UNICEF Annual Report 2017

Sri Lanka

Executive summary

In 2017 Sri Lanka reiterated its goal of becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2025, with growth structured on a knowledge-based, highly competitive, social market economy model. While the country continued to exhibit impressive human development indicators, resulting from decade-long investments, current investments in key social sectors remained low, partly due to a large debt burden and system inefficiencies. Further, disparities in health, education, protection and development persisted, especially in the former conflict-affected Northern and Eastern Provinces and on tea estates. UNICEF’s programme in 2017 was informed by these challenges, and its upstream work focused on Sri Lanka’s sustainable development.

In child protection, strengthening the enabling environment to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation remained the priority. As one of 13 ‘pathfinder’ countries of the global partnership to end violence against children, the Sri Lankan Government launched a ‘national partnership to end violence against children’ (NPEVAC) in June 2017. UNICEF Sri Lanka played a critical role in the partnership, including development of a country discussion paper to identify the current situation regarding children’s experiences of maltreatment and to recommend solutions.

The launch of the NPEVAC brought together leading stakeholders, including the Government, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, media, activists and children and adolescents, and received wide mainstream media and social media coverage. Building on this momentum, on Sri Lanka’s National Children’s Day (1 October), the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MoWCA) launched a roadmap for preventing violence against children, and will continue to streamline, coordinate and guide the actions of partner government agencies and NGOs.

UNICEF Sri Lanka supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) to develop and test an innovative teaching approach that adapts to the learning needs of each child. Enthusiasm from education officials, principals, teachers, parents and children – as well as increased student attendance at the targeted schools – resulted in government plans for scale-up across provinces, and the commitment of government funds by several provinces for 2018.

UNICEF Sri Lanka was also able to support reforms of the primary and secondary education curricula, to strengthen the development of socio-emotional competencies among students. Teacher guides were developed, incorporating activities and age-appropriate stories for early primary grades, to be used nationwide from 2018 onwards. Capitalizing on the increasing focus on co-curricular activities as a strategy for promoting social cohesion and peace among adolescents, an innovative approach introducing newly designed sports activities was piloted in targeted lower-secondary schools, in collaboration with the ministries of sports and education, to promote life skills and socio-emotional competencies through physical education. Another pilot involved music as a convener to enhance social cohesion among junior-secondary students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in the Eastern Province. Under this pilot, a new curriculum was developed merging the two separately taught music streams and will be
mainstreamed into the national music education curricula in 2018.

While children’s nutritional status in Sri Lanka remained above the regional average, the decline in malnutrition continued its decade-long stagnation. To address this, UNICEF Sri Lanka supported the presidential secretariat to bring stakeholders together to develop a new multi-sectoral action plan for nutrition for 2017-2021. The plan elaborated sectoral objectives and plans for sustainable improvement of nutrition outcomes in the country. Additionally, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine (MoHNIM) to develop and launch a national strategy to prevent and control micronutrient deficiencies and malnutrition. In water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), UNICEF provided increased technical capacity (in the form of staff) to the South Asia Regional Centre for Sanitation, which is hosted by the Government. Another key achievement was helping almost 270,000 individuals affected by drought, landslides and floods to gain access to basic water and sanitation services.

With enhanced opportunities for large-scale advocacy and fundraising presented by Sri Lanka’s growing digital and social media usage, UNICEF prioritized social media audience growth and engagement, increasing the number of its total social media followers from 27,100 to over 140,200.

However, challenges remain that need to be addressed as UNICEF Sri Lanka moves into its new Country Programme for 2018–2022. They include gaps in the enabling environment, including social norms, the quality of services and demand for services related to children’s full development. UNICEF Sri Lanka will contribute to national efforts to accelerate the realization of child rights for all children, while promoting strategic investments in children and adolescents to enhance the cognitive capital of Sri Lanka as the basis for sustainable development.

### Humanitarian assistance

Since mid-2016 over 1.8 million people in 20 districts have been affected by drought, leaving 340,000 people food insecure and approximately 680,000 without access to safe drinking water. In response, UNICEF mobilized approximately US$1.6 million, enabling access to life-saving drinking water for drought-affected communities and health and nutrition services for children under five.

UNICEF’s drought response was designed to address some of the root causes of the lack of access to water, making the response more long-term and sustainable. In this regard, with UNICEF support, more than 36,000 highly vulnerable people gained access to sustainable safe water sources through the rehabilitation of 884 non-functioning deep tube wells in the four worst-affected districts (Kurunegala, Monaragala, Vavuniya and Mannar) and construction of 25 new tube wells in Mullaitivu district. Further, support to 25 community-managed water supply systems in Puttalam and Hambantota districts expanded distribution networks and water extraction efficiency, benefitting another 7,000 people. At least 82,000 people also gained access to interim water points through 1,025 UNICEF-supplied water tanks. In schools, UNICEF established water sources at 10 schools in Jaffna Islands, benefiting 6,000 students and 700 teachers.

UNICEF also provided critical water supplies to the Ministry of City Planning and Water Supply (MoCPWAS) to increase its capacity to respond to urgent community needs in the most severely drought-affected districts. In addition, to respond to the dengue epidemic attributable to the prolonged drought, UNICEF conducted dengue prevention awareness and environmental clean-up and built dug well covers in Trincomalee district, benefiting approximately 4,300
people, and provided 1,550 mosquito nets in Rathnapura and Kalutara districts. UNICEF also procured 1,253 cartons of BP100 for therapeutic feeding of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition and 1,354 infant kits for distribution in drought-affected areas.

In May 2017 the country was hit by heavy rains causing flash floods and landslides across 15 districts in the Southern and Western regions. More than 300 people were killed, around 880,000 people directly affected and over 109,000 people displaced. In response, UNICEF mobilized approximately US$3 million for the WASH, child protection, health and education sectors to meet immediate and early recovery needs of those affected in four districts. More than 220,000 people gained access to water through the cleaning of 438 dug wells, rehabilitation of 43 community-managed and rural water supply systems, installation of 32 chlorination units and rehabilitation of 50 tube wells, as well as the provision of urgently needed water supplies. This included, among other items, 5,800 household water filters and nearly 1 million water purification tablets for health authorities, to prevent water-borne diseases. UNICEF also supplied health authorities with 200 test kits to facilitate monitoring of chlorine levels and promote water safety. Further, almost 45,000 people benefitted from access to emergency sanitation supplies and facilities, including 5,397 disinfection kits, 280 semi-permanent latrines, 140 garbage bins and 3,606 cash-for-work activities (debris cleaning/repair of sanitation facilities). UNICEF support was complemented by hygiene promotion programmes for beneficiaries.

UNICEF Sri Lanka took the lead role at the national level in providing technical support to relevant government authorities and other stakeholders on maternal and newborn childcare during the emergency period. Specifically, UNICEF assisted in the provision of 1,347 cartons of BP100 for children and pregnant women, 446 infant kits and growth monitoring equipment to ensure uninterrupted nutrition surveillance of children under five in the worst-affected districts, benefiting over 270,000 children.

UNICEF also renovated 10 damaged schools and 15 pre-schools to ensure access to education and safe learning environments for 3,375 children, and provided play/reading materials and furniture to 150 pre-schools and 33 primary/secondary schools, benefiting 5,950 children.

As part of the child protection response, UNICEF supported the establishment of four child-friendly spaces at welfare centres in Rathnapura District, benefitting around 167 children. UNICEF continued to promote standards for child-friendly spaces, protocols for volunteers/aid workers working with children in emergencies and child-friendly camp management, and trained 200 government officials to ensure greater compliance. UNICEF also assisted 1,012 people to recover lost legal documents. In areas of return, UNICEF and its partners established 25 children’s clubs, creating safe spaces for 1,467 children/adolescents, and conducted 65 psychosocial programmes that reached more than 2,800 children and their families.

UNICEF contributed to the development of WASH, health, gender, human interest and disaster risk-reduction sector reports in the rapid impact needs assessment (RINA), which was jointly conducted by the Government, with the EU, UNDP and the World Bank, ensuring that the assessment maintained a child-focused approach throughout the process and effectively captured age-specific recommendations.

**Equity in practice**

With support from UNICEF’s Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), UNICEF Sri Lanka engaged with the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) to compute a multi-dimensional
poverty index for children, which will help DCS to capture the complex deprivations and inequities faced daily by children and provide insight into structural and institutional factors that contribute to child poverty. The results of Sri Lanka’s 2016-2017 demographic and health survey were released in October 2017, facilitating up-to-date data and computations. The work is ongoing, and set to be completed in the first quarter 2018. The results will be used on a range of occasions to continue dialogue with the Government regarding the necessity of increased allocations and/or more effective utilization of current public expenditure in social sphere. As one of the target indicators to be included in routine data collection by the DCS, the index on child poverty will also allow the country to better monitor progress toward the SDGs. Moreover, the extensive development process of for the national CMPI created momentum for building political consensus with policymakers based on solid evidence that guides high-level policy design.

UNICEF Sri Lanka maintained its partnership with the DCS and strengthened the capacity of its staff to more effectively use available data to demonstrate child deprivations, as well as to generate and use evidence for policy making and advocacy for children. Based on existing data, UNICEF conducted an analysis of deprivations and their correlation in the areas of nutrition, WASH, health, child protection and education, which fed into the situation analysis and was used to inform development of the new CP.

In addition, UNICEF built the capacity of some key programme staff in the sphere of public financing for children (PF4C), and entered into strategic private sector partnerships focused on leveraging resources for advocacy/social issues, as well as business principles and the impact of business on women and children (i.e., poverty, living conditions). The process of developing the new CP was also an opportunity to continue the dialogue with government and NGO partners around the inter-linkages across UNICEF programmes and social protection, which is a prerequisite for successful implementation.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also prioritized social inclusion/social protection issues in emergencies. Specifically, with support from UNICEF ROSA, UNICEF Sri Lanka partnered with MoWCA to initiate a dialogue on development of a shock-responsive social protection mechanism(s), to be mainstreamed into disaster risk-reduction activities. This implies an assessment of existing government social security programmes, exploring the possibility of delivering emergency (top-up) cash transfers, and development of potential scenarios for operationalizing an emergency cash transfer response mechanism using the existing social protection system. The results of the assessment and recommendations are expected by mid-2018.

**Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

Development of the Sri Lanka CP occurred concurrently with the design of UNICEF’s global Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and is, therefore, well-aligned with the global priorities and implementation strategies for children. This is particularly clear in relation to some of the new strategies, involving: more active engagement by families and communities in tackling issues of violence; use of innovative approaches to address issues of child malnutrition; and adolescents as agents for change through meaningful participation in decision-making.

The CP marks an important milestone in supporting Sri Lanka to transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the SDGs, and to make the transformation from a post-conflict society to a more stable democracy with economic aspirations to become an upper-middle-income, or even a high-income, country.
In line with the Strategic Plan call for fostering “cross-sectoral and multisectoral programming to provide a holistic and rights-based response to children and to the environment in which they live”, UNICEF Sri Lanka’s CP adopted a life cycle approach to child development, a concept that connects and reinforces multisectoral policy measures in a coherent manner. It includes programmes on health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, child protection and social protection, which mirror the outcomes of the Strategic Plan. However, this holistic approach poses challenges to operationalizing the Plan due to certain inflexibility in the country’s organizational system and government structures that do not support cross-sectoral and multisectoral programming, which in turn, complicates accountability and management processes.

The CP is accompanied by a five-year action plan and multi-year work plan for 2018-2019, which will constitute the basis for implementation and monitoring. The results framework includes standard global indicators to support monitoring and reporting against the Strategic Plan. In addition, the CP for Sri Lanka is aligned with the global gender action plan 2.0.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**Accelerated early childhood development (ECD).** To promote awareness and investment in early childhood development (ECD), in March UNICEF Sri Lanka convened a round-table forum with five influential business leaders focused on building cognitive capital. The forum was broadcast live online by a national broadcaster to over 900,000 individuals, and covered by national news media. In June, UNICEF Sri Lanka participated in UNICEF’s Father’s Day campaign, developing a ‘viral video’ to inform and celebrate the role of parents in ECD. The film reached over 50,000 individuals online and generated media coverage. In October, UNICEF Sri Lanka, in partnership with the Parliamentary Caucus for Children, delivered a high-level parliamentary forum on investing in ECD for members of parliament, featuring renowned economist. The objective was to secure the scale-up of state commitments for interventions that promote nurturing care – health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, security and safety and early learning. The forum, led by the Speaker of Parliament and attended by the ministries of finance, health, policy and planning, education and women’s and children’s affairs, called for the prioritization of ECD in policy, programming and public spending. Further, UNICEF strengthened the skills of senior officials from the Children’s Secretariat in integrated early childhood care and development (ECCD) programming, sponsoring the participation of two officials to attend the 2017 regional ECD conference organized by the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) in Siem Reap, Cambodia in March 2017. Guided by this conference, the Children’s Secretariat strengthened its approach to integrated ECCD policy making and programming, as reflected in the newly revised draft of the national ECCD policy.

**Violence against children.** UNICEF Sri Lanka prioritized efforts to end violence against children across all of its work, including support for government efforts to improve services for children affected by abuse and exploitation. This included developing policies and legislation that protect children and helping communities, parents and children learn how to prevent child abuse, neglect and exploitation. In 2016 the Government of Sri Lanka joined the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, as one of 13 pathfinding countries, committing to ending all forms of violence against children by 2030. Led by MoWCA, and with support from UNICEF and many NGOs and civil society groups, in June 2017, Sri Lanka launched the NPEVAC. Adding to the multiple actions already undertaken by the Government, on 1 October, MoWCA launched a national roadmap listing planned priority actions to achieve this bold goal. Part of this action will see the Government implement strategies from ‘INSPIRE’, a package of proven strategies agreed and promoted by WHO, UNICEF and the Global Partnership to End
Violence Against Children, including: changing laws and policies, tackling social norms, promoting positive parenting, teaching life skills and supporting economic development and poverty reduction.

Details related to these two emerging areas of importance are discussed in other sections of the annual report.

**Summary notes and acronyms**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
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<td>ARNEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood</td>
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<td>CJPB</td>
<td>Children’s judicial protection bill</td>
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<td>CMT</td>
<td>country management team</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>DCS</td>
<td>Department of Census and Statistics</td>
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<td>DCTs</td>
<td>direct cash transfers</td>
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<td>DPMM</td>
<td>Department of Project Management and Monitoring</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>early childhood development</td>
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<td>ECCD</td>
<td>early childhood care and development</td>
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<td>ERW</td>
<td>explosive remnants of war</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>HACT</td>
<td>harmonized approach to cash transfers</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>information communication and technology</td>
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<td>IMEP</td>
<td>integrated monitoring and evaluation plan</td>
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<td>LTAs</td>
<td>long-term arrangements</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MHM</td>
<td>menstrual hygiene management</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MOHNM</td>
<td>Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine</td>
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<td>MOSS</td>
<td>Minimum operational security standards</td>
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<td>MoCPWS</td>
<td>Ministry of City Planning and Water Supply</td>
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<td>MoWCA</td>
<td>Ministry of Women and Child Affairs</td>
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<td>MPs</td>
<td>Members of Parliament</td>
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<td>MRE</td>
<td>mine risk education</td>
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<td>MsAPN</td>
<td>multisectoral action plan for nutrition</td>
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<td>Natcoms</td>
<td>National committees for UNICEF</td>
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<td>NCPA</td>
<td>National Child Protection Authority</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>NMC</td>
<td>national monitoring committee</td>
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<td>NPEVAC</td>
<td>National Partnership to End Violence against Children</td>
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<td>NWS&amp;DB</td>
<td>National water supply and drainage board</td>
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<td>OMT</td>
<td>operations management team</td>
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<td>RINA</td>
<td>rapid-impact needs assessment</td>
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<td>ROSA</td>
<td>UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia</td>
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<td>SACOSAN</td>
<td>South Asian conference on sanitation</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>Security management team</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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In 2017 UNICEF Sri Lanka supported individual and community capacity development across all programmes.

In education UNICEF supported the development and testing of the ‘multi-level teaching and learning approach’ and close to 300 schools used the full package of Grade 2 materials for at least one term. Materials were also developed for Grades 1 and 3 and teachers trained accordingly, enabling expansion in 2018. A total of approximately 6,500 boys and 6,300 girls are benefitting through these initiatives. Further, UNICEF-supported resource teams trained officials in all education zones, helping to meet the growing demand from other schools. At the national level, UNICEF supported the MoE to develop related national guidelines.

In child protection, UNICEF Sri Lanka supported the training of officers attached to women and children’s desks (WCDs) at police stations. In addition, continued support was provided to post-graduate diploma programmes on child protection at Rajarata University and the National Institute of Social Development, benefitting over 600 frontline child protection officers. Further, advocacy efforts resulted in the University of Colombo launching a post-graduate diploma in child protection. Continued support to the attorney general’s (AG) department led to increased staff capacity within the AG Children’s Unit to help clear the backlog of child abuse cases pending investigation.

In WASH, beyond the rehabilitation of 884 tube wells, UNICEF built the capacity of and provided materials to the ground-water section of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWS&DB), ensuring that tube wells were well maintained and managed, and that drought-prone and vulnerable communities had both the resilience to cope and capacity to maintain these wells. UNICEF also provided technical support and equipment to the Department of National Community Water, enabling improvements in groundwater extraction and the expansion of a pipe network for 25 community-managed water systems.

Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy

Supporting the Government’s policy of promoting peace and reconciliation through education, UNICEF commissioned a review of the national policy on education for social cohesion and peace. The report’s recommendations formed the basis for a Government action plan delivered through the peace and reconciliation unit of the MoE. Based on this action plan, technical task teams were set up to support the unit’s delivery of the action plan.

In child protection, research commissioned by UNICEF Sri Lanka provided key evidence for a number of policy reviews, including an alternative care policy developed by the Department of Probation and Child Care Services. Largely based on the UNICEF-supported child protection system mapping study of 2016, the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) finalized a
second draft of the country’s child protection policy. UNICEF advocated in favour of establishment by the Ministry of Justice of a steering committee to review recommendations for reforming the justice sector’s legal and institutional framework, with a specific focus on improving justice for children.

UNICEF also supported the Government to conduct the national nutrition and micronutrient survey of pregnant women and national nutrition survey of lactating women, the results of which served to guiding the identification of interventions, specific behaviour change goals and development of nutrition policies and strategies. Further, UNICEF provided technical and financial support for a study into the risk factors, immediate triggers and critical outcome predictors of pre-term births in government hospitals in Colombo. The findings are informing policy dialogue around improving child survival interventions and reducing preventable neonatal deaths, in line with the Government’s four-year ‘every new-born’ action plan.

UNICEF also supported a study among 800 adolescents directly impacted by the flooding and landslide emergency, as part of efforts to take the views of children and adolescents into consideration during emergency preparation and response.

**Partnerships**

In 2017 collaborative partnerships remained vital to UNICEF’s work in Sri Lanka.

To support early childhood development, UNICEF Sri Lanka, in partnership with the Parliamentary Caucus for Children, delivered a high-level parliamentary forum on investing in ECD, with the objective of securing the scale-up of state commitments for interventions that promote nurturing care - health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, security and safety, and early learning. The forum, led by the speaker of parliament and attended by the ministries of finance, health, policy and planning, education and women and child affairs, called for prioritizing ECD in policy, programming and public spending.

In child protection, UNICEF Sri Lanka partnered with several international NGOs, including ChildFund and World Vision, to support MoWCA to develop and implement policies to protect children from violence and abuse. This resulted in increased ministry capacity and an enhanced ability to deliver major policy reforms, such as the roadmap for preventing violence against children and the alternative care policy. UNICEF also facilitated a partnership between the Family Planning Association and the information technology (IT) corporation Saberion, resulting in the development and testing of a social media-based platform on sexual and reproductive health.

In WASH, multiple drought and flood emergencies led UNICEF Sri Lanka to develop more collaborative partnerships with the ground water section of the NWSDB on drought resilience, and with the department of national community water supply. UNICEF also re-activated its collaboration with the Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum to explore rain water as a sustainable solution for building resilience against drought. Working with key NGO partners, such as World Vision, OXFAM and Sarvodaya, enabled UNICEF Sri Lanka to respond to the flooding in May in a more timely and effective manner.

**External communication and public advocacy**

In 2017, UNICEF Sri Lanka used communication to drive and mobilize key audiences in support of national, regional and global advocacy priorities, with a focus on child protection (#EndViolence) and ECD (#EarlyMomentsMatter).
To promote ECD awareness and investment, in March UNICEF convened five influential business leaders for a round-table forum focused on building cognitive capital, which was broadcast live online by national broadcaster (News1st) to over 900,000 individuals, and covered by national news media, including The Sunday Times. In June, UNICEF Sri Lanka participated in the global UNICEF’s Father’s Day campaign, developing a ‘viral video’ to inform and celebrate the role of parents in ECD. The film reached over 50,000 individuals online and generated media coverage, including in The Daily News. In October, UNICEF held a parliamentary forum on investing in ECD for members of parliament, supported by extensive national media coverage, including The Island, with a renowned economist.

In support of #EndViolence, the NPEVAC was launched in June, with the Government, to increase public awareness and encourage partner organization participation. The launch generated substantial coverage, including in The Daily Mirror. In October, UNICEF partnered with Sri Lanka’s media network MTV to develop and broadcast three #EndViolence campaign films to mobilize public action. Broadcast on national TV in each official language, the films reached a national TV audience and 367,000 individuals online, generating over 100,000 views on Facebook. A selection of six agenda-setting TV interviews was aired on national news, including on Ethiroli.

With Sri Lanka’s growing digital and social media usage, in 2017, UNICEF prioritized social media audience growth and engagement, successfully increasing Facebook followers from 18,000 to over 119,000 and Twitter followers from 5,500 to 16,600 between January and December.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

In 2017, South-South cooperation remained an important area for UNICEF Sri Lanka. In the area of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), UNICEF Sri Lanka’s technical support helped the newly established South Asian Regional Centre for Sanitation to define its regional roles and responsibilities under the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) platform for improved clarity and accountability.

The Regional Centre’s mandate is to both collaborate with country secretariats on the organization of SACOSAN events and facilitate the implementation of strategic SACOSAN actions and priorities. The hosting and facilitation of international and regional knowledge-based events would benefit all eight countries in South Asia in terms of knowledge generation, sharing and promotion. Such events will help South Asian countries learn from each other’s successes and failures and promote the adoption of best and sustainable practices in the long term.

**Identification and promotion of innovation**

Utilizing innovative methods and new sources of data continued to be a key priority area in 2017.

UNICEF Sri Lanka launched an innovative pilot project in Uva Province that used co-curricular and extra-curricular sports activities to promote civic values, linking physical education activities to civic education competencies. With the objective of teaching vital life skills (i.e., communication, conflict-management, problem-solving and leadership) while fostering positive peer relations, sport activities (including mini-games) were tested among 690 junior secondary students from multi-ethnic and religious backgrounds. Teacher guidelines were developed and a group of master trainers were trained in selected provinces on how to use these sport activities.
to promote social cohesion among students.

In child protection, UNICEF Sri Lanka strengthened its partnership with MoNHiM and its departments, including the non-communicable disease unit and family health bureau, as well as with the Sri Lanka Medical Association and the department of police, to address the high prevalence of child injuries. UNICEF’s support for the roll-out of the automated injury surveillance system to 90 hospitals – which recorded and analysed over 47,900 incidents - helped identify insights into the causes and prevalence of child injuries. Partly based on this, UNICEF and MONHiM will jointly advocate for a policy review and implementation of programmes to prevent child injuries.

In WASH, UNICEF Sri Lanka improved capacity in the area of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in Eastern Province, building on the positive experiences from a pilot effort in the North. Through this, 40 education professionals became competent as trainers on MHM in 14 education zones, and are training teachers in targeted schools. This was an innovative approach that provided a cost-effective way to scale up MHM in priority locations using existing resources and capacity built in the North.

**Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

UNICEF Sri Lanka continued its engagement with the National Steering Committee for ECCD, supporting the shaping of an integrated framework of policies and programmes, including revision of the national ECCD policy. UNICEF also convened international/national NGOs and civil society organizations around ‘holistic’ ECD through national and district-level forums that strengthened cross-sectoral linkages. Internally, UNICEF strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration through the establishment of an ECCD working group, bringing together all programme sections to develop joint concept notes, work plans, advocacy strategies and funding proposals.

In child survival and health, bringing the ministries of water supply, health and education together in support of specific objectives, including MHM, was successful. However, when a similar approach was attempted in response to Sri Lanka’s flood emergency, regulatory and accountability limitations limited convergence among ministries. Moving forward, common entry points, such as financing and SDG monitoring will be identified to facilitate further cross-sectoral synergies.

Engagement and participation by adolescents continued to be a priority area across sectors, both as a means of promoting adolescent-led initiatives and of informing UNICEF’s work going forward. UNICEF’s continued support for children’s clubs in targeted provinces provided a platform for engaging children and adolescents, particularly around issues of ending violence. Further, support to the Sri Lanka Model United Nations enabled adolescent participation in UNICEF’s regional #WeTheFuture campaign. As part of this campaign, UNICEF hosted and participated in the launch of the UNICEF - International Cricket Council (ICC) Initiative, which brought UNICEF celebrity supporter cricketer Yuvraj Singh together with adolescents from the region to highlight the power of sport in transforming young lives.

**Service delivery**

The EU’s support to district development programme - which ended in 2017 - was a strong example of a successful multi-stakeholder partnership, which featured UNICEF Sri Lanka, working in collaboration with the Government, UN agencies and NGO partners. Each partner brought unique skills, knowledge and capacities. For example, to provide improved WASH
facilities in former conflict-affected districts, UNICEF managed overall coordination among stakeholders, the Government provided technical expertise, including designs for construction/rehabilitation of facilities, while actual construction was carried out by NGO partners. Beyond this approach, UNICEF Sri Lanka supported activities to improve maternal and child health care in targeted communities, including the new construction of 12 community-based health centres, refurbishment of 15 health institutions and provision of equipment for health centres that improve conditions for 200,000 individuals.

In child protection, UNICEF Sri Lanka established and strengthened 217 village child development committees (VCDC) in Eastern, Northern and Uva provinces, reaching over 25,000 children and their families with child protection services and knowledge, in addition to directly supporting more than 3,000 vulnerable children through in-kind support, such as school materials.

In addition, two key UNICEF-supported intervention strategies – VCDCs and Police Women and Children's Desks - facilitated the reporting of abuse by vulnerable community members. In partnership with the Government and NGOs, UNICEF Sri Lanka delivered targeted mine-risk education (MRE) to over 86,200 community members addressing the risk of injuries to children caused by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in high-risk resettlement communities in Northern and Eastern provinces. This contributed to a 75 per cent reduction in mine/ERW casualties and a 22 per cent increase in the reporting of explosive devices by community members compared to 2016. To ensure long-term sustainability of the MRE programme, 52 community volunteer groups were also established.

**Human rights-based approach to cooperation**

In the area of child protection, UNICEF Sri Lanka supported MoWCA to strengthen its leadership on streamlining government efforts to implement the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Technical support from UNICEF Sri Lanka and its key partner, Save the Children, resulted in the re-organization of the national monitoring committee (NMC) – an interagency government body mandated to monitor and report on the status of implementation of the Convention. A Presidential Decree in April 2017 appointed six new core members to the committee. Further, an October cabinet paper mandated every government ministry to assign a high-level official to the NMC, while provincial governments are required to develop child rights monitoring committees to coordinate implementation measures.

In 2017 MoWCA launched the first version of the child rights monitoring framework, a monitoring and reporting tool for government agencies to report on their progress in implementing provisions of the Convention.

In the area of WASH, UNICEF Sri Lanka’s emergency response was a direct manifestation the organizational Core Commitments for Children, reflected in the commitment to undertake unplanned emergency activities with extremely limited human resources.

**Gender equality**

While Sri Lanka has successfully achieved gender parity for most social indicators for children, in 2017 UNICEF continued to mainstream gender across all programme areas, to address existing disparities, especially in nutrition, adolescence and gender-based violence.
In the area of child protection, UNICEF supported the construction of 10 women and children’s desks at police stations in formerly conflict-affected districts. This ensured that increased numbers of vulnerable people, particularly women and girls, could access protection services. The lack of a separate desk within police stations has been identified as one of the key barriers faced by victims of violence and abuse, particularly women and girls, due to issues of privacy and confidentiality. The new buildings provide a secure and private space for victims and contribute to increasing trust between the community and the police. For instance, during the year, the UNICEF-supported Karawalagawewa Police women and children’s desk reported a 40 per cent increase in the number of cases reported, compared to 2016.

The prioritization of menstrual hygiene management in the child survival and health programme drove clear gender-responsive programming within WASH programming throughout 2017. Further, to address the lack of sex-disaggregated data on the nutritional status of children under five years of age, UNICEF Sri Lanka provided technical assistance to partners to enhance real-time nutrition surveillance. This resulted in improved identification of the most vulnerable groups requiring targeted nutrition interventions.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also initiated the development of an office-wide gender action plan for 2018-2019 based on existing gender disparities, particularly related to menstrual hygiene management and gender-based violence as the two targeted gender priorities. UNICEF will also undertake a more comprehensive gender programming review in 2018, which will further inform some of the key areas for gender mainstreaming and targeted gender priorities.

**Environmental sustainability**

In 2017 Sri Lanka’s vulnerability to climate change, environmental degradation and extreme weather events continued to be evident, as the country faced unpredictable variations in seasonal rain and drought patterns. Heavy rains in May 2017 led to large-scale flooding and landslides across 15 of the country’s 25 districts, resulting in damage, displacement and loss of life. At the same time, the country faced protracted drought conditions, disproportionately impacting children and vulnerable communities.

UNICEF Sri Lanka’s WASH emergency response was designed to tackle the environmental root causes and ensure service resilience, such as the sustainability of ground water. One key method focused on building the capacity of the groundwater section of the NWSDB to ensure greater resilience in groundwater-based services. In addition, measures were taken to re-assess rain water harvesting as a means to support environmental sustainability and drought resilience.

UNICEF Sri Lanka’s WASH programme adopted a risk-informed programme approach, especially in the area of water safety planning. When the national sanitation policy was finalized in 2017, UNICEF advocated for enhanced human waste and menstrual hygiene management, specifically the safe disposal of sanitary pads.

In the health area, UNICEF Sri Lanka supported facilitation of the Government’s greening efforts, specifically the replacement of existing refrigerators with ice-lined refrigerators for vaccine storage across the cold chain. The new refrigerators are more energy-efficient, supporting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2017 the Country Office reviewed its environmental footprint assessment for 2016, which reflected the greening initiatives undertaken in 2016, including installation of a solar system in...
Colombo office. The office continued to benefit from greening initiatives implemented over the past two years and, in 2017, focused on expanding the solar system in the Colombo office to increase the percentage of energy generated by solar power by approximately 30 per cent. UNICEF also replaced one of its vehicles with an electric model to further contribute to greening initiatives.

Effective leadership

Nine country management team (CMT) meetings were held in 2017, which included participation by relevant zone office staff (through video conference), focusing mainly on issues related to programme, finance and staff welfare. Major initiatives discussed included: follow-up on recommendations of the 2016 internal audit and preparation for and response to the 2017 external audit; development of the UN Sustainable Development Framework 2018-2022; and development of the new country programme document for 2018–2022 and associated action and management plans. In 2017 the country management team adopted country-specific advocacy, fundraising and partnership strategies. On a quarterly basis, the team also examined implementation of the integrated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, PRIME: annual management plan; and harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) assurance plan.

During the first quarter, the country management team reviewed office-wide enterprise risk management, updated the risk and control library and included related mitigation measures in the annual work plan. Additionally, the office reviewed and updated its business continuity plan, integrating requirements of the UN organizational resilience management system into the document. The plan was comprehensively tested in 2017.

Bottlenecks associated with Treasury delays in transmitting UNICEF funds to implementing partners is a significant risk to programme implementation; nonetheless, in 2017, building on mitigation measures implemented during the previous year, UNICEF achieved and maintained a low percentage of outstanding direct cash transfers (DCTs), in line with global and regional key performance indicators.

Following the outcome of the 2017 global staff survey, the country management team and joint consultative committee deliberated on the results and developed an action plan that was discussed with all staff and will be monitored and reported on a quarterly basis.

Financial resources management

UNICEF Sri Lanka has a strong financial system for budget monitoring at both operations and programme level, and continued to closely monitor the office budget during the year. This included ensuring that adequate levels of funding/cash for programme activities and operating expenses were available. In addition, the finance unit facilitated timely closure of commitments to ensure that grant balances were fully utilized, with monthly status updates on funds utilization provided at programme meetings and to the country management team. Budget utilization is reported to UNICEF ROSA, as part of office key performance indicators, on a quarterly basis. The office consistently achieved the benchmark of more than 95 per cent. Further, the office continued to closely monitor outstanding DCTs to implementing partners, thereby ensuring that there were no outstanding DCTs over nine months at year-end.

To increase office efficiency and effectiveness, a detailed analysis of transaction processing in the business support centre was carried out to identify areas of duplication, staff workload and issues that impact on both process and output. UNICEF ROSA’s chief of operations facilitated this review during his visit in September, and the office is implementing key recommendations to further streamline work processes.
In 2017 the UN Board of Auditors conducted a financial and compliance audit to assess compliance of UNICEF Sri Lanka’s activities. The audit mainly covered transactions and programme activities during 2016 and 2017. Upon conclusion of the audit, office management provided responses to 11 audit observations issued by auditors. These responses will be considered by the auditors and the observations will be included in the management letter by external audit. Observations from the 2016 internal audit were fully addressed and closed in 2017.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to maintain good relationships with key in-country donors, such as the EU, the Governments of Australia and Korea and UNICEF National Committees (Natcoms), through briefing meetings/papers and field missions, when requested. Dedicated fundraising efforts and achievement of high-quality results generated additional funding from the EU and the German and UK National Committees in 2017. UNICEF Sri Lanka also benefitted from joint UN funding from the UN Peace-building Support Office and from UNICEF global/regional thematic funding for all sectors. This resulted in the mobilization of 100 per cent of planned funding for 2017. Good donor relations and UNICEF Sri Lanka’s strategic position helped it to quickly raise approximately US$3 million to respond to drought and flood emergencies in 2017. Further, UNICEF tested a ‘text to donate’ mechanism for individuals, which has potential for raising additional revenue.

With an increasingly active corporate sector and growing prioritization of corporate social responsibility, UNICEF Sri Lanka is exploring opportunities for engagement with corporates to mobilize resources. The office has initiated recruitment of a resource mobilization officer to take the lead in building strategic partnerships with the private sector in 2018. The resource mobilization strategy for 2018–2019 defines strategies for engagement with the private sector and individuals, in addition to continuing to foster positive fundraising relationships with bilateral donors and national committees. The implementation of this strategy is critical as UNICEF Sri Lanka faces a severe funding shortfall as it moves into its new five-year country programme 2018–2022 (CP).

The internal control mechanism used by the office to monitor the timeliness and quality of donor reports resulted in all donor reports meeting UNICEF global reporting standards. Further, due to a rigorous budget monitoring system, UNICEF Sri Lanka utilized almost 100 per cent of the grants that expired in 2017, with an overall implementation rate of 91 per cent.

**Evaluation and research**

The implementation status of the rolling IMEP for 2016–2017, which reflects the priority placed on knowledge-generation for the UNICEF Sri Lanka and its partners, was 73 per cent by end 2017. The IMEP/PRIME is a live document, updated and reviewed every quarter by the country management team. Further, the office introduced a procedure and tools to streamline the process of evidence- generation and quality assurance of knowledge products.

Management responses to two evaluations finalized in early 2016 were completed within the agreed timeframe in 2017. The findings and recommendations from both evaluations were used to inform the development of the CP for 2018–2022. Lessons learnt from the EU-funded project evaluation were fed into the ongoing EU-funded project.

In 2017 UNICEF Sri Lanka conducted a final review of the joint peace-building project and
supported the end-line survey and final evaluation of the joint EU-UN project. Two evaluations (on multi-level teaching and the nutrition surveillance system) are planned in 2018, as part of the costed evaluation plan.

UNICEF also supported the Government to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system and capacity to meet the requirements of the SDG agenda. In this regard, UNICEF continued its partnership with the Department of Project Management and Monitoring (DPMM) and the global and Sri Lankan parliamentarians’ forums for evaluation, to map and link different parts of the M&E system, as well as support the development of individual and institutional capacity. Specifically, UNICEF, UNDP and the DPMM are jointly conducting a case study on national evaluation capacity, as part of the regional review, to assess the readiness of Sri Lanka’s monitoring and evaluation system for SDG-related evaluations. The case study will support Sri Lanka’s 2018 national voluntary review submission at the high-level political forum.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

With the aim of improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of the UN's support to programme delivery, in 2017 the UN country team and operational management team (OMT), chaired by UNICEF, continued implementation of the business operating strategy for the years 2016-2017. Successful implementation of activities as per the OMT 2017 workplan led to greater cost efficiency, reduced duplication and improved quality of services. This could be seen particularly in the area of procurement, where the establishment of common long-term arrangements (LTAs) for UN common services resulted in savings of staff time and transaction costs of approximately US$100,000.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also continued to benefit from greening initiatives implemented over the past two years and in 2017 focused on expanding the solar system in the Colombo office to increase the percentage of energy generated by solar power by approximately 30 per cent. UNICEF also replaced one of its vehicles with an electric vehicle to further contribute to greening initiatives.

Another area of focus was the migration of information communication and technology (ICT) infrastructure to a new ‘light’ model, financed by the UNICEF Headquarters’ ICT department, which by year-end will bring greater efficiency and flexibility to ICT services, as well as strengthening business continuity. Several other IT-related initiatives were initiated in 2017 to improve the quality of office communication systems, contributing to higher-quality and more reliable communication between Colombo and field offices.

**Supply management**

In 2017, the UNICEF Sri Lanka established a procurement plan for 2017, of which 89 per cent had been implemented by the third quarter of the year. The total supply throughput amounted to US$ 5,727,267.00, representing an 88.5 per cent increase from 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF Sri Lanka 2017</th>
<th>Total value in US$ (as of 31-12-2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
<td>1,699,493.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational supplies</td>
<td>295,210.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service contracting</td>
<td>520,420.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement for other countries (Maldives)</td>
<td>158,138.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement services</td>
<td>3,054,006.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-supply throughput</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,727,267.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Half of the supplies procured and distributed by UNICEF Sri Lanka in 2017 were in response to drought and flood emergencies, while the balance were primarily procured for the health, nutrition and WASH programmes.

To ensure that UNICEF could respond in a timely and efficient manner in the emergency context, the office supply unit established five LTAs, which reduced both process and delivery times for the most critical and frequently required emergency supplies. Further, strategic sourcing was carried out for a wide range of high-value, complex procurement and contracting activities, such as procurement of technical water supplies, school furniture and production of a video documentary. Operational supplies also increased during the year due to the procurement of new office vehicles, furniture and ICT equipment as part of the office’s replacement plan.

The value of institutional contracts reached US$520,420 in 2017, representing a five per cent increase from 2016, which varied from the production of documentary videos, HACT assurance activities, hotel and transportation services, to assessments, research and training programmes.

Collaboration with government partners increased with the direct delivery of supplies to provincial locations. In addition, UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to promote the strengthening of national partners’ supply chains through procurement services. The total procurement services component in 2017 reached US$3,054,006. UNICEF’s supply strategy, initiated in 2017, will continue to focus on promoting procurement services in the country, in support of building partners’ capacity.

As part of inter-agency common procurement initiatives, UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to share and benefit from common and other agency’s LTAs for Internet, security, travel, cleaning, passenger transport, hotel and auctioneer services.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also continued to enhance its own staff capacity in procurement and supply management by providing staff with opportunities for assignments in other country offices and global/regional training programmes and as surge support in emergency countries.

**Security for staff and premises**

The safety and security of UNICEF personnel and assets that deliver programmes were advanced by UNICEF Sri Lanka’s compliance with the UN Department of Safety and Security’s (UNDSS) minimum operational security standards for Sri Lanka, including the head office in Colombo and Batticaloa and Kilinochchi zone offices. To facilitate compliance UNICEF requested and received funds from UNICEF ROSA in 2017. In line with updated (March 2017) security standards, the following steps were taken to both maintain and enhance safety and security:

1. Regular and mandatory participation by the Representative at security management team meetings, with the chief of operations acting as the security focal point and member of the UNDSS-headed security team
2. Automated building access control system updated by installing a fingerprint/radio frequency card reader with the ability to record access history (implemented with funding from UNICEF ROSA)
3. Fire fighting capability enhanced by installing a pressurized fire hose reel system as recommended by the fire department (implemented with funding from ROSA)
4. Security guards trained by UNDSS on UN system security standards and protocols
5. Drivers trained by UNDSS on defensive driving techniques and radio communication methods
6. All offices inspected by local fire departments and all recommendations followed
7. Emergency evacuation and fire drills conducted during the year to practice and perfect building emergency procedures
8. All fire wardens received refresher training in August 2017 to ensure that they are prepared to handle an emergency and know how to use the fire fighting equipment.

UNICEF Sri Lanka maintained 100 per cent compliance with security standards at all offices in the country, with no reported security incidents related to UNICEF staff.

**Human resources**

Staff well-being remained a priority in 2017 and management, together with the staff association and human resources unit were proactive in addressing challenges highlighted in the global staff survey, including the development and ongoing implementation of an action plan.

UNICEF Sri Lanka had identified four group activities in its 2017 learning and training plan. By year-end, 75 per cent of the learning activities were completed, including a one-day workshop on performance management; a three-day staff retreat/team building event and a three-day workshop on private sector funding for selected staff. Staff were also continuously encouraged to follow available UNICEF courses on professional development and those related to their duties. Interactive sessions on ethics and integrity were conducted to enhance staff knowledge in this area, in line with global priorities.

The guidance shared and effective follow-up with staff ensured that the office achieved 100 per cent compliance with the global deadline for 2016 performance reviews. Further, UNICEF Sri Lanka achieved 96 per cent completion of 2017 performance planning phase by the global deadline and at end-year was undergoing the appraisal phase for 2017. As part of the transition to the new performance management culture, UNICEF Sri Lanka has developed and is implementing an office-wide action plan.

Another key area of work was support for developing the office structure for the new CP and drafting of the country programme management plan. In line with the approved plan, a recruitment plan was put in place for the six newly established posts, to be monitored by the country management team.

The office continued to face challenges in attracting qualified female candidates for national professional posts requiring specialized technical knowledge and expertise. The gender ratio for national professional staff is presently 35 per cent females and 65 per cent males.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

The ICT unit is responsible for enabling programme delivery by providing reliable and secure ICT infrastructure and innovative business solutions. In 2017 office infrastructure stability was improved through the procurement of three new servers and 75 UNICEF standard laptops with Windows 10 operating system, Office 365 and access to cloud-based office automation tools to improve programming effectiveness and efficiency. This will reduce ongoing maintenance costs of aging equipment and system downtime due to hardware failure or software incompatibility.

To reduce the ICT footprint, UNICEF Sri Lanka migrated the ICT infrastructure of the head office
and field offices to a new ‘light’ model, which enhances the flexibility and mobility of users so that staff can seamlessly access ICT services from any location.

The office also achieved more effective and timely disaster recovery by updating the IT-disaster recovery plan to accommodate field offices and strengthening data backup procedures. A SharePoint common folder was created for seamless access to critical documents, as part of business continuity planning. UNICEF also updated and obtained certification of ICT profiles of the Colombo and field offices to enable visibility of its ICT stock for emergency preparedness.

The ICT unit also actively engaged in innovative initiatives, such as an upgraded Survey Monkey account to facilitate unlimited and customized multi-language surveys for programme staff. A preliminary meeting was also held with the main ICT agency in Sri Lanka to help identify opportunities to incorporate technology for development in the next CP.

To ensure the security of office ICT infrastructure and delivery of secure data communication, the ICT unit removed devices detected on external, publicly visible interfaces of mission control devices by monitoring firewalls, removed public IPs from user devices and installed a new server room access control system with a fingerprint device.

Programme components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 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 in recent decades, Sri Lanka’s maternal and child health services still present critical weaknesses. Results from national maternal mortality reviews and perinatal death reviews in 2016 indicate that more than 59 per cent of maternal deaths were preventable. Despite the fact that 99 per cent of women deliver in the hospital, heart and respiratory diseases are the leading causes of maternal mortality, while 70 per cent of infant deaths occur during the neonatal (first 28 days after birth) period. This data raises questions on the quality and equity of care at the facility level.

According to the 2014 family health report, the leading causes of neonatal mortality include: prematurity (30.1 per cent), birth defects (19.7 per cent), sepsis (16.0 per cent), acute respiratory distress syndrome (9.4 per cent) and birth asphyxia (4.9 per cent). Most of these conditions are preventable and treatable with basic, affordable and practical solutions, particularly during childbirth and the first days after birth. Unfortunately, despite the approximately 3,000 new-borns who die annually in Sri Lanka (according to the same report), evidence-based strategies to ensure quality services for childbirth and new-born care and management of complications have not been scaled-up in the country.

MoHNIM recognizes that while the neonatal mortality rate has been halved over the last two decades and Sri Lanka maintains a comparatively lower rate compared to other countries in the region, progress has now slowed down. Therefore, there is renewed commitment by the Ministry to undertake new measures to drastically reduce preventable neonatal deaths; UNICEF is to play a key role through technical support for the implementation of globally proven
interventions. The ‘every new born’ action plan includes comprehensive strategies for improving the quality of new-born care services in the country, addressing recommendations of the bottleneck analysis.

Given the high percentage of hospital-based deliveries, there is an increasing trend toward premature deliveries; 17 per cent of babies are low birth weight. Therefore, special newborn care services and timely postnatal care are important for both the mother and child to treat complications, as well as to provide the mother with important information on how to care for herself and her child, especially sick and at-risk newborns; with particular emphasis on the importance of proper care and nutrition for a child’s survival, growth and development. UNICEF provided support to enhance the knowledge and skills of 550 relevant health personnel through hands-on, practical training on caring for sick and at-risk new-borns.

To improve access to adequate maternal and child health care, in particular for children and women who are pregnant or lactating, 12 Gramodaya health centres providing antenatal and immunization services were constructed and 15 others refurbished in low-coverage/resettled areas of North and East Provinces. One maternity ward in Batticaloa and one paediatric ward in Kilinochchi were also constructed. In addition, equipment was provided to targeted health institutions to facilitate the delivery of quality, equitable maternal and child health services. These facilities have improved access to health services for a population of more than 200,000 in low-coverage/resettled areas.

Sri Lanka’s national immunization programme is frequently cited as one of the strongest performers, not only in the region, but also in the world. The national expanded programme on immunization (EPI) has an excellent record, with extremely low incidence of EPI diseases and high coverage (98–100 per cent) of EPI vaccines. Hence, quality improvement of EPI was a high priority for the MoHNIM, in addition to addressing recommendations of the 2015 effective vaccine management report. With technical and financial support from UNICEF, the epidemiology unit conducted district-level consultative meetings on EPI, which focused on solutions to improve the programme’s quality and increase the knowledge of more than 1,220 health professionals, including specialists, doctors, nursing officers and public health inspectors.

To increase public awareness about the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination UNICEF offered technical and financial support for a media campaign, which consisted of national television advertising and television screen billboard messaging in both local languages (Sinhala and Tamil), ensuring nationwide coverage. The campaign coincided with the introduction of the HPV vaccination in early October 2017, and contributed to greater public awareness, as evidenced by the increase in daily enquiries received by the epidemiology unit regarding the vaccination programme. MOHIMN confirmed that HPV vaccination coverage of the target group is on-track and will reach the planned country targets.

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

Analytical statement of progress
The health system in Sri Lanka is considered a good model in the region and UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to promote the country as a learning hub for mother and newborn health, using South-South collaboration as a means for shared learning. UNICEF facilitated the participation of two technical experts in the regional immunization supply chain review and another two experts for training on cold chain equipment and special newborn care unit equipment and
maintenance. This led to the development of a supply chain improvement and maintenance plan, which will be rolled out in 2018. UNICEF also supported participation by a key technical expert from the family health bureau to attend a regional workshop focusing on the integration of key indicators related to maternal and new-born survival and health (in line with national plans) into the health management information system (HMIS) to track progress against national targets. This led the Ministry to begin developing follow-up actions and a related M&E plan.

UNICEF also continued to support the family health programme HMIS, which collects data from all 346 medical officer of health areas on a quarterly basis on programme implementation and related outcomes. The information generated is systematically being used to inform corrective actions at the national level and provide feedback to grassroots level public health staff. During 2017 an electronic HMIS (e-HMIS) was implemented in all 25 districts of the country, with data entered quarterly by medical health areas on a quarterly basis. However, real-time data is still not available and remains a priority going forward.

In terms of knowledge products, UNICEF supported a study (in the final draft stage at end-2017) on the risk factors, immediate triggers and critical outcome predictors of preterm births in government hospitals in Colombo District, to support the identification of strategies that could reduce neonatal mortality. In addition, the National STI/AIDS control programme, with support from UNICEF, developed a booklet for health care workers on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis. A total of 5,000 booklets were printed and disseminated to public health midwives and other relevant health staff in all 344 medical health officer areas and 53 STI/AIDS clinics to increase awareness and spur actions to achieve the Government target by 2018.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also established knowledge partnerships with professional institutions: the Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Medical Nutrition Association. In partnership with the Perinatal Society, more than 550 health professionals, including specialists, doctors and nursing staff, gained improved knowledge and skills on new-born care practices, with a specific focus on sick and at-risk new-borns. Partnership with the Sri Lanka Medical Nutrition Association resulted in the costing and launching of the health sector component of the national nutrition programme, which will inform policy decisions and funding allocations for the nutrition programme over the next five years.

**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**
UNICEF provided financial and technical assistance to MoHNIM to improve the quality of maternal and newborn care, as well as better understand the causes of neonate, infant and maternal deaths through maternal mortality and perinatal death reviews, covering the period from 28 weeks of gestation to 28 days of life. Perinatal death reviews were conducted on a monthly basis in all 81 institutions by specialist paediatricians under the leadership of the head of the institution, and national reviews were conducted annually by districts, under the leadership of the director of the family health bureau, with participation by relevant stakeholders, including service providers in the field. In 2017 UNICEF supported capacity building of more than 1,500 specialists, medical officers and nursing staff on maternal and new-born care through these district-level maternal and perinatal death reviews.
The perinatal death reviews were critical to ascertaining the causes of neonatal deaths, to then address the causes and improve the quality of newborn care. The key findings were shared with relevant stakeholders to put into place mechanisms to address the causes of preventable newborn deaths and take measures to improve logistic facilities. Efforts to improve coordination and strengthen the links between national and provincial health systems levels remain a priority. The establishment of a national desk review committee on perinatal death reviews is also underway, based on the success of the desk review committee for maternal mortality, and will consist of senior experts from professional colleges (College of Paediatricians and College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists) and academia. The committee will review all perinatal deaths using relevant information sources and prepare an individual case report for each death and make recommendations for improvement. These cases will be discussed in detail during national perinatal death review meetings in districts, with participation by relevant stakeholders.

OUTCOME 2 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
A key milestone achievement in 2017 for the WASH sector was approval by the MoCPWS of the national sanitation policy, which serves as the guiding document for the sector to ensure quality sanitation services. This was the result of years of advocacy by UNICEF and other key stakeholders and provides a strong foundation for all sanitation-related initiatives in the country. Further, the MoCPWS could fulfill its commitment at the 2013 South Asia Regional Conference for Sanitation (SACOSAN) to establish an adequately resourced Regional Centre for Sanitation. UNICEF supported the initial stages of establishing the Centre, which now plays a key role in hosting international and regional events. As the sector lead, the MoCPWS also re-established the national WATSAN steering committee and led an exercise to align with SDG 6 (targets and indicators), facilitated by UNICEF and WHO. To contribute to SDG targets, UNICEF will have to provide support for strengthening sector monitoring, institutional capacities and collaboration among key stakeholders.

In the area of community-managed water, UNICEF continued to support the NWS&DB’s water safety unit to scale-up water safety plans to assure safety of water at the point of drinking. UNICEF took advantage of two opportunities during 2017. First, Sri Lanka and China finalized an agreement for an advanced water quality laboratory to address health and environmental burdens attributed to extensive chemical pollution of water sources; second, water safety planning was successfully integrated in at least two advanced university courses as a stand-alone module.

In schools, the school nutrition and health services branch – which leads the MoE’s WASH in Schools (WinS) programme—created a permanent staff position for WinS under the regular carder. However, an imbalance remains between the hardware and software components. More support is needed to assess the hardware’s functionality and define indicators for key WASH behavioural components that could be included in the annual school census (e.g., hand washing, water treatment, MHM and service sustainability).

A major concern during 2017 was prolonged drought, beginning in late 2016, in 14 districts of Sri Lanka. The drought directly affected a population of over 900,000, with a detrimental impact on both water management and drinking water, as well as water-related livelihoods. The
drought response is ineffective if provided only on a short-term basis; it must include medium- to long-term actions, with a focus on resilience building.

UNICEF provided significant resources to the Government in support of the WASH sector, benefitting more than 125,000 people (approximately 31,000 families) with access to sustainable and safe water sources in the worst drought-affected districts. In schools, 6,000 students and 700 teachers gained access to safe water in Jaffna District. The situation was made worse in May, when Sri Lanka was hit by devastating flooding and deadly landslides, primarily in four districts, directly affecting a population of 550,000. The disaster, perceived to be the worst in recent history, followed a similar disaster the year before, highlighting the need for a continued focus on disaster risk reduction and resilience-building. UNICEF played a key role in convening stakeholders and, at the onset of the emergency, supporting a national emergency coordination mechanism for the WASH sector. UNICEF also supported the Government in providing more than 220,000 people with safe drinking water, almost 45,000 people with improved sanitation facilities and almost 25,000 people with hygiene support. 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 fetching water, making them more available for their children and income-generating activities. Overall, having such services improved the well-being of people by ensuring their dignity, safety and comfort.

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
The NWS&DB continued providing technical support for implementing and documenting water safety plans in 10 community-managed and rural water schemes piloted in 2016. More focus was placed during 2017 on preventing water source contamination and failures within water catchment areas. Building on this momentum, UNICEF and WHO advocated in favour of making these plans an academic model, which contributed to the NWS&DB’s water safety team and Uva Wellasa University launching a for-credit course on water safety plans for students studying mineral resources and technology. Also, in line with World Water Day celebrations, UNICEF raised awareness among 1,500 persons from the general public and professionals, including school children, on issues related to water, particularly highlighting the challenges of tackling the drinking water crisis. UNICEF also generated additional evidence to inform water safety planning through: i) the publication and dissemination of 32 research papers from a vast range of water sector professionals participating in the NWS&DB Research and Development Symposium, and ii) conducting an assessment of drinking water quality, household water treatment and safe storage practices and the capacity for drinking water quality surveillance in Sri Lanka’s Western Province.

Another key milestone was the finalization and approval by the MoCPWS of the long-awaited national sanitation policy, which has been a key area of advocacy for UNICEF since 2010. In line with this policy, UNICEF specifically supported, in the initial phase, the newly established Regional Centre for Sanitation, which facilitated holding of the 10th inter-country working group meeting and the first regional training on MHM. UNICEF Sri Lanka also facilitated participation by key government officials in the Sanitation and Water for All high-level meeting and steering committee meeting, to ensure that Sri Lanka’s commitments to this global platform are maintained.
UNICEF also played a key role in responding to the drought, which was followed by flooding and landslides in May 2017. Based on a desk review of the situation gaps in groundwater and community-managed water sub-sectors, UNICEF provided more than 125,000 vulnerable people (approximately 31,000 families) with access to sustainable and safe water sources in the worst drought-affected districts. Some 6,000 students and 700 teachers gained access to safe water in Jaffna district. In response to the floods and landslides, UNICEF provided critical life-saving support and invested resources during the recovery phase for people living in camps and areas of return in the four worst-hit districts, benefitting 220,000 people with safe drinking water, almost 45,000 people with improved sanitation facilities and almost 25,000 people with hygiene support. Another key crisis response involved a dengue outbreak. UNICEF facilitated the safety of 100 household dug wells in Trincomalee District, as well as providing 1,550 mosquito nets to at-risk people in Rathnapura and Kalutara districts, benefitting more than 4,200 rights-holders.

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

**Analytical statement of progress**

National-level engagement in WinS has not progressed as planned due to competing priorities in the MoE’s school health and nutrition branch, which is mandated to oversee the WinS programme. UNICEF’s capacity to play a key advocacy and convenor role in this area at the national level was also compromised by the diversion of resources to provide an adequate and timely response to the multiple drought and floods emergencies that occurred in 2017.

However, at the sub-national level, progress was made in the area of MHM. In 2016, UNICEF gave technical and financial support for field-testing the MHM toolkit in the Northern Province. This toolkit was designed to explore and improve existing menstrual hygiene practices, including the development of MHM action plans in schools. The toolkit was applied in 40 schools in the North with significant improvements against 10 MHM-specific indicators reported within a month of the application. Involvement of experts from the MoHNIM (obstetricians, gynaecologists and reproductive health officers) was a key strength in countering negative social norms and myths associated with menstruation, not only among within school communities but also parents and the broader community.

Building on these positive experiences in the North and the sharing of knowledge between Northern and Eastern provincial education authorities, in 2017 UNICEF Sri Lanka supported the piloting of the MHM Toolkit in 40 schools in the Eastern Province. Through this initiative, 40 education professionals became competent as trainers on MHM in 14 education zones, and are currently training teachers in the targeted schools on use of the toolkit in school activities.

UNICEF also facilitated Sri Lanka’s participation in the 6th WASH in schools learning exchange in Myanmar, thereby reaffirming the MoE’s commitment to MHM and WinS. This resulted in MoE commitment to four key actions to be implemented in 2018 and beyond:

1. Integrating indicators on the functionality of school WASH services and key WASH-related behaviours (hand washing and MHM) into the annual school census
2. Improving the school-level accountability framework on WinS (hardware and software)
3. Revising the existing school accreditation system to include specific parameters for WASH operations and maintenance and students’ competencies and practices
4. Scaling up MHM, with clear criteria and a monitoring framework.
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 programme conducted in seven conflict-affected/border districts, (Ampara, Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Mannar, Monaragala, Puttalam and Vavuniya) UNICEF is working to improve access to water supply and 1,600 families to sanitation facilities for more than 6,500 families. In 2017, the following results were achieved:

Northern/Uva/North Central/North Western provinces
- 15,780 persons (50 per cent women and girls) gained improved access to water through the establishment of a community-managed water supply system in Mannar district and water safety coordination mechanism in Vavuniya district.
- WASH facilities were improved at two health care facilities in Anuradhapura and Puttalam districts, benefitting approximately 3,600 people that visit these clinics.

Eastern Province
- 1,840 persons (54 per cent women and girls) gained access to improved water through construction of four community-managed water supply systems in Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara and Monaragala districts.
- Construction/rehabilitation of dug wells and tube wells in Batticaloa, Ampara and Monaragala districts increased access to improved water for 1,570 people (52 per cent women and girls).
- Newly constructed laboratory facilities under the regional directors of health services in Batticaloa, Ampara and Monaragala districts benefitted 38,000 persons through enhanced verification of the quality of their drinking water sources.
- The newly established sewage management facility in Ampara District benefitted 16,000 people (56 per cent women and girls) with access to safely managed sanitation (inline with SDG Target 6.2) by strengthening off-site safe management of human excreta.
- Newly constructed WASH facilities at six health care facilities benefitted 3,900 people who access health care services in Batticaloa, Ampara and Monaragala districts.
- 8,400 persons have access to safe water through community-managed water supply schemes.
- 2,080 persons have access to safe sanitation through the provision of 520 household latrines.
- 11,500 students (55 per cent women and girls) and 500 teachers (60 per cent women) in 40 schools in Batticaloa, Ampara and Monaragala districts gained access to improved WASH facilities in their schools, including focused attention on improving behaviours and practices related to hand-washing and MHM.

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 for their children and income generating activities. Overall, the availability of these services improved peoples’ well-being, protecting their dignity, safety and comfort.
OUTCOME 3 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
UNICEF Sri Lanka provided technical support for the development of national guidelines for implementing the multi-level teaching and learning approach in primary schools. These guidelines will be used island-wide from 2018 onwards, constituting a major milestone towards the scale-up of the model approach supported by UNICEF over the last few years. In terms of school-level implementation, the full package of multi-level materials and interventions for Grades 1 to 3 was finalized and will continue to be used in up to 300 schools in the Eastern and Northern Provinces. As demand from other schools increased, plans were made in provinces to expand the model gradually to all primary schools within the next few years. To facilitate this expansion, senior provincial education officials began reaching out to development partners to request matching funds, with plans to invest a substantial portion of their own provincial funds for further development and testing of the multi-level teaching and learning approach in targeted provinces.

UNICEF also supported the strengthening of participatory school development planning processes in Northern and Eastern Provinces. Resource teams of master trainers at the provincial and zonal levels—mainly planning officers and principals from selected schools—were trained on the provincial guidelines for participatory school self-assessments and planning. Following training programmes across all zones for principals and teachers from a total of 800 schools, school communities reviewed and revised their school plans for 2017 based on a participatory and more evidence-based school self-assessment and planning process. A small number of the 17 disadvantaged schools in the Eastern Province also received complementary funds from UNICEF for school improvement works based on the revised school plans. Both the Northern and Eastern provinces have expressed their commitment to using the guidelines during the school planning process for 2018 and onwards.

One key feature emerging from a more participatory school development process was a reported first-time increase in engagement of parents and children in the planning process. A second feature involved the use of evidence, such as data from attendance records and catchment area mapping exercises, as a basis for school-level planning. This was made possible in particular through UNICEF’s support for the development of a zonal-level database system for capturing school performance data, including the provision of laptops to school principals of about 40 pilot schools and training for principals and school staff on laptop use and data entry. The school performance data presented to the community also led to increased community demand for improved school performance and stronger accountability mechanisms.

Another key area of work focused on supporting peace and reconciliation through education. UNICEF continued to play a key advocacy and technical support role in the development and implementation of a related action plan based on the policy review recommendations. To strengthen the implementation of the action plan and coordination among stakeholders, the MoE established a new unit for peace education and reconciliation to oversee such initiatives within the education sector. Technical task forces have also been set up to drive implementation in key areas, such as curriculum development, teacher development and research and M&E.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also continued to facilitate the innovative use of co-curricular activities, such as music and sports, to promote social cohesion among diverse groups of students studying in schools segregated by ethnicity and religion. In this regard UNICEF, in partnership with the
National Commonwealth Games Association and the Ministry of Sports, used the ‘Queen’s Baton Relay’ as a momentous opportunity to promote social cohesion through sports in Sri Lanka. Celebrating the arrival of the Queen’s Baton, UNICEF brought together a group of ‘mini-games’ trainers from Uva Province with over 300 children from across Colombo to demonstrate the games in action. This has positioned UNICEF as a partner of choice in technical support for Ministry of Sports implementation of sports for development initiatives. UNICEF will work with the Ministry to highlight the use of sports among children as a means of creating bridges of friendship and understanding across communities.

In November 2017 UNICEF, together with Sri Lanka’s Parliamentary Caucus for Children, organized a high-level forum on ECD. The forum, led by the Speaker of the Parliament and represented by the ministries of finance, policy and planning, education, health and women and child affairs, underlined the importance of committing to increased investments, leadership, coordination, programme integration and policy coherence in ECD. It also allowed UNICEF to renew its partnership with the Parliamentary Caucus for Children for representation and advocacy on ECD policy and practice.

Northern and Uva Provinces showed an increase in the percentage of Grade 5 students passing the exam, while UNICEF’s two other targeted areas, Nuwara Eliya District and Eastern Province, showed markedly worse learning outcomes between 2014 and 2017. It is important to note, however, that UNICEF’s programme focus on improving learning outcomes was only introduced in 2015, through the multi-level teaching and learning approach, which is being rolled out across provinces in phases. With respect to gross pre-primary enrolment figures, obtaining verifiable and traceable data remains a challenge due to the absence of systematic record-keeping, resulting in discrepancies in the annual preschool data provided by provinces.

**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**

UNICEF supported further development and testing of the multi-level teaching and learning approach in targeted provinces. In Eastern and Northern Provinces, almost 300 schools used the full package of Grade 2 materials for at least one of the three school terms during 2017, benefitting more than 10,000 girls and boys. Materials for Grades 1 to 3 were developed and teachers trained on their use, so that the model could be scaled up in 2018. Resource teams were established n both provinces, facilitating training of education officials in all education zones. Following exchange visits to Eastern, Central and Uva provinces also began to pilot the approach at 100 schools. At the national level, UNICEF supported the MoE’s development of national guidelines for implementing the multi-level approach. A documentary featuring interviews with senior national and provincial education officials and a set of human interest stories were produced with UNICEF’s support, to showcase the approach and highlight initial impacts. The overall impact of the multi-level approach will be assessed in 2018.

UNICEF continued to support the National Institute of Education to integrate peace and reconciliation lessons into primary education through the development of teacher guides for the ‘environment-related activities’ subject and teacher training. Grade 2 materials developed in 2016 were disseminated to all schools island-wide in early 2017, with approximately 167,000 Grade 2 children benefitting from the new lessons. Based on the model for Grade 2, a supplementary teacher guide for Grade 3 was finalized during 2017 and will be launched island-wide in early 2018. Conceptually, the teacher guides for Grades 2 and 3 feature age-appropriate
play-based learning activities and stories to promote student competencies related to empathy, cooperation, conflict resolution, respect for diversity and social inclusion.

Capitalizing on the growing focus on co-curricular activities as a strategy for promoting social cohesion and peace, UNICEF launched an innovative pilot programme in 36 schools with over 4,000 children in Uva Province to promote life skills and socio-emotional competencies through physical education. In collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation, the programme introduced and tested the concept of mini-games designed to promote leadership, communication, conflict-management and problem-solving skills among students. Emphasis was placed on using simple, fun activities that would not require additional costly resource materials and could be scaled up to additional schools. Initial observations from pilot schools and discussions with students showed that they enjoyed the games, grasped the concepts and could reflect on how to apply the lessons learned to their everyday lives. Another pilot involved music as a convener to enhance social cohesion among junior secondary students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in Eastern Province. Under this pilot, a new curriculum was developed merging the two separately taught music streams, and will be mainstreamed into national music education curricula in 2018. An assessment of the effectiveness of this approach will be available early 2018.

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
To ensure the smooth transition of preschool children to primary school, teachers must take a central role by seeking harmonization of teaching practices and expectations across the two institutions to sustain a child’s developmental continuum. In the absence of an institutionalized approach to facilitate such collaboration, UNICEF working with Sri Lanka’s ECD Authority (ECDA) and the departments of education and probation and childcare services of Uva Province, developed a five-step model and training tool to pilot a programme to foster collaborative teacher relationships between preschools and primary schools. In 2017, 500 preschools and 100 primary schools were connected using this model, and based on positive outcomes, the Uva Provincial Council issued a circular requiring all pre- and primary schools to participate in this initiative as of 2018. An identical model was implemented in Central Province, which has reached a similar number of preschools and primary schools. Further, Uva Province’s ECDA, with UNICEF support, developed a teacher instruction manual for ECD centres, with the objective of introducing a consistent approach to annual lesson planning across all preschools in the province. The rollout of this manual in 2018 will facilitate the monitoring of teaching and learning quality in the province because all preschools will follow the same lesson plan, calendar and methods of instruction and assessment.

At the national level, UNICEF supported the Children’s Secretariat to develop an ‘ECD model village’ concept, whereby selected villages will be supported to build model preschools, play areas and child-friendly police stations; conduct child health clinics; and raise awareness among parents and community groups on ECD. The concept development was accomplished through a consultative workshop and series of site visits. The implementation of this concept provides UNICEF with an entry point for piloting multi-sectoral ECD work at the village level in 2018.

UNICEF further strengthened the skills of senior officials from the Children’s Secretariat on integrated ECCD programming by sponsoring the participation of two officials in the 2017 Asia-
Pacific regional early childhood development conference organized by ARNEC in Siem Reap, Cambodia in March 2017. Guided by this conference, the Children’s Secretariat strengthened its approach to integrated ECCD policy making and programming, as reflected in the newly revised draft of the national ECCD policy.

To strengthen implementation of Sri Lanka’s ECD standards for 3-to-5 year olds, UNICEF supported the Children’s Secretariat to organize a consultation in September 2017, aimed at harmonizing early childhood assessments with primary school readiness assessments. This meeting provided a platform for educators and child development specialists to debate on assessment objectives, role clarity, methodologies, tools and implications for referrals and data privacy. The Children’s Secretariat will conduct a trial of the assessment in the first quarter of 2018.

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 its critical support for rehabilitating and equipping schools and pre-schools, as part of its regular and emergency response programmes. In Eastern Province, 37 schools damaged during the conflict were rehabilitated, restoring higher-quality education services for 1,110 children. School furniture (chairs and desks) was also supplied or repaired at 1,010 children in 29 schools in the North; 4,710 children in 134 schools in the East and 6,590 children in 94 schools in Uva Province.

With regard to preschools, play materials were provided to 50 preschools in the Eastern Province, benefitting 1,000 children; 13 preschools in Uva Province, benefitting 260 children; 27 preschools in Northern province benefitting 540 children; 10 preschools in North Central Province benefitting 200 children; and nine preschools in North-Western Province benefitting 180 children.

As part of UNICEF’s response to the emergency in May, UNICEF supported the rehabilitation (classroom/roof repair) and equipping of nine schools and 14 preschools in the most severely flood-affected district of Rathnapura, benefitting more than 540 school children and 280 preschool children. UNICEF also provided an additional 33 flood-affected schools and 50 preschools with school furniture, and 100 preschools with reading and play materials benefitting 2,905 school children and 3,340 preschool children in the flood-affected areas of Sabaragamuwa, Southern and Western Provinces. To strengthen government capacity to assess damages, losses and recovery needs, UNICEF provided technical support to the MoE in data collection and analysis and for drafting the multisectoral post-disaster needs assessment conducted in mid-2017. Based on the report’s recommendations, a costed recovery plan was finalized.

To mitigate the effects of future disasters, UNICEF supported the integration of school safety measures and DRR initiatives into school planning and monitoring processes through dedicated DRR committees at 60 pilot schools. UNICEF further facilitated the implementation of these plans for selected initiatives, including by providing relevant supplies. The lessons learned from this pilot programme will be included in the revised national school safety guidelines, which should be completed in early 2018.
OUTCOME 4 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
Building on the accomplishments of the last two years, the child protection sector has experienced a dynamic year, characterized by evolving national commitment to end violence against children, improvements in policy and practice in the field of child rights monitoring and the response to flood emergencies that impacted thousands of children and adolescents.

Several key milestones were achieved during the reporting period to strengthen the enabling environment to protect girls and boys from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. As a Pathfinder Country of the global partnership to end violence against children (#End Violence), the Government of Sri Lanka launched the NPEVAC in June 2017. UNICEF’s assistance was critical in the lead up to, and during, the launch, which also included development of a country discussion paper to describe children’s experiences of abuse, neglect and exploitation and solutions to these challenges. The launch of the national partnership brought together many high-level officials, government and UN agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations, activists and children, and was covered by mainstream and social media – creating a strong advocacy moment in the country.

This momentum was built upon by MoWCA to develop a new policy paper entitled ‘Roadmap document to prevent violence against children’, which identified three priority areas for the country to addressed during the next three-to-five years. The roadmap was formally launched on October 1, 2017 on Sri Lanka’s National Children’s Day. With financial assistance from UNICEF, the Ministry set up a secretariat to run day-to-day management of NPEVAC. UNICEF encouraged several international NGOs to support the Ministry’s efforts, such as ChildFund, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan, and SOS Kinderdorf. The Ministry is currently developing an action plan to streamline and coordinate actions of various government agencies and guide the work of non-government partners.

Key child protection research and studies conducted by UNICEF Sri Lanka in 2016 contributed to the evidence base for policy/legislative review and development by several departments within MoWCA. The department of probation and child care services initiated the country’s first-ever alternative care policy, with specific support from UNICEF through the sharing of international experience, drafting the report and conducting multi-stakeholder consultations to develop this priority policy document. The first draft of the alternative care policy was finalized in 2017 and ready for submission to the Cabinet for consideration. Once passed it will significantly contribute to reducing the number of children in institutional care, where they face serious protection risks.

The NCPA finalized the second draft of its child protection policy, which was largely informed by the child protection system mapping study of 2016, carried out with UNICEF support. This policy will set standards for enhancing the quality of child protection services to both prevent and respond to issues of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. During 2017, NCPA guidelines on the provision of child protection services during emergencies were finalized, translated into Sinhala and published for wider circulation. These guidelines provide minimum standards for child protection during emergencies, ensuring that children, the most vulnerable segment of the population, are protected, receive psychosocial support and have access to the services they need to return to a sense of normalcy.
The MoWCA played a strong leadership role in streamlining government efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Technical support from UNICEF and Save the Children resulted in a reorganization of the national monitoring committee, an inter-agency government body mandated to monitor and report on the status of the Convention’s implementation. Six new core members were appointed to the committee by presidential decree in April 2017. A cabinet paper in October mandated every government ministry to assign a high-level official to the committee, while provincial governments are required to develop child rights monitoring committees at all levels to coordinate implementation measures. The Ministry also launched a child rights monitoring framework, a monitoring and reporting tool for government agencies at various levels to report on their progress toward implementing the provisions of the Convention.

At the community level, UNICEF either strengthened or established around 217 village child development committees in Eastern, Northern and Uva Provinces, reaching out to more than 25,000 children and their families through awareness-raising on child protection issues, child participation initiatives and referral services. Over 3,000 vulnerable children received support via in-kind assistance mechanisms through the VCDC case management process. Linkages between VCDCs and WCDs were established and strengthened by developing the capacities of police officers working at WCDs on investigation, diversion and complaint mechanisms.

**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**

Intense advocacy with the Ministry of Justice and other government institutions resulted in a Cabinet decree increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility from eight to 12 years—a long-awaited policy shift. It is expected that this change will reduce the number of children placed in institutional care and in contact with the justice system each year. The Ministry established a steering committee, comprised of high-level officials from key ministries and UNICEF, to review UNICEF’s recommendations to reform the legal and institutional framework with a specific focus on improving justice for children. This was a result of UNICEF’s new study, which examined the status of administration of justice for children in the country and whether it is in line with Sri Lanka’s international obligations. It is expected that the committee will produce recommendations for the Government to amend specific legal, policy and regulatory frameworks that improve children’s access to justice, ensure free and accessible legal aid, tackle remarkably long delays in investigating cases of child sexual abuse and improve trust in the justice system and its services.

Several capacity development initiatives continued in 2017, including training programmes for police officers at women and children’s desks. The post-graduate diploma programmes on child protection, initiated and supported by UNICEF, continued to be offered at the Rajarata University and the National Institute of Social Development, benefitting over 600 front-line child protection officers. UNICEF advocacy also resulted in initiation by the University of Colombo of a post-graduate diploma in child protection in 2017.

UNICEF also supported the construction of 10 WCDs at police stations in conflict-affected districts to reach the most deprived children and adolescents. The lack of a separate WCD within police stations was identified as one of the key barriers faced by victims of violence and abuse, due to issues of privacy and confidentiality. The new buildings provide a secure and
private space for child victims and contribute to increasing trust between the community and the police. For instance, during 2017 the UNICEF-supported Karawalagawewa Police WCD reported a 40 per cent increase in the number of cases reported compared to 2016.

UNICEF’s advocacy with the Attorney General’s department led to the recruitment of seven lawyers for the department’s children’s unit, to enhance its capacity to process an additional 3,000 cases per year (of an approximate caseload of 15,000) and tackle the backlog of child abuse cases pending investigation. Additionally, the NCPA, with support from UNICEF, launched its guidelines on procedures for police officers, including child-friendly practices when they interact with children to avoid secondary victimization for children in contact and conflict with the law. The NCPA also developed and launched the www.youthink.lk - a website that provides valuable advice on dealing with children in a non-violent manner. Initial reports suggest that teachers visit the site to learn how to discipline children without using corporal punishment.

**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 MoHNIM and relevant departments, including the non-communicable disease unit, family health bureau, Sri Lanka Medical Association and department of police, to address both intentional and unintentional child injuries. During 2016, UNICEF gave technical support to the non-communicable disease unit to roll out an injury surveillance system at 14 hospitals. In 2017 surveillance was expanded to 90 hospitals and around 47,900 incidents were reported and analysed, of which about one-fourth were related to children. This information on child injuries and related causes is being used to inform ongoing policy development on injury prevention and programme design and implementation.

UNICEF also specifically addressed the issue of child injuries caused by mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) through targeted MRE in high-risk resettlement communities in the North and East, in partnership with national NGOs and the Government’s humanitarian de-mining unit. In 2017, the MRE programme reached more than 86,200 community members, resulting in a 75 per cent reduction in casualties and a 22 per cent increase in the reporting of explosive devices by community members (compared to 2016). To ensure long-term sustainability of the MRE programme, 52 community volunteer groups were established to educate community members on safe behaviour, with support from UNICEF. Further, the district-level child injury prevention steering committees established in 2016 continued providing multisectoral support to children referred to them with both intentional and non-intentional injuries. These committees also continued to receive increasing numbers of community reports of ERWs (72 cases as of October 2017), reflecting the public’s positive perception of the committees. These initiatives were successful in reducing injuries, as can be seen, for example, in Mannar District where a 33 per cent reduction in injuries was recorded in three targeted Grama Niladhari divisions (local administrative unit).

**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 modelled in targeted areas, monitored, documented and promoted in policy advocacy
Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF and MoWCA worked together to increase awareness and knowledge on violence against children in Sri Lanka and produced specific media content, including three short video-documentary films, TV interviews and other media content. The films had more than 100,000 views on various platforms, including TV, while media content reached over 372,000 individuals through mainstream and social media, generating a significant social media reaction. The videos were the best-performing social media content, drawing more than 9,800 individuals to the UNICEF Sri Lanka website.

UNICEF-supported training for government officials working with young people through a post-diploma programme benefitted 306 officials, who were trained on how to work with adolescents to promote life skills, empower them to become responsible and active citizens and protect themselves and others from violence and abuse. This initiative resulted in 32 social action community projects designed and implemented by adolescents and youth to address local issues.

To facilitate evidence-based policy making, UNICEF supported several knowledge products during the year, including: i) a study on disciplinary methods in Sri Lankan schools conducted by the NCPA, which revealed that over 80 per cent of school children had experienced at least one form of corporal punishment in the last three months; ii) country discussion paper on violence against children published by MoWCA, which: summarizes relevant information and data, proposes policy and practical solutions and recommends specific interventions on priority issues; iii) a study of Sri Lanka’s legal and institutional framework for delivering justice for children, with comparisons to international standards in juvenile justice and access to justice; and iv) an assessment of children deprived of liberty who have been placed in special institutions run by the Government, produced by Sri Lanka’s Human Rights Commission. These knowledge products continue to play an important role in informing policy discourse and have resulted in specific milestone achievements described in previous output statements.

OUTCOME 5 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
Among the challenges and risks involved in taking a systems approach to social protection are: the political economy, differences in views and practices of various stakeholders, dynamics and limited coordination between centralized and decentralized structures and transparency in planning and processes. In 2017, UNICEF Sri Lanka faced specific policy and programme-related bottlenecks that impeded achievement of this outcome.

The president of Sri Lanka declared 2017 as the year of poverty elimination. UNICEF Sri Lanka, with support from UNICEF ROSA, engaged the DCS in computing a multi-dimensional poverty index for children. The index will enable DCS to better capture the complex deprivations and inequities faced daily by children and provide insight into structural and institutional factors that contribute to child poverty. The release of results from Sri Lanka’s 2016-2017 demographic health survey in October 2017 will help to ensure that computations are up-to-date. The work is ongoing, and is expected to be complete by the first quarter of 2018. Results will be used on a variety of occasions to foster dialogue with the Government regarding the need to increase allocations and/or make more effective use of public expenditure in social spheres. The child poverty index will also allow the country to improve monitoring of progress toward the SDGs.
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
Despite limited human and financial resources, UNICEF Sri Lanka, with support from UNICEF UNICEF ROSA, redesigned its engagement in the area of social protection. As a climate change hotspot, Sri Lanka faced a series of cyclical natural disasters (floods, drought and landslides) in 2016-2017, which not only required an immediate response but pointed to the need for developing a more sustainable and coordinated strategy to address the needs of affected populations. With almost 30 per cent of the population living just above the poverty line and overall high rates of indebtedness among this population, particularly those living in rural/estate areas, their risk of slipping into absolute poverty is very high. To mitigate the adverse impact of natural disasters on poor families, help them rapidly recover from repeated crises and, overall, be better prepared to respond, UNICEF partnered with MoWCA to initiate dialogue on the development of a shock-responsive social protection mechanism mainstreamed into disaster risk reduction activities. This required an assessment of existing government social security programmes, such as opportunities to deliver emergency (top-up) cash transfers and to operationalize an emergency cash transfer response mechanism through the existing social protection system. Results of the assessment and accompanying recommendations are expected by mid-2018.

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

Analytical statement of progress
Postponed to 2018

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
Findings from the situation analysis of children and women completed late 2016, informed discussions between UNICEF Sri Lanka and partners on the future priorities, which are reflected in the country programme for 2018-2022. The situation analysis also fed into the Common Country Assessment, which forms the basis for engagement of the wider UN in Sri Lanka.

UNICEF Sri Lanka’s CP, builds on the achievements of the current country programme and is well aligned with national priorities, many of which are reflected in key strategic government documents: public investment programme (PIP) 2017-2020; peace-building priority plan 2016-2020; Vision 2025, etc. For example, the PIP established a medium-term framework for annual capital budgets; according to the projections, Government expenditure on health and education is expected to increase (in absolute figures) by about 1.5 times by 2020. Some of the priorities in the social sphere, as defined by the PIP, are to: enhance equitable access to quality education and improve education; reduce disparities in maternal and infant mortality rates, by
increasing budgetary provisions for rural/primary healthcare facilities; and address health needs on tea estates. In addition, the PIP targets increased pre-school enrolment of up to 100 per cent by 2020, improved preschool teacher training and a reduction in incidents of violence against women and children. In addition, the PIP suggests sports as a “vehicle to promote peace and reconciliation after the three-decade long conflict”.

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#### Evaluation and research

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