Executive Summary

At the end of the third quarter, the Panamanian economy showed gross national product growing at 5.6 per cent. This was slightly lower than the expected 6 per cent, and confirmed the deceleration trend of the economy. Unemployment was just above 5 per cent, but slowly rising, owing to the completion of massive public works such as the Canal expansion. Among youth, unemployment figures were three times higher than the national average. Inflation is under control (less than 1 per cent) and food prices are relatively stable.

For the 2017 national budget, there is an estimated 7 per cent increase, reaching US$21.67 billion, based on the prediction of a minor recovery of the speed in the economic growth. The deficit is within the law and the public debt is US$21.66 billion, less than half of the gross national product. Subsidies approximated US$1 billion of a US$20 billion national budget. Social protection programmes reached 271,000 beneficiaries countrywide, but attention and service delivery could be strengthened to ensure results for the most vulnerable families, thus making an effective investment of the 80 per cent of the Ministry of Social Development budget that goes to transfers.

The process for drafting the comprehensive protection system legislation was one of the contributions UNICEF Panama made in 2016. As a result, the Government of Panama has draft legislation that incorporates comments from the legislative and the judiciary branch and from non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

A specialized part of the protection system is the Government’s response to children without parental care, where UNICEF Panama also supported the country in 2016. About 50 children and adolescents were deinstitutionalized as the result of the pilot project that involves the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families and the four most emblematic private institutions for children without parental care. An inter-institutional coordination mechanism was adopted by the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families to follow efforts linked to the road map to deinstitutionalization.

In terms of public health, there was a sharp increase (10 times) of Zika cases, but a decrease of chikungunya and dengue cases. The Government of Panama response was on vector control and prevention, and public campaigns. With the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF Panama continues to monitor the situation, and will support the Government in awareness raising and care and support.

According to a study published by the Gorgas Institute, a large majority of adolescents in public schools didn’t know the basic facts about HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Another study shows changes in the HIV country map over the years. Ngabe-Bugló and Kuna Yala Comarcas have reached significant levels of HIV prevalence; and the situations of Panama and Colon have not improved, although their socio-economic profile has changed.
in three decades. Evidence shows there is an increase of AIDS patients, as people living with HIV live longer, and death rates have decreased.

In 2016, there was steady opposition from fundamental and conservative sectors to the mainstreaming of gender issues in health and education. Rallies against a draft legislation that recognizes the rights of young women and adolescents to learn and access contraceptive methods, and education in sexual and reproductive health in public schools, have caused paralysis of such services. However, the Government’s intention to respond to the recommendation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) regarding the need for a child-rights legal framework remains strong, and UNICEF Panama hopes to see regained momentum in 2017 closer to the Committee on the Rights of the Child review of Panama in its seventy-seventh session.

Another trend was a significant upsurge in the flux of northbound migrants. With some limitations, the Government of Panama provided shelter, food and relative security during their transit. Although there are no official data about unaccompanied migrant children, authorities have recognized isolated cases of unaccompanied migrant adolescents. UNICEF Panama continues to monitor the situation.

Despite some setbacks related to the politics and change of leadership of key government counterparts, UNICEF Panama was able to deliver many of the groundwork results of the first year of the Country Programme Document in the areas of deinstitutionalization, comprehensive protection law and policy, intercultural bilingual education, early childhood development, disaster risk reduction, and advocacy for violence prevention.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

As there was no major humanitarian crisis in Panama in 2016, UNICEF Panama did not provide any humanitarian assistance per se to the country during the reporting period. However, the office monitored the spread of Zika virus, and raised awareness among government authorities in the education, health and social development sectors regarding the potential impact of any outbreak of Zika. By the end of 2016, Panama reported more than 550 cases. Most of the cases are linked to the Province of Panama (265) and Guna Yala (148). Of the suspected cases of children with congenital syndrome associated with Zika, five were confirmed.

Throughout 2016 there was an influx of international migrants through Panama. The Government of Panama responded by providing essential housing, health interventions and food supplies.

UNICEF participated in inter-agency meetings to coordinate support that could be provided in partnership with other agencies. Furthermore, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Government of Panama to strengthen the protocol of handling unaccompanied children on the move.

The implementation of the Care for Child Development in partnership with the National Council for the Integral Attention of Early Childhood became a solid entry point to address Zika prevention, care and support, as it will become part of an integrated strategy to be rolled out in 2017.

In November, tropical storm Otto hit the coast of Bocas del Toro, affecting the provinces of Bocas del Toro, Chiriquí and Colón. There was severe property damage from the flooding, but the situation did not require humanitarian assistance for children from UNICEF other than close monitoring.
Emerging Areas of Importance

Migration. There was an influx of international migrants through Panama, primarily Cubans due to the 'wet foot, dry foot' policy that grants them residency upon arriving on United States soil. After the initial wave of Cubans, other nationalities from the region have followed. An extra continental wave of migrants trying to reach the United States has also been identified. Children were a small proportion of the population on the move, and for the most part, they were travelling with their families.

The Government of Panama responded by providing essential housing, health care, and food supply. UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Government to strengthen the protocol of handling unaccompanied children as a preparedness measure. At the United Nations General Assembly Summit for Refugees and Migrants, Panama’s President highlighted the country’s role as a collaborator country for the protection and rights of migrants and pleaded that the notion of shared responsibility of the countries involved be strengthened.

The second decade of life. The 2014 National Human Development Report suggests that there is much to be done in Panama to ensure that adolescents and youth have a place in public policies that will safeguard their future. The macro policies on economic growth, education and citizen security need to be harmonized to ensure adolescents’ full development. So far, UNICEF Panama has been laying the groundwork for adolescent programming with adolescent participation, raising awareness about their rights through workshops and SNS.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>Country Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COIF</td>
<td>Centros de Orientación Infantil (Child Orientation Centres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCT</td>
<td>direct cash transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HACT</td>
<td>Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILANUD</td>
<td>United Nations Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USMA</td>
<td>Universidad Católica Santa María La Antigua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELAF</td>
<td>Latin America Foster Care Network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Capacity Development

During 2016, there were capacity-building activities with the team from the Interdisciplinary Education Institute as a key strategy to strengthen alternative measures to imprisonment; build an information system, and consolidate the Pacora Juvenile Centre as a model to be replicated. These actions included participation in international seminars and trainings for custodians, teachers and technical teams on juvenile centres. As part of the process to strengthen capacities and specialization regarding the juvenile system, judges from juvenile criminal jurisdiction participated in a specialized course on jurisdictional protection of child rights, organized by UNICEF Chile and Diego Portales University.

UNICEF’s partnership with academic centres seeks to broaden social actors’ participation in the dialogue about policies for children, but also seeks to strengthen their capacity for rights-based, results-oriented and evidence-based formulation of strategies and policy frameworks. Such has been the work with the Universidad Católica Santa María La Antigua (USMA), the
most important catholic university in the country, with sub-regional centres in various provinces. USMA’s work has been instrumental in the development of a base document for child rights-based policies, which may play a vital role in developing other sector-specific policies for children. An array of policy basis documents, communication strategy and draft law, which are all necessary to develop a system of comprehensive protection for children, is now available to government institutions.

In 2016, UNICEF Panama contributed to the capacity development for the implementation of the 0–3 curricula, with more than 300 teachers trained. Two other capacity-building initiatives that took place include: (1) III International Seminar on Early Education, and (2) the initial training of trainers of the Care for Child Development Initiative. Twenty-five professionals from different government institutions that provide services to families with children 0–3 years old participated in the training of trainers to introduce this proven methodology to strengthen the role of the family in the care and development of children.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

In child protection, there are several ongoing evidence generation initiatives, including: a situation analysis about violence against children; a study on the human rights standards in juvenile centres; and a study to analyse the characteristics of adolescents in the juvenile justice system. This study will provide important input to develop psycho-educational programmes and interventions for the social reintegration of adolescents in conflict with the law.

A diagnosis about the situation of children whose mothers are in detention centres were developed as an input to develop a model of attention, with a roadmap to articulate response between the Penitentiary System-Ministry of Government and the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families.

In the education sector, UNICEF Panama commissioned a study to better understand the causes of school drop-out in the violence-prevalent District of San Miguelito, where an intervention model will be launched in 2017.

In terms of advocacy for the prevention of violence against children, an alliance with religious leaders in 2016 created a social dialogue with and between authorities and religious leaders to promote awareness and public policies for the prevention of violence against children and adolescents. The advocacy with the participation of adolescents was considered so successful that Panama became a reference and will be hosting the Global Network of Religions for Children forum in May 2017, where religious leaders at the highest level will get together and discuss how religious communities can contribute to the prevention of violence against children, which will enable the topic to be put on the agenda of all major religions globally.

Partnerships

Partnership with three different social groups matured to produce results for children. Religious leaders through the Ecumenical Committee; private sector through SUMARSE (Global Compact’s branch in Panama); and civil society, and private sector through Aliados por la Niñez showed advocacy results for 10 priorities for children, including the comprehensive child protection system, which is a key outcome of the programme of cooperation. The value added by UNICEF Panama has been in evidence generation, capacity development, convening of actors and technical assistance.

UNICEF Panama mobilized a broad range of national and international partners to ensure results in the areas of capacity building and evidence generation. The partnership with the United Nations Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD) and with the Latin America Foster Care Network (RELAF) was effective in terms of evidence generation that informs policy in the pressing issue of deinstitutionalization.
The new partnership with the Ngabe Cultural Association also provided depth and new opportunities in terms of the implementation of intercultural bilingual education.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

UNICEF Panama implemented communication and public advocacy strategies and digital communication strategies. UNICEF Panama increased its followers in Facebook by 8 per cent and in Twitter 13 per cent in 2016. Currently, the social media community is 60,500 people among Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Based on the per capita measurement, UNICEF Panama among all its networks has a penetration of 1.4 per cent of the population of Panama. UNICEF Panama aligned itself to global initiatives such as #Endviolence y #foreverychild, not only in its social media, but also in the social media of its partners and allies.

In addition, the mobilization campaign implemented along with the Aliados por la Niñez (Allies for Children) reached more than 1 million people during 10 weeks of publications with well-aligned messages on the country’s priorities for children. The hashtag used was #aliadosporlaníñez. The online mobilization and advocacy campaign helped to put children on the public agenda. The mobilization campaign will have a second phase focused on the comprehensive protection system for children, which is an important outcome of the UNICEF programme of cooperation in Panama.

Another communication and public advocacy result was an alliance with seven leaders from different religious communities to promote the prevention of violence against children. Thanks to all the outreach activities, including a televised inter-religious mass transmitted simultaneously in six channels at the national level, this advocacy initiative is estimated to have reached approximately 1 million people with a clear message to stop violence against children.

In the traditional media, more than 50 news stories about issues related to child rights were printed in newspapers and online news websites and blogs.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

UNICEF Panama mobilized support from Universidad Diego Portales of Chile to provide technical guidance and coaching to USMA of Panama in developing a conceptual platform for child rights-based policies. The university provided invaluable support during the drafting of the Chilean legislation for the comprehensive protection of children’s rights. The Chilean team visited Panama at the beginning and towards the end of the process, conducting working sessions in which a multifaceted analysis was shared, and continued their follow-up by means of teleconferences with the Panamanian academics commenting on the documents produced by USMA. This example of universities working together may lead to a further step in which government institutions will be exchanging knowledge and experiences regarding child rights.

In the education sector, UNICEF Panama brokered support from the Government of Guatemala for the Ministry of Education on knowledge sharing and technical assistance related to education information systems to better monitor and understand the dynamics of school drop-out. This cooperation between Guatemala and Panama should continue in 2017.

As part of UNICEF’s work on the prevention of all forms of violence, UNICEF Panama supported the Ministry of Education in developing a protocol to prevent and respond to bullying in public schools. The initiative was developed through a cooperation facilitated by UNICEF Costa Rica with the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education.
Identification and Promotion of Innovation

UNICEF has been working with the Government of Panama on various initiatives that seek to make rapid progress in helping the adolescents out of school in an Miguelito District. UNICEF Panama’s search for lessons learned in programmatic interventions that work to bring out-of-school children back to school indicated that using technology not only as part of the learning environment, but also as a progress monitoring tool, can be very effective. UNICEF Panama will provide technical assistance to the Government in ensuring that the latest innovation for out-of-school children is used in providing their intervention model, which is scheduled to be operational in April 2017.

Support to Integration and Cross-Sectoral Linkages

The work on deinstitutionalization saw significant progress in 2016. UNICEF Panama used its role in the National Council for the Integral Attention of Early Childhood to position the tools produced by RELAF on the prevention of the separation of children from their families. This was also done with the Red de Oportunidades staff, the social protection scheme that attends to the poorest families in the country. An agreement was reached to train their workers to support families with simple messaging that can support them in preventing the separation, bearing in mind that a large proportion of children in institutions are there because of poverty.

UNICEF’s work with detention centres also explored the particular situation of women deprived of liberty regarding what could be happening to their children. This resulted in the Needs Assessment of the Situation of Women in Detention Centres, and a model of attention for their children was subsequently developed with the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families.

This strategy allowed UNICEF Panama to work on the prevention of more children entering institutions; in reducing the number of children in institutions by establishing the interinstitutional coordination/governance mechanism that was adopted by the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families to elaborate and implement a road map to deinstitutionalization; and attending to the specific needs of children in institutions, primarily those children of women deprived of liberty.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

Much of UNICEF Panama’s advocacy work with the Government and civil society is based on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child from 2011. This strategy, thanks to the Committee’s normative authority and the Government of Panama’s international obligation to respond to the recommendations, yielded positive results in terms of deinstitutionalization, juvenile justice and child protection.

In addition, throughout 2016, UNICEF Panama supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Commission that follows up on Human Rights Commitments in elaborating the state report for the Committee; and the first state report for both optional protocols. Panama ratified the third optional protocol on communications in 2016.

Gender Equality

In 2016, UNICEF Panama participated in an initiative to develop a needs assessment of the situation of women in detention centres, which found that 80 per cent of women in such centres are mothers. The study was done as part of an agreement with the penitentiary system to attend to the emerging issues faced particularly by women deprived of liberty and provided inputs for a model of integral attention for children without parental care in this kind of situation.
Many women deprived of their liberty remain the head of the household and are responsible for the care of their children, sending home their income from activities inside the centre. The study found that weaknesses in the treatment of women within the penitentiary system translate into a weakness of their parental competences. This situation affects the care of children when the mother is back at home and attempting to get back to a ‘normal’ family life.

**Environmental Sustainability**

UNICEF Panama worked with the Refugee Education Trust and the Ministry of Education to introduce a set of SDGs related to environment in the process of updating the public education materials distributed by the National Direction of Environmental Education. The materials will be ready in 2017, and will be aligned with the 2030 Plan being drafted and consulted by the Government.

For the second year, UNICEF Panama performed its environmental footprint exercise, and is taking measures to be more systematic in practicing good waste management.

**Effective Leadership**

Thanks to the organizational efforts to streamline the processes for small offices, UNICEF Panama increased the effectiveness and efficiency of office management and programme support in 2016, and the country management team (CMT) continues to serve as the main decision-making and information-sharing mechanism for doing so.

During 2016, 11 country management team meetings were held. The main initiatives related to improving operations and programme management were:

- CMT indicators were reviewed and changed to include annual management plan, Scoreboard and Dashboard indicators, so that the CMT could have a complete picture of all indicators for the office, as it looked for the alignment of what is being monitored in Insight.
- The new administrative assistant post assumed the CMT secretariat, so that the operations assistant could focus on the review of indicators and compliance and support the management on this section.
- Macro-evaluation of the Government of Panama was done, and the result was shared with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- The risk library was updated to include the Zika situation and the result of the macro-evaluation of the Government of Panama.
- 8 audit recommendations of medium risk from 2015 were closed during 2016. A plan of action was prepared and it was duly monitored regularly to guarantee compliance with audit observations.
- Business Continuity Plan simulation was done in June to evaluate the applicability of the instrument and it was updated in November to reflect new details.

**Financial Resources Management**

Regarding financial resources, the country management team included new management indicators to effectively monitor the funds implementation for regular resources, other resources and institutional budget, as well as direct cash transfers (DCTs), contract expirations, implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) plan, and bank threshold monitoring. Close monitoring of these financial indicators allowed UNICEF Panama to actively follow up on the necessary actions internally and vis-à-vis partners despite management transition of the representatives.

As of 12 January 2017, there was an execution of 88 per cent of the total allotment for the
year, encompassing 99 per cent of institutional budget, 90 per cent of other resources and 85 per cent of regular resources. The contribution of the Government of Panama of US$300,000 to the 2016 Country Programme was recorded in December 2016, and will be implemented for the 2017 annual workplan. Regarding DCT implementation, the office closed with an outstanding balance of 0 per cent for more than 9 months DCT; 6 per cent for 6–9 months DCT; and 61 per cent for 3–6 months DCT.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

UNICEF Panama is part of the group of emerging Private Fundraising and Partnerships country offices that worked to identify the space for sustainable fundraising from the private sector with the support of the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office in 2016. Under predefined criteria, several industries and businesses were mapped, selected and prioritized to be part of the first round of presentations on the marketing potential of customer-based fundraising partnership with UNICEF. In the case of Panama, the preferred sectors were insurance, telecommunications and cable service providers, and utilities.

With the new leadership in UNICEF Panama the sectors were expanded to include the maritime and logistics industry, and ports. UNICEF Panama held an initial visit with potential partners in 2016 and will follow up more vigorously in 2017 with a newly recruited partnership specialist.

The Government of Panama continues to be the biggest other resources donor to UNICEF Panama, with a yearly contribution of US$300,000. This regular resources funding provides a lot of flexibility in UNICEF programme cooperation with the Government of Panama, as the Government respects UNICEF’s independence and does not impose any requirement on its use.

Another significant source of funding for UNICEF Panama are global and regional thematic funds. This helps reduce the reporting burden. Also, examples of good reports from other countries that also receive the regional thematic fund helps UNICEF Panama improve its results-based reporting.

**Evaluation and Research**

UNICEF Panama identified five key activities in the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan for 2016. Of these, one was finalized, two are ongoing and two are pending.

One evaluation was conducted at the request of the Ministry of Education on the Telebasica and Multigrado models. The results of the evaluation suggest that both models need to be revamped. While they are relevant in rural and dispersed communities, the sustained economic growth and rapid changes in the country have led to urbanization, making the models neither efficient nor effective.

The results of the evaluation were used to influence two initiatives: 1) Aprende al Máximo, an initiative that seeks to strengthen the passion for learning; and 2) the model initiative to be implemented in San Miguelito for out-of-school children, which draws from the recommendation that videotechnology be dropped from Telebásica and converted to mobile devices.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

As UNICEF Panama remains in the same building as the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office, the office continues to benefit from savings in operational
expenses such as utility bills, information and communication technology, security, and cleaning services at scale, while maintaining autonomy as UNICEF (compared with other agencies that share the UNDP/United Nations Development Group building).

As part of the operations management team initiative of previous years, the office maintains savings in long-term agreements regarding the purchase of tickets and services from the travel agency, security, hotels for events, and office supplies.

The most important savings in the United Nations system is the decrease in the administrative cost for the issuance of an international ticket. In figures, this represents a saving of US$12 per ticket each time the ticket is being issued.

The estimated cost of savings for UNICEF Panama using these types of inter-agency long-term agreements translates to approximately US$13,900 for 2016. This relates to savings in the procurement process, selection of providers and time consumed for an assistant.

**Supply Management**

As part of the programmatic and operational implementation in 2016, the office executed US$271,758.15 in purchase orders and service contracts, including consultancies. The following table shows the details of assets acquisition and services during 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract no.</th>
<th>Contract type</th>
<th>Validity period start</th>
<th>Validity period end</th>
<th>Contract amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>43200329</td>
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<td>$1,770</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The office does not have inventory value in warehouse, neither construction projects via partnership, nor supplies issued through HACT.

### Security for Staff and Premises

UNICEF Panama actively participated in United Nations Country Teams and three Security Management Team meetings, where it approved: 1) the Security Plan 2016; 2) Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards and Minimum Operating Security Standards 2016; 3) continuity of the Guardian System that did not start in 2015 and is already being implemented in 2017 after guardians were trained; and 4) a request for new post-exposure prophylaxis kits to be delivered at the beginning of 2017.

In terms of inter-agency training, a workshop on safety and protection for women was held for all female United Nations staff and six radio checks were conducted during the year. Additionally, the office passed the Minimum Operating Security Standards evaluation in March 2016 following the recommendations requested. Business continuity plan simulation was done in June to evaluate the applicability of the plan and it was updated in November to reflect new details.

Furthermore, the Security Office (United Nations Department of Safety and Security) recommended to the United Nations system the revision of the security plan and the strengthening of security measures. UNICEF responded by improving the access systems to the building and now has an intercom and biometric fingerprint system, metal detector and an access protocol.

### Human Resources

A new administrative assistant joined UNICEF Panama to support operations and administration. This reduced the workload and redistributed tasks. As the operations assistant was on maternity leave most of 2016, UNICEF Panama hired a former UNICEF staff member with experience in HACT. The programme assistant participated in a stretch assignment for two months in the UNICEF Ecuador Country Office, supporting the emergency. As a result, she strengthened her skills and knowledge of emergency contexts and HACT implementation.

The ergonomic plan was 85 per cent implemented. UNICEF Panama has an informal meeting space, and it is being used actively by staff. A follow-up office-therapy session was conducted to coach staff on simple exercises that can be done from their desks.

There were two joint consultative committee meetings, during which the following topics
were discussed: implementation of an ergonomic plan, follow-up on actions related to the Global Staff Survey, follow-up on strengthening the team according to the learning plan, security aspects for the office and flexible work arrangements.

100 per cent of regional learning funds were implemented as per the learning plan, mainly in the professional coaching of staff. Two staff members were trained as peer support volunteers to have back-ups.

The ACHIEVE system was successfully introduced for performance evaluation. Some performance evaluation reports from 2015 are still pending discussion between staff and the previous representative. The country management team will continue to monitor the completion of all performance evaluation reports for compliance. In order to decrease the annual leave balance of more than 40 days for some staff, the office monitors this indicator and encourages staff to take vacations and maintain a good work-life balance.

As for the learning plans, the office decided to monitor only group activities and use the ACHIEVE system to monitor individual trainings separately. This will enable the CMT to monitor the learning indicators more accurately.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

As UNICEF Panama shares the same building with the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office, the office benefited from the improvement of a telephone switch in the building. This strengthened the internal network and communication within UNICEF Panama and with the regional office. In addition, most of the devices have been replaced with wireless technology, reducing cables and potential fire hazards. The data back-up system was reorganized in the common drive and SharePoint. Conference facilities in UNICEF Panama’s conference room were improved with the support of the regional office and with a minimum expenditure, as the devices were donated from another country office and the regional office. A digital access system with biometric finger printing to access the building was implemented during 2016.

The office project of telecommunications started in 2016 (purchase of the equipment), and the implementation will be finished in 2017 (installation and training for use of this new system). UNICEF Panama changed the laptops for all staff, updated other equipment, and installed Office 2016 on the majority of the laptops to fulfil information and communication technology requirements and increase efficiency.

**Programme Components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1: Communications/external relations**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2016, 11 CMTs meetings were conducted. The main initiatives related to improving operations and programme management were:

- CMT indicators were reviewed and changed to include Annual Management Plan indicators, Scoreboard and Dashboard indicators, so the CMT could have a whole picture of all the indicators for the office, looking for the alignment of what was being monitored in Insight.
- The new Administrative Assistant post assumed the CMT secretariat, so the Operations Assistant could focus on the review of indicators and compliance and support management on this section.
• Macro-evaluation of the Government of Panama was done, and the result was shared with UNDP and UNFPA.
• The risk library was updated to include the Zika situation and the result of the macro-evaluation of the Government of Panama.
• 8 audit recommendations of medium risk from 2015 were closed during 2016. A plan of action was prepared and it was duly monitored regularly to guarantee compliance with audit observations.
• The Executive Assistant of the office assumed many of the human resources functions to support the Operations team and for her own career development in human resources.
• Business Continuity Plan simulation was done in June to evaluate the use of the instrument and it was updated in November to reflect new details.
• As of 2015, the office use the consultant comparative matrix to incorporate selection criteria for consultancies, and the consultancies recruitment monitoring table is reviewed by the CMT for follow-up actions.
• The Joint Consultative Committee met twice during 2016, addressing topics such as flexible work arrangement, follow-up to the Global Staff Survey, and review of completion of the ergonomic plan. Results of the Global Staff Survey were followed up thoroughly including the implementation of the ergonomic measures and professional coaching of the staff.
• Working with the Global Shared Service Centre Budapest, required General Service staff to take trainings and webinars in areas such as finance and vendors, so the information received by providers can be complainant with what is needed and that the process can follow smoothly.
• Human Resources Global Shared Services Centre started to function, and the digitalization of staff files was concluded.
• The learning plan was regularly monitored and the learning funds received from the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office were fully implemented.

OUTPUT 1: Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:
During 2016, the CMT held 11 meetings where the Annual Management Plan and Scorecard indicators were closely monitored to improve operations and management. Programme Group meetings were held purposefully before the CMT on the same day so that any issues for programme support could be presented and discussed at the CMT meeting.


In terms of inter-agency training, a workshop on safety and protection for women was held for all female United Nations staff and six adio checks were conducted during the year. Additionally, the office passed the Minimum Operating Security Standards evaluation in March 2016 following the recommendations requested. Business Continuity Plan simulation was done in June to evaluate the applicability of the plan, and it was updated in November to reflect new details.

Furthermore, the Security Office (United Nations Department of Safety and Security) recommended to the United Nations system the revision of the security plan and the strengthening of security measures. UNICEF responded by improving the access systems to
the building and now has an intercom and biometric fingerprint system, metal detector and an access protocol.

**OUTPUT 2: Human Resources Management**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The contribution of the Government of Panama of US$300,000 to the Country Programme 2016 was recorded in December 2016, and will be implemented for the 2017 Annual Workplan.

Regarding DCT implementation, the office closed with an outstanding balance of 0 per cent for more than 9 months DCT; 6 per cent for 6–9 months DCT; and 61 per cent for 3–6 months DCT.

As UNICEF Panama remains in the same building as the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office, the office continues to benefit from savings in operational expenses such as utility bills, information and communication technology, security, and cleaning services at scale while maintaining autonomy as UNICEF (compared with other agencies that share the UNDP/United Nations Development Group building).

As part of the operations management team initiative of previous years, the office maintains savings in long-term agreements regarding the purchase of tickets and services from the travel agency, security, hotels for events, and office supplies.

The most important savings in the United Nations system is the decrease of the administrative cost for the issuance of the international ticket. In figures, this represents a savings of US$12 per ticket each time a ticket is being issued.

The estimated savings for UNICEF Panama using these types of inter-agency long-term agreements translates to approximately US$13,900 for 2016. This relates to savings in the procurement process, selection of providers and time consumed for an assistant.

**OUTPUT 3: Human Resources Management**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Starting in 2016, a new Administrative Assistant joined the office to support the Operations and Programme area regarding administrative tasks. This helped reduce the workload among the assistants of the office, and redistribute tasks during leaves.

The Operations Assistant was on maternity leave during most of the year 2016, and the office hired a former UNICEF staff member who has much experience in operations, management and HACT. The office took advantage of the temporary staff member’s expertise and institutional knowledge.

At the end of the year, the office’s programme assistant participated in a stretch assignment for two months in the UNICEF Ecuador Country Office, supporting the emergency. As a result, she strengthened her skills and knowledge of emergency context and HACT implementation.

The ergonomic plan of the office has been implemented by more than 85 per cent. UNICEF Panama has an informal meeting space to gather in the middle of the office, and it is being used very actively by staff and motivates staff to maintain a good office climate. A follow-up office-therapy session was also held to coach staff on simple exercises that can be done from their desks.
During 2016, there were two joint consultative committee meetings, during which the following topics were discussed: implementation of the ergonomic plan, follow-up to actions for the Global Staff Survey, follow-up on strengthening the team according to the learning plan, security aspects for the office and flexible work arrangements in the office.

Also in 2016, 100 per cent of regional learning funds were implemented as per the learning plan mainly in the professional coaching of the staff.

The office also trained two staff members as peer support volunteers to create back-ups.

While ACHIEVE was successfully introduced as a new tool for performance evaluation as of 2016, some of the 2015 performance evaluation reviews from the previous version are still pending discussion between staff members and the previous representative. The country management team continued to monitor the completion of all performance evaluation reviews for organizational compliance. In order to decrease the annual leave balance of more than 40 days of some staff, the office monitors the indicator and encourages staff to take vacations and maintain a good work-life balance.

As for the learning plans, the office decided to monitor only group activities and use the ACHIEVE system to monitor individual trainings separately.

OUTCOME 2: Outcome 1 (Education): By 2020, children and adolescents, particularly in rural, indigenous and disadvantaged urban areas, will have appropriate access to quality early education and will complete their lower secondary school education.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Despite a complex climate in the Ministry of Education (at least four key positions experienced change in leadership; there was long-standing tension as a result of sexual education guides prepared by the Ministry of Education; and there was a two-week teacher strike), UNICEF and its partners managed to bring forward significant work on early education, out-of-school children and intercultural bilingual education.

Key milestones for early childhood development and early education 2016 include:
1. The National Council for the Integral Attention of Early Childhood (Consejo Nacional de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia) developed an agenda and annual workplan to strengthen itself as a coordination mechanism.
2. The National Council for the Integral Attention of Early Childhood developed a strategy to expand the COIF (Centros de Orientación Infantil, or Child Orientation Centres) model using the resources available from an Inter-American Development Bank loan to the Ministry of Social Development.
3. The coordination mechanism from the National Council for the Integral Attention of Early Childhood established an implementation unit with profiles, duties and responsibilities.
4. The Ministry of Education created a draft early education plan that includes disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response.
5. The Ministry of Social Development implemented a draft risk reduction and humanitarian response for the COIF model.
6. Initial steps of the Care for Child Development roll-out were set into motion.
7. The evidence on child-bearing practices of the Ngabe indigenous population was generated. This evidence will inform various programmes.

In terms of out-of-school children, there is an evidence-based intervention model with additional inputs for the legal framework to be modified and there is a list of professionals
(profile, duties and responsibilities) that would be required to support the model. Currently, UNICEF continues to support strengthening the capacity of the technical team that will have to lead the initiative. In addition, there are efforts to support a broader evidence-based strategy to prevent drop-out, and the return of out-of-school children. This strategy will be rolled out in the San Miguelito District.

Despite an ambitious Intercultural Bilingual Education Plan presented in 2015, a milestone was reached in 2016 in terms of the key areas that the National Direction of intercultural bilingual education would have to focus on to make progress on guaranteeing the right of indigenous children to education. UNICEF played a significant role in enabling the dialogue between Ministry of Education and Ministry of Government to ensure that resources available for the National Development Plan for Indigenous Comarcas leverage the four key priority areas: (1) access to early education in indigenous languages; (2) development of curricula and materials (particularly in ethno-mathematics; art; L1 and L2; and identity); (3) teacher profile and training; and (4) institutional strengthening to be able to manage all these processes. Progress in this area will ensure Panama has taken action on the CRC recommendations related to indigenous children.

**OUTPUT 1**: Output 1.1 (early childhood development/preschool): By 2020, the Ministry of Education will have mechanisms and instruments with which to implement an early education policy, with a regulatory and management framework, quality standards and a monitoring system and resources for its implementation.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Panama moved forward in drafting policy instruments specific for early education. In partnership with Fundación Casa Taller and the Ministry of Education, a participatory process was conducted to draft a National Plan on Early Education. The plan will undertake both an internal validation process and a multisectoral process with participation of NGOs through the National Council for the Integral Attention of Early Childhood. The plan strives to close an important gap in terms of early education, and is an integral part of the aspirations put forward in the Early Childhood Integral Attention Route (RAIPI) to be partially rolled out in 2017, which has been declared by the Government as the year of early childhood. In addition, 2016 finished with increased capacity for the implementation of the 0–3 curricula, as more than 300 teachers were trained. The teacher training was systematized for future roll-out of training for educators in the COIF model implemented by the Ministry of Social Development. Two other capacity-building initiatives that took place in 2016 were the III International Seminar on Early Education, and the initial Training of Trainers of the Care for Child Development Initiative. Twenty-five professionals from different government institutions that provide services to families with children 0–3 years old participated in the training to introduce this proven methodology to strengthen the role of the family in the care and development of children. A strategy to roll out the Care for Child Development in all government services (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, and Social Security) will be drafted in 2017 to ensure there is a plan to implement the services at national scale by 2019.

The coordination mechanism in early childhood, the National Council for the Integral Attention of Early Childhood, which is part of the Ministry of Social Development, has (1) a roll-out strategy for the expansion of the COIF model; and (2) the organization of the institutional structure that will support them in achieving results established in the Government’s Strategic Plan (PEG), and the implementation of a loan to expand early childhood development services from the Inter-American Development Bank. In addition, this coordination mechanism received support to incorporate disaster risk reduction as an integral part of the programming, considering that services are being expanded. More than 50 teachers of the COIF model were trained in identifying and mitigating existing risks in
COIF classrooms. In addition, guidelines are being elaborated both for the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education and their early education services for 0–3-year-olds and 4–5-year-olds, respectively.

OUTPUT 2: Output 1.2 (out-of-school children): By 2020, the Ministry of Education will have a strategy, mechanisms and model for implementing policies and plans to prevent school drop-outs in rural and disadvantaged urban areas and facilitate the reintegration of those that have already done so.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
At the request of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF finalized the evaluation of the Telebasica and Multigrado models. The report indicates that there have been substantive transformations in the country that require both models to be updated following their impact and lessons learned from their implementation. The increased urbanization of the country changed the landscape in which the model is implemented, and thus requires that new technologies be incorporated, taking advantage that 82.5 per cent of children under 18 years old access cell phones, according to 2010 census data. The change management strategy for both models is pending.

UNICEF supported the Government of Panama in the formulation of the conceptual model of the intervention that would allow adolescents and youth up to 19 years old in the San Miguelito District to return to school. To this end, UNICEF convened an inter-ministerial working group that enhanced its capacity to implement the initiative. The working group includes both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Government.

The conceptual model was finalized in April with international and national technical assistance led by UNICEF that identified best practices and lessons learned from other middle-income countries. UNICEF’s deliverable included the intervention; the legal framework supporting it; the governance mechanism; and the list and description of competencies of the technical staff to support the initiative.

As part of the evidence generated, UNICEF commissioned a study to learn more about school dropout in the San Miguelito District. A survey and focus groups took place as part of the methodology leading to a better understanding as to the causes associated with dropout. The study revealed that 36.9 per cent of adolescents are vulnerable to dropping out to support their family.

Currently, the Government is in phase 1 of implementation of the project, remodelling the infrastructure that will house this return-to-school initiative.

In 2016, the office supported the Ministry of Education in the organization of a technical meeting on education-sector data and information systems. UNICEF helped shed some light into the forthcoming indicators and SDG agenda; and supported a South-South exchange with Guatemala on their education information system that will require follow-up in 2017.

OUTPUT 3: Output 1.3 (intercultural bilingual education): By 2020, the Ministry of Education will have the capacity and tools to implement an intercultural bilingual education policy and national plan that will guarantee the quality of services and their cultural relevance for all indigenous peoples.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The past year saw a breakthrough in terms of the identification of priority actions for the implementation of the National Intercultural Bilingual Education Plan. This came from a
meeting that took place in September to reflect on the state of intercultural bilingual education in Panama, identifying the main bottlenecks. Key priorities for the plan in 2017 include: (1) access to early education in indigenous languages; (2) development of curricula and materials (particularly in ethno-mathematics; art; L1 and L2; and identity); (3) teacher profile and training; and (4) institutional strengthening to be able to manage all these processes.

As the intersection between intercultural bilingual education and early education is key to various ongoing initiatives, in partnership with Asociación Cultural Ngabe, UNICEF is developing a study on child-bearing practices among the Ngabe and Buglé peoples. This study will provide the evidence for interventions being formulated by the Ministry of Social Development as part of the loan from the Inter-American Development Bank to expand early education modalities to families in disperse communities that are more than an hour away from service providers.

Similarly, the World Bank is offering funding for the National Development Plan for Indigenous Comarcas through the Ministry of Government. UNICEF was able to position and leverage the needs to fulfil the rights of indigenous children to education, and to flag their importance using the CRC recommendations; engaging both ministries in policy dialogue; and supporting local indigenous planners deployed by the Ministry of Government to capture the specific needs to fulfil the right to education in targeted communities.

In partnership with Fundación Casa Taller, UNICEF supported the elaboration of traditional stories from three of the main indigenous peoples in the country: the Ngabe, the Emberá and the Wounaan, into an animated version that is narrated in the indigenous language, with subtitles in Spanish and sign language to be used in inclusive education.

OUTCOME 3: Outcome 2 (comprehensive protection): By 2020, children and adolescents will have a comprehensive system for protecting their rights, plus comprehensive protection and violence reduction policies.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, with support from UNICEF, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs met the deadline for submission of the state report to the CRC, which will be examined in 2018. In addition, there was substantive work towards the presentation of the first state report on both Optional Protocols. As part of Panama’s commitment to human rights standards, the Government ratified the Third Optional Protocol on Communications.

Despite the complex scenario for discussions around child rights, 2016 saw progress towards the discussion of the legal framework for the protection of children. UNICEF supported Panama in drafting, consulting, advocating, strategizing and revising the legislation that now sits with the government authorities for its approval. In addition, UNICEF Panama supported the formulation of a policy document mobilizing the technical expertise of Universidad Diego Portales of Chile and strengthening the capacity of Universidad Santa María La Antigua using a landmark South-South arrangement between universities under cooperation agreements.

Both the law and the policy document have mainstreamed disaster risk reduction and humanitarian actions, and similar efforts have been taken with sectorial policies in early childhood development, out-of-school children, intercultural bilingual education, environmental education, and adolescents in conflict with the law.
Leadership for following up on the policy document falls with the Secretariat of the Social Cabinet, who will ensure that sectorial policies for children and SDG initiatives are linked to this framework of child rights. As Panama prepares to present its report to the CRC in 2018, this policy document will be a tool to mainstream efforts that will result in efficient and effective policies and services for children.

Regarding the specialized protection of children, there were indicative advances in the areas of deinstitutionalization of children, and children without parental care whose mothers are in detention centres; adolescents in the juvenile justice system; and access to justice for children. After having been a notable area of concern and recommendation from the CRC Committee, Panama has taken significant steps towards implementing a juvenile justice system that adheres to international standards, and has endorsed this priority through Law 42/2016, and making alternative measures to imprisonment an institutional priority of the Ministry of Government. Key to this progress were the partnerships with ILANUD and RELAF.

That some of the most emblematic private institutions (Hogar Malambo, Ciudad del Niño and Aldeas SOS) participated in this effort by undertaking a change management initiative to establish services that will support families in parental care practices is also very telling of the positive changes underway. As a result, about 50 children and adolescents were deinstitutionalized. The new leadership in the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families has also stepped forward in assuming its role in providing services for families and ensuring there are alternatives to the institutionalization of children.

Following its commitment to the SDG agenda, Panama made progress towards the development of a Multiple Deprivations Index. UNICEF Panama has been in constant dialogue with the working group to advocate that children be included in the index, despite growing government concerns that disaggregation for the most vulnerable groups could become a demand from organized social sectors and interest groups.

UNICEF Panama increased its capacity to introduce Public Finance for Children through both internal and external capacity-building initiatives. It is expected that the national process of mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda in national plans will provide an opportunity to further engage the Government in budgeting for children through technical and political discussions.

**OUTPUT 1**: Output 2.1 (CRC-based legislations and policies): By 2020, the social sector institutions will have effective tools and mechanisms with which to coordinate and evaluate the comprehensive protection system, including violence prevention and reduction, the prevention of institutionalization, and the protection of children in humanitarian situations.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Through technical assistance from UNICEF, a legal framework for the protection system was drafted at the beginning of the year. Following consultations, the framework was modified and now rests with government authorities for its approval. The validation process took place with the judicial sector and various civil society actors that submitted their observations. So far, there is consensus about the need to establish a protection system, but the consulted parties requested (1) a more detailed regulation of administrative procedures; and (2) peripheral changes which largely focus on family law issues, and concerns about judicial competencies.

As part of the advocacy process with the National Assembly, two conferences took place to discuss key issues in the comprehensive protection of children with the participation of national and international speakers. The input gathered from these processes allowed
clarification of the need to follow international standards regarding child rights and policies, and advocate for a decisive action of government authorities on this matter. Because of this consultation, the proposed normative framework for results-based policies and administrative protection was strengthened.

In addition, a policy document was completed with the assistance of two academic teams, one national and the other international, under the umbrella of cooperation agreements with UNICEF. Universidad Santa María La Antigua had the main responsibility of compiling data, researching various subjects, interviewing civil servants, revising the document, discussing with experts, and validating the final draft through two workshops, one in the capital and the other in Veraguas Province. Universidad Diego Portales of Chile offered technical and strategic advice, in writing and through teleconferences; interviewed high-ranking officials and discussed a final draft with the national academic team; and offered specific recommendations on the draft in order to improve its applicability. This landmark document will be used as the basis for all sectorial policies for children.

UNICEF Panama also assisted the Ministry of Social Development with the drafting and implementation of a communication strategy in the context of the protection system law. The plan seeks to enable speakers from different government institutions to participate in public discussions about the need to proceed with the approval of the legislation for the comprehensive protection of children.

With UNICEF’s support, the Observatory of Children’s Rights advocated throughout 2016 for a protection system through two public forums, quarterly bulletins, and a social media communication strategy.

OUTPUT 2: Output 2.2 (local protection models): By 2020, the social sector institutions and local authorities will have operational models with which to apply comprehensive protection; specialist intervention models against all forms of violence; risk and humanitarian response management; and local comprehensive protection monitoring systems.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF works on deinstitutionalization of children in support of the Government of Panama and contributed to an interinstitutional coordination/governance mechanism that was adopted by National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families to elaborate and implement a roadmap to deinstitutionalize the children without parental care. Three of the most emblematic private institutions for children without parental care (Hogar Malambo, Ciudad del Niño and Aldeas SOS) participated in this effort by undertaking a change management initiative to establish services that will support families in parental care practices. As part of this pilot programme, some of these private institutions will be implementing a protocol for foster care that was developed in partnership with RELAF. These actions, under the new leadership of the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families, have contributed alternative measures to institutionalization of children, and resulted in the deinstitutionalization of about 50 children and adolescents.

In Veraguas, where the government has an institution, a local committee was established to promote a child protection local system, and prevent that children be institutionalized only as a last resort. The circuits applied in the pilot programme to deinstitutionalize children resulted in nine adolescent girls settling back in their family environment. In addition, the circuits became an input to the draft legislation for the integral protection system, as part as the procedure for administrative protection.
On an issue related to children without parental care, UNICEF, in partnership with ILANUD and the Ministry of Government, developed a needs assessment of children whose mothers are in detention centres. As a result, an intervention model was developed. The model presented to the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights establishes a coordination mechanism with the Penitentiary System lead by the Ministry of Government, and a protection mechanism articulated by the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families.

A second initiative with ILANUD and the Supreme Court of Panama was the implementation of a policy for the access to justice for children. The policy offers guidance on the amicability of judicial services when children are involved to ensure that children are neither discriminated nor revictimized.

As part of UNICEF’s work on the prevention of all forms of violence, UNICEF Panama supported the Ministry of Education in developing a protocol to prevent and respond to bullying in public schools. The initiative was developed through a cooperation facilitated by UNICEF Costa Rica with the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education.

OUTPUT 3: Output 2.3 (Juvenile Justice): By 2020, the social sector institutions and local authorities will have operational models with which to apply comprehensive protection; specialist intervention models against all forms of violence; risk and humanitarian response management; and local comprehensive protection monitoring systems.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Alternative measures to imprisonment became an institutional priority of the Ministry of Government in 2016. Law 42/2016 established a specialized career for public servants in Interdisciplinary Studies Institute that provides stability for the institute and promotes continuous training as a specialized institution for social reintegration of adolescents in conflict with the law.

Throughout the year, there were various capacity-building activities with the Interdisciplinary Education Institute, as the main strategy to strengthen alternative measures to imprisonment; build an information system; strengthen the specialization of the institute; and consolidate the Pacora Juvenile Centres a model to replicate. These actions included participation in international seminars and training of custodians, teachers and technical teams on juvenile centres.

To improve evidence generation and strengthen the newly created research department of the Interdisciplinary Education Institute, UNICEF is providing key technical assistance in partnership with ILANUD: (1) a study on the application of human rights standards in juvenile centres; and (2) a descriptive study of the adolescent population in the juvenile system. The evidence generation will provide an input to develop and enhance psycho-educational programmes and interventions.

In addition, there were activities conducted to promote adolescent participation in juvenile centres, and empower them about their rights through art.

As part of the service model for children with mothers in detention centres, adolescents in juvenile centres were taken to visit their mothers who are deprived of liberty. This is a key action to promote family bonding, and is included in the service model for cases in which both mothers and their son or daughter are deprived of liberty.
To support strengthening the specialization of the juvenile system, two judges from juvenile criminal jurisdiction participated in the specialized course on jurisdictional protection of child rights, organized by UNICEF Chile and Diego Portales University.

**OUTPUT 4: Output 2.4 (Social Inclusion):** By 2020, government and civil society capacity to plan, budget and monitor inclusive social policies for children and comprehensive protection measures, including risk management, will have increased.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Under the leadership of the Social Cabinet, Panama established a working group to develop a Multiple Deprivations Index following the mandate of SDGs with participation from the National Statistical Institute, Ministry of Economics and Finance, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health, among others. UNICEF Panama has been in continued dialogue with the working group to advocate that children be included in the index. The process is well advanced, and a number of changes to the questionnaire of the yearly household survey have been agreed to capture adequate data; the budget for a strengthened sample was approved, which means that disaggregated data for provinces and main districts will be available; and the methodology of the measurement is almost finished. Six dimensions have been defined and the team is currently running exercises with available data from the 2016 survey in order to test indicators and thresholds. There is a detailed timetable for the 2017 process, as the Government plans to launch the index in June. However, methodological choices justified based on the technical expertise may preclude the visibility of children in the index, and other studies may be required to have a more complete picture of the child poverty situation.

UNICEF Panama also facilitated the country’s participation in the International Seminar for Public Investment in Early Childhood that took place in Mexico City. The Government of Panama was represented by a member of the Social Cabinet, who made a presentation of the national process of mainstreaming the SDG’s agenda in national plans, and benefited from conferences and a substantive discussion on budgets and public finance for children according to the experience in other Latin America and Caribbean countries.

UNICEF Panama held a teleconference with CRC Commissioner Jorge Cardona Llorens with more than 20 civil servants from the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Economics and Finance, National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families, and members of the Observatory of Children’s Rights, to raise awareness on the implications of the General Comment #19 on public finance for children.

**OUTCOME 4:** Outcome 3: Evidence-based advocacy, communication, and partnerships for social inclusion.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The past year was a significant year for partnerships with three different social groups, which matured into solid alliances with religious leaders through the Ecumenical Committee; with the private sector through SUMARSE; and with civil society and the private sector through Aliados por la Niñez. The value added of UNICEF has been in evidence generation; convening of actors; capacity development; and technical assistance. For instance, the Ecumenical Committee gained global recognition from the Global Network of Religions for Children based on their work over the past four years on violence prevention. As a result, Panama’s Ecumenical Committee will be hosting the 5th Global Network of Religions for Children in 2017 in Panama.
Aliados por la Niñez is one of the very few national platforms that brings together NGOs and private-sector organizations on issues of common interest. The past year saw one of the few examples in the country of a digital awareness campaign in which several organizations were using the same messages with their brands to raise awareness on child rights. The organizations in this platform are also seeking ways to strengthen the advocacy with key decision makers in the country around the 10 points in the agenda for child rights in Panama.

As for the alliances with the private sector, the evidence generated through the study on private-sector investment and philanthropy provides relevant and comparable information on corporate social responsibility programmes, their motivations, governance mechanisms and main areas of investment. The study conducted in Panama looks in depth at the investment in education and provides insights as to the resources and initiatives regarding quality of education. Both private and public sectors value such information to start and scale up initiatives based on lessons learned.

The corporate engagement initiative in partnership with SUMARSE has provided corporate social responsibility programmes with a wealth of information and resources, and has resulted in action plans that will require sustained actions into 2017. Areas such as disaster risk reduction; environmental sustainability; marketing; and products and services mindful of children’s rights are some of the areas that businesses identified where they need to further strengthen their corporate social responsibility commitment.

On evidence generation, compared with previous years, 2016 provided limited opportunities in terms of moving forward with strengthening administrative data systems due to the change in leadership at the National Statistical Institute. With the new director in place, and the SDGs as a country priority, UNICEF Panama expects to be able to thrive in 2017.

**OUTPUT 1:** Output 3.1 Evidence Generation

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The National Statistical Institute had a change in leadership that has impacted the pace and capacity to move forward with activities in the annual workplan. A new director came into office late in November of 2016, so UNICEF Panama expects to catch up with many activities in 2017.

The change in leadership limited the decision-making process on the publication of the final report of the MICS, the update of three information systems regarding women and children; and moving forward with strengthening administrative data in the child protection and education sectors. UNICEF Panama has taken other steps to ensure that national government institutions such as the Ministry of Health and Social Security strengthen their role as stakeholders and users of the MICS data to publish/print the final report. UNICEF had preliminary conversations with UNACHI to build the capacity of a group of faculty members to conduct a Situation Analysis in Bocas del Toro, Chiriqui, and Ngabe.

**OUTPUT 2:** Output 3.2 Communication and Social Mobilization

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
During the year, UNICEF Panama consolidated the partnership with Aliados por la Niñez, an NGO platform constituted by 22 organizations of the civil society and private sector. Aliados por la Niñez implemented a communication campaign to advocate for the priorities for children, including a Child Protection System. Aliados por la Niñez has a rolling 2016–2018 workplan with three key priority components: (1) communications; (2) public advocacy; and (3) monitoring. The online campaign was implemented by 22 organizations at the same time, reaching about 1 million people through all their social media channels. For the offline
implementation of the communication campaign, members of Aliados participated in a meeting with government authorities to advocate for children’s rights.

UNICEF Panama’s work around the global ENDViolence against children initiative in 2016 consolidated the alliance with religious leaders from different faith-based communities such as Anglican, Baha’is, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox to call for ending violence against children and adolescents in Panama. The advocacy and mobilization strategy reached about 1 million people not only because of the activities with mass media, but also because of the commitment of the religious leaders to share words in their religious services, including a televised Catholic mass in which the sermon focused on the prevention of violence against children. Adolescent participation took a spin this year when adolescents wrote, recorded and sang a song called ‘The Peace We Need in the World’. The alliance with the Ecumenical Committee around the annual Day of Prayer (to End Violence) made it possible to place the topic on the agenda of decisionmakers such as the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Families and Ministry of Social Development. The Ecumenical Committee is also in support of a comprehensive protection system that will advocate with UNICEF that children are protected from all forms of violence.

The public advocacy strategy and the digital communication strategy were developed and implemented, and the UNICEF Panama website was updated into the new 2.0 template. Advocacy through online channels is reaching about 60,500 people with participation of key decision makers and influencers such as ministers, vice ministers and the First Lady.

In partnership with the Child Rights Observatory and the National Journalism Council, UNICEF established an initiative to share content regarding six priority topics for children in Panama. The content, which includes a video on the comprehensive protection system.

**OUTPUT 3:** Output 3.3 Strategic Alliances and Private Sector

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF and SUMARSE conducted a study on Corporate Social Responsibility and Education in Panama. The study underscored that 83.3 per cent of all corporate social responsibility funds in the country go to the education sector, representing more than US$24 million. The corporate social responsibility investment in the education sector is primarily linked to quality education.

To leverage the contribution from the private sector in Panama, UNICEF and SUMARSE organized two forums. The first one was on innovative technologies for quality education, with the participation of the Vice Ministers of Education and Social Development. The event showcased two experiences implemented by the private sector that used innovations in the education sector in Panama. Following the event, there are preliminary conversations as to how to transfer the knowledge to the Ministry of Education, and how to expand some of the initiatives that have had good results in terms of impacting the quality of education.

The second forum was in the context of the International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction. UNICEF and SUMARSE linked the SDGs, disaster risk reduction and child rights so that the private sector in Panama raised its awareness of the various ways in which it can positively or negatively impact the lives of children. Forty businesses attended the forum, which took place before the tropical storm Otto. As a result, many businesses requested assistance with revising preparedness plans, policies and practices, as disaster risk reduction was perceived as a real need.

Seven businesses in Panama participated in a corporate engagement initiative promoted jointly by UNICEF and SUMARSE. Participant businesses come from sectors such as
The initiative utilized the ‘Children Are Everybody’s Business’ manual and included a self-assessment of corporate policies, impact evaluations and sustainability reporting. As a result, businesses came up with plans of action to mainstream child rights into their corporate social responsibility programmes.

### Document Centre

#### Evaluation and research

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#### Lessons learned

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#### Programme documents

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