Mult-Country Programme initiatives will be designed to raise the awareness of caregivers, families and communities about child development stages and needs; child protection issues, laws and services; human rights and gender issues.

UNICEF worked with governments in PICTs to keep children safe from cyberbullying. In 2017, through UNICEF support, the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Tonga conducted awareness-raising on cyberbullying, reaching 1,043 adults and 853 children.

OUTPUT 1 CP PCR 8 IR8.1: By 2017, parents, families and communities demonstrate strengthened knowledge, attitude and practices creating an environment that protects children from violence, abuse and exploitation in T2 and T3 countries

Analytical statement of progress
Fiji: From January to October 2017, 752 adults and 3,800 children were reached in 78 communities in all five divisions, bringing the total number of communities reached since the beginning of the programme to 940 (46 per cent of communities in the country, 1,714 indigenous/rural and 315 informal/urban), and 279 of the communities had developed and were implementing child protection plans.

The community facilitation package was contextualized and translated into Fijian language by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Twenty-five representatives from the Ministries of Cultural Affairs, Social Welfare, Education and Health as well as faith-based organizations participated in a workshop to finalize the package. Topics discussed included traditional child rearing practices conducive to care and protection of children, cultural developmental milestones, traditional practices detrimental to the child’s development and strengthening cultural identity, ethics and values. In 2018, an assessment of this intervention will be carried out to improve the approach before undertaking further expansion. A workshop will be organized to develop a coordinated implementation strategy among ministries in charge of social welfare, youth and cultural affairs.

Samoa: The Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MOWCSD) rebroadcast television spots on child safety, protective measures and positive parenting developed with UNICEF support. Approximately 90 per cent of households own a television and the spots were aired by all three major television stations. Representatives from the MOWCSD in all 330 villages reported the ads had been seen by families. According to the Samoa Victim Support Group, the majority of people who reported child abuse cases to them said that they did so after viewing the television ads. A cybercrime awareness-raising campaign in schools jointly planned by the Ministries of Police and Education and Internet service providers did not take place due to personnel changes.

Tonga: The Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted awareness-raising sessions on cyberbullying in 35 villages and 7 schools, reaching 1,043 adults and 853 children. Anecdotal evidence demonstrated these sessions increased understanding of cyberbullying and cybercrimes and led to recommendations to the National Cybercrime Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. These activities supported the community component of Tonga’s commitment to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, to which the country acceded in May 2017. Recommendations included strengthening collaboration between Internet carriers and ministries in charge of youth and children; establishing a national cyber safety hotline and children’s helpline; and ensuring that legislation to safeguard and protect young Internet users is passed. Legislation related to cybercrimes was drafted and will soon be enacted. Discussions on the establishment of a child helpline were deferred to 2018.
OUTPUT 2 CP PCR 8 IR8.2: By 2017, in Kiribati parents, families and communities demonstrate strengthened knowledge, attitude and practices creating an enabling environment that protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation

Analytical statement of progress
The community facilitation package was developed, tested and successfully piloted in three communities in Kiribati. A total of 80 community leaders (63 female) including village chiefs, women leaders and youth leaders, among others, were trained as community facilitators who facilitated sessions in their respective villages. As a result of these sessions, parents and caregivers acquired knowledge about child development stages and parenting skills and were gradually putting them into practice. Awareness was raised about the role of communities in protecting children and youth from violence, abuse and exploitation and communities were better equipped to fulfil this responsibility as a consequence. Topics covered in the package included: family visioning, understanding child development, effective parenting, and the role of parents. The sessions also covered identifying and helping children in need of protection, building strong and resilient children, creating the right environment for children and child protection in emergencies. The next step will be to develop an implementation strategy for expansion, training modules and a monitoring system, including supervision and information management system, as well as pre- and post-intervention knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys to measure results.

The fact that community leaders are trained as volunteer facilitators makes it difficult to expect that they will facilitate the different sessions in their respective communities over an extended period, which is necessary to elicit long-term changes. Identifying the appropriate people to act as facilitators will be explored. Training will be delivered to allow facilitators to fully master the contents of the package facilitation skills required to be able to lead female and male audiences of varying ages in structured dialogue on sensitive issues.

OUTPUT 3 CP PCR 8 IR8.3: By 2017, in Solomon Islands parents, families and communities demonstrate strengthened knowledge, attitude and practices creating an enabling environment that protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation

Analytical statement of progress
The community facilitation package developed for Fiji was adapted to the context of Solomon Islands. Graphic design of the community facilitation package was completed, including positive images of children with disabilities in community settings with families and friends. The package will be used to conduct structured dialogue sessions with communities on child development, needs and rights, child protection issues, services and laws, harmful practices and parenting skills. Community-based child protection mechanisms will be established and trained to detect, respond to, report and refer child protection cases. The next steps will be to develop an implementation strategy and workplan as well as supervision, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and information management systems, tools, and training modules; train trainers-supervisors; train community facilitators; orient local authorities and jointly select target communities; conduct a pre-intervention knowledge, attitudes and practices survey; and conduct structured dialogue sessions with communities.
The implementation strategy will take into account lessons learned from the Fiji and Kiribati experiences mentioned above.

OUTPUT 4 CP PCR 8 IR8.4: By 2017, in Vanuatu children, families and communities demonstrate strengthened knowledge, attitude and practices creating an enabling environment that protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation

Analytical statement of progress
The community facilitation package was rolled out by the Ministries of Justice and Community Services (MOJCS) and Youth and Sports Development (MOYSD) to seven new communities in four provinces, reaching 143 village leaders (79 female and 64 male) who were trained as community facilitators. The facilitators subsequently conducted sessions on the package in their respective villages, leading villagers in five communities to develop child protection plans.

Two additional communities in two provinces established community child protection committees (CCPC) in 2017. The CCPC conducted awareness-raising activities, monitored the situation of children and families, and assisted 329 children (149 female and 180 male) in their communities, including referring four children for additional services.

Community-based child protection mechanisms continued to be strengthened through the convening of a meeting to review progress, share success stories and challenges, and plan the subsequent phase of the initiative. The meeting was attended by 25 participants (14 male and 11 female), including provincial and community child protection committee members from the three pilot sites and interested members of communities. Participants developed detailed pilot workplans (July 2017–December 2018) and agreed on a strategy for the way forward for the pilot community-based child protection initiative.

Twenty-eight trained facilitators and representatives from MOJCS, MOYSD, and UNICEF (15 female and 13 male) participated in a five-day review meeting during which they identified changes to be made to the community facilitation package based on the field experiences of facilitators. A final revised package and accompanying information, education and communication materials were printed.

Results of a child protection baseline survey conducted in January 2017 in three communities highlighted the need to improve knowledge, attitudes and practices of parents and caregivers regarding child protection and develop clear referral systems to respond to child protection cases.

OUTCOME 9 PAPE PCR 9: Social policies, safety nets and budgets progressively address disparities and build resilience for the realization of child rights.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Pacific continued to support Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) in protecting, promoting and fulfilling the rights of all children in the region and overcoming challenges that impede effective programme design and implementation, such as geographic dispersion, natural hazards, and chronically under-resourced arms of government. The identification of the most marginalized and disadvantaged children in the Pacific region is critical to ensuring UNICEF upholds its commitment to equity and the 2030 Sustainable Development
agenda to ‘leave no one behind.’

Critical areas of support provided to children in 2017 were linked to the implementation of various national goals and policies across the PICTs. Vanuatu adopted its 2030 National Sustainable Development Plan, which identifies poverty reduction as a key priority area. In doing so, Vanuatu joined Kiribati and Solomon Islands in identifying poverty as a key issue requiring attention. This was notable since the governments of several PICTs continued to deny that poverty exists. Monetary poverty measurement approaches were heavily disputed because of the high subsistence production levels in most PICTs.

In September, the Government of Cook Islands approved the country’s first-ever National Policy Framework for Children, which was founded on principles of both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan. UNICEF Pacific supported the development of the national Policy. Budgetary and human resources challenges remain for the implementation of the Policy. UNICEF will work with the Government to put in place the necessary structures to ensure the policy is effectively implemented.

Progress was achieved in the generation of evidence and reliable national disability data in the PICTs with support from UNICEF, the UN Population Fund, the World Bank, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific and the Pacific Community. In accord with the globally-accepted principle of ‘leaving no one behind’, progress was made in establishing national disability data baselines. Disability reports developed in Palau and Kiribati using data from censuses carried out in 2015 in both countries, with technical support from UNICEF, will inform policy and government and stakeholder programmatic interventions. Kiribati set up a disability grant to support persons with severe disabilities using data from the disability report. Capacity development initiatives enhanced the ability of government officials to collect and analyse reliable data and respond to the data needs of monitoring progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNICEF Pacific advanced its engagements with PICTs on measuring poverty by strengthening basic technical and analytical skills of government officials to measure poverty from uni-dimensional and multi-dimensional perspectives, which are required to measure income-based SDG indicators 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, respectively. Tonga’s national poverty report included, for the first time, data that was disaggregated by age as well as multidimensional child poverty measures that were developed by Bristol University using a consensual approach.

Following UNICEF Pacific’s social protection activities in Kiribati, the Government made a commitment to allocate additional resources for vulnerable populations and established a Social Protection Unit to strengthen coordination and response at the national level. The Kiribati Cabinet approved a disability grant and the development of a programme to address poverty. UNICEF Pacific supported the preparation of a Cabinet paper on a child grant, which was under consideration at year end.

UNICEF followed through with the Government of Fiji on the recommendations from the assessment of the care and protection programme, contributing to the increase in budgetary allocation for existing programmes in 2017–2018. A cabinet paper was produced following the assessment conducted in 2015 with UNICEF support to strengthen social protection programmes. The Care and Protection Allowance increased by 94 per cent. A Poverty Benefit Scheme targeting destitute families increased by 64 per cent. The Social Pension Scheme increased by 166 per cent for old-age pensioners and the food voucher programme for pregnant mothers increased by 230 per cent.
Implementation of recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child progressed in 2017. Children were represented in decision-making in Fiji’s National Coordinating Committee on Children. The Government of Tuvalu made legislative changes prohibiting corporal punishment in all schools. Cook Islands strengthened coordination at the national level through endorsement of the Cook Islands National Advisory Committee on Children. UNICEF’s work with Tonga, Federated States of Micronesia and Kiribati to clear CRC reports that have been outstanding for 20, 17 and 6 years, respectively, resulted in the production of final drafts that were awaiting approval by the respective Cabinets before submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF helped Vanuatu prepare for a constructive dialogue with the committee by facilitating mock sessions.

OUTPUT 1 PAPE PCR 9 IR9.1: By 2017, collection, analyses and dissemination of disaggregated data on the situation of children and women strengthened.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Pacific continued efforts in 2017 to improve and build regional and country capacity to collect, analyse and utilize data on disability. At the regional level, UNICEF supported the attendance of a Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) research officer and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) disability coordination officer at global training workshop on measuring child disability. The workshop was organized by UNICEF’s Data and Analytics Section in New York and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to strengthen capacity to collect, analyse, understand, use and disseminate data on children with disabilities in a manner that is accurate and consistent across different settings, countries, and populations. With the knowledge gained, PDF carried out training for disabled people’s organizations in Solomon Islands in October 2017. The knowledge gained will enhance the capacity of PIFS to lead the implementation of the Pacific Framework for Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its goal to strengthen disability research, statistics and analysis.

At the country level, UNICEF Pacific partnered with the Pacific Community (SPC) and national statistics offices in Kiribati and Palau to provide training on measuring disability to ministry and civil society stakeholders. Twelve participants from Kiribati’s Ministries of Education, Health, Labour, Women, Youth and Social Welfare participated in the training in Kiribati. Eighteen participants from government ministries including the Ministries of Finance and Justice were trained in Palau. With facilitation from UNICEF and SPC and using knowledge gained from the training, government and civil society representatives worked to produce disability reports from their respective 2015 population and housing census data that included Washington Group Disability Questions. The reports will improve understanding about the situation and needs of persons with disabilities in these two countries and stakeholders will use the skills acquired from training collect regular and reliable national disability data to inform planning processes.

UNICEF Pacific worked to improve measurement and reporting of child poverty in six Pacific Island countries. Ten Government representatives from six Pacific countries (two from Fiji, two from Kiribati, one from Solomon Islands, one from Tuvalu, two from Tonga and two from Vanuatu) received basic technical and analytical skills training on poverty analysis. A poverty analysis workshop jointly organized by UNICEF Pacific, Tonga Department of Statistics, SPC and Bristol University brought together government statisticians from across the Pacific, who acquired skills and reliable tools that will help them adopt a more critical approach to both unidimensional and multi-dimensional poverty measurement. Technical support was provided to Tonga and Tuvalu to process data from Household Income and Expenditure Surveys and
institutionalize reporting on child poverty for national poverty reports. For the first time, Tonga’s national poverty report included data disaggregated by age and multidimensional child poverty measures that were developed by Bristol University using a consensual approach.

**OUTPUT 2 PAPE PCR 9 IR9.2:** By 2017, governments’ policies, budgets and social protection systems enhance resilience and reduce disparities for children.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Limited capacity to design and implement social protection programmes persisted in the Pacific region. To address this and to strengthen partner capacity and the development of child support grants and poverty-based social protection programmes, UNICEF facilitated South-South cooperation learning exchanges between the Governments of Kiribati and Fiji and the Governments of Tonga and the Cook Islands. Senior government officials responsible for social protection from Kiribati and Tonga participated. The exchange helped to strengthen a proposal submitted to Cabinet in Kiribati to establish a first-ever child-centred social protection programme. The experience in Cook Islands prompted the Social Protection and Disability Division of Tonga’s Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to explore the feasibility of universal cash transfers to reduce vulnerability.

A public consultation on 12 social protection programmes, including a child grant and support to vulnerable groups, was conducted in Cook Islands November 2017. The consultation was organized by the MIA and supported by UNICEF Pacific and brought together 70 participants from the Government, non-governmental organizations, beneficiaries of social protection programmes and members of the public. Participants made 28 recommendations on issues, including service provision. Positive progress was achieved on extending the age of eligibility to 16 years for children with disabilities, aiming to ensure children with disabilities have access to critical services under the child grant.

The Cook Islands National Policy Framework for Children 2017–2021 became the first comprehensive national policy for children to be endorsed by Cabinet. The process leading to its adoption was led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and supported by UNICEF Pacific. The policy is aligned to the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2020 and linked to various national goals related to poverty reduction, improving health and equitable opportunities and quality education, and advancing the rights of children and other vulnerable groups. Based on five national outcomes for children, the policy aims to create a safe and supportive environment for all children, in the home and in other settings. It also addresses the provision of quality services in education and health and access to and participation in economic and other opportunities. Gaps remained in budgetary and human resources required to coordinate implementation of the policy over the short term.

UNICEF joined at UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific, and International Monetary Fund organized regional workshop on improving medium-term expenditure planning in November 2017. The workshop brought together more than 50 representatives of ministries and departments of finance and national planning and central banks from 15 countries (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). UNICEF addressed the importance of enhancing budgetary responsiveness to children’s needs. The workshop equipped participants with the knowledge and skills to adopt inclusive budgetary planning and monitoring processes that equalize opportunities, build the potential of children and create high returns for Pacific nations.
OUTPUT 3 PAPE PCR 9 IR9.3: By 2017, national child rights coordination and reporting mechanisms strengthened guided by national child and youth policies, with increased participation of young people.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017 UNICEF continued to engage in human rights monitoring and reporting to support governments in the Pacific region to take the necessary steps toward progressive realization of the rights of women and children.

A constructive dialogue between the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Vanuatu Government delegation took place in September. UNICEF Pacific facilitated a periodic dialogue to review Vanuatu’s progress in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), two optional protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and an optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The Committee’s concluding comments and recommendations will guide the Vanuatu’s work in creating an environment that supports the holistic development of all Vanuatu’s children.

UNICEF Pacific attended Committee on the Rights of the Child pre-sessional dialogue on Solomon, Islands Palau and Marshall Islands in June. UNICEF identified key gaps and advocated the need to strengthen evidence-based laws and policies as well put in place requisite resources for their effective implementation. Priority issues and recommendations that emerged during this dialogue will inform constructive dialogues between the Committee and government delegations from three Pacific Island countries that will take place in January 2018.

Three Pacific Island countries were on track to clear outstanding Committee on the Rights of the Child state party reports: Tonga (initial report), Kiribati (combined periodic second–fourth report) and the Federated States of Micronesia (second periodic report) drafted their respective reports in 2017 and were awaiting internal endorsement prior to submission to the Committee. UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education and Training in Tonga to complete five consultations across the country and key informant interviews with relevant government ministries about their Committee report. UNICEF also worked with the Ministry for Women, Youth and Social Affairs in Kiribati and the Department for Health and Social Affairs in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) on their Committee reports. The reports were outstanding for 20 years in Tonga, 17 years in FSM and six years in Kiribati. Submission of these reports will ensure that the three countries comply with obligations for reporting.

Three other Pacific Island countries were on track to submit their respective Committee on the Rights of the Child reports, which are due in 2019: Tuvalu (combined second–fifth), Cook Islands (combined second–fifth) and Niue (second–fifth).

The Cook Island Cabinet endorsed the establishment of the National Coordinating Committee on Children in November 2017. The multisectoral committee is expected to improve the coherence, effectiveness and timeliness of the Government’s response to children’s issues. The capacity of the Committee was strengthened through the engagement by the lead agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, of a national coordinator, which was supported by UNICEF Pacific.
OUTCOME 10 the Pacific Multi-Country Programme is effectively designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, UNICEF Pacific completed the planning process of the 2018–2022 programme cycle. The new Multi-Country Programme was endorsed by all the countries and major donors in the Pacific. In May 2017, UNICEF Pacific held consultations with key regional stakeholders, including representatives of governments and regional organizations based in Suva. Feedback from those consultations helped to strengthen the Multi-Country Programme Document (MCPD). Country level consultations with governments and national stakeholders were held as part of UNICEF Pacific programme consultations with all 14 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). The MCPD was endorsed by all countries before submission to the UNICEF Executive Board for approval. Fiji, Solomon Islands and Federated States of Micronesia presented testimonials to the UNICEF Executive Board in support of the 2018–2022 UNICEF Pacific Multi-Country Programme. The MCPD was approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in September 2017.

Fundraising for the new program cycle began in earnest in 2017. By the end of December 2017, UNICEF Pacific's funding pipeline included Other Resources (OR) totalling US$20.5 million against a ceiling of US$67 million for the new programme cycle. Additional funding for the introduction of new vaccines is expected from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Funds utilization in 2017 was at 100 per cent of Regular Resources, 95 per cent of OR and 91 per cent of Other Resources Emergency (ORE). OR and ORE repathed to 2018 totalled US$8.65 million. The 2018–2022 programming cycle will commence on solid financial footing.

UNICEF Pacific partnered with ADB in 2017 on an initiative to introduce new vaccines in four PICTs, strengthened its relationship with the World Bank and worked to widen the pool of donors to include China, Japan and Korea.

In 2017, UNICEF Pacific supported the finalization of the United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) as co-lead of the following three outcome areas: Outcome 1 on climate change, disaster resilience and environmental protection; Outcome 4 on equitable basic services; and Outcome 5 on governance and community engagement. The UNPS was endorsed by all relevant countries. The UNICEF Pacific Representative and Deputy Representative were part of UNPS consultations in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga and Samoa. UNICEF facilitated UNPS consultation processes in Vanuatu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands. Joint work planning for the UNPS that began in 2017 will be finalized during the first quarter of 2018. UNICEF was co-chair with the UN Population Fund of the Data Monitoring and Evaluation Group.

The 2013–2017 programme cycle concluded with key achievements across all results areas. Of 11 outcomes, two were met, 8 were on track and 1 was constrained. Out of 49 outputs, 9 were met, 33 were on track and 7 were constrained.

In response to a new guidance note on preparedness for emergency response, UNICEF Pacific took steps to fulfill minimum preparedness actions. Capacity-building on emergency preparedness and response was made available for staff in Suva's UNICEF Multi-Country Office and field offices in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati. Prepositioned emergency supplies in UNICEF-controlled warehouses were replenished during year.
OUTPUT 1 Programme Coordination - DepRep - BMA only UNICEF staff and partners are provided guidance, tools and resources to effectively design and manage programmes

Analytical statement of progress
Preparation of UNICEF Pacific’s new Multi-Country Programme (MCP) commenced in 2016 and continued in 2017 with intensive planning that culminated with endorsement by the UNICEF Executive Board of a MCP Document (MCPD). During the MCPD development process, strategy notes elaborating how the MCPD results will be achieved and a Country Programme Management Plan indicating the human resources required for implementation also were finalized. Regional and country level consultations on the MCPD were carried out with all 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) between May and July 2017.

The 2018–2022 MCP emphasizes equity and the Sustainable Development Goal pledge to ‘leave no one behind.’ In 2017, UNICEF Pacific strengthened its network of contacts in North Pacific countries, particularly Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), where child indicators were among the worst in the region. A programme team consisting of the UNICEF Pacific Deputy Representative and education, water, sanitation and hygiene, child protection and health section chiefs conducted a reconnaissance mission to the North Pacific, including FSM, RMI and Palau, to identify entry points for the UNICEF Pacific programming. UNICEF Pacific established contacts with sectoral government partners, local non-governmental organizations, development partners and other UN agencies such as World Health Organization, UN Population Fund and International Organization for Migration.

Programme implementation planning aimed at optimizing 2018–2022 MCP delivery efficiency also commenced. The UNICEF programme team agreed on a planning process that includes delivering programme activities ‘on government plan’ and ‘on government budget’ in selected PICTs. Rolling workplans will be maintained in most PICTs while consolidated workplans will be utilized in PICTs where critical children’s issues will be addressed. This process will be replicated (where applicable), documented and shared with the UNICEF regional office and New York Headquarters. Key strategies were defined to promote convergence in programming and equity-based targeting at subnational levels.

UNICEF Pacific carried out annual and midyear reviews (MYR) in 2017. Key recommendations from the MYR were tracked through monthly programme and country management team meetings. Significant achievements in resource utilization were noted in 2017. Utilization of Regular Resources reached 100 per cent, Other Regular Resources reached 95 per cent and Other Resources Emergency reached 91 per cent. UNICEF Pacific managed to meet key performance indicators for direct cash transfers (DCTs) of zero DCTs exceeding nine months and was within the benchmark of DCTs six months in the last quarter of 2017. A total of 48 donor reports were completed and submitted on time in 2017.

OUTPUT 2 External relations Advocacy / Communication BMA only UNICEF Staff and partners are provided tools, guidance and resources for effective communication on child rights issues with stake holders

Analytical statement of progress
Global advocacy campaigns throughout the year were localized to be in line with the Pacific key advocacy priorities and national priorities, Campaigns included the #flipclimatechange
challenge, #earlymomentsmatter, #eatplaylove, #endviolence and #climatechange. Both traditional media outlets and social media platforms were used to disseminate key advocacy messages and extend audience reach during these campaigns.

Audience reach and engagement on social media increased in 2017, particularly via UNICEF Pacific’s Facebook and Twitter platforms, which reached 3,620,964 people (with Twitter reaching 1,479,950 and Facebook 2,128,760). Facebook had 45,000 followers and Twitter had 13,500. Staff and other UN colleagues based in UN Joint Presence Offices received training on social media, which led to an increase in staff content shared. During the COP23 month, 8 million were reached on Facebook and Twitter. Medium reached 2,207 users and YouTube 3,398 while Instagram had 969 engagements and LinkedIn reached 5,680 people.

UReport/RapidPro uptake was delayed and SMS messaging was not utilized as planned on these social media platforms. UReport/Rapid Pro will be coordinated in 2018 by Innovation. Remaining SMS will be utilized by communication and communication for development campaigns, including Get Ready emergency preparedness campaigns, during Fiji’s cyclone season.

Several high-profile advocacy events were carried out during the last quarter of 2017, including the Pacific early childhood conference, climate week celebrations in Fiji, Global Handwashing Day, COP 23 in Germany, World Children’s Day and the State of the World’s Children (SOWC) Report launch. The communication plan around COP23 was integrated with the education disaster resilience in school’s programme. The digital communication plan was included in the global COP23 plan, drawing attention to the impact of climate change on children in the Pacific. Two children from Fiji were selected to travel to Germany to participate in advocacy events in Bonn, including a high-level event with the Prime Minister of Fiji, German Chancellor, French President and UN Secretary-General.

The number of news items as of the end of November 2017 that included UNICEF messaging was 342 (compared with 371 in 2016, which included the response to Tropical Cyclone Winston). In November, 72 articles covered UNICEF Pacific advocacy messages, including COP 23, World Children’s Day and the emergency response to the volcanic activity on Ambae Island in Vanuatu.

Support was provided for donor visits and new partnerships, including the Innovation Challenge with ANZ, Marriott visit to Fiji, a celebrity chef’s support for a stunting campaign and New Zealand and Australia UNICEF National Committees. Visibility for key programme events was provided, including the WASH in Schools Three Stars awards, the launch of the disaster resilience in school’s programme and the launch of the Beginning of Life documentary as part of the early childhood development campaign.

Highlights around the field offices included: the SOWC launch linked to the Queen’s Baton in Vanuatu; World Children’s Day takeover in Solomon Islands with the Prime Minister as chief guest; Kiribati World Children’s Day; and song and emergency response visibility in Vanuatu.

OUTPUT 3 Programme results enhanced through effective planning, monitoring, evaluation, joint UN coordination, and resource mobilization

Analytical statement of progress
Situation analysis reports were finalized for 14 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). A regional summary was also finalized. The evidence from the situation analysis reports was used in the drafting of strategic notes for all outcomes envisaged in the new Multi-Country Programme Document (MCPD). UNICEF Pacific met all time scales associated with the development of the MCPD, which was approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in September.

UNICEF Pacific contributed to the strengthening of country systems, institutions and capacities to tailor, deliver and monitor national and regional sustainable development aspirations. Government statisticians and statistics officers from six PICTs – Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – and a technical officer from Pacific Community’s Statistics for Development Division attended a South Asia and East Asia Pacific Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) design workshop in Bangkok in August. Technical advice was provided to the participants from PICTs on how to integrate a collection of children and women-related data in other surveys to facilitate monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals. The training contributed to the objectives of the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development by strengthening capacities to monitor national and regional development priorities. In Kiribati, MICS modules were integrated into an ongoing Demographic and Health Survey to improve coverage of the indicators monitored.

In 2017, 26 major studies and research documents were included in UNICEF Pacific’s integrated monitoring and evaluation plan: one water, sanitation and hygiene evaluation, five programme reviews and eight external publications were anticipated. Of these, 13 studies, one evaluation, two reviews and four external publications were completed. Two activities were cancelled and the remaining were ongoing. The completed studies enabled UNICEF Pacific to more fully understand the challenges facing children and were used to strengthen programme plans and external publications and position UNICEF as a knowledge leader on children’s issues in the Pacific.

A consolidated results and resource framework for the 2018–2022 Multi-Country Programme was finalized ensuring that all indicators had baselines, annual targets and means of verification.

Programme outcomes were supported through two-page fundraising concept notes, which were produced as part of the preparations for the new MCP. The concept notes summarize the key challenges facing children in the Pacific that will be addressed by UNICEF Pacific programme areas. They were used during fundraising discussions with potential donors and partners for the programme cycle 2018–2022.

**OUTPUT 4** UNICEF staff and partners are provided tools, guidance, and resources for effective advocacy and partnerships on child rights issues with stakeholders

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, communication for development (C4D) technical support was provided to implement Expanded Programme on Immunization social mobilization activities; roll-out reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health activities; plan and promote inclusive and comprehensive integrated water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in school’s campaigns and interventions; design and develop integrated C4D resources for programmes in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji.
Technical support was provided for a knowledge, attitudes and practices study on positive parenting in Kiribati and formative research on stunting in Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Republic of Marshall Islands and campaign roll-out in 2018. Menstrual health management assessments were underway in Kiribati through a WASH in Schools programme. UNICEF provided technical support to Fiji’s National Disaster Management Office in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and Pacific Community Secretariat to develop an integrated C4D multimedia package, ‘Get Ready. Disasters Happen.’ The package, which included radio spots, animations, print materials (brochures and poster) and a dedicated website, was to be launched during the fourth quarter of 2017. Following the declaration of a national state of emergency because of volcanic activity on Ambae Island in Vanuatu, UNICEF supported immediate C4D interventions.

Capacity-building was an important part of preparations for UNICEF Pacific’s Multi-Country Programme. C4D training was rolled out to UNICEF staff in Suva and a C4D training workshop for 25 programme colleagues and multisectoral partners in Solomon Islands was held in September. Training that was to be provided in Kiribati and Vanuatu was postponed to 2018. Several workshops were held with young people in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to gather information and support youth to voice their opinions on the use of digital technology for UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children 2017 report. For World Children’s Day, children from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu took over radio stations to bring attention to key issues, which consolidated new media partnerships with Fiji Times, Solomon Star, Vanuatu Daily Post and Magic FM in Samoa. Climate change advocates supported the #flipchallenge campaign on climate change. Other key partnerships included COP23 in October and November, as well as the University of the South Pacific’s climate awareness in school’s events.

The Sports for Development programme supported the Oceania Football Confederation in training 389 Just Play Programme facilitators in Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The Just Play Programme for children aged 6–12 years was delivered in six countries, reaching 19,215 children (10,447 boys and 8,768 girls), and the programme for children aged 13–16 years reached 200 children (100 boys and 100 girls) from 10 communities in Tonga. Just Play Emergency Programme activities were rolled out in Fiji following landslides in Laucala District and in Vanuatu on the Island of Ambae following the evacuation and repatriation of the population due to volcanic activity. The #ENDviolence campaign helped to broaden community awareness in the region.

**OUTPUT 5** Cross sectoral support to operations staff salaries; Field based staff; cross sectoral programme staff; Office emergency preparedness and response; Multi-country and Field Offices running costs. Strategies to address cross cutting issues are developed and applied

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF Pacific’s emergency preparedness and response capacity was beefed up with the recruitment of an emergency specialist on temporary appointment and a junior programme officer posted as emergency officer.

UNICEF Pacific took steps to fulfil the minimum preparedness actions per a new guidance note on preparedness, including through the provision of staff training on emergency preparedness and response for Suva-based staff and field offices in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati.

Prepositioned emergency supplies in UNICEF-controlled warehouses were replenished and will be further augmented with the approval of funding from Department of Foreign Affairs and
Trade for emergency supplies and logistics. A UNICEF Pacific Supply and Logistics Emergency Preparedness Strategy paper was finalized and tabled for discussion and approval by the Country Management Team. The paper describes options for delivering and procuring emergency supplies and identifies the supply and logistics preparedness activities that must be done immediately to achieve strategic objectives. Single sector and multisectoral (water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and child protection) contingency programme cooperation agreements for emergency were being pursued with Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga.

UNICEF supported the Pacific Humanitarian Team in developing country preparedness packages (CPP) in selected Pacific Island countries. The CPP is a process in which national and international actors develop and agree upon a country-specific approach to work together during disaster. Phase 1 was completed in Vanuatu, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) and Solomon Islands, where a basic national framework was established. Phase II was being pursued in Vanuatu and will involve contingency planning with the national government and other humanitarian partners.

UNICEF Pacific maintained three field offices in Kiribati, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands and worked through UN Joint Presence Offices in Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, RMI and Cook Island on a costs recovery basis.

OUTCOME 11 Children affected by emergencies in Pacific Islands receive support as per UNICEF CCCs

Analytical statement of progress
Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) are highly vulnerable to natural hazards. One of the most seismically and volcanically active regions in the world, the Pacific also experiences some of the most severe tropical cyclones. Eight PICTs are on the list of 20 countries in the world with the highest average annual disaster losses scaled by gross domestic product. With varying government capacities to respond, dispersed populations, limited infrastructure and connectivity, reaching the needy with essential and life-saving supplies is always challenging.

In 2017, UNICEF continued to respond to needs from large-scale emergencies triggered by Tropical Cyclone Pam in 2015 and Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016. Late in 2016, two small-scale events occurred that UNICEF Pacific responded to in 2017. In December 2016, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck near Makira Province in Solomon Islands and a tropical depression caused flooding that triggered landslides in Fiji. In 2017, Tropical Cyclone Donna struck Vanuatu in May and the Monaro Volcano erupted in September. UNICEF Pacific secured financial support from the Governments of New Zealand and Korea and from the global humanitarian thematic fund to respond to the Monaro volcanic eruption emergency.

UNICEF provided water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and dignity kits to 1,136 families (9,307 people, approximately 4,747 females) and provided access to safe water to more than 5,800 affected people. UNICEF supported the deployment of government medical teams to affected areas and evacuation centres to provide medical services, including nutrition screening, breastfeeding counselling and immunization. The continued schooling of at least 4,650 students (approximately 2,371 girls) was enabled through the provision of teaching and learning materials and school tents.
UNICEF contributed to improved coordination of humanitarian response in the Pacific as member of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT). Established by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2008, PHT is based in Fiji and Samoa, and comprises UN agencies, and other regional humanitarian players, non-governmental organizations and donors. OCHA provided overall coordination of the development of country preparedness packages (CPPs) and country-specific approaches to disaster. UNICEF, with Oxfam, played a leading role in the development of the CPP in Vanuatu and advocated for its adoption by the Government. UNICEF continued in 2017 to lead regional clusters on WASH, education (with Save the Children), health and nutrition (with World Health Organization) and was an active member of the protection cluster as well as the Pacific Cash Working Group and Communication Working Group. These clusters and working groups met regularly and were actively engaged in preparedness actions in 2017.

In August 2017, Fiji launched its National Humanitarian Policy for Disaster Risk Management and Fiji Tsunami Response Plan. Fiji's National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018–2030 was in development during 2017 and is expected to be launched in 2018 once it is approved by national authorities. PHT members, including UNICEF, provided feedback to strengthen the policies and plans, improve coordination mechanisms of humanitarian responses and institutionalize the cluster system for humanitarian coordination in Fiji.

OUTPUT 1 Vanuatu Emergency Response- Affected children in Vanuatu receive life-saving emergency interventions towards their recovery and return to normality, with strengthened resilience and capacities for mitigating the impact of future natural disasters.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Pacific responded to two emergencies in Vanuatu in 2017: one triggered in May by Tropical Cyclone (TC) Donna, the strongest off-season cyclone on record, and a second that resulted from a Monaro Volcano eruption in October. Prepositioned supplies were utilized to support immediate response to the emergencies. TC Donna grew to a category 5 cyclone and skirted the northern and western side of Vanuatu. The Torres Group of Islands in northern Vanuatu and its population of more than 1,000 scattered over five islands were most affected. UNICEF airlifted supplies and, with government officials in charge of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster, provided 179 families with WASH and dignity kits. Three tents and three early childhood care and education kits were delivered to support the return to school of some 200 students in three schools. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Health in re-establishing services in two health centres and in conducting nutrition screening and distribution of Plumpy’ Doz, a ready-to-use-supplementary food rich in vitamin and minerals to approximately 100 children aged 6–36 months from the affected islands.

UNICEF supported the Government of Vanuatu throughout the process of evacuating and repatriating approximately 2,220 Ambae Island residents during the Monaro volcano emergency. UNICEF helped government ministries develop response plans for the evacuation and provided useful inputs into a repatriation plan developed by the National Disaster Management Office.

UNICEF supported the Government’s immediate response by mobilizing prepositioned stocks in-country and in Suva, Fiji and by providing cash and technical support for critical activities. Safe drinking water was provided through the installation of eight 6,000-liter water tanks and delivery of water through trucking. Hygiene needs were addressed through the distribution at
eight evacuation centres in Luganville of 600 WASH and dignity kits to all 2,220 Ambae Island residents. The return to school of at least 2,260 primary school children was supported through the provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Training on planning and monitoring the status of students and the provision of 8 tents, 66 early childhood development kits, 54 school-in-a-box and 1,200 storybooks in the local Bislama language. Psychosocial support was provided through activities in evacuation centres that were facilitated by peer volunteers, reaching 732 children (396 boys and 336 girls) and 660 adults (387 women and 273 men).

The WASH needs of 30 communities in West and South Ambae were addressed after repatriation. Old water tanks were cleaned, six new 6,000-liter water tanks were installed and water trucking was carried out to ensure residents had continued access to safe water. (West and South Ambae are dependent on rainwater for their water.) A total of 235 WASH and dignity kits were distributed, benefiting 1,175 people, including 482 children aged 0–14.

**OUTPUT 2** Solomon Emergency Response- Affected children in Solomon Islands receive life-saving emergency interventions towards their recovery and return to normality, with strengthened resilience and capacities for mitigating the impact of future natural disasters.

**Analytical statement of progress**
A 7.8-magnitude earthquake that occurred on 9 December 2016 affected more than 9,000 people and damaged at least 305 homes, 20 schools and several health centres in Makira Province in Solomon Islands. UNICEF participated in damage assessment and response planning of three key committees – health (covering health, nutrition, WASH), education and protection. UNICEF made available to the committees in-country prepositioned emergency stocks for the immediate emergency response. UNICEF collaborated with the Solomon Islands Red Cross (SIRC) on the delivery of UNICEF emergency supplies to Makira Province.

One water bladder was installed and 1,442 bars of soap, 1,222 water containers, purification tablets and information materials were distributed to 611 affected people. Eight tents and five tarpaulins were used to set up temporary learning spaces at 13 schools damaged by the earthquake. This ensured the return to school of 1,950 students (1,013 boys and 919 girls). Four additional UNICEF tents were set up as temporary clinics in four areas that provided coverage for more than 2,000 people.

Distributing emergency items through the government system proved challenging because of limited weak coordination and logistics capacity. A partnership with SIRC was effective in arranging commercial vessels for distribution but inclement weather made delivery difficult. The experience also highlighted the need to build the capacity of national and provincial authorities in coordinating emergency response activities.

**Document centre**

**Evaluation and research**

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**Does women’s participation in water committees affect management and water system performance in rural Vanuatu?**

**Operational Research on Water Safety Plans**

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**Final Evaluation Improving WASH in Solomon Islands (IWASH-SI) Project**

**[UNICEF EAPRO 2017] Diversion not Detention**

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**Community Engagement and Supportive Supervision in Solomon Islands**

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**Other publications**

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