Executive Summary

Sri Lanka entered a new political period in 2016, after a change of government in 2015. Against this backdrop, peacebuilding and reconciliation became increasingly important areas as the country continued its transition from a post-conflict context to one of lower-middle-income status. Throughout 2016 Sri Lanka continued to face a serious budgetary challenge, with a growing debt burden resulting in low investment in key social sectors.

UNICEF Sri Lanka contributed to the country’s progress in key areas, including continued reductions in stunting, wasting and anaemia, improvements in education quality and exerting a positive influence on policy changes in child protection. However, persistent challenges remain, including disparities in health, education, protection and development in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and on tea estates. These challenges will inform UNICEF’s future work.

In child protection, UNICEF Sri Lanka’s advocacy and technical support, including the presentation of key data and close coordination with key ministries and Government bodies, proved important to the adoption of a new Government policy increasing the minimum age for criminal responsibility from eight to 12 years old. This policy change will have a dramatic impact on the number of children convicted and sent to institutions, including remand homes and certified schools.

Further, UNICEF Sri Lanka was a major driver in the national child protection system mapping exercise, which brought together key stakeholders for the first time, resulting in a report on the protection system and a draft roadmap detailing strategic areas of intervention, such as establishing a mechanism to coordinate child protection policy and programming. The report forms the basis for a strengthened national child protection system. After a one-year delay in the reporting of Sri Lanka’s implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UNICEF Sri Lanka supported the Government in submitting the 2016 State Party Report, which resulted in the expansion of the National Monitoring Committee, a key mechanism for monitoring the status of children in the country.

In education, the UNICEF Sri Lanka-commissioned ‘Education for Social Cohesion Policy Review’ was approved by the inter-ministerial steering committee in November, and its recommendations will form the basis for policy reforms to strengthen peace and reconciliation across the country and build an environment conducive to child development. Further, UNICEF is testing a package of primary school learning and teaching processes in formerly conflict-affected areas in the Eastern Province. Preliminary results suggest higher motivation and engagement, especially among children previously deemed ‘slow learners’. Selected provincial governments have expressed an interest in having this education package rolled out in their provinces.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also contributed to national reductions in stunting, wasting and anaemia, including through the training of health professionals and service providers to identify, treat and prevent malnutrition. UNICEF supported data generation, including mapping and monitoring nutritionally vulnerable families. This data supported production of the ‘Multi-Sectoral Action Plan for Nutrition’, which provided the basis for country-wide activity to
address malnutrition. UNICEF led the introduction of innovations, including community-level mothers’ support groups, that empowered members to address child undernutrition at the source, along with providing financial and technical support for the implementation of a real-time nutrition monitoring system with the National Nutrition Secretariat (NNS). This is helping to enhance the Secretariat’s ability to use timely data and evidence to improve existing national nutrition strategies.

Advocacy to improve menstrual hygiene among adolescent school girls and address water safety issues in rural communities resulted in increased investment from Government partners. Additionally, UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to drive South-South collaboration, bringing together Government partners from South Asia and beyond to share experiences and ‘know-how’ in maternal, newborn and child health.

However, shortfalls remain. Further work is required to reduce instances of child abuse and exploitation. The quality of education remains a concern, as do high instances of school segregation on religious, language and ethnic lines, limiting opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and undermining peacebuilding reconciliation efforts. Additionally, limited capacity within certain geographical areas has resulted in slow implementation of national health strategies, limiting the nation’s ability to achieve improved health and nutrition results for women and children.

Yet, working closely with partners has brought positive change. In 2016, UNICEF utilised its convening power to bring together the Government, UN agencies and partners under the ‘Global Partnership to End Violence against Children’ (VAC). This partnership has the potential to contribute to Sri Lanka’s ability to deliver Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.2: ‘end all forms of violence against children’.

### Humanitarian Assistance

Unprecedented heavy rainfall across the country caused floods and landslides in 22 of the 25 districts in Sri Lanka, affecting approximately 490,000 people. UNICEF immediately provided lifesaving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, health and educational support to the severely affected people. UNICEF mobilized over US$2.6 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund, key bilateral donors (including Australia, Italy and Norway), and the private sector to meet life-saving and recovery needs of the most vulnerable children and women in four severely disaster-affected districts.

Particularly in Kegalle district, UNICEF’s humanitarian response resulted in improvements in sanitation, drainage and waste management in eight temporary camps, benefitting 296 families. Additionally, the provision of 40 large-capacity water tanks and stands accelerated the installation of water storage and treatment facilities during early recovery. UNICEF also facilitated sustainable pipe-borne water for 301 families living in 16 transitional shelters. In addition to water supply in camps, 150 temporary and semi-permanent latrines and 30 bathing places (including provisions for people with disabilities) improved access to sanitation and hygiene for 500 families. Around 30 hygiene-promotion programmes and 1,000 hygiene packs helped 1,000 affected families maintain their basic hygiene standards. To improve water supply planning, transportation and monitoring in hard-to-reach terrains, UNICEF procured a four-wheel double cab and water tanker for the National Water Supply & Drainage Board (NWS&DB).

During the recovery stage, 8,000 vulnerable households received household water filters and 350 households received sustainable, flood-resilient sanitation facilities, particularly for safe management of human excreta. UNICEF also helped to improve the capacity of the NWS&DB’s emergency field water quality testing system by providing 16 types of sophisticated equipment for testing microbial/chemical/physical parameters. Further,
UNICEF procured 50 heavy-duty sludge desilting pumps for water intakes and 15 portable generators, increasing the NWS&DB’s mobility and capacity to repair damaged water intakes and distribution systems. To set up interim water supply in affected areas, four portable water treatment plant packages were provided to the NWS&DB. In addition to mandated Government stakeholders, UNICEF created new partnerships with two International non-governmental organizations (INGOs), World Vision and ACTED, during this emergency response.

UNICEF also took a lead role at the national level in providing technical support to relevant Government authorities and others on maternal and newborn childcare during the emergency period. UNICEF assisted in the provision of ready-to-use therapeutic food (BP100) for 1,000 children and pregnant women in disaster-affected areas to address nutrition issues. Additionally, UNICEF provided 180 portable height/length measuring systems, 400 mechanical infant clinical scales (beam and spring types) and 400 weighing trousers to ensure uninterrupted nutrition surveillance of children under five in the worst affected districts.

In the education sector, UNICEF led coordination meetings with relevant Government departments and other stakeholders to facilitate the resumption of schooling, particularly in schools that housed displaced persons. UNICEF renovated 22 damaged schools to ensure access to education and safe learning environments for 2,600 children (1,271 girls and 1,329 boys) and provided play/reading materials and furniture to 140 pre-schools, benefiting 2,800 children (1,680 girls and 1,120 boys).

UNICEF Sri Lanka also provided technical and financial support for the establishment of 28 child-friendly spaces in welfare centres, particularly in Kegalle, benefitting around 712 children. To promote minimum standards, UNICEF provided technical support to the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) for developing guidelines for child-friendly spaces, including protocols for volunteers/aid workers working with children during emergencies and child-friendly camp management. This support extended to training 340 government officers on these guidelines, resulting in stronger adherence to the standards and guidelines. Further, UNICEF assisted 176 people to recover lost legal documents (such as birth/marriage certificates, national identity cards). In areas of return, UNICEF and its partners established 40 children’s clubs, creating safe and trusted spaces for children and adolescents.

Post-disaster, UNICEF took the lead in coordinating the WASH and education sectors during the post-disaster needs assessment process, which was jointly conducted by the Government, World Bank, UNDP and EU. UNICEF also actively contributed towards the development of WASH, health, gender, human interest and disaster risk reduction (DRR) sector reports, ensuring that the post-disaster assessment maintained a child-focused approach throughout the process and effectively captured age-specific recommendations.

**Emerging Areas of Importance**

**Accelerating integrated early childhood development, ECD.** This continues to be a priority area for UNICEF Sri Lanka, which supported the strengthening of ECD governance and coordination mechanisms during 2016. In the Eastern Province, the results of a functional mapping exercise completed end-2015 were disseminated and discussed further in 2016, through which the existing allocation of roles and responsibilities were mapped out and overlaps in implementation were highlighted. UNICEF was successful in advocating for the creation of a multi-stakeholder forum on ECD in the Eastern Province as a means of facilitating continuous dialogue and reaching agreement on roles and responsibilities, as well as areas for joint planning, monitoring and evaluation. As a first action point of the new forum, it was agreed to conduct a comprehensive joint planning exercise in December 2016,
taking into account the findings from the mapping exercise.

In education, UNICEF provided technical and financial supported to the National Institute of Education (NIE) for developing a common national early childhood education (ECE) curriculum framework, based on the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) launched at the end of 2015. An open framework design would allow other stakeholders sufficient flexibility for adjustments when designing and implementing preschool programs. A multi-stakeholder consultation process was used to develop it as a way to ensure acceptance of the framework – as the key guiding instrument – among stakeholders. In 2017 UNICEF plans to further support the NIE to develop guidelines and supplementary materials for implementing the curriculum framework throughout the country.

In the Central and Uva provinces, UNICEF provided technical and financial support for the development of guidelines, minimum standards and related instructions for preschool education. Firstly, guidelines for preschool management committees were piloted, finalized and adopted by the provincial ECD Advisory Committees. To strengthen the implementation of these guidelines, dedicated preschool management committees were established and members trained in 132 preschools. Secondly, preschool minimum standards were developed and piloted and play parks were piloted, finalized and approved by the provincial Cabinet through a dedicated Gazette notification. To support implementation, 160 ECD officials and 600 preschool teachers were trained on these minimum standards. UNICEF also supported the development of standards, a Bill of Quantities and drawings for low-cost, environment-friendly play parks. The parks were piloted, with financial support from UNICEF, at 40 preschools after receiving approval from the provincial ECD Advisory Committee.

To enhance the capacity of preschool management heads UNICEF facilitated the training of 180 preschool communities on conducting self-assessments and developing strategic plans for improving preschools. Following the training, preschool self-assessments were conducted and annual plans developed, based on a multi-stakeholder consultation process, enabling collaboration between preschool management committees and community-level mothers’ groups that focus on maternal and child nutrition.

Following UNICEF’s 2015 collaboration with artists, to develop innovative story books and learning activities that promote peace and social cohesion among 3-5 year olds, six related products were produced and disseminated on a pilot basis to 52 preschools in early 2016, including training on use of the materials. A follow-up review showed that the products and trainings were highly appreciated by pre-school teachers and children; many pre-school teachers highlighted the innovative approach used. Requests were made to scale up the printing and dissemination of these six products, as well as four additional products developed in 2015. Finally, the NIE as the lead agency on the development of national curricula, requested training on these products and is exploring modalities for launching these products on a nationwide basis to all pre-schools.

UNICEF worked closely with the Family Health Bureau (FHB) to develop a docudrama on ECD to create awareness on the importance of investing in ECD. The docudrama was disseminated at the end of 2016 to medical officers in all 344 areas (covering 25 districts), and will be used with mothers during clinic visits. In addition, guidelines and simple messages are currently being developed by the FHB for parents/caregivers, to enhance their understanding of development delays and support their role in facilitating early stimulation activities.

The major constraint in ECD remains the lack of a multi-sectoral implementation mechanism. While a multi-sectoral Steering Committee is in place at the national level, it has not met frequently enough to ensure proper follow-up. This has led to the creation of a separate ECE proposal, drafted by the Ministry of Education (MoE), which was subsequently
recommended for integration into a revised multi-sectoral ECD policy. The revision process has been ongoing for an extended period. UNICEF will take a more active role in supporting these processes in 2017.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

- APLS: Advanced paediatric life support
- BOS: Business operating strategy
- CFA: Child-friendly approach
- CMT: Country management team
- CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CRPD: Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
- CSD: Child survival and development
- DCT: Direct cash transfer
- DRR: Disaster risk reduction
- ECD: Early childhood development
- ECCD: Early childhood care and development
- ECE: Early childhood education
- ELDS: Early Learning remnant Standards
- ERW: Exploded remnants of war
- EU: European Union
- FGD: Focus group discussions
- FHB: Family Health Bureau
- GBV: Gender-based violence
- GIZ: German Development Cooperation
- GoSL: Government of Sri Lanka
- GSSS: Global Staff Satisfaction Survey
- GSSC: Global Shared Services Centre
- HBR: Home-based record
- ICT: Information and communications technology
- INGO: International non-governmental organization
- IYCF: Infant and young child feeding
- JCC: Joint Consultative Committee
- KII: Key informant interview
- KPI: Key performance indicator
- LTAs: Long-term agreements
- MHM: Menstrual hygiene management
- MoCPWS: Ministry of City Planning and Water Supply
- MoE: Ministry of Education
- MoH: Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine
- MOSS: Minimum operating security standards
- MoWCA: Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs
- MsAPN: Multi-Sectoral Action Plan for Nutrition
- NCPA: National Child Protection Authority
- NGO: Non-governmental organization
- NIE: National Institute of Education
- NNS: National Nutrition Secretariat
- NWS&DB: National Water Supply and Drainage Board
- OIAI: Office of Internal Audit and Investigation
- PDNA: Post-disaster needs assessment
Results-based management
Regional Support Centre
Regional Office for South Asia
South Asian Conference on Sanitation
South Asia Infant Feeding Research Network
Support to District Development Programme
Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SitAn
Situation analysis
Sri Lanka Medical Nutrition Association
Standard operating procedure
United Kingdom
United Nations
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Department of Safety and Security
United Nations Population Fund
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United Nations Children’s Fund
United Nations Sustainable Development Framework
Village Child Development Committees
Water, sanitation and hygiene
WASH in Schools International Learning Exchange
Water safety plan(s)

Capacity Development

UNICEF Sri Lanka supported individual and community capacity development across all programme areas in 2016.

In this regard, UNICEF systematized in-service training for Government officials directly involved in handling child protection cases. Over 320 child protection officers received financial support to enrol in an 18-month child protection diploma programme by the National Institute of Social Development. At the community level, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to 191 village child development committees (VDCDs), which act as community voluntary groups monitoring, identifying and referring families and children at risk of abuse and exploitation. This resulted in positive outcomes for children, such as preventing more than 2,200 children and adolescents from dropping out of school.

In education, investments focused on developing, testing and scaling-up a multi-level teaching and learning approach in the Eastern Province. This approach – which included classroom improvements, changes in classroom pedagogy processes, student-driven formative assessments, a clearer ‘learning path’ and learning materials in-line with the ‘learning ladder’ – was received positively by parents, teachers and students who were more eager to engage in the learning process to attain the expected competencies set for the grade. This resulted in marked improvements, especially among children previously deemed as ‘slow learners’. To ensure sustainability and scale-up, ‘champions’ were identified at national/provincial levels of government, and a dedicated resource team was set up to lead the development and implementation of the pilot programme in another three provinces.

To improve the health/nutrition status of children under five, UNICEF facilitated participation of Government officials in global nutrition networks and regional/country level capacity-building initiatives on related topics, such as new-born care, which led to costing of the
national new-born action plan. Knowledge products developed on new-born care and ECD also helped make the case for greater and more effective investments in these areas.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

In 2016 UNICEF Sri Lanka carried out a situation analysis (SitAn) that provides an overview of the situation of children in Sri Lanka, complemented by in-depth assessments/studies on certain topics, such as inadequate new-born care, difficulties facing children with learning disabilities, child vulnerabilities to disasters, etc. The analysis is guiding preparations for the next five-year country programme.

Analysis undertaken by UNICEF Sri Lanka highlighted that poor children face family separation and unnecessary institutionalization. This led national and provincial government stakeholders, supported by UNICEF, to develop a model ‘Orphanage Ordinance and Child Development Centre’ statute establishing minimum standards and gatekeeping procedures for children’s homes. Further, UNICEF used evidence generated from its review of the police women and children’s desks to design and deliver a targeted training programme for police officers on national/international standards in juvenile justice.

In education, UNICEF commissioned a review of the education for social cohesion policy. The report was approved by the Government-led inter-ministerial steering committee, and became the basis for a multi-sectoral action plan to address implementation gaps, a revised policy framework and programme proposals. UNICEF also commissioned a documentary/research study on the challenges faced by children with learning difficulties, which led to recommendations for future programming priorities.

The Country Office played a key advocacy role in securing Government commitment to implement a national nutrition surveillance system. Further, findings from studies on nutrition, newborn care, youth, and maternal deaths are informing policy dialogue and recommendations at the national level. In WASH, evidence generated through a UNICEF-commissioned study on the Kelani River, a key water source, is leading to more holistic and multisectoral water management as reflected in water-safety plans. UNICEF also played a key role in advocating for a sanitation policy and Regional Support Centre on Sanitation, which are now being taken forward by the NWS&DB.

**Partnerships**

In 2016, Sri Lanka became a pathfinder country within the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, bringing together multiple partners to address the situation. Supporting this agenda, UNICEF drew together a coalition of over 40 stakeholders to advocate with the Government and raise public awareness on the impact of child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Further, UNICEF entered into partnerships with Rajarata and Colombo Universities to enable systematic professionalization of child protection officials, including development of a consistent curriculum (as opposed to former ad-hoc trainings), and improvement of the child abuse database system for to facilitate Government management and follow-up of cases.

UNICEF partnered with the MoE, NCPA, private sector and civil society to drive a national online safety campaign for children, parents and caregivers, which raised awareness on related issues and led to changes in school curricula.

Largely due to UNICEF’s advocacy, a dedicated component on strengthening peace promotion through the education system was included in the ‘Peacebuilding Priority Plan’ launched by the President in September 2016. UNICEF’s high-level involvement included commissioning a policy review; supporting the set-up of an inter-ministerial steering
committee and technical working groups for planning, monitoring and evaluating related policies and action plans; and creating a dedicated development partner working group chaired by UNICEF.

UNICEF Sri Lanka maintained its strong partnership with the NNS for developing and rolling out a surveillance monitoring system based on the multi-sectoral nutrition action plan. UNICEF also partnered with the South Asia Infant Feeding Research Network (SAIFRN) to explore the use of mobile technology for transmitting key health information to mothers, which is promoting behaviour changes and contributing to improvements in the nutrition status of children. UNICEF also worked with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to engage and empower mothers through community-level groups.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

In 2016 UNICEF Sri Lanka carried out strategic communication activities that supported national and international public advocacy and engagement objectives.

The communications unit supported multiple regional and global advocacy initiatives, ‘localising’ them to the national context to drive UNICEF’s child rights agenda and further position UNICEF as a trusted and credible voice for and with children. These initiatives included a focus on refugee children through ‘Children on the Move’ (January), UNICEF’s Equity agenda through the State of the World’s Children (June), and supporting UNICEF’s #End Violence Campaign (July - December).

The Office undertook local activities to encourage engagement and action on behalf of children. To mark the International Day of the Girl Child (October), UNICEF conceptualised and led an initiative to raise awareness on child marriage among the public and drive policy change on behalf of vulnerable, at-risk girls. The activity, which consisted of a young woman from a vulnerable community delivering an advocacy letter to the Government, co-signed by close to 50 UN agencies, partners, academics and medical practitioners, resulted in strong media coverage by Sri Lankan outlets, including the Sunday Times and the Daily FT, and contributed to the Government’s review of laws in this area.

Recognising the shift and growth of digital/social media, the growing proportion of young people online and the opportunity presented by these mediums to reach and engage audiences, all key UNICEF Sri Lanka communication activities included a digital and social media element. This strategy drove a rise in audiences on Facebook (4,769 additional likes), YouTube (15,256 additional views), Twitter (522 additional followers) and Instagram (2,116 additional followers), positioning UNICEF Sri Lanka with the largest social media audience of all UN agencies in the country. Continued growth of digital reach will support UNICEF’s ongoing work to advocate for policy change and positive action for children.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

In 2016, South-South cooperation remained a key priority for UNICEF Sri Lanka.

UNICEF continued to promote Sri Lanka as a hub for mother and newborn health learning, using South-South collaboration as a means for shared learning. The Office led and coordinated six events that enabled strong knowledge-sharing and learning exchanges in the South Asia region on maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health. These regional initiatives built a strong network of peer-to-peer support that continues after a learning exchange takes place and facilitates learning or innovation being taken to scale. These exchanges have had several significant positive outcomes. For instance, following the South-South Home-Based Records (HBR) event in Sri Lanka, India revised its federal HBR, and Afghanistan and Nepal have been re-designing their vaccination cards.
In the child protection sector, UNICEF led the planning of and participated in a key session focused on child protection at the South Asia Conference on the Future of Policing, attended by police forces from across the region. The session enabled the sharing of key principles, learnings and developments in the administration of justice for children and informed the police reform agenda in Sri Lanka.

In partnership with the MoE and UNICEF ROSA, the Office organized a high-level symposium on Education and Sustainable Peace in Colombo. The conference brought together over 100 policy makers, high-level government decision makers, academics, journalists and civil society leaders from eight South Asian countries. This resulted in UNICEF’s ability to position itself as a credible partner with technical expertise in this area; The Office is now taking the lead in supporting the Government to use education as a means of promoting peace, social cohesion and resilience.

**Identification and Promotion of Innovation**

Utilizing innovative methods and new sources of data continued to be a key priority area for UNICEF Sri Lanka in 2016.

In child protection, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in the development and roll-out of a new national injury surveillance system that enabled the collection and monitoring of national injury-related data. This resulted in identification of trends and development of strategies to protect children and prevent injuries. This automated system supported key improvements in referral processes between hospitals and other service providers. Further, UNICEF supported the NCPA to create a new electronic case management tool for its ‘1929’ child protection helpline, enabling better tracking/monitoring of child rights violations to ensure effective and responsive actions for children. In 2016, 6,800 complaints were recorded through the helpline.

In education, UNICEF Sri Lanka launched an innovative pilot programme in the Eastern province that uses music to promote social cohesion among junior secondary students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. To ensure long-term sustainability, a music education curriculum was developed by merging two local (formerly separately taught) music streams into a common curriculum and identifying a pool of school music teachers and lecturers from leading music institutions. Following two months of implementation, this programme has been appreciated by school communities, provincial authorities and music practitioners and the new curriculum has been endorsed by the NIE for national roll-out.

To promote healthy feeding practices, UNICEF supported innovative practices initiated by the MoH, such as weekly radio programmes by nutrition experts, to educate the public on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices. This was documented and published by the Sri Lanka Medical Nutrition Association, and a symposium was conducted to share these best practices amongst stakeholders in the sector.

**Support to Integration and Cross-Sectoral Linkages**

Integrated and cross-sectoral programming continued to be a priority for UNICEF Sri Lanka.

In child protection, as part of the national child protection system mapping undertaken to review and improve the current system of child protection in Sri Lanka, UNICEF led consultations with key government officials at the national and sub-national levels. These consultations enabled UNICEF and partners to better understand the challenges and opportunities of the current system, linkages between protection and other issues affecting children and the individual roles of each duty-bearer across the life cycle of a child.
In early childhood care and development (ECCD), a critical challenge has been poor coordination between key stakeholders from education, health, nutrition and child development sectors working in this area. To address this, UNICEF supported the re-establishment of a national steering committee on ECCD as a key mechanism for strengthening and maintaining linkages between the multiple stakeholders in this sector. Further, given that the causes of undernutrition are multi-sectoral in nature, UNICEF continued to work closely with the NNS to develop the new multi-sectoral ‘National Strategic Plan and Framework for 2017-2021’.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also facilitated integrated WASH and child protection programming, together with UNHCR, in its delivery of critical assistance to communities resettling in former high-security zones, as a key component of ongoing peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Through a joint project, UNHCR and UNICEF assisted all targeted families to return in safety and with dignity, and enabled them to restart their lives. UNICEF assistance included access to water and sanitation; protection; health and mine-risk education for those most at-risk.

**Service Delivery**

UNICEF Sri Lanka has concentrated on shifting its emphasis and limited resources towards upstream programming. However, the European Union (EU)-funded Support to District Development Programme (SDDP) remains an important component of the Country Programme, with a significant focus on service delivery in seven targeted districts.

Under the SDDP, UNICEF constructed/refurbished 17 health clinics, one maternity ward and one paediatric ward, to improve access for more than 200,000 people to adequate maternal and child health care. UNICEF also supported the construction of three youth centres, one social care centre, five child-friendly court buildings and four police women and children’s desks to improve access by vulnerable families and children to quality child protection services. The mine risk education programme reached more than 250,000 community members, contributing to a 20 per cent reduction in related incidents compared to 2015. Improved water sources, such as wells or water connections, were provided to 35,800 people and approximately 5,900 people gained access to improved sanitation facilities through the provision of latrines with a septic tank or soakage pit and sufficient quantities of water for cleaning and washing. In the education sector, 24 schools were rehabilitated in the Eastern and Uva provinces, as well as 35 preschools in Uva and Central provinces.

As part of its annual quality assurance plan, UNICEF Sri Lanka conducted regular programme monitoring through meetings with implementing partners and visits to project sites to assess progress made against planned targets. Through such monitoring, the Office generated evidence on the quality, timeliness and effective reach of services; assessed constraints; and identified implementation risks and the use of resources. This has served to refine implementation strategies, document good practices and lessons learned and adopt risk-mitigating actions.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

UNICEF Sri Lanka worked directly with line ministries to support the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to address the concluding observations of Sri Lanka’s 4th and 5th Periodic Reports (2010) on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. To harmonize Sri Lanka’s international human rights obligations with national legislation, UNICEF provided significant input and guidance for the country’s constitutional reform process, specifically advocating for the inclusion of child rights. UNICEF supported the NCPA and the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (MoWCA) to prepare and disseminate child-friendly versions of the Convention.
UNICEF supported efforts to structure national systems in the best interest of the child, such as providing technical support to the MoE for a rights-based quality framework for education and promoting child-centred processes in the judicial system. UNICEF Sri Lanka worked closely with the Government, to submit the combined 5th and 6th periodic State Party Report in June 2016 and, based on this experience, UNICEF is supporting the Government to restore the National Monitoring Committee as a mechanism for monitoring the status of children in the country. UNICEF Sri Lanka also worked closely with the National Human Rights Commission to increase civic/social spaces to demand accountability mechanisms for the realisation of the rights of all children.

UNICEF Sri Lanka participated in national consultations followed by Sri Lanka’s ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ensuring that children’s rights were incorporated in the National Action Plan for the CRPD. To support advocacy, UNICEF produced a documentary/research on the barriers faced by children with intellectual disabilities that are limiting their opportunities to realize their right to education. UNICEF provided financial and technical support to targeted schools across four provinces to ensure that the right to education was realized for all school-aged children, such as through catchment area mapping and innovative approaches to reduce school drop-outs, including for the most vulnerable. A survey to assess the results will be conducted in 2017.

**Gender Equality**

While Sri Lanka achieved gender parity across most social indicators for children (particularly in health and education), disparities emerge later, during adolescence and adulthood, especially in gender-based violence (GBV). UNICEF mainstreamed gender in its programmes and continued to work with partners to collect sex-disaggregated data and apply a stronger gender lens in analyses.

To eliminate gender-based violence in all settings, including cyber space, gender was mainstreamed in UNICEF’s child protection programme through: (1) training 40 police officers from the National Child Protection Authority; (2) training 150 police officers from women and children’s desks and the minor crime section in three police divisions; (3) providing a certificate programme for 45 police officers on counselling family disputes; and (4) supporting National Child Protection Authority analysis on laws related to online safety, with recommendations to the Ministry of Justice.

These initiatives contributed towards changing the way officers handle gender-based violence cases, as well as in the legal framework, to recognize the special needs of women and girls. Further, through the gender-based violence forum, UNICEF Sri Lanka contributed to the development and implementation of multiple policy documents, including the policy framework and national plan of action to address sexual and gender-based violence.

To mark the International Day of the Girl Child, UNICEF helped to raise awareness about the increasing trend of child marriages and teenage pregnancies with a joint statement signed by almost 50 stakeholders and presented by UNICEF and UNFPA to the Minister of Women and Child Affairs, advocating for urgent actions to be taken.

To achieve better health outcomes for adolescent girls, gender was mainstreamed in WASH through: training of 600 teachers to facilitate menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in the Northern Province; and development of an MHW toolkit for 8,200 students and 500 teachers in 41 primary and secondary schools in the Northern Province. School health clubs, mostly led by adolescent students, actively participated in these initiatives. The baseline study found that during menstruation nearly half of adolescent girls are not allowed to interact with boys, and more than one-third of adolescent girls reported missing school during menstruation.
Environmental Sustainability

Sri Lanka is vulnerable to climate change with evident environmental degradation, intensified natural disasters and unpredictable variations in seasonal rain and drought patterns. This has meant that the protection of the environment and promotion of environmental sustainability is increasingly becoming an area of focus, including disaster and risk reduction (DRR). Environmental sustainability is addressed mainly through water and sanitation initiatives, as well as disaster and risk-reduction advocacy through schools. UNICEF Sri Lanka has integrated emergency preparedness activities in its work planning and defined its commitments and responsibilities in the early warning/early action plan.

In 2016 Sri Lanka suffered from substantial flooding and landslides that resulted in both human and material loss. As part of its support for immediate recovery, UNICEF Sri Lanka’s and the Ministry of City Planning and Water Supply (MoCPWS) agreed to include resilience-building measures. This included working with the NWS&DB to make vulnerable water intakes resilient, supply water testing apparatus to track water quality issues during emergencies and provide flood-resilient septic tanks for 350 households in at-risk areas, thereby reducing the risk of water contamination during future floods. Following the immediate flood response, UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to work with relevant ministries to apply disaster resilience in future WASH activities.

The Country Office also continued ‘greening’ initiatives started in 2015. This included the installation of solar panels in the Colombo office and a series of improvements in both zone offices, such as proper sealing of air conditioned areas, replacement of aging conventional air conditioners with energy-saving inverter models, installation of LED bulbs, replacement of all energy-consuming computer monitors with new energy-saving and environmentally friendly LED monitors, etc. UNICEF also continued its efforts to travel by train to field locations, which contributed to Global UN/UNICEF efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save energy.

Effective Leadership

Twelve country management team (CMT) meetings were held in 2016; relevant zone office staff participated through video conference. The major initiatives discussed during these meetings included the preparations for audit, the audit report and response; development of the UN Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) 2018-2022; and the development of the new Country Programme Document 2018-2022.

In addition, country management team meetings served as a forum for monitoring the programme and operational risks and discussing mitigation measures.

In 2016 four reviews of the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan were carried out by the country management team. The team also monitored the integration of results-based management (RBM) in the Office’s planning, implementation and reporting.

The country management team also monitored mandatory emergency preparedness and response, as well as reviewing office-wide enterprise risk management and closely monitoring its implementation. Bottlenecks associated with Treasury delays in transmitting UNICEF funds to implementing partners poses a significant risk to programme implementation; nonetheless, in 2016, building on mitigation measures implemented during the previous year, UNICEF Sri Lanka achieved and maintained a low percentage of outstanding direct cash transfers, in line with global and regional key performance indicators.

The country management team and the joint consultative committee (JCC) continued to
address the results of the 2014 Global Staff Satisfaction Survey and follow up on the approved action plan. The outcomes of the follow-up plan were discussed with all staff, reported and monitored on a quarterly basis.

**Financial Resources Management**

The business support centre, initiated with a centralized team of four local focal points, played a key role in the smooth transfer of financial transactions to the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) in 2016. To better support transaction processing in VISION, both locally and in the GSSC, the in-house-developed ‘push & track’ system was further streamlined in 2016. In addition, new standard operating procedures (SOPs) with clear workflows, covering local and international travel and petty cash, were established to improve efficiency and effectiveness of processes.

Because of close monitoring of direct cash transfers (DCTs) and successful mitigation measures – including high-level meetings with Government officials and consultations with other UN agencies – UNICEF Sri Lanka managed to maintain outstanding direct cash transfers over nine months under 1 per cent, in line with the organizational target. Further, all eligible implementing partners were micro-assessed or audited, as stipulated. The follow-up mechanism on recommendations made during these assessments/audits has been strengthened. Refresher trainings on the harmonized approach to cash transfers were also held with all IPs.

The Office of Internal Audit and Investigations conducted an audit of UNICEF Sri Lanka covering the period January 2015 to June 2016 to assess governance, risk management and control processes. The audit concluded that the control processes were functioning satisfactorily. The Office is in the process of addressing the eight observations, of which seven were of medium priority and one was high.

General ledger account reconciliations were carried out monthly and bank reconciliations were completed on time to ensure no long-outstanding unreconciled amounts. Year-end closure was on track.

UNICEF ensured the availability of adequate funding/cash for programme activities and operating expenses, whilst securing the most competitive rates from the market. At year-end, it achieved an overall utilization rate of 94 per cent.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to maintain close relationships with donors, preparing progress updates, organising briefing meetings and facilitating field missions to visit UNICEF-assisted programmes. This, along with dedicated fundraising efforts, resulted in the mobilization of 100 per cent of planned funding for 2016, with the majority ear-marked for specific downstream service delivery under a multi-agency EU project. Good donor relations and UNICEF’s strategic position helped the Country Office to quickly raise approximately US$2.6 million to respond to the May 2016 emergency.

UNICEF Sri Lanka maintained strong partnerships with key donors such as the EU, Governments of Korea and Australia and National Committees for UNICEF, including Germany and the UK, which generated additional resources for Sri Lanka. Apart from small amounts of private-sector funding mobilized for the emergency response, UNICEF did not enter strategic partnerships with the private sector. This will be addressed as a priority area in 2017. UNICEF Sri Lanka also benefitted from joint-UN funding from the UN Peacebuilding Support Office and UNICEF global/regional thematic funding for all sectors.
As of December 2016, the Office had raised approximately 83 per cent of the total budget required through December 2017, leaving a funding gap of approximately US$9.4 million. The resource mobilisation strategy was updated for 2016-2017 and used to inform strategies for generating flexible, predictable income from public and private sector donors.

The internal control mechanism used to monitor the timeliness and quality of donor reports resulted in all donor reports meeting UNICEF reporting standards. Further, due to a rigorous budget monitoring system, the Office utilised almost 100 per cent of the grants that expired in 2016, with an overall implementation rate (Support Budget, Regular/Other Resources) of 94 per cent.

**Evaluation and Research**

In 2016 UNICEF Sri Lanka prepared a rolling monitoring and evaluation plan (2016-2017) to give the office greater flexibility in responding to dynamic programming needs and changes in the country context. Sixty-four per cent of planned studies/surveys (some rolled over from 2015) were completed in October.

Two evaluations conducted in 2015 were also finalized: ‘Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Approach (CFA) in Sri Lankan Primary Schools’ and the final evaluation of the EU-funded project ‘Widening Horizons and Creating Opportunities for Sustainable Livelihoods in North and East Sri Lanka (EU-SEM)’. The Office ensured compliance with UNICEF’s global guidelines and overall quality and ethical standards. Both evaluations, uploaded in UNICEF’s Global Evaluation database, were rated as “highly satisfactory”. Following discussions with the evaluation management team and partners, the Office prepared management responses to reflect priority actions based on findings for each evaluation.

The lessons learned and best practices from the evaluations were applied to ongoing programmes, as well as for defining future programmatic priorities. For example, in the CFA evaluation, the recommendation to focus on inclusive education and provide better educational opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities has resulted in completed research on the barriers to education faced by these children. This work is under consideration as one of priorities for the next Country Programme (2018-2022). The evaluation also provided evidence to guide the MoE on strategies and interventions required for scale-up of the child-friendly approach and mainstreaming in schools.

Findings of the EU-SEM project evaluation have led to improvements of the ongoing EU-funded project, such as a monitoring framework, centralized data collection/verification/reporting processes and a system of stakeholder review meetings to assess project achievements, constraints and effectiveness.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

In 2016, with support from the Regional Office, UNICEF Sri Lanka invested US$43,000 in the installation of solar panels in its Colombo office, resulting in a reduction of 17.82 tons of carbon dioxide emissions and a 50 per cent cost savings for electricity. Additionally, the Office initiated the repairs of zone offices, including proper sealing of air conditioned areas, replacing aging conventional air conditioners with energy-saving inverter models, installing LED bulbs, etc., leading to savings in electricity costs of more than 30 per cent. The Office also continued its efforts to use train travel to field locations, thus contributing to a reduction in travel costs, fuel and maintenance and repair of vehicles. Further, a number of IT-related initiatives implemented in 2016 improved the quality of communication systems within the office, contributing to a reduction in telephone and energy costs.

In 2016, to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of the UN’s support to programme
delivery, the UN Country Team and Operational Management Team, chaired by UNICEF, initiated the development of a business operating strategy for 2016-2017. The operational analysis enabled the identification of potential areas of harmonization of UN business operations in procurement, finance, human resources and administration, which led to greater cost efficiency and reduced duplication, as well as improved quality of services. In procurements, the UN achieved savings of US$100,000 through the use of long-term agreements (LTAs) for common services.

Transition to the Global Shared Services Centre at the end of 2015 was identified as a high-risk area due to uncertainties in its scope and operation. However, the Office was well-prepared for the transition in 2016, which enabled the level of risk to be reduced.

**Supply Management**

The procurement component of UNICEF Sri Lanka in 2016 is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
<td>US$1,553,904.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational supplies</td>
<td>US$223,306.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service contracting</td>
<td>US$307,664.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement to other countries-Maldives</td>
<td>US$188,444.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement services (through Government funding)</td>
<td>US$765,239.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total-Supply throughput</td>
<td>US$3,038,557.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procurement planning significantly improved through close collaboration with programme colleagues and quarterly reviews of the annual supply plan, ensuring quality and timeliness of supplies. The total value of construction projects, managed directly by partners, amounted to US$1.4 million.

Emergency supplies was a major category of supply assistance, representing 47 per cent of total supply expenditures in 2016, mainly for water, sanitation, health and nutrition. The rapid supply response during the emergency was instrumental to enabling UNICEF to respond in a timely and effective manner, and enhanced UNICEF’s credibility as a key Government partner during emergencies.

Compared to 2015, procurement services increased steadily in 2016 (approximately 30 per cent), mainly due to the procurement of nutrition supplies for the MoH, as part of in-country support.

Key initiatives undertaken resulted in improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of supply business processes. This included increasing the Office’s Contract Review Committee threshold to the global level of US$50,000; establishing 14 new LTAs, using other UN agency LTAs and discontinuing some low-use LTAs within the office; and refining global low-value procurement regulations to meet UNICEF Sri Lanka requirements.

An important role of the supply function during the period was its active participation in and contribution to the Inter-Agency Joint Procurement team, which led to greater harmonization in procurement and reduced duplication of efforts. This was achieved through the establishment/extension of 11 common UN LTAs and, overall, resulted in improved product quality and reduced costs.

In capacity building, the supply unit, with support from the UNICEF Supply Division, enhanced in-house knowledge and experience in contracting services, enabling the office to better handle service contracts. The Supply Unit also conducted several training programmes on VISION for programme and operations staff, to facilitate better understanding of the status of procurement, and continued to provide technical assistance to
the UNICEF Maldives Office for processing its procurement requests, amounting to US$147,551.

**Security for Staff and Premises**

UNICEF Sri Lanka’s Colombo and two zone offices are fully compliant with minimum operating security standards (MOSS). The Office has trained relevant staff in first aid, and first aid kits are available in all offices and UNICEF vehicles. UNICEF Sri Lanka is also a disability-friendly workplace, with a handicap ramp, a disability-friendly bathroom and availability of a wheel chair. The warden system, both for fires within the building and out-of-office emergencies, is up-to-date and functional, and was tested twice in 2016. Training for wardens and an evacuation drill were conducted by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in 2016.

All 10 UNICEF vehicles are fully MOSS-compliant. Vehicles are regularly serviced and kept in excellent working condition. All drivers are UNICEF staff and were trained in safe/defensive driving and security by UNDSS. In 2016, selected UNICEF drivers from Colombo and the zone offices were trained on four-wheel handling and safe driving tactics by a professional company hired by ROSA.

All staff travelling to areas requiring security clearances obtained such clearance prior to receiving their travel authorization, ensuring 100 per cent compliance, and were required to travel in a MOSS-compliant vehicle. Additionally, staff movements during a mission were tracked, reported and checked, via cell phone, till the end of the mission.

In 2016, the country’s security profile remained stable, at a low level. The UN system does not foresee any potential threat or risk scenario likely to have an adverse impact on the implementation of UN activities. Despite this, certain areas of threat and risk remain, mainly in the Northern Province, as witnessed by demonstrations, strikes and social tensions, such as the security incidents reported in Jaffna in October 2016.

**Human Resources**

The human resources (HR) unit focused on implementing the 2014 programme budget review recommendations. Of the 26 posts established, four were to be filled in 2016; three recruitments were completed and one post remains vacant due to the extension of an existing post. The Office continued to face challenges in attracting qualified female candidates for national professional posts requiring specialized technical knowledge and expertise. The current gender ratio is 37 per cent female to 63 per cent male.

By year-end, 50 per cent of the learning and training plan had been completed, with trainings on: FACE forms; VISION supply reports; and results-based management. Staff were continuously encouraged to take courses offered on the Agora Learning and Development Portal on professional development and areas related to their duties. A training on emergency preparedness response was not conducted in 2016.

Effective follow-up on performance management ensured 100 per cent compliance with the global deadline for reporting in 2016. In line with UNICEF’s global transition to a new performance management system (ACHIEVE) in 2016, UNICEF Sri Lanka ensured that staff were briefed on the new system and that performance management became part of the office culture. By year-end, 97 per cent of staff had completed the planning phase in ACHIEVE.

The Office transitioned many HR functions to the GSSC in September 2016. This enabled staff to complete most of their HR requests by themselves, using MyCase. However, during
this transition phase, some delays were experienced from the GSSC; the Office is taking actions to mitigate such delays.

Staff well-being remains a priority. Task teams were set up across all levels of staff to address issues arising from the Global Staff Association Survey. Further progress will be assessed in 2017.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

The ICT unit is responsible for facilitating programme delivery by providing reliable and secure ICT infrastructure and innovative business solutions. All staff were provided with access to UNICEF standard cloud-based office automation tools to improve programming effectiveness and efficiency, enabling 90 per cent of internal meetings/trainings with field offices to be held using Skype/video conferencing.

The Colombo office telephone system was replaced with the latest digital system and connected with upgraded telephone systems in the field offices, which facilitated more effective internal and external communication. This upgrade also ensured reliable, secure and quality communication for staff and reduced telephone costs. Further, the audio and video facilities in conference rooms were upgraded to ensure reliable and quality communication.

ICT disaster-recovery equipment was upgraded, data backup procedures strengthened and the IT-disaster recovery plan was updated and tested.

Further, improvements were made in the bar code-based asset management application to facilitate scanning using Android and iOS smart mobile devices, thereby improving asset management and reducing required staff time.

The ICT unit continuously improved and supported the regionally adopted push & track and Travel2Field applications, including troubleshooting, change management and maintenance support for countries that utilized these applications. The ICT unit collaborated closely with the global e-tools team on integrating Travel2Field in e-tools for global deployment.

The ICT footprint in field offices was reduced through efforts by the Colombo office to provide remote support for most ICT functions. Further, efforts to replace the field office servers and network switches, to reduce hardware failures and improve performance, are ongoing.

The ICT unit also actively engaged with innovative Office initiatives, such as using interactive platforms to connect with young people (U-Speak), and is leading a project to restructure the office shared drive for better information management and collaboration.

**Programme Components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1** By the end of 2017, UNICEF contributed to a reduction of stunting by 20%, wasting by 20%, anaemia by 20% and no increase of overweight through evidenced based policies and equity focused programming, resulting in improved access to quality nutrition services to children and women in UNICEF assisted districts.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
The most recent nutrition data published by the Family Health Bureau in 2016, records positive trends in the reduction of national prevalence rates for stunting, wasting and anaemia in targeted districts, particularly those most vulnerable – including districts that have a large rural/tea estate population or were affected by the conflict.

This positive trend can be attributed to the continued delivery of well-designed and effective nutrition interventions under the overall framework of the Multi-Sectoral Action Plan for Nutrition (MsAPN) by the Presidential Secretariat and Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine (MoH), with technical and financial support from UNICEF. The MsAPN is the national planning framework of key interventions to reduce maternal and child malnutrition in the country. UNICEF also played a key role in generating data and evidence, and documenting pilots and other approaches (such as delivering education messages on nutrition through voice and SMS via mobile appliances and mobilization of mothers/community support groups) for potential replication and scale-up, as well as to feed into future policy and programme design.

In 2016, with technical and financial support from UNICEF, the NNS introduced a more comprehensive and multi-sectoral data management and monitoring system on nutrition in nine under-performing districts, which included a computer-based, real-time monitoring system in three of the targeted districts (Nuwara Eliya, Matale and Polonnaruwa). The availability of timely and relevant data will contribute towards more evidence-based policies and equity-focused nutrition programming at all administrative levels. Further, the NNS, with UNICEF’s support, is scaling up this data management and monitoring system for the nutrition sector in all 25 districts.

UNICEF also partnered with non-governmental organizations, including Plan Sri Lanka and the Health Promotion Foundation, to promote innovative approaches, such as the formation of community-level mothers’ support groups that empower community members to address issues of child undernutrition through community-led actions related to infant and young child feeding practices and targeted interventions for nutritionally vulnerable households, amongst others.

During the year, Sri Lanka faced a severe nutrition supply gap (approximately 50 per cent) for the treatment of severe acute malnourishment amongst children under five years of age. As a strategic Government partner, UNICEF agreed to bridge this gap through the procurement of 1,700 cartons of ready-to-use therapeutic food, which is the most commonly accepted form of treatment in the country. In total, with support from UNICEF, the Government treated 276,321 children suffering from severe malnutrition through community assessments and treatment. Going forward, the Government is in the process of allocating additional resources to address this supply gap.

OUTPUT 1 National Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action Plan rolled-out with monitoring and evaluation framework generating evidence and critical knowledge for informed programming

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, the national nutrition specialist (NNS) initiated the development of a new multi-sectoral ‘National Strategic Plan and Framework for 2017 – 2021’, with technical and financial support from UNICEF. Further, the specialist introduced a more comprehensive multi-sectoral data management and monitoring system in nine under-performing districts under the MsAPN. UNICEF facilitated development of nutrition surveillance software for both health and non-health actors. UNICEF also continued advocacy efforts with the Presidential Secretariat and the MoH to establish a real-time monitoring system under MsAPN. The software and real-time monitoring surveillance system were piloted, with technical and financial support from UNICEF, in three targeted districts: Nuwara Eliya, Matale and
Polonnaruwa. District and divisional health staff were trained on data collection, monitoring and follow-up procedures.

By the end of 2016, data had been entered into the electronic system in all three pilot districts through smart phones, with close monitoring by supervising staff to ensure timely identification of determinants and interventions. To date, more than 10,175 nutritionally vulnerable children below the age of five have been registered by public health midwives in the three districts (2,064 children in Matale; 6,006 children in Nuwara Eliya and 2,105 children in Polonnaruwa district) using the mobile application, enabling improved, real-time child nutrition assessments, including periodic risk factor reviews. This system is linked to the data server at the MoH Nutrition Coordination Division, enabling the generation of health and nutrition data at all administrative levels.

Further, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the national nutrition specialist for the scale-up of a nutrition monitoring system, including software, for other, non-health, sectors in the remaining 16 districts in Sri Lanka. During 2016 data collection by multi-sectoral teams (using a standardised questionnaire) was completed in all districts. This new monitoring system will enable extraction of information on the status of nutritionally vulnerable households in each Grama Niladhari division (village level), specific targeting criteria and the status of interventions. This system-generated information will be used to review the progress of the MsAPN at all administrative levels and will inform future policies and service delivery. In addition, the information will be used to update mothers/guardians on growth progress and nutrition risks through individual discussions at the community level.

To further complete these developments in data collection and monitoring, UNICEF Sri Lanka provided technical and financial support for the training of more than 1,500 non-health and health staff in all 25 districts – including divisional secretaries, assistant directors of planning, medical officers of health, programme and planning officers, development officers and other government officers at divisional level – on micro-planning (identifying causal determinants and setting targets) for nutritionally at-risk families.

Based on these achievements, the MoH and Presidential Secretariat issued a joint circular on the implementation of the national nutrition surveillance system and the use of nutrition-related data for interventions at the divisional, district, provincial and national levels to ensure that this system is sustained and effectively used in the long term.

**OUTPUT 2** Knowledge, capacity and standards on child nutrition, breastfeeding, appropriate feeding practices, early childhood development/stimulation strengthened

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In 2016, the SAIFRN, with technical and financial support from UNICEF, continued its research on the use of mobile phones for improving infant and young child feeding practice. To date, more than 2,300 voice messages and 4,400 SMS messages on IYCF, growth monitoring, child care practices, good hygiene practices etc., have been shared with targeted mothers. While it is too early to measure the impact of this approach on feeding practices, UNICEF continued to assess and document how this has made a difference in the lives of children and its potential for replication. Additionally, the research will help in the design of an intervention package on IYCF counselling using mobile phones.

UNICEF invested in innovative approaches to empower communities to address issues of under-nutrition. Some 2,800 mothers’/community groups, involving more than 30,000 families, have been formed and are undertaking collective action to monitor and improve the nutritional status. UNICEF partnered with Plan Sri Lanka and the Health Promotion Foundation to sensitise public health midwives and others about the importance of engaging
mothers, through these community groups, on actions such as measuring and documenting their child's growth and development.

UNICEF provided financial and technical support for weekly radio programmes by nutrition experts over a six-month period to educate the public on key nutrition issues. This was complemented by support to the MoH for the printing of 950 sets of education panels (includes 19 panels) with 10 key IYCF messages, which are being used at the national and district levels during well baby clinics and community support groups to promote healthy feeding practices. These innovative practices in the nutrition sector were documented and published by the Sri Lanka Medical Nutrition Association, and a symposium was held to share these best practices amongst stakeholders in the sector. Overall, improvements were documented at the community level with increased numbers of collective actions taken to address nutrition determinants; promote innovative ways of providing early stimulation; facilitate more effective family units (such as involvement of fathers in child care and feeding, etc.); and instil healthier eating habits (such as using 'food books' to record the types of foods given to children).

ECD continues to be a priority area for UNICEF Sri Lanka. In 2016, it supported FHB to develop a docudrama to create awareness on the importance of investing in ECD, particularly the nutrition component, emphasizing breastfeeding, IYCF and responsive feeding. The docudrama was disseminated at the end of 2016 to Medical Officers of Health in all 344 MoH areas (covering 25 districts), to be used with mothers during clinic visits.

UNICEF supported five policy-makers to attend the Public Financing for Nutrition meeting under the global Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) platform, which led to the formulation of recommended actions for consideration when designing the MsAPN. UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the NNS to help them develop this action plan.

OUTCOME 2 By the end of 2017, National public health system delivers equitable and quality services on new born survival modelling good practices, contributing to knowledge generation and wider learning

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Despite considerable progress over the last decades, Sri Lanka’s maternal and child health services still present critical weaknesses. Results from national maternal mortality and perinatal death reviews in 2015 indicate that more than 59 per cent of maternal deaths are preventable, and 70 per cent of infant deaths occur during the neonatal period. Despite 99 per cent of women delivering in the hospital, heart and respiratory diseases are recorded as the leading causes of maternal mortality, which raises concerns about the quality and equity of care at the facility level.

UNICEF worked with the MoH to initiate a bottleneck analysis on newborn care to help policymakers and other stakeholders to define strategies and develop an action plan for quality improvements of new-born care services. The 'every newborn' action plan was finalized, with technical support from UNICEF, and launched, together with the bottleneck analysis, in December 2016. Recommendations from this analysis have been incorporated into the MoH maternal and new-born strategic plan for 2017-2025.

Sri Lanka’s national immunization programme is frequently viewed as one of the strongest performers, not only in the region, but also in the world. The national expanded immunization programme (EPI) has an excellent record, with extremely low incidence of EPI diseases and high coverage (98-100 per cent) of EPI vaccines. To maintain these high standards, in 2016 UNICEF Sri Lanka and UNICEF ROSA, with World Health Organization, provided technical support for conducting an external quality assurance review of Sri Lanka’s EPI programme. This led to key recommendations to the MoH on how to further improve the quality of the EPI
programme. Based on recommendations arising from the effective vaccine management assessment in 2015, UNICEF provided technical and financial support for improving the quality of cold chain management of vaccines in the country through the supply of ice-lined refrigerators and temperature monitoring devices, as well as related capacity building for cold chain technicians.

To improve access to adequate maternal and child health care, in particular for children and pregnant and lactating women, in low-coverage/resettled areas of the North and East of the country, two central clinics and seven Gramodaya Health Centres - providing antenatal and immunization services - were constructed, another three were refurbished and five more are being constructed. A maternity ward in Batticaloa and a paediatric ward in Kilinochchi were also constructed in these areas. In addition, equipment (such as pulse oximeters, ultrasound scanners and infusion pumps) were provided to targeted health institutions to facilitate the delivery of quality and equitable maternal and child health services. Once functioning, these facilities will improve the quality of and access to maternal and child health services for a population of more than 200,000 living in the targeted areas.

OUTPUT 1 Knowledge developed and disseminated on Maternal and New-born Child Health for learning exchanges and partnerships on neonatal mortality reduction in South Asia

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Given that the health system in Sri Lanka is considered a good model in the region, UNICEF continued to promote Sri Lanka as a mother and new-born health learning hub, using South-South collaboration as a means for shared learning. UNICEF Sri Lanka, which houses the South-South Coordinator for Health, facilitates many exchanges and monitors the long-term outcomes of the South-South initiative.

The initiative works to build a strong network of peer-to-peer support that continues after a learning exchange takes place, and facilitates learning or innovation being taken to scale. UNICEF Sri Lanka coordinated six events during 2016, on the following topics: (1) management of immunisation cold chain equipment; (2) home-based vaccination records; (3) advanced paediatric life support and related instructor course; (4) kangaroo mother care; (5) costing newborn care plans; and (6) audit of maternal and perinatal near-death incidents (near-miss). Each event included the development of related products (such as manuals) and follow-up interventions for sustainable implementation. UNICEF Sri Lanka also supported the development of a regional South-South website, which provides an overview of these regional collaborations.

Several significant positive outcomes resulted from these exchanges. Following the home-based records event in Sri Lanka, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, India revised its federal home-based records, and Nepal and Afghanistan have been re-designing their vaccination cards, in collaboration with their respective ministries of health. Following training on immunisation cold chain equipment repair, maintenance and management, one cold chain technician reported that the training enabled him to resolve four different cold chain problems within 15 days of returning home to Bhutan (the equipment had been non-functional for more than three years). Following the advanced paediatric life support course, Maldives conducted a national-level training on this topic to strengthen the capacity of their health professionals to improve new-born survival rates.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also gave technical and financial support to the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians to document best practices in newborn care and the newborn transport system for sick newborns. This information will be shared during an upcoming South-South event in 2017 to increase knowledge on these practices amongst health practitioners.
OUTPUT 2 Strengthened national and subnational capacity in monitoring, reporting and verification of neonatal deaths for informed decision and quality health care services to children and women in the disadvantaged areas

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016 UNICEF provided financial and technical assistance to the MoH to improve the quality of maternal and new-born care, as well as better understand the causes of neonate, infant and maternal deaths, through maternal mortality and perinatal death reviews. The detailed analysis undertaken by expert teams during the last two decades was documented in two books and is being printed by the FHB, with financial support from UNICEF. This analysis will help policy-makers to make relevant decisions to further reduce maternal mortality in the country. To complement these efforts, the College of Forensic Pathologists, jointly with the MoH and UNICEF, developed and disseminated in December 2016 guidelines for autopsies on maternal death to improve the quality of investigations, permit better understanding of the causes of such deaths and develop a stronger maternal death surveillance system.

To improve infant mortality rates, UNICEF focused on enhancing care during the extremely vulnerable neonatal period. In 2016, this included assistance for training 140 medical officers and paediatricians on basic and advanced paediatric life support, as well as conducting perinatal death reviews to identify the underlying causes of new-born deaths and address gaps in services. The perinatal death reviews, covering the period from 28 weeks of gestation to 28 days of life, are critical in ascertaining the causes of neonatal deaths, to address them and improve the quality of newborn care. UNICEF provided technical and financial support for conducting such reviews in 10 hospitals in Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts (of a total of 65 hospitals conducting such reviews). Key findings were shared with relevant stakeholders, to put in place mechanisms to address the causes of preventable newborn deaths and take measures to improve logistic facilities.

To prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, UNICEF gave technical and financial support to the National STI/AIDS Control Programme to develop a guide for healthcare workers on the ‘Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis’. These guides, including a CD, were disseminated to 344 medical officer of health areas and 53 STI/AIDS clinics, to be used during routine community awareness programmes in field and clinic settings. Further, UNICEF procured 250 safety kits for use in key health institutions in the country, thereby ensuring the safe delivery of babies of HIV-positive mothers.

OUTCOME 3 By the end of 2017, UNICEF contributed to WASH sector performance ensuring effective coverage of safe drinking water, improved knowledge, sanitation services and practices in most disadvantaged areas and healthy environment promoted

Analytical Statement of Progress:
National WASH coverage has already exceeded the targets set for 2017, an achievement reached through the contribution of many stakeholders from different domains. UNICEF’s long-term advocacy on child-friendly water and sanitation also helped leverage resources for WASH in schools. In 2016 UNICEF continued to play a key technical and advocacy role in WASH, which has contributed to several important achievements.

With UNICEF’s support and facilitation, the MoCPWS demonstrated its commitment to improving sanitation services through its participation (including adolescent representation) in the 6th South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) held in Dhaka in January 2016, and SACOSAN Inter-Country Working Group (ICWG) meetings. After the conference, in close collaboration with UNICEF ROSA, UNICEF Sri Lanka gave technical support to the MoCPWS, detailing Sri Lanka’s commitment to establishing a Regional Support Centre on Sanitation. Further, the Government reconfirmed its commitment to the Sanitation and Water
for All agenda by participating in the high-level meeting in Addis Ababa and including both WASH and health sector representation, for the first time. One key result has been the initiation of discussions between the MoCPWS and UNICEF on conducting a mapping of water and sanitation services during the first half of 2017, to identify areas that are underserved due to emerging disparities in rural areas. In safe water supply, Sri Lanka’s mandated water service provider, the NWS&DB, had strong representation at the Global Water Safety Conference in the Philippines, co-facilitated by WHO and UNICEF, where they presented four research papers.

As the sector lead, the MoCPWS re-established the national WATSAN Steering Committee meetings, which led to the facilitation of the first formal discussion with the Ministry of Sustainable Development on the SDGs relevant to WASH. This discussion led to the establishment of a dedicated SDG monitoring forum comprising key stakeholders, including UNICEF. UNICEF has a major role to play, together with WHO, in redefining Sri Lanka’s indicators and monitoring mechanisms in line with the SDGs and Joint Monitoring Programme. Through the WATSAN Steering Committee, the MoCPWS has established mechanisms to monitor and follow up on commitments and related actions related to the SACOSAN and SWA platforms.

Key progress against country commitments was made in 2016 with critical contributions from UNICEF. The draft national sanitation policy, which was strongly advocated for, and technically supported, by UNICEF, has now been shared with the legal draftsman for articulation and Cabinet approval, following delays in 2015 due to changes in Government. In the water sector, the NWS&DB, with technical and financial support from WHO and in collaboration with UNICEF, has expanded the use of water safety plans (WSPs) to all 320 water supply schemes under its purview (only 65 schemes used WSPs in 2015). From this strategic partnership, a dedicated internal WSP cell has been actively supporting this process by building staff capacity on planning, implementing and monitoring WSPs. Further, in 2016, WHO audited the WSPs of several water supply schemes to ensure that quality standards are maintained. The NWS&DB, with financial support from UNICEF, also provided technical support to community-managed water supply schemes, which supply nearly 10 per cent of the country’s drinking water, on the use of WSPs.

To address issues of inequity in water and sanitation services by 2020, a Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement Project was launched in 2015 by the NWS&DB, with funding from the World Bank. During the consultation of key stakeholders in the project design phase, UNICEF identified inequities in service quality beyond the good coverage statistics. The project targets deprived pockets of the population, areas lagging on critical indicators and vulnerable population groups, including those displaced by the conflict, tea estate populations and victims of malnutrition, chronic kidney disease and other illnesses. In 2016, under this project, the rural water and sanitation section of the NWS&DB introduced innovative and cost-effective technologies to the rural water sector through two pilot installations in Uva province, building on innovative technologies supported by UNICEF in 2015.

Under the WASH in Schools programme, 2015 changes in Sri Lanka’s Government led to a shift of focus towards the hardware (infrastructure) components of the programme and a restructuring of the school nutrition and health services branch, minimizing attention to critical behaviours such as hand-washing and MHM. Therefore, UNICEF has continued to strongly advocate for much-needed focus on these components, in line with Sri Lanka’s commitments at the WASH in Schools International Learning Exchange in 2015. As a result, the profile of MHM and the need for recurrent cost recovery for the care and maintenance of services have been included in the MoE’s resource prioritization. Sri Lanka reflected these achievements in the WASH in Schools International Learning Exchange (WInS ILE) 2016 in Indonesia.
OUTPUT 1 National multi-stakeholder mechanisms functional and strengthened, mainstreaming water safety and community participation in water resource management and enforcing national sanitation policy.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A key achievement in 2016 was the leadership of the Central Environmental Authority (CEA), with technical support from UNICEF, in bringing together relevant multi-disciplinary stakeholders to address issues of water safety of natural resources in a holistic manner. As a result, in June, the CEA published a multi-stakeholder strategy and action plan on the management and conservation of the Kelani River Basin involving 54 stakeholders from various sectors. This strategy was supplemented by a preliminary perception survey to capture the inherent views of stakeholders, profile natural resources and map fluctuations in water safety against critical parameters. Despite being the source of drinking water for the densely populated Western province, the Kelani River is estimated to be the most polluted river in the country. The multi-stakeholder approach employed for this river basin can become a replicable model for any water basin or catchment area in Sri Lanka.

Further complementing efforts on water safety, the NWS&DB expanded its technical role to implementing WSPs in community-managed and rural water schemes. Together with WHO, UNICEF played a key advocacy and technical role in this regard, particularly in applying an equity lens to drinking water safety in-line with the SDGs. With support from UNICEF, 10 community-managed water schemes piloted WSPs, resulting in less contamination of raw water, thereby minimising the cost of water treatment. These pilots are replicable models for reaching almost 4,000 community-managed water supply schemes in Sri Lanka.

To promote knowledge sharing in the sector, on World Water Day, UNICEF supported awareness-raising for an audience of more than 1,000 people, including school children, community leaders, service providers, etc. on water safety and challenges related to climate change. Further, UNICEF supported the publishing and dissemination of 32 research papers from a wide range of water sector professionals who participated in the NWS&DB Research and Development Symposium.

In the sanitation sector, UNICEF facilitated the participation of three adolescent students in the 6th South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) to encourage adolescent representation in discussions and decisions that affect their lives. The students had gained the skills and knowledge they needed to actively contribute their ideas during the Conference, even leading sessions, from participation in previous conferences, such as the UNICEF-led South Asian Student Conference and WInS ILE in 2015. Following SACOSAN, UNICEF provided technical support to the MoCPWS to detail Sri Lanka’s commitment to establishing a Regional Support Centre on Sanitation. This commitment is being taken forward through participation in SACOSAN inter-country working group meetings. UNICEF also played a technical role in further refining Sri Lanka’s draft Sanitation Policy based on comments from Cabinet, in line with SACOSAN commitments.

OUTPUT 2 National institutional standards and norms operationalized and strengthened and positive behaviour norms promoted under WASH in Schools

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Under the WASH in Schools programme, during 2016 UNICEF gave technical and financial support for field testing of the menstrual hygiene management (MHM) toolkit, which had been developed in 2015. The toolkit was designed to analyse and improve existing menstrual hygiene practices for planning and action, including the development of MHM
action plans in schools.

Under the Northern Provincial Department of Education, 30 education professionals were given the skills and knowledge to act as trainers on the MHM toolkit. With their facilitation, 600 teachers in 12 educational zones were trained on how to use the toolkit in school activities. Resource materials (flash cards, pocket charts, marbles and other stationery items) were made available for teachers. These toolkits were also included in the hygiene promotion packs for schools that received WASH facilities under an EU-funded programme. It was observed that the training helped facilitate discussions around MHM in schools and supported the trainers to gain a better understanding of how certain MHM-related myths were negatively affecting the lives of adolescent girls.

To date, 8,200 school children and 500 teachers in 41 schools gained knowledge about better hygiene practices, including MHM and group hand-washing with soap. The schools in which the initiative was piloted have commenced incorporating MHM in their regular school development plans for future interventions. During the development of the toolkit, it was found that cultural norms and myths are the main challenges to MHM, leading to irregular attendance of adolescent girls in schools. Therefore, the provincial education ministry of the Northern Province has decided to tackle one key myth at a time to address the issue. The myth that compels adolescent girls to reduce their intake of water during menstruation was chosen as the first myth for targeted advocacy work. MoH experts (obstetricians, gynaecologists and reproductive health officers) have held several technical sessions on this myth. As a result, a society formed by Sri Lankan doctors who have migrated to the United States has shown interest in establishing community-based sanitary napkin production units in Sri Lanka. Preliminary discussions between this society and the provincial ministry of health are currently in progress.

UNICEF continued to technically support the MoE to follow up on commitments made at the 2015 WinS ILE, and to support the ministry’s planning of and participation in the 2016 WinS ILE. This participation further strengthened Sri Lanka’s role and ability to share WinS-related knowledge in the region through South-South cooperation. Sri Lanka’s representation reflects its continued commitment and willingness to learn about best practices in WinS in South and East Asia as well as the Pacific. Further, the WASH in Schools Handbook (begun in 2015) was finalized as a key resource document for future WinS programmes, with technical and financial support from UNICEF.

**OUTPUT 3** By the end of 2016, WASH community infrastructure strengthened, ensuring improved access to and quality of services to children, families and communities, especially in disadvantaged areas

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Through the EU-funded program conducted in seven conflict-affected/border districts, (Ampara, Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Mannar, Monaragala, Puttalam and Vavuniya), UNICEF is improving access for more than 7,200 families to water supply and 1,000 families to sanitation facilities. In 2016:

- Approximately 35,800 people gained access to improved water sources through the construction/rehabilitation of 70 dug wells, 417 tube wells and four rural water schemes and provision of 1,493 household piped water connections in the targeted districts.
- Sixteen trainings were conducted for rights-holders on issues of water quality to promote the use of improved and safe water sources, leading to the establishment of 21 community-level water quality surveillance committees in all seven targeted districts.
• 216 user groups/water committees were formed in the targeted districts, and now have the capacity to interact with their respective local government bodies on the mechanism for maintaining and repairing water sources.
• Approximately 5,900 people gained access to improved sanitation through the construction of 1,469 household latrines in the targeted districts.
• 2,400 school children and 120 teachers gained access to improved water and sanitation facilities in 12 schools in Batticaloa, Ampara and Monaragala districts. Additionally, 1,720 school children and 120 teachers have improved knowledge on better hygiene practices through their participation in 12 hygiene and school health promotion activities.
• WASH facilities were improved in 14 Gramodaya Health Centres in Batticaloa, Ampara and Monaragala districts, benefitting the approximately 1,800 outpatients that visit these centres. Further, 18 hygiene promotion sessions were conducted for the community members accessing these centres, to promote good hygiene practices.

Improved access to safe water and adequate sanitation services contributed to a reduced risk of water-borne diseases; mitigated the risk of people resorting to open defecation; and reduced the time spent by mothers in fetching water, making them more available to their children and for income-generating activities. Overall, having such services improved the well-being of people by ensuring their dignity, safety and comfort.

As part of its ongoing support to the Government in resettling those displaced by the conflict, UNICEF, in collaboration with UNHCR and key non-governmental organizations, provided improved water and sanitation services in the formerly high-security areas of Jaffna and Trincomalee. A total of 680 returnees now have access to improved sanitation facilities and hygiene through the construction of 223 household toilets and conducting of hygiene promotion sessions. In addition, 2,100 returnees have access to improved water through the extension of piped, treated water and construction of 10 tube wells and 50 dug wells. These services contributed to an open defecation-free environment, mitigating risks from water-borne diseases.

**OUTCOME 4** By the end of 2017, improved effective coverage to quality pre-primary and primary education for girls and boys, particularly for the most disadvantaged

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Under the programme component focused on enhancing learning for all, UNICEF has focused its investments and efforts since end-2015 on the development, piloting, testing and scaling up of a comprehensive intervention package based on the multi-level teaching and learning approach. Moving away from a sole focus on teacher trainings, this package included: (1) changes in classroom design and layout, enabling a more student-driven and group-based learning environment; (2) changes in classroom pedagogy processes, with students becoming ‘managers’ of their own learning and teachers becoming facilitators of that learning journey; (3) changes in classroom assessment systems, with more focused and student-driven formative assessments integrated into the regular classroom process; (4) a more refined and differentiated learning path towards attainment of the expected learning competencies for a particular grade level, displayed as a ‘learning ladder’ within classrooms; and (5) a full set of supplementary learning materials and activities structured according to the ‘learning ladder’.

Apart from undertaking school-level pilot programmes, UNICEF continued its advocacy and technical support to the central-level MoE and the NIE to ensure that channels for mainstreaming the intervention package into the regular education system would gradually open up.

In the Eastern Province, the first such comprehensive intervention package was finalized for
Grade 2 in all three subjects (languages, math and environment) in August 2016 and launched as a pilot programme in 124 schools, with technical and financial support from UNICEF. Following two months of implementation, the feedback from teachers, parents and students was outstandingly positive. Children who were previously passive and unmotivated to go to school as they were lagging far behind in their competency levels became excited about going to school again and were eager to climb up the learning ladder to catch up with their fellow classroom students. All school-level stakeholders interviewed requested that the same approach be developed for subsequent primary grades as well.

In the Northern Province, UNICEF facilitated the establishment of an online learning assessment system to track learning outcomes on a term basis for Grade 5 in 2016 and for all primary grades starting from 2017. Through this system, slow learners are identified and targeted through remedial programs and supplementary learning materials were designed and piloted in 100 UNICEF-supported model schools. Both interventions contributed to a substantial improvement in learning outcomes during the Grade 5 scholarship examination conducted in August, showing an increase from 71 to 75 per cent compared to the previous year. While this approach is a key step towards promoting learning for all, UNICEF sees it as an intermediate step only, due to the need for advocacy to strengthen formative assessment systems within classrooms and adapt learning materials and pedagogy to the particular child’s learning level as part of the regular classroom teaching process, similar to the full intervention package used in the Eastern Province.

The second programme component focused on promoting peace and social cohesion through education. Competencies and skills such as analytical thinking and problem-solving skills, communication and peace education, are essential for young people to become active citizens and contribute to greater tolerance and respect for diversity. Increasingly, quality education has become recognized as a key factor in the promotion of social cohesion and peace building. UNICEF’s advocacy in this regard contributed to a dedicated programme component on strengthening peace promotion through the education system in the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, launched by the President in September 2016.

UNICEF’s high-level involvement included: (1) commissioning a social cohesion policy review; (2) supporting the set-up of a governance structure with a multi-sectoral steering committee and technical working groups for planning, monitoring and evaluating related policies and action plans; and (3) creating a dedicated development partner working group, currently chaired by UNICEF. These efforts have contributed to making UNICEF a partner of choice in this area of work, supporting, among others: i) curriculum revisions; ii) design of innovative co-curricular programs; iii) capacity development; and iv) development of policies and action plans in collaboration with the MoE and related stakeholders, such as the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation. The policy review report commissioned by UNICEF was well received by both Government and development partners and, following approval by the Government-led steering committee in October 2016, has been recognized as the basis for developing the multi-sectoral action plan to address implementation gaps, a revised policy framework over the next two years and resource mobilisation.

The third programme component focused on strengthening ECD. Following UNICEF’s collaboration with artists during 2015 to develop innovative story books and learning activities that promote peace and social cohesion among three-to-five-year-olds, six related products were produced and disseminated on a pilot basis to 52 preschools in early 2016, including training on how to use these materials. A follow-up review showed that the products and trainings were highly appreciated by pre-school teachers and children; many pre-school teachers highlighted the innovative approach used. Requests were made to scale up the printing and dissemination of these six products, as well as four additional products developed in 2015. Finally, the NIE, the lead agency on developing national curricula, has
requested training on these products and is exploring modalities to launch these products on a nationwide basis to all pre-schools.

**OUTPUT 1** By end 2017, systems are strengthened to deliver quality education that improves learning outcomes and promotes social cohesion and inclusion for girls and boys.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Since 2015, UNICEF focused on enhancing learning outcomes through a more holistic package of interventions based on the concept of multi-level teaching and learning. In the Eastern Province, a complete intervention package was finalized for Grade 2 in August 2016 and launched as a pilot programme in 124 schools, with technical and financial support from UNICEF. UNICEF launched a similar pilot programme for 100 schools in the North, focusing on identifying slow learners through an online database on learning outcomes and targeted remedial learning interventions for those students.

The pilot in the North involved the establishment of a provincial resource team, development of learning materials for remedial teaching, teacher training, student camps to support catch-up sessions for slow learners and knowledge exchanges among teachers on remedial teaching modalities. It also included the distribution of laptops to pilot schools to facilitate data entry and analysis of learning outcomes, as well as more evidence-based school planning and monitoring processes. In addition, UNICEF Sri Lanka identified champions at the central and provincial levels and supported establishment of dedicated resource teams to lead the development and implementation of these pilot programmes.

Building on UNICEF’s technical support to the review of the education for social cohesion policy and establishment of a dedicated governance system, UNICEF supported the NIE to integrate social cohesion concepts and peace education into the primary curricula. This was accomplished by incorporating activities into the curricula framework on “environment” and developing age-appropriate stories as support guides to teachers. Additionally, related trainings were provided to the primary curricula development board and primary teachers by the NIE through the existing cascade training model, using provincial resource teams. Implementation of these curriculum changes will start in schools in 2017.

Under the area of social cohesion, UNICEF partnered with a local civil society organization to implement a pilot project in the Eastern province that focuses on promoting social cohesion among junior secondary students from different ethnic/religious backgrounds in targeted schools, through increased interactions using music as an approach. The project, which merges two local music streams into a common curriculum, has been well-received and endorsed by the NIE. Further, UNICEF helped to develop a strategy to address issues of corporal punishment and bullying in schools. A related “Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices” study was conducted by the Provincial Education Department, with UNICEF’s technical guidance for analysis of study findings. UNICEF also supported the development of a guidebook on positive classroom management techniques, which is being piloted in 100 schools.

To improve understanding of the challenges faced by children with learning difficulties, UNICEF commissioned a related documentary and research study in 2016. The study included recommendations for making changes to the education system to better respond to the needs of this marginalized group of children. The documentary was well-received by stakeholders during an initial screening, leading to the inclusion of its key recommendations into UNICEF’s future plans. It is envisaged that the documentary will be further screened during key advocacy moments and technical meetings in 2017.
OUTPUT 2 By end 2017, enhanced capacity of key education stakeholders at national and provincial levels in UNICEF geographical priority areas to deliver and assure quality pre-school education for girls and boys aged 3-5 years

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF gave technical and financial support to the NIE for developing a common national ECD curriculum framework based on the ELDS launched at the end of 2015. An open framework design would allow other stakeholders sufficient flexibility for adjustments when designing and implementing preschool programmes. A multi-stakeholder consultation process was used to ensure acceptance of the framework as the key guiding instrument by all stakeholders. In 2017 UNICEF plans to further support the NIE to develop guidelines and supplementary materials for implementing the curriculum framework throughout the country. UNICEF also supported the strengthening of governance and coordination mechanisms in ECD. In the Eastern Province, the results of a functional mapping exercise completed in late 2015 were disseminated and discussed further in 2016, through which the existing allocation of roles and responsibilities was mapped out and overlaps in implementation were highlighted. UNICEF was successful in advocating for the creation of a multi-stakeholder forum on ECD in the Eastern Province as a means of facilitating continuous dialogue and reaching agreement on roles and responsibilities, as well as areas for joint planning, monitoring and evaluation. As a first action point, forum participants agreed to conduct a comprehensive joint planning exercise in December 2016, taking in account the findings from the mapping exercise.

In Central and Uva provinces, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the development of guidelines, minimum standards and related instructions in preschool education. First, guidelines for preschool management committees were piloted, finalized and adopted by provincial ECD advisory committees. To strengthen the implementation of these guidelines, dedicated preschool management committees were established and members trained in 132 preschools. Secondly, preschool minimum standards were developed, piloted, finalized and approved by the provincial cabinet through a dedicated Gazette notification. To support implementation, 160 ECD officials and 600 preschool teachers were trained on these minimum standards. UNICEF also supported the development of standards, Bill of Quantities and drawings for low-cost, environment-friendly play parks. These parks were piloted, with financial support from UNICEF, in 40 preschools after receiving approval from the provincial ECD advisory committee.

To enhance the management capacity of preschool heads, UNICEF facilitated the training of 180 preschool communities on conducting self-assessments and developing strategic plans to improve preschools. Following the training, preschool self-assessments were conducted and annual plans developed based on a multi-stakeholder consultation process, enabling collaboration between preschool management committees and community-level mothers’ groups that focus on maternal and child nutrition.

OUTPUT 3 By the end of 2016, children in pre-primary and primary education have greater access to quality school infrastructure and child friendly learning environments

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF continued to provide financial support for the rehabilitation of schools and preschools as part of its regular and emergency response programme. In the resettlement areas of the Northern Province, two damaged schools were rehabilitated/repaired in 2016 and work on a third school will be completed in 2017. As part of an EU-funded education programme, 24 schools were rehabilitated in the Eastern (23) and Uva (1) provinces during 2016. UNICEF further supported infrastructure improvements in 35 preschools in Uva and Central provinces, which included: providing and upgrading WASH facilities, roof, wall and floor repair, improving the condition of access roads and providing preschool furniture items.
Nevertheless, it is envisaged that interventions to rehabilitate schools will play an increasingly reduced role in UNICEF’s future support programme.

UNICEF also supported the rehabilitation of schools and pre-schools following the flood and landslide emergency that occurred in May 2016. This included the rehabilitation of 25 schools, 22 of which are in the most-affected Kegalle District. Such interventions included roof, wall and floor repair, improving access roads and providing and/or upgrading WASH facilities. More than 8,000 children benefited from this intervention. Moreover, UNICEF supported the provision of furniture, learning materials and equipment to 141 pre-schools in all flood-affected areas, in collaboration with MoWCA.

OUTCOME 5 By the end of 2017, an enabling environment is strengthened to protect boys and girls from abuse, violence and injuries in Sri Lanka

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The changing context has continued to shape the interventions undertaken in the child protection sector. The policies of the new Government, coupled with economic development perspectives and shrinking international aid assistance, as well as deadly landslides, were key highlights of the year. In this environment, UNICEF increased its advocacy on and support to the development of new child protection-related policies, continued development assistance to the most affected districts in the North and East and provided much-needed emergency responses in the aftermath of the landslides and flooding in May 2016.

Previous assessments by UNICEF Sri Lanka and other child protection actors indicated that the national child protection system in Sri Lanka largely focuses on specific issues, resulting in resources being spread thinly across many areas. This approach weakens the overall system’s ability to mitigate or respond to children’s vulnerabilities and fails to identify, prevent and respond to multiple deprivations. Global evidence indicates that strengthening the overall child protection system can provide comprehensive response and prevention mechanisms to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation. UNICEF has therefore been advocating with the GoSL to move beyond policies that are issue-based and fragmented, towards a more holistic system-strengthening approach. As a result, MoWCA committed to child protection system-strengthening reforms and established a multi-sectoral steering committee to oversee the mapping exercise. UNICEF hired international and national consultants to assist in carrying out the exercise during the second and third quarters of 2016.

The findings of the system-mapping exercise provided a common understanding of the child protection functions, capacities and gaps in Sri Lanka. Based on the final report, a prioritization workshop was convened by the steering committee, under the stewardship of the MoWCA and with support from UNICEF, in the third quarter. The workshop aimed at building consensus amongst stakeholders, establishing national priorities and guiding national decision-making to strengthen the child protection system.

Another priority area for UNICEF has been the prevention of violence against children by advocating for a safe, stable and nurturing environment for children to reach their full potential. A key area of support for children has been at the community-level, through technical and financial support to the establishment/strengthening of village-level support mechanisms, such as the village child development committees (VCDC, formerly, village child rights monitoring committees), that focus on prevention and early intervention. There are currently 191 VCDCs (covering Eastern, Northern and Uva Provinces) acting as community volunteers that monitor the welfare of vulnerable children within the village and identify and refer families and children who are at risk of abuse and exploitation. These groups work in tandem with Government child protection officers at the divisional level, especially with case management officials, on referrals of cases of child victims of
abuse, neglect or exploitation. For example, the village child development committees collaborated with divisional officials to address the high incidence of out-of-school children in certain areas. Concerted efforts by divisional officers and community-level work by the committees resulted in 2,292 children returning to school during the reporting period. These community initiatives have also been complemented by the NCPA’s expanded field presence in 2016 following the recruiting of additional officers. The NCPA officers are mandated to identify children at risk and screen the community for risk trends and patterns. UNICEF works in close partnership with the NCPA and provides technical support, helping them to carry out their mandate.

Special attention was also given to adolescents as agents of change, who can help prevent the reoccurrence of violence and create social cohesion in their communities. In this regard, the National Youth Services Council (NYSC), with UNICEF’s technical inputs, produced a training manual on ‘Social Cohesion and Inclusive Development’, which was rolled-out in mid-2016. The Council encouraged active youth engagement and participation in their civic role by creating spaces and opportunities for youth interaction, such as nationwide youth clubs and organising a Youth Forum, with participation by 150 adolescents. The European Union and British Council in Sri Lanka are also key partners in youth development. UNICEF will continue to support the NYSC with this programme in 2017, by proposing additional methods for peaceful co-existence and social cohesion, such as through sport for development.

Another key achievement in 2016 was the pledge by the Government to be one of the pathfinder countries in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. This decision reflects the GoSL’s strong commitment to achieving this goal. UNICEF played a key advocacy role in placing VAC on Sri Lanka’s national agenda and prioritizing it within the child protection sector. UNICEF will continue to provide technical support to the GoSL in 2017 to turn this commitment into a meaningful policy and national programme.

OUTPUT 1 Child protection policies, legislation and Standard Operating Procedures reviewed, amended and/or developed based on knowledge; and capacity to protect children is strengthened

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The GoSL is steadily integrating international obligations into domestic law. In 2016 several pieces of legislation, policies and SOPs related to child protection were reviewed and amended.

- UNICEF was actively engaged in all public consultations on the constitutional review process, providing technical guidance on international standards/best practices on child rights. UNICEF used partnerships to leverage support for child rights, such as through joint proposals submitted to the UN Country Team, Child Protection Working Group and National Human Rights Commission. As a result, the final proposed Constitution, under review by the reform body, reflects specific provisions on child rights.
- Following a child protection system mapping in Sri Lanka, UNICEF and the Ministry of Justice launched a comprehensive review of the juvenile justice system to understand current gaps and propose related solutions.
- The child protection task force, led by the NCPA, is drafting a national child protection policy, with technical input from UNICEF.
- The NCPA is currently reviewing national legislation to address the legal lacuna in relation to protecting victims of cyber-bullying (mostly adolescents). UNICEF contributed with knowledge products, such as the South Asia Regional Study on online sexual exploitation, as well as expertise on the criminalization of cyber-bullying.
- The Department of Probation and Child Care Services, in consultation with NCPA officers, NGOs and UNICEF, revised existing case management guidelines to strengthen the role of divisional child protection officers and focus on family/social care.
UNICEF is advocating for child-friendly SOPs within the judicial system, especially in police stations and amongst law enforcement officers. UNDP and UN Women have jointly advocated for similar justice sector reforms. In capacity building, UNICEF systematized in-service training for officials directly involved with child protection cases through two specific interventions. With support from UNICEF, a child protection diploma is now being delivered to all child and social protection officers under the Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS) working in North and East provinces. UNICEF provided technical inputs to revise the curriculum so that the social care component considers the child and family in a more holistic manner. In addition, UNICEF partnered with the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute to establish refresher courses to justice system professionals on international standards for working with children in contact with the law. This pilot aims to ensure that the justice system is structured in the best interest of Sri Lankan children, with the potential for scale-up by the Ministry of Justice and National Police Commission.

UNICEF also supported the construction of child-friendly courts in Mannar, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Monaragala and Ampara districts. As a result of intense advocacy in previous years, the Victims and Witness Protection Act provides for the use of simultaneous audio-visual links to obtain evidence from children, without them having to be present in open courts. UNICEF advocated with authorities to establish this system in Mannar courts. The Act has created a stronger advocacy platform to further the reconciliation process by supporting child victims of the conflict.

OUTPUT 2

Policy arrangements covering education and child protection to prevent injuries and to end violence against girls and boys in Sri Lanka operationalized

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF maintained strategic partnerships and coordination mechanisms at the national level with the MoH and relevant departments (including the non-communicable disease unit, FHB, Sri Lanka Medical Association and the Department of Police) to address child injuries, both intentional and unintentional. During the year, UNICEF provided technical support to the MoH's non-communicable disease unit to roll out the injury surveillance system at hospital level. This system, which will function as of 2017, will generate information on child injuries and related causes that will be fed into systematic reports for policy and programme design and implementation.

UNICEF also specifically addressed the issue of child injuries caused by mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) through mine-risk education (MRE) in high-risk resettlement communities, in partnership with national NGOs and the Government's Humanitarian Demining Unit. In 2016, this programme reached more than 250,000 community members, resulting in a 20 per cent reduction in mine/ERW incidents and a 15 per cent increase in the reporting of explosive devices by community members compared to 2015. To ensure long-term sustainability of the MRE programme, 67 community volunteer groups have been established, with support from UNICEF, in villages to educate community members on how to prevent injuries. Further, district-level child injury prevention steering committees (established in 2015 in five districts) continued to function effectively during the year, with a focus on providing multi-sectoral support to children with both intentional and non-intentional injuries. The number of cases remained proportionately high (93 cases as of October 2016), indicating the public's positive perception of the steering committees.

In line with its work on systems-strengthening, UNICEF Sri Lanka commissioned a study to analyse the effectiveness of income generation assistance from the Department of Social Services in preventing school drop-out and other types of family separation, including institutionalization of children. The study showcases the importance of an inter-sectoral approach for an effective child protection system, ranging from the MoE to MoWCA and the
Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare. Study findings provide a foundation for common understanding on the most effective approaches for engaging in dialogue with policymakers on social protection mechanisms.

**OUTPUT 3** Approaches to combat violence and harmful behavior in communities, schools and homes are integrated into awareness campaigns, ECD, the CFSA and curricula activities and methods and campaigns are modeled in targeted areas, monitored, documented and promoted in policy advocacy.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Following the launch of the integrated campaign to end child abuse and violence against children in 2015, ending violence against children remained a key national priority on the agenda of all stakeholders, including the Government, UN, civil society and the broader community. The NCPA was very active in this area, working on various platforms, including their role in addressing the growing threat to children, particularly adolescent girls, from improper use of the Internet and mobile devices. In late 2016, the NCPA launched a confidential telephone line, separate from the general 1929 child helpline, for children and young persons who are being bullied, harassed or intimidated online or via a mobile device.

A ‘knowledge, attitudes and practices’ study commissioned by UNICEF revealed that corporal punishment is a commonly accepted practice among adults (teachers, parents and police officers), despite being illegal and prohibited according to a circular by the Ministry of Education. To address this, child rights organizations, including UNICEF, came up with alternative strategies to end corporal punishment in Sri Lanka. Notably, the NCPA, with technical inputs from UNICEF, ChildFund and Save the Children, initiated the drafting of a manual on positive discipline, based on initial research conducted during the second quarter of 2016. The research and data on the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools will be used to develop recommendations (from a pedagogical perspective) on how to end violence against children in schools. The justification for the research arose from greater understanding of the conflict between empirical expectations and legal norms – people continue using corporal punishment regardless of it being illegal – which indicates that interventions must incorporate a behaviour-change component in order to see changes in the lives of children.

**OUTCOME 6** By the end of 2017, the social protection system, knowledge and policies are strengthened to provide well-targeted, adequate and effective assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable families and children.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Definitive responses to social welfare, poverty and inequality continue to be elusive in Sri Lanka, signalling the difficulty of finding clarity in approaches to social investment, poverty alleviation and equity. Numerous challenges and risks are involved in taking a systems approach in social protection, including political economy, differences in views and practice of various stakeholders, dynamics and limited coordination between centralized and decentralized structures, transparency in planning and processes etc. In 2016, policy and programme level bottlenecks impeded achievement of this outcome.

**OUTPUT 1** A national strategy or similar planning framework is developed for improving the effectiveness of the social welfare (social transfer) system with formulated measures for improvements in the targeting, administration, delivery and monitoring of social transfer programmes.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Sri Lanka's existing social security system is fragmented and is comprised of 11 major social safety nets targeting: the poor, old age pensions, lump-sum payment at retirement for public
officers and workers in the formal private sector, schemes for disability and health care, nutrition-related food assistance and in-kind support to increase access to education. Programmes rely on manual registration/identification and employ varying eligibility requirements and administrative structures, which reduces their outreach to marginalized individuals. There is no comprehensive social protection strategy/policy, hence no harmonization among programs.

During the last several years, the GoSL continued to channel resources to livelihood development initiatives through the Samurdhi/Divineguma subsidy programme to improve socio-economic conditions for low-income households. For example, under this programme the allocated total fund was US$263,088,800 in 2015, targeting 1.45 million low-income households (27 per cent of the total population). US$15,785,328 was spent on distributing food packages for expectant mothers, and under the Divineguma Social Security programme, US$5,465,669 was allocated for 330,443 beneficiary families. The Divineguma programme continued to develop rural and regional infrastructure facilities, to improve the effectiveness of livelihood initiatives. In general, the budget allocation for welfare programmes increased twice, rising from US$355,170 in 2014 to US$670,876 in 2016.

There is limited linkage between long-term financing frameworks and sector plans, with the latter effectively lacking cost estimates. During annual budget preparation, ceilings provided by the Ministry of Finance are often late and do not relate to medium-term financial plans. In most cases, sector plans and strategies follow an activity-based expenditure classification that is not compatible with the administrative and functional classification used for budgeting and financial reporting. These budget practices lead to an input-oriented culture that focuses on “spending the budget” with little reward for achieving outputs or outcomes. At the same time, due to chronic shortfalls in actual revenues, budget adjustments are effectively carried out through cash rationing by the Treasury vis-à-vis ministries and other agencies. This leads to ad hoc prioritization of non-discretionary expenditures, such as salaries, to the detriment of other priority items.

The major constraint consists of the fact that there is no comprehensive national strategy or similar planning framework, although various important sectoral and multi-sectoral strategies and plans are currently under development – e.g. the Public Investment Plan, a reform of the social protection system that aims to reorganize existing cash transfer schemes etc. UNICEF Sri Lanka closely monitored the situation and collaborated with the World Bank and other critical stakeholders to be able to advocate for child-related issues to be incorporated into main strategic documents.

Despite internal human resource constraints, UNICEF continued its effort to monitor Sri Lanka’s social expenditure programmes and use every opportunity to advocate for more strategic and far-reaching social protection schemes. For this, the Office plans to undertake a study/mapping of social transfers and budgetary flows in Sri Lanka which to allow UNICEF to be better positioned for the dialogue with Government counterparts.

**OUTPUT 2** Improved financing frameworks are in place for critical social services in child nutrition and pre-schooling

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Postponed to 2017.

**OUTPUT 3** By the end of 2015, comprehensive knowledge and partnership on the situation of children in the country is built, making it possible to identify clear priorities to guide development of the next UNICEF country programme in Sri Lanka
Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Sri Lanka began to develop a situation analysis (SitAn) in 2015, using an innovative approach consisting of the compilation of an overarching situation overview of children’s situation in Sri Lanka and a series of assessments and studies in the areas where children face significant deprivations and suffer from under-realisation of their rights. Among the resources included were: a video-documentary and qualitative research on the barriers to education facing children with disabilities; natural disaster vulnerability mapping of children and women in the Eastern Province; and an equity analysis in the sectors of health, nutrition, water and sanitation; work in child protection and education is still ongoing. The situational analysis is also complemented by policy briefs on Sri Lanka’s digital landscape and child protection system mapping. Moreover, the analysis is a live source of knowledge which will be expanding with the UNICEF’s growing engagement in generating evidence on children, and will also be used to further inform UNICEF Sri Lanka’s advocacy and policy efforts for sustainable national development.

According to the situational analysis, key concerns in relation to child survival, health and well-being, include pockets of unacceptable neonatal mortality and persistent under-nutrition (e.g., in the tea estate sector), and inequitable access to key preventive and curative health services, including mental and adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Another key issue emerging from the deprivation analysis is the continuing level of violence and abuse against boys and girls, with its detrimental effect not only on child development, but also on prospects for peace and social cohesion. The education sector is fraught with challenges, including uneven quality, lack of relevance and sub-optimal learning outcomes, as well as inequitable access to quality learning (as opposed to mere school attendance).

The findings from the SitAn have nourished the discussions between UNICEF Sri Lanka and partners on the priorities for the years to come, which will be reflected in the forthcoming UNICEF Sri Lanka Country Programme 2018-2022, following consultations and validation with key stakeholders. In addition, the SitAn fed into the UN Common Country Assessment, which forms the basis for engagement of the wider UN in Sri Lanka.

OUTCOME 7 Cross Sectoral includes Support and PME
OUTPUT 1 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, UNICEF engaged more fully with the Department of Project Management and Monitoring (DPMM) under the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, building on the growing leadership of this Department. The DPMM, with technical and financial support from UNICEF, accelerated the finalization and implementation of the National Evaluation Policy (NEP), developed by the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association. The draft text of the Policy has been critically reviewed to ensure that it is comprehensive and compliant with the Global Evaluation Agenda 2015-2020, and, as such, has the potential to establish evaluation as an essential management and social change instrument in Sri Lanka. The plan of action is being prepared, in parallel to support for ongoing advocacy with relevant members of parliament (MPs) on the need for Sri Lanka to adopt the NEP and secure budget allocations to implement it. Participating MPs have recommended the creation of a Parliamentary Committee on Evaluation, which is a critical step in creating an enabling environment for greater accountability and transparency in the Sri Lankan public sector.

UNICEF Sri Lanka maintained its partnership with the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) to strengthen the staff capacity to more effectively use available data to demonstrate child deprivation, as well as to generate and use evidence for policy making and advocacy for children. Based on existing data, UNICEF produced an equity profile on stunting to analyse multiple deprivations and the correlations between them. Similar exercises are ongoing for WASH, health, child protection and education. This set of equity profiles will be a

As part of global efforts, UNICEF conducted RBM training for all 55 staff (including seven regional champions) to improve programme logic, monitoring and reporting as well as to better contribute to the development of the new five-year Country Programme. RBM training enabled staff to sharpen the human rights and equity approaches to formulating the deprivations facing children in Sri Lanka and thus to explore more appropriate and effective solutions.

Further, UNICEF conducted a mapping of the current national data collection system to identify existing gaps in data for children, both in general and within the SDG framework. A more in-depth analysis of SDG indicators is currently being finalized by the DCS to be presented to the SDG lead ministry (Ministry for Sustainable Development and Wildlife) to further align the SDGs with the national development agenda. Preliminary recommendations concentrate on reviewing data collection processes and methodologies, exploring possibilities of using “big data” to bridge data gaps and the use of information technologies. Addressing some of these critical gaps will be a priority in the next Country Programme.

OUTPUT 2 Communication for development - C4D

Analytical Statement of Progress:

- UNICEF Sri Lanka continued ‘greening’ initiatives started in 2015. In 2016, it installed solar panels in the Colombo head office and undertook repairs and improvements of zone office facilities, including proper sealing of air conditioned areas; replacement of aging conventional air conditioners with energy saving inverter ones; installation of LED bulbs, etc. These initiatives resulted in more than 30 per cent cost savings in the overall electricity bill. Further, the office continued its efforts to use trains to travel to field locations, contributing to a reduction in travel costs and fuel and maintenance/repair of vehicles. These combined initiatives also contributed to global UN/UNICEF efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the extent possible.

Review of the risk and control library were carried out regularly by the CMT. Actions to mitigate and manage each risk were incorporated into relevant work plans and staff performance assessments to ensure that they were implemented and reported.

The Office continued to closely monitor direct cash transfers that were over nine months. Because of the successful mitigation measures undertaken, including high-level meetings with Government officials and consultations with other UN agencies, as of November 2016, UNICEF had less than 1 per cent outstanding DCTs over nine months. The Office continued to monitor and follow-up on these issues to ensure that it meets the organizational key performance indicator target of 1 per cent.

The Office’s statutory committees, updated at the beginning of 2016, were fully functional, as per established terms of references. Membership selection took into consideration the recommendations of specific UNICEF global policies and guidelines and – to the extent possible – the criteria of balanced representation for gender, sections (for example, programmes, operations, etc.), category of staff, terms already served in the committee and knowledge of UNICEF policies. In addition, to ensure streamlined and simplified office processes UNICEF Sri Lanka revised the thresholds for the contract review and partnership review committees, bringing them in line with global levels.

Financial and human resource transactions were successfully transferred to UNICEF’s GSSC in Budapest. Throughout the year, the Office made strong efforts to mitigate any risks
associated with this transition, including briefings to all staff on changes in business processes, clarifying roles and responsibilities and training of local focal points.

OUTPUT 3 Communication for development - C4D

Analytical Statement of Progress:
As of end-December 2016, the Office had achieved an overall financial utilization rate of 93 per cent (including both actuals and commitments), with 100 per cent utilization of Regular Resources, 100 per cent utilisation of the Support Budget, 78 per cent utilisation of other resources-emergency and 95 per cent utilisation of other resources-regular. These figures show that the Office is on track for fund utilization. Monthly financial closures were completed on time and the Office carried out all month-end reconciliations in line with scheduled deadlines, with no long-outstanding unreconciled items. Mid-year closure, including the physical count of assets, was also completed in line with scheduled deadlines. Year-end closure was also on-track.

OUTPUT 4 Communication for development - C4D

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, the prime objectives of UNICEF Sri Lanka management in relation to human capacity were to: increase staff participation in office-wide information sharing, promote career enhancement and performance of staff through learning and training initiatives and maintain good understanding between management and staff. In this regard, UNICEF achieved the following results:

By year-end, 96 per cent of established vacant posts had been filled, apart from the international post of chief, child survival and development, which was filled in the interim by a national temporary appointment. The Office continued to face challenges in attracting qualified female candidates, particularly for national professional posts requiring specialized technical knowledge and expertise. With the current percentage of female staff at 37 per cent, UNICEF Sri Lanka needs to make more progress towards staff gender parity, in particular in identifying strong female candidates through its selection process.

Effective follow-up on performance management (PAS/ePAS) ensured 100 per cent compliance with the global deadline for reporting in 2016. In line with UNICEF’s global transition to a new Performance Management System (ACHIEVE) in 2016, the Office ensured 97 per cent completion of the planning phase.

UNICEF Sri Lanka facilitated two joint consultative committee meetings between senior management and staff association during the year, implementation of agreed-upon action points took place within the required timeframe. Implementation of the learning and training plan for 2016 had reached 50 per cent by mid-November. A key output was a four-day training for all staff on RBM. Apart from these learning activities, staff were also encouraged to take advantage of the Agora Learning and Development Portal and follow UNICEF e-learning courses on professional development and/or other appropriate courses relevant to the staff member.

To promote better work-life balance, senior management encouraged staff to make use of flexible work arrangements. All staff that requested such arrangements were supported by their supervisors and teams.

OUTPUT 5 Communication for development - C4D
Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2016, UNICEF’s communications unit carried out strategic activities in support of the national programme and international, regional and other behaviour-change communication and advocacy objectives. Some of the key activities are described below.

To mark the International Day of the Girl Child in October, the communications unit conceptualised and drove an initiative designed to raise awareness on a priority child protection area - ending child marriage - among the public, and to drive policy change through advocacy with MoWCA. The initiative involved a young woman delivering a powerful letter, co-signed by close to 50 key stakeholders, to the Minister, which secured strong media coverage in the country and contributed to ongoing pressure on the Government to review existing laws allowing child marriage.

Throughout 2016 the communications unit supported regional and global communication and advocacy initiatives, ‘localising’ them to the national context, which helped to drive UNICEF’s child rights agenda and further position UNICEF as a trusted and credible voice for and with children. These initiatives included refugee children through ‘Children on the Move’ (January), equity agenda through the State of the World’s Children (June), and UNICEF’s #Endviolence Campaign (July).

In social and digital media, the communications unit ensured that all key activities had a digital and social media component, recognizing the growing proportion of young people online and the importance of reaching these audiences with key information. The unit tailored and produced content in line with existing trends in the digital media environment, including increasing use of video, as an opportunity to engage young people in positive action for children. This strategy drove a steady growth in audience figures. Between 1 January and 14 November 2016, Facebook page “likes” rose by 4,769 likes, YouTube page views rose by 15,256, Twitter followers increased by 522 and Instagram followers by 2,116. These increases confirmed that UNICEF Sri Lanka has the largest social media audience of all UN agencies in the country. In March 2016, the Office Facebook page was ‘verified’ by HQ.

Recognizing the extended reach of high-profile individuals as a vital means to draw attention to key issues, the unit produced key communication materials to support visits by: the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children (March), UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Anna HANSKI (April) and the visit of the UN Secretary General and his wife (September).

Supporting behaviour change objectives, UNICEF commissioned a six-month digital landscape study with over 5,000 individuals, focused on children’s access and use of the Internet and related policy/knowledge gaps. This study partially informed key messaging and themes of a 2016 UNICEF-NCPA Online Safety Campaign, utilising social media to target children, adolescents, parents and caregivers to strengthen responsible digital citizenship. The impact of this effort will be explored in 2017.

The unit continued to produce engaging content as a means of reporting back on donations and investments, including over 18 stories and photo sets linked to May’s flood emergency.
### Evaluation and research

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