Executive Summary

The year 2014 was in part characterised by reflections on repositioning the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in the post-conflict, economically strong context of Sri Lanka, culminating in a mid-term review (MTR) that placed equity and policy more squarely at the core of the Country Programme and added social policy as a programme component. Recent presidential election led to a change in political leadership, creating opportunities for socio-economic reforms, including social protection schemes, child and women’s abuse prevention and youth empowerment. The new Government is keen to engage more with UNICEF/UN.

In 2014, UNICEF used the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC@25) to (re)address the challenges of human rights in Sri Lanka and celebrate the considerable achievements for children as well as flag areas that need continued attention. A multi-sector, multi-organisation strategy brought decision-makers, youth, children, celebrities, media, private sector and civil servants together through high-profile events and advocacy activities. Events included competitions, innovations, training, assemblies in all schools, sports and media events, and one-to-one ministerial discussions, and culminated on 20 November with a multi-party Parliamentary Pledge and the establishment of a Parliamentary Caucus with a progressive mandate that will examine all legislation related to or affecting children in the future.

A national End-Violence Campaign was developed. UNICEF moved from mine-risk activities to broader safety and prevention of violence issues. UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to model child-injury surveillance systems in 14 hospitals, while district injury-prevention steering committees were formed and functional in five districts. With a high teen suicide rate in Sri Lanka, online safety also became an area of interest, and wide consultations/discussions on the matter were facilitated by UNICEF Sri Lanka with youth, Internet providers and policy makers.

UNICEF’s advocacy with the Ministry of Education (MoE) resulted in the development of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy being submitted for approval. It outlines key elements such as national standards on ECE curriculum, teacher capacity development, a monitoring mechanism and funding. The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL)/UNICEF successfully launched the Multi-sectoral Action Plan in October 2014 to accelerate progress towards transforming all primary schools into child-friendly schools by 2016.

Building on 2013 successes, UNICEF facilitated two high-profile health missions from neighbouring countries to learn about the national maternal newborn and child health (MNCH) package. The success of these missions led the Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) to recommend that Sri Lanka host a regional centre of South-South cooperation.

Other policy successes in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition were achieved throughout the year. However, the suspension of a post-war European Union (EU) project (34 per cent of other resources [OR] funding) caused a 14-month delay in implementation in the North and East Provinces. The EU/UN programme re-started in December 2014, with an
extension from the EU to April 2017.

UNICEF Sri Lanka identified quality, analysis sensitivities around data and weak coordination between the national and subnational governments as bottlenecks to improved policy analysis and application for children. These will be built into the 2015+ country programme strategy as priority concerns.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

Sri Lanka has experienced frequent drought/flood cycles in the last three years. During the Northeast monsoon, which supplies water for agriculture across the key rice-producing areas, there was below-average rainfall for six consecutive months, which led to a prolonged drought in parts of the country. A multi-sector rapid-assessment conducted in April 2014 by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the GoSL revealed that the current emergency is not an isolated event but rather the accumulation of impacts due to reduced coping mechanisms resulting from the past armed conflict and recurrent natural disasters. The number of food-insecure people has risen dramatically as a consequence of a gradual erosion of coping strategies to recurring natural disasters among the rural population.

In mid-2014, 1.5 million people were considered affected by the drought, of whom 768,000 were identified as food insecure with limited coping capacity, and 60,000 were in urgent need of food and drinking water assistance. Providing potable water through a bowser supply was the only option for these most vulnerable communities to meet their urgent needs until a longer-term solution, such as wells rehabilitation, can be undertaken. In addition, there was an urgent need to respond to the nutritional needs of mothers and children living in affected areas through a nutrition rehabilitation programme that focuses on community- and facility-based therapeutic feeding. To respond to the drought, UNICEF Sri Lanka received $US 94,204 (47 per cent of the total funding requirement) against a joint-Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Allocations were made to provide lifesaving emergency water assistance for affected people in five priority districts: Ampara, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Mannar and Monaragala. The specific locations were identified through situation analyses and water sector coordination meetings at the district level. The funding was specifically used for water bowering and procurement of 210 water tanks for water transportation and storage in common locations. The following results were achieved:

- 34,303 individuals in 14 Divisional Secretariat (DS) Divisions in the targeted districts had access to an adequate quantity of safe drinking water, complying with national standards; and
- targeted communities had easy access to safely stored drinking water in common locations, thereby reducing the burden, particularly on women, of walking long distances to fetch water.

In other parts of the country, floods and flash floods led to a landslide in October 2014 that swept the hilly village of Meeriyabedda, Badulla District. As of 5 November 2014, 12 people were killed, five injured, 22 missing (unconfirmed subject to verification) and 1,875 affected. Sixty-six houses and seven other buildings were reported to have been fully destroyed. While basic needs, such as water, sanitation, food and shelter, were addressed by the Government, UNICEF immediately responded by supporting government authorities in ensuring that affected children, particularly those separated from their families or those who had lost one or both parents, were protected, registered by authorities and reunited as quickly as possible with their family or an appropriate caregiver, while receiving much-needed psychosocial support and counselling.
There was a need to establish temporary learning spaces to minimise the disruption to schooling during the period of displacement, with many schools housing the internally displaced. As an interim, just three days after the disaster, UNICEF supported temporary learning programmes in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Education.

Unusually heavy rains across the island created massive temporary displacement in December 2014, with some 1.1 million people affected by flooding. More than 50 per cent of the second annual rice and vegetable crop was destroyed, compounding drought impacts significantly. UN/non-governmental organisation (NGO) rapid assessments indicate some 230,000 plus are now severely food insecure as a result of these losses, and another 400,000 plus are considered food secure as a result. Infrastructure, including schools and clinics, was damaged, and UNICEF is responding in the first instance with basic WASH supplies and will activate ‘light’ coordination structures in WASH and education in the second week of January 2015. No emergency had been declared as of the end of 2014.

Collection, disaggregation and timely use of data on affected communities remained a challenge to be addressed through assistance channels on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change mechanisms the Government has developed in order to improve targeted mitigation and preparedness strategies as well as respond to affected communities.

**Equity Case Study**
Not applicable

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

AWP – Annual Work Plan
BCP – Business Continuity Plan
BSC – Business Support Centre
CERF – Central Emergency Response Fund
CFA – Child-Friendly Approach
CMT – Country Management Team
CRC@25 – 25th Anniversary of the Convention of the Child Rights
DCT – Direct Cash Transfers
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
DS – Divisional Secretariat
ECE – Early Childhood Education
EU – European Union
EWEA – Early Warning Early Action
GAVI – Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative
GoSL – Government of Sri Lanka
GSSC – Global Shared Support Centre
HACT – Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
HCT – Humanitarian Country Team
HIV/AIDS – Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRCSL – Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
ICT – Information Communication and Technology
IMEP – Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
LTA – Long Term Agreement
MDG – Millennium Development Goal
MNCH – Maternal Newborn and Child Health
In 2014, UNICEF supported various capacity-development initiatives.

To address capacity gaps identified during review meetings, 240 public health midwives were trained on the integrated nutrition package, infant and young child feeding practices and supportive supervision. To improve targeting of nutritionally vulnerable households and create greater demand for services at the household level, community capacity was strengthened through the training of mothers’ support groups. UNICEF continued to strengthen institutional capacity to provide quality health care by supporting knowledge sharing in maternal and newborn care, developing guidelines on emergency obstetric care and training health officials on newborn care. In addition, UNICEF facilitated perinatal death audits to strengthen the collection, analysis and use of data related to the causes of neonatal deaths.

In the WASH sector, a globally tested evaluation approach was introduced to evaluate the WASH in Schools Programme and encourage better management of school WASH facilities. Further, 200 officers of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board were trained to use a web-based information system for sharing relevant technical/operational information. To promote greater knowledge sharing on WASH in emergencies, UNICEF facilitated the participation of the Ministry of Water Supply and Drainage at the Regional WASH Humanitarian Coordination Platform for South and East Asia.

UNICEF continued to build government capacity in promoting social cohesion, and in this regard, collaborated with the German Technical Cooperation Agency to support the MoE in the mapping of the roles and responsibilities of newly nominated Social Cohesion Coordinators. The results will be formally disseminated through a circular in early 2015 and will contribute to a more cohesive strategy for social cohesion initiatives. In addition, UNICEF’s ongoing advocacy led to an agreement to review the existing national policy on Education for Social Cohesion given the country context.

UNICEF also partnered with the MoH to initiate an Injury Surveillance System in 14 hospitals, which collects and analyses injury data that is fed into village-level injury prevention committees. Further, 572 government officers were trained on child injury prevention to ensure coordinated
responses at the district level, and 131 village mine action / injury prevention committees were strengthened.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

Evidence for programming and policy making continued to be a priority for UNICEF Sri Lanka.

In nutrition, to generate evidence for informed decision making and potential scale-up of pilots, UNICEF supported the MoH in documenting the role of mothers’ support groups in the North and East; reviewing the multiple micronutrients programme in 12 pilot districts; reviewing multi-sectoral nutrition activities in targeted districts; and documenting the complementary feeding programme in Hambantota District. In addition, UNICEF supported a micronutrient survey to document deficiencies among children aged 6-59 months.

In health, to assess service gaps in reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, UNICEF supported an emergency obstetric care survey, which will feed into interventions aimed at reducing the identified bottlenecks.

In child protection, UNICEF supported two critical studies to address gaps in data and information: firstly, a documentation of the current status of child care institutions and causes for institutionalisation, and secondly, an assessment of the degree and quality of female participation in social, economic and political spheres in Sri Lanka. These studies provide the evidence base required for further advocacy in these areas, as well as technical inputs for policy reforms and future programming.

To increase public awareness on child rights, UNICEF used the occasion of the CRC@25 to launch an awareness campaign through a series of high-level policy discussions. This led to a public reaffirmation of a commitment to uphold and further child rights by ministers, parliamentarians and national media, as well as the establishment of a Parliamentary Caucus for Children with a specific focus on the Children’s Act. Parliamentary leaders pledged their commitment to children’s rights at a public event on November 20 with the Minister of Child Development asking his fellow parliamentarians to sign onto an action plan for improving children’s rights realisation in 2015. Furthermore, greater dialogue with policy makers and the media, and engagement with adolescents and youth activists on issues related to online safety led to the initiation of a first-time study on online behaviour of adolescents and youth in Sri Lanka, which will contribute to informing programming in the future.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF Sri Lanka continued its efforts to build/strengthen partnership with key stakeholders, especially national and local governments and civil society.

To build capacity through partnerships, UNICEF supported Sri Lanka’s participation in two global workshops – scaling up nutrition (SUN) and stop stunting – and engaged experts and practitioners from government, civil society and professional institutions as convener of SUN. This led to a prioritisation of efforts to address malnutrition, including policy revisions, partnerships with shared nutrition goals, and mobilising resources to scale up nutrition interventions, with a focus on empowering women. In the area of stunting, action plans were developed to accelerate improvement in nutrition indicators. UNICEF also supported scientific sessions for decision makers and selected high-level health staff to foster partnerships in delivering effective nutrition interventions, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life.
UNICEF’s partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) in water safety led to a strategic collaboration with the Central Environmental Authority and the environmental think-tank International Union for Conservation of Nature, bringing a stronger environmental dimension to the water safety programme under the lead of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board.

In education, UNICEF strengthened its partnership with the child-friendly unit in the Presidential Secretariat to facilitate the country-wide roll-out of the Child-Friendly Approach (CFA) in schools. This led to the launch of the multi-sectoral CFA Action Plan in October 2014, involving nine government ministries. In the area of social cohesion, UNICEF leveraged resources from the German Technical Cooperation Agency to strengthen the capacity of the newly nominated social cohesion coordinators that are focal points in promoting social cohesion and peace education in schools.

On the occasion of the CRC@25, UNICEF, in partnership with the Centre for Peace Building, enhanced the capacity of 16 children and adolescents in reporting through video and photography. Children learned how to develop one-minute videos and take photos, and produced 13 stories that showcase child rights. These photos and videos were circulated on the UNICEF website, social media and the YouTube channel. UNICEF will build on this partnership with children during 2015 and will further engage adolescents in sharing their stories through social media channels.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

The occasion of the CRC@25 represented an opportunity to engage millennials and policy makers to act on behalf of UNICEF by initiating public discourse on rights at a sensitive time in Sri Lanka. This effort contributed to dialogue amongst children at a Sri Lanka Model UN Special Session on Children, as well as discussions in Parliament, which led to the creation of a Parliamentary Caucus for Children.

UNICEF also spurred innovation and partnership with the organisation of the first-ever Children’s Hackathon, in partnership with Microsoft, Google, the MoE and Sri Lanka’s Information Technology Agency, to showcase children’s innovative solutions to problems affecting them. Amongst the top winners were ideas to promote online safety, improve mathematics skills and increase access to psychosocial counselling, which will be reviewed by UNICEF’s Innovations Lab for possible scale up.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also shifted from one-directional sharing of facts to a two-way conversation, particularly with millennials, through its “Youth for Children” programme that increased both online and off-line engagement with youth interested in becoming activists for children. These dialogues led to the airing of views on online safety amongst youth and senior editors, as well as UNICEF’s decision to produce the first-ever research on children’s online behaviour in Sri Lanka – a subject that is receiving increasing interest from both government and civil society agencies.

Finally, UNICEF continued to raise the visibility of children’s issues with 128 articles (up from 65 in 2013) highlighting children’s issues in major media outlets. At the same time, UNICEF Sri Lanka is expanding its digital media outreach by having millennials “liking”, sharing or retweeting UNICEF’s posts and photos. This effort resulted in the number of Facebook fans jumping from 3,000 in 2013 to 12,500; the number of Twitter followers increasing from 974 to 2,502; and 772 new fans on Instagram. UNICEF also expanded its engagement from
conversations to story-telling, initiating the first ever #CRCBaton run on Instagram, which enabled 11 renowned national Instagram users to share stories and photos about children’s rights for 11 weeks, thereby expanding UNICEF’s social media outreach.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

In 2014, UNICEF promoted and facilitated South-South cooperation through knowledge exchanges and sharing of lessons learned and good practices.

The health system in Sri Lanka is considered to be one of the best models in the South East Asian region. It has shown commendable achievements in delivering the continuum of care through the life cycle approach. As part of South-South and triangular cooperation, UNICEF facilitated the hosting of two high-profile missions from Nepal and Afghanistan to learn about maternal and child health interventions in Sri Lanka. This included learning on antenatal and postnatal care services, early childhood care and development, growth monitoring, integration of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) into MNCH, maternal and perinatal death surveillance systems, well-women clinic services, the immunisation programme, national and district Health Management Information System, quality care for newborn survival and the newborn retrieval system. UNICEF provided logistical and facilitation support to the MoH to undertake the two missions, which will help the visiting teams to incorporate some of the best practices from Sri Lanka in their respective countries. In addition, as a way forward, UNICEF aims to establish a mother and newborn learning hub that facilitates South-South learning exchanges.

UNICEF also supported the GoSL to participate in the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) Inter Country Working Group (ICWG) meeting in Nepal to review the country’s progress on its 2013 commitments and to determine the key focus areas of the SACOSAN VII conference scheduled to be held in 2015 in Bangladesh. The ICWG represents the governments of the eight countries in South Asia, and provides continuity between successive SACOSAN conferences and functions as a forum for governments and partners to assist in achieving national goals on sanitation.

Identification Promotion of Innovation

UNICEF Sri Lanka explored innovative ways of working to advance progress towards results for children, especially those most disadvantaged.

In the nutrition sector, UNICEF engaged with the MoH in improving information management and flows that enable real-time monitoring and responsive programming. In this regard, UNICEF in 2014 initiated a pilot (two districts) on the use of smart phones to identify nutritionally at-risk households, collect data and report it to the relevant health officers for an analysis of the causes of undernutrition and design of appropriate interventions. In 2015, this initiative will be documented to assess the potential for scale up.

In the education sector, UNICEF provided financial and technical assistance to school development committees to initiate school-based entrepreneurial assistance projects. In total, 203 schools were covered with the formation of committees, comprising students, teachers and parents, to manage and identify the most feasible entrepreneurial project, such as school cooperative shops, pottery painting and other local manufacturing projects, based on their social and environmental context. The income generated through these projects enabled each school to establish a self-sustaining fund to support children at risk of dropping out due to financial constraints. While this community-based social protection approach improved school
In the child protection sector, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, supported the Attorney General’s Department in developing an innovative web-based case tracking system to address the long pre-trial delays in the criminal justice system. The University of Colombo’s School of Computing was contracted to develop the user-friendly electronic case tracking system to help track cases, identify bottlenecks (delay points) and analyse the time needed to process a case. The system will also allow for timely follow up with the police, judicial medical officers, government analysts and other officials. Once completed, the supervising officers will be able to generate reports that enable them to monitor the work of reviewing officers, in order to enhance their efficiency and help reduce delays.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF Sri Lanka focused on integrated programming for children and played a critical role in advocating with partners for cross-sectoral linkages.

Specifically, UNICEF played a key advocacy and technical role in promoting a multi-sectoral approach to addressing nutrition issues in the country. This was formalised through a government-led Multi-sectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MsNAP) involving multiple stakeholders to identify the proposed nutrition results and targets. Funding gaps in the MsNAP were identified and incorporated in a joint fundraising proposal by UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in consultation with the MoH and the Nutrition Secretariat. The three agencies will support selected initiatives of the MsNAP to contribute to the achievement of key results of the GoSL: (a) reduce stunting, underweight, wasting and overweight among children under five years of age; (b) reduce low birth weight and underweight/overweight among women; (c) reduce anaemia; (d) reduce food insecurity; and (e) improve access to safe WASH among households.

Further, UNICEF supported the MoH to develop a coherent and sustainable monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework to review implementation progress of the MsNAP at national, provincial, district and divisional levels and measure achievement of results. The system assists in generating real-time data for timely decision-making and implementation of corrective measures to improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable children and women.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also played a key role in establishing a divisional level inter-agency mechanism to address issues of out-of-school children in Uva and Central Provinces, made up of divisional-level government officers such as the non-formal education officer, social service officer, child rights promotion officer, women development officer and members of community-based organisations and NGOs. This inter-agency mechanism addressed issues on an individual case-by-case basis and strengthened linkages with available government services to facilitate the return of children back to school.

Service Delivery

In 2014, UNICEF continued to support direct services, products and processes that benefit the most vulnerable children.

In the health and nutrition sector, UNICEF contributed to improving access to services for children and pregnant and lactating women through the construction of 17 Gramodhaya Health Centres and Offices for Medical Officers in low coverage/resettled areas of the North and East,
benefiting 51,000 underserved families. Further, health service coverage was enhanced through the provision of critical supplies to health institutions, such as mobility support (34 motorbikes), enabling the Regional Director of Health Services office to increase service outreach and accessibility to peripheral areas.

UNICEF Sri Lanka also contributed to the provision of improved water and sanitation facilities for nearly 2,000 resettled persons in the North and East. Another 12,000 people in these areas benefitted from access to safe water and sanitation facilities in four health centres. At the school level, approximately 89,000 students (49,000 males and 40,000 females) and 4,250 teachers in 217 underserved schools in five provinces gained access to improved water sources and hand-washing facilities. Through UNICEF’s humanitarian response, 25,000 people affected by droughts gained access to safe drinking water over a three-month period as an interim measure until more sustainable solutions could be provided.

UNICEF’s continued efforts to mainstream CFA in 1,100 targeted schools resulted in over 80 per cent of schools having school development plans based on school self-assessments. In addition, more than 1,200 teacher trainees from 13 National Colleges of Education were trained through the CFA e-learning module. Some of the good practices implemented in the targeted schools related to increasing access to school and retention of children are being replicated in non-CFA schools in the targeted provinces. Further, the renovation/reconstruction of 50 schools in former conflict-affected areas ensured continued access to quality education for more than 7,500 students who had previously been studying in temporary learning centres.

In the child protection sector, UNICEF supported the Department of Social Services, Eastern Province, to develop a database on beneficiaries of income-generation assistance. The database will be operational in 2015.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

UNICEF Sri Lanka’s Country Programme employs a conceptual framework that is normatively based on international human rights standards/principles and operationally directed towards promoting and protecting human rights.

In 2014, UNICEF Sri Lanka worked jointly with other UN agencies to continue its support to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL). Specifically, UNICEF supported the establishment of a coordination mechanism between the HRCSL and Village Child Rights Monitoring Committees (VCRMCs), as well as relevant government officials, in targeted districts on issues related to child rights violations. A total of 60 VCRMCs and 195 state officials, including police officers, probation officers and local government officials, were trained on child rights protection and monitoring. In addition, UNICEF supported the HRCSL in raising awareness on child rights through the development and dissemination of child rights manuals to school authorities and children in targeted districts.

UNICEF also partnered with the MoH on the “right to health” agenda to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and address regional disparities. In this regard, UNICEF provided technical support in reviewing policies and programmes in line with the human rights based approach. UNICEF supported the Ministry in building the capacity of health officers on maternal and neonatal care, paediatric life support and perinatal death reviews as a means of addressing structural causes of the non-realisation of rights to health. Further, UNICEF supported the Ministry in conducting a study to identify the main causes and risk factors contributing to maternal deaths in order to guide future interventions based on an equity-
focused analysis.

UNICEF also supported the finalisation of the Sanitation Policy, as well as participation of key government counterparts in the Sanitation and Water for All high-level meeting, which contributed to an increase in resource allocations and a greater focus on promoting equal access to water and sanitation facilities for all. These advocacy efforts were instrumental in promoting a rights-based approach to water and sanitation, as a basic human need, and in line with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to reduce by half by 2015 the number of persons who do not have access to basic sanitation facilities.

**Gender Mainstreaming and Equality**

UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to design and implement programmes that ensured equal opportunities for men, women, girls and boys and addressed issues of gender inequality.

In the health and nutrition sector, UNICEF promoted an evidence-based and gender-responsive approach to planning at both the national and district levels. These efforts involved revisions to the National Health Policy to better integrate gender and equity concerns, resulting in a political commitment to accelerate the reduction of stunting with a focus on the most disadvantaged girls and boys. In addition, surveys, such as the micronutrient survey, collected sex-disaggregated data to highlight gender considerations that need to be addressed in future programming.

In addition, the national study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Behaviour in WASH, including menstrual hygiene management in schools, collected sex-disaggregated data against all critical indicators. The study results will be used to improve WASH facilities in schools taking into consideration the interests, needs and priorities of both girls and boys, specifically related to menstrual hygiene management. A participatory Menstrual Hygiene Management Kit was developed in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Education, Zonal Department of Education and experts from NGOs. This Kit will be field-tested in a variety of contexts with boys and girls, and male and female teachers. The findings will be documented and shared at the upcoming WASH in Schools International Conference in Sri Lanka.

In the area of child protection, UNICEF, together with the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), facilitated discussions with experts to obtain inputs for proposed amendments to the Vagrants Ordinance. The Ordinance is an archaic law and is often used to harass marginalised women, especially sex workers. The recent amendments drafted by the Ministry of Justice aimed to improve the law, making it gender neutral. However, the revised version still allowed for loopholes that could be misused against women. These issues were raised with the Gender Based Violence forum that took the lead in advocating with the Ministry for further improvements and provisions that promotes equality. This action resulted in the Ministry proposing additional amendments, which are now being shared for wider consultation with relevant stakeholders.

**Environmental Sustainability**

Protection of the environment and promotion of environmental sustainability is increasingly becoming a key area of focus, including DRR.

In the health sector, 50 staff were trained on the Global Nutrition Emergency Module that covered targeting of the vulnerable; equitable distribution of food aid; nutrition surveillance as part of early warning; and assessing the prevalence of acute and severe malnutrition. Through this training, service providers enhanced their capacity to better respond to nutritional needs that arise during an emergency.
UNICEF established strategic partnerships with environmental stakeholders to advocate for water catchment protection as a key priority intervention within water safety planning, resulting in an agreement to establish a multi-stakeholder mechanism for water catchment protection. In addition, a WASH Needs and Vulnerability Assessment toolkit was developed with support from UNICEF to help standardise WASH assessments amongst various stakeholders during key disasters. The toolkit provides concise, but essential, information on disaster risks and WASH-specific vulnerabilities, including the mechanism to assess, prepare, mitigate and respond to disasters.

Through the CFA at the school level, community understanding of the importance of a conducive and eco-friendly school environment for children was enhanced, while taking into account socio-economic circumstances. Collective action taken by communities in UNICEF’s targeted schools, in line with school self-assessments and school development plans, included increasing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities, improving garbage dumping practices and enhancing the protective school environment. These elements also helped to improve hygiene practices and prevent communicable diseases among children in schools.

**Effective Leadership**

The Country Management Team (CMT) met 10 times in 2014. The process and management of office restructuring to meet the demands of the country context and address changes in the office fundraising status was a CMT priority. CMT approved and regularly reviewed a process that led to internal reflections, ROSA consultations, partner consultations, a Strategic Moment of Reflection and an MTR at the end of year two of the cycle. Supported by ROSA, the MTR was well attended by government at high levels and endorsed significant shifts in programme directions for 2015-2017.

The CMT used standard and local office and programme management indicators to undertake three reviews during the year, with the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) being reviewed twice. These processes led to some proposed changes to what will be measured in 2015. Equally, UNICEF Sri Lanka continues to work on how to manage accountabilities for programme results across zone offices, sections and the Colombo Office. Lessons will be used to redefine this in January 2015.

Biannual annual work plans (AWPs) were ambitious in the country context, but adjustments and discussions lowered expectations with counterparts. Fund distributions through Treasury and provincial mechanisms were problematic. In-depth reviews of bottlenecks and concerns about the harmonised approach to cash transfers (HACT) resulted in proposed changes to modalities for managing how UNICEF funds are accounted for, giving more accountability to higher-level civil servants than before.

Programme risks were assessed through quality assurance mechanisms including spot checks and discussion of the complex political operating environment through CMT and the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) as well as in programme meetings. Major risks were considered and mitigated for through regular communication and advocacy. The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was updated, though not comprehensively, in the year as the situation changed and Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) had some updates. Operational risks were identified and an accounts company brought in to assess systems weaknesses and potential misuse/abuse. This was followed up locally with strengthening of systems and at Headquarters. The experience
encouraged the UNICEF Country Office to use the MTR to undertake a comprehensive exercise that reviews risk management, the BCP and emergency preparation as a package in February 2015. As this will be an innovative approach, it will be documented closely for lessons.

The year saw a mail poll and a Programme Budget Review (PBR) submission, which aimed to “right-size” the office using vacancies and redeployment opportunities and the establishment of essential posts. Preparation for a post-MTR January 2015 mail poll also took place. In all instances systems were put into place to ensure programme results wherever possible in this challenging transition environment. In total, the office organogram changed from 110 at the end of 2013 to 65 in March 2015. Retreats, change management discussions, good SA engagement, staff-counsellor support and coaching helped make these processes relatively smooth.

Finally UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to contribute Operations and Programme staff to L3 emergencies. This is an initial drain on the office, but a rich experience for those who fill gaps in the office and for those who move to L3 situations for short- or longer-term periods.

**Financial Resources Management**

UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to closely monitor the outstanding Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) over nine months through a focused and proactive approach; as at 31 December, 1.37 per cent of all DCTs were outstanding over nine months. In 2014, a HACT Protocol was developed and reporting formats and processes were further simplified. UNICEF continued to work closely with the UN Excom agencies on harmonising macro- and micro-assessments and financial spot checks. On-sight programme and financial monitoring were streamlined and refresher training on HACT was conducted for implementing partners. UNICEF is also working towards an automated database for HACT implementation to streamline the existing processes and ensure a systematic approach to fund transfers.

The Business Support Centre (BSC), Push&Track and other automated systems were fully operational with enhanced features to support regional requirements. During the year, the Operations team visited the Batticaloa and Kilinochchi field offices to review and further strengthen operation-related work processes and provide guidance on operating policies and procedures. Given the limited budget for operating expenditure in 2015, UNICEF Sri Lanka will relocate its head office in Colombo, which, it is envisaged, will result in substantial savings.

Interim accounts closure was completed on time, and ledger account reconciliations were carried out monthly to ensure no long outstanding unreconciled amounts. Bank reconciliations were completed on time with no long outstanding unreconciled items. The Finance section was able to consistently ensure the availability of adequate levels of funding/cash for both programme activities and operating expenses, whilst securing the most competitive rates from the market. With close monitoring of the Support Budget, UNICEF achieved a utilisation rate of 99.9 per cent.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to maintain close relationships with donors locally, organising progress updates, briefing meetings and facilitating field missions to visit UNICEF programmes. This, along with dedicated fundraising efforts, resulted in the mobilisation of 34 per cent of the planned OR funding for 2014. Funding constraints was experienced during 2014, as the majority of the funding was earmarked for specific downstream service delivery in one large multi-agency EU project. Thus, several activities planned for 2014 remained unfunded.
Given the rapidly changing country context and declining donor funding, UNICEF Sri Lanka is unlikely to raise the approximately $US 56 million originally planned for the 2013-2017 Country Programme. As of December 2014, the Office had raised approximately 50 per cent of the total budget required until 2017, leaving a funding gap of $US 28.49 million. However, as noted above, the majority of this funding is specifically earmarked and does not cover more upstream planned interventions.

Post-MTR, UNICEF needs to commit sufficient time to rework the resource mobilisation strategy with an increased focus on sustained engagement with a smaller set of donors and forging new partnerships with emerging public and private sector allies for children.

UNICEF Sri Lanka has a comprehensive funds-monitoring system with specific tracking tools for close monitoring of grant contributions, allocations and utilisation. The Country Office ensured 99 per cent utilisation of all funds that expired during the year and avoided any unnecessary grant extensions. The internal control mechanism to monitor the timeliness and quality of donor reports resulted in all donor reports meeting UNICEF reporting standards and being submitted on time. This was identified as good practice in the region, and the experience was shared with other countries of South Asia.

Feedback from donors on the reports was positive and served as an opportunity for further engagement.

**Evaluation**

The IMEP for 2014 was drafted at the beginning of the year in consultation with partners, and was subsequently approved by the CMT. The CMT reviewed the IMEP mid-year to identify new studies that had to be included due to emerging opportunities and priorities, and others that would need to be postponed based on a changed country/sector context or funding constraints. The CMT reviewed the IMEP again at the end of the year and noted an improved rate of completion, but also a high number of new components, which indicated that better forward planning should be considered in 2015.

In 2014, no new programme evaluations were conducted, however, a 2013 Final School Construction Evaluation was completed with a timely management response and was rated well by the Evaluation Office in New York. The Terms of Reference and consultant contracts were developed and agreed for a 2015 evaluation of the Child-Friendly School Approach (CFSA). This will feed into a national CFSA policy roll out in 2015.

Several critical studies were conducted; two have final reports and have been included under the evaluations and research section of the annual report. The remainder of the studies will be reported on in 2015 once the final reports have been received. Critical studies include an analysis of data gaps on the situation for children, which will feed into a comprehensive policy-focused Situation Analysis in 2015 and was used as a basis of MTR planning. UNICEF supported the production of the third MDG Report in Sri Lanka and its simplification into infographics for young people providing up-to-date knowledge on the country situation and development gaps.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

As part of the initiative to rationalise operating costs and promote greater efficiency, a detailed review of overhead costs was carried out in early 2014, resulting in the consolidation and
reorganisation of some of the ancillary services, such as messenger services, cleaning services and office maintenance. With the downsizing of the office from 2015, the decision to relocate to smaller and more centrally located premises in 2015 is expected to result in substantial cost savings in rent, office maintenance, electricity and water. Improvements to the new office building will be based on ‘greening initiatives’, thereby contributing to further savings in overhead expenditure.

The in-house systems developed, including Push&Track, Travel2Field, and monitoring Programme Cooperation Agreements / Small Scale Funding Agreements and fuel consumption, are fully operational and continue to contribute to efficiency gains in transaction processing. For example, efficiency gains were achieved by simplifying the business process related to local travel, hence limiting the volume of Travel Authorisations (TAs) in VISION and improving the processing time and ability to monitor field activities.

UNICEF Sri Lanka conducted a comprehensive market survey covering key districts in the Northern Province to identify potential suppliers with whom UNICEF could establish Long Term Agreements (LTAs). Additionally, new LTAs were also established for the Colombo office and the Batticaloa field office to secure the best rates and services. To further promote efficiency gains, UNICEF actively participated in the joint-UN procurement process to harmonise common procurement and took the lead in establishing common LTAs across agencies.

UNICEF Sri Lanka made adjustments to its structure in the light of the establishment of the Global Shared Support Centre (GSSC). Since all payments for the Colombo Office and the zone offices are centralised with the BSC, and all staff are using Push&Track as a document management system, the switch to GSSC is expected to be smooth.

**Supply Management**

The total value of procurement for the UNICEF Sri Lanka programme in 2014 was US$ 3.6 million, of which local procurement amounted to US$ 1.7 million, while the remainder was through offshore procurement.

In 2014, supply management focused on procuring goods and services in support of programme interventions, and no major issues were reported regarding the quality and timeliness of supplies during the year. This was achieved through the annual supply-planning process, as well as establishment of LTAs. In 2014, 48 new LTAs were established for regularly used supplies and services simplifying administrative processes and reducing transaction costs and time. In addition, UNICEF actively participated in the joint-UN procurement process to harmonise common procurement, and took the lead in establishing a common LTA for security services. The office had gradually scaled down its warehouse capacity over the years by improving its direct-delivery strategy and closed down the warehouse at the end of 2014.

As part of procurement services, UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to provide in-country support for the procurement of vaccines through the Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative (GAVI) on behalf of the MoH. The 2014 procurement of vaccines totalled US$ 341,531.07. Vaccine refrigerators were also procured by the UNICEF Supply Division for the cold chain system restructuring project under the MoH. Additionally, the MoH requested support in procuring nutrition supplies (multiple micronutrients and BP100) to address shortfalls in 2014. The advisory body on local procurement – the Contracts Review Committee (CRC) – met 19 times to review 46 procurement-related cases.
Security for Staff and Premises

All critical security issues were addressed satisfactorily in 2014. UNICEF Sri Lanka took specific measures on staff safety by ensuring that selected key staff had training in first aid and that, at any given time, a certain number of first aid trained staff were available. In addition, essential first aid items were made available on each office floor and in the UNICEF vehicles. The office is also accessible, with a handicap ramp from the car park to the inside of the office, an accessible bathroom on the ground floor, and a wheelchair that is available as required.

In terms of other safety and security measures, the office has two well-positioned means of escape to cover both sides of the building in the event of an emergency, a state-of-the-art smoke detector and fire alarm system, fire trigger switch, fire hose reels on each floor, extinguishers for water and electrical fires located at all crucial locations of the building, demarcated assembly points, luminous emergency exit signs, safe room, an automatic gas suppression system (protecting the network servers in the event of overheating/fire), close circuit cameras (with viewing screen and recording capability) on all perimeter walls, and a warden system, both for fires within the building and an out-of-office emergency. In addition, office guards have received regular training by their security company experts/UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS)/staff overseeing their day-to-day activities.

Staff travelling to areas that require security clearance must obtain such clearance prior to receiving their TA and are required to travel in a Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS)-compliant vehicle. Additionally, staff movements during a mission will be reported and checked, via cell phone, until the staff member reaches the destination.

Human Resources

Within the context of a country transitioning from post-conflict to middle-income development, and decreasing funding from donors, UNICEF Sri Lanka is reviewing its staffing structure to maximise its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as make the best use of the limited available resources. In this context, innovation and a results-based approach have an increased importance to both programme and operations. In this process of downsizing the office, a participatory approach was adopted and information was shared with all staff through virtual and face-to-face meetings and teleconferences involving senior management, human resources and the staff association. UNICEF strived to retain technically competent staff and mitigated the number of staff affected by using lateral movements where possible. Key technical positions were advertised broadly to attract competent candidates, though the Office continued to face challenges in attracting qualified female candidates for national professional posts. The gender ratio for National Professional staff is currently 37 per cent female and 63 per cent male. In order to improve the gender balance, professional posts were re-advertised to attract female candidates, which did cause some delays in filling critical posts.

Staff learning and development initiatives in 2014 reflected the shift to more upstream policy and programming work. The 2014 Learning and Training Plan focused on developing the skills, knowledge and competencies required for implementing the identified priorities for the year. Five country-level training and learning events were implemented on executive coaching; competency-based interview skills; programme planning procedures; dynamic leadership certificate programme; and staff entitlements. UNICEF Sri Lanka also supported four individual learning requests related to advances in social norms and implications for programming and management development. Staff were also encouraged to take advantage of the soft skills portal and follow UNICEF e-learning courses for professional development. In addition, staff missions to other Country Offices were supported, which provided an opportunity for staff to
expand the depth and breadth of their technical expertise and experience.

Performance management was further strengthened at all levels. A three-phase participatory performance management approach emphasising regular and honest performance discussions with positive and constructive feedback was conducted for all staff. The Office had a 100 per cent compliance rate for 2013 (as of 31 March 2014) and 2014 performance reviews (as of 30 April 2014).

Staff well-being continued to be a priority for 2014, particularly during the change management process, and counselling services were made available for all staff through group and individual sessions. The Office also went on an all-staff three-day retreat in March to discuss the upcoming MTR and Annual Management Plan processes, as well as engage in team-building activities. The Office further enhanced staff well-being by promoting work-life balance through the use of flexible work arrangements. UNICEF Sri Lanka is also compliant with the minimum standards on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in the workplace. In 2014, staff were encouraged by the staff association and the Representative to actively participate in the 2014 Global Staff Survey.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

The Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Unit played a key role in providing innovative business solutions and reliable and secure ICT infrastructure for the efficient and effective implementation of programme functions. This includes the Office’s migration to Office 365 in May 2014, which, together with One drive, provides greater mobility and accessibility to staff. In addition, the Lync software was widely used for training and conferencing activities, thus saving both staff time and travel-related costs. In December 2014, the ICT Unit implemented a cost-effective solution for Internet connectivity, and the Office is now getting doublet the bandwidth for the same cost.

The ICT Unit also initiated innovative solutions of open source and mobile technologies to address the needs of programme sections and partners. This included customisation and adapting of existing applications and developing new applications and tools. Research on innovations was conducted to identify applications already developed by UNICEF, other UN agencies, private sector and academia, and to evaluate the feasibility of adapting them to the Sri Lankan context.

In order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in operations, a Travel2Field application was developed to manage local travel, thus reducing processing time and costs. Another system application, Push&Track, a request management application developed by Sri Lanka ICT for BSC operations, gained global attention. The Efficiency and Effectiveness Working Group on Business Transaction Continuity recommended the adaptation of this application for global use. In addition, the change management unit in ITSS evaluated the possibility of using Push&Track for the Shared Services Centre operations. Currently, 882 UNICEF staff members from countries in the region are using the two systems, which had handled 16,509 requests as of 15 December 2014.
ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 By 2017 improved quality social services are available and utilised, so disparities and inequalities are reduced in health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, water, sanitation, education, and child protection

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, UNICEF continued to contribute towards scaling up nutrition activities in the country under the MsNAP. This included screening of vulnerable households; enhancing the monitoring system; strengthening coordination mechanisms; and engaging communities in nutrition interventions. To further improve infant and young child feeding practices at community and household levels, UNICEF continued to promote innovative approaches that empowered nutritionally vulnerable communities, such as through mothers’ support groups. Additionally, UNICEF supported the conduct of a micronutrient survey to identify the causes of micronutrient deficiencies and develop effective interventions. As UNICEF transitions towards a more policy-oriented focus, emphasis was placed on assessing/documenting pilots, such as the mothers’ support groups, as well as multi-sectoral nutrition activities and complementary feeding. The results of these assessments fed into policy and programmatic recommendations to guide policy makers in scaling up such programmes in nutritionally vulnerable districts. UNICEF also played a key role in launching country-specific standards in early childhood care and development, complemented by the finalisation of the ECE Policy in 2014. The policy lays the foundation for developing ECE standards, pre-school teacher development systems and quality assurance systems.

To improve infant mortality rates, UNICEF focused on improving care during the neonatal period, a time of extreme vulnerability that accounts for 60 per cent of infant deaths. This included the training of paediatric health staff on life support facilities, as well as the conduct of perinatal death reviews, covering the period from 28 weeks of gestation to 28 days of life, in 66 hospitals to identify the underlying causes of newborn deaths and address gaps in services. The key findings of the reviews were shared with relevant stakeholders to put into place mechanisms that will address the causes of preventable newborn deaths. Overall, however, Sri Lanka has low levels of infant/child/maternal mortality due to a relatively high quality of healthcare. Given that the health system in Sri Lanka is considered to be a good model in the region, UNICEF supported the government in hosting two missions to promote South-South collaboration and learning on maternal and child health. This will be a key area of focus in the future as UNICEF promotes Sri Lanka as a mother and newborn learning hub.

In the WASH sector, to mainstream an equity focus in programming, UNICEF facilitated government participation in the Sanitation and Water for All Global Forum. UNICEF also played a key role in bringing together the Central Environmental Authority and the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWS&DB) to expand water safety planning to include catchment protection and involvement of multiple stakeholders. In the sanitation sector, UNICEF provided technical inputs to finalise the much-awaited Sanitation Policy, while supporting the government in following up on its commitments stemming from SACOSAN. In 2014, the Ministry of Water Supply and Drainage took key actions to raise the profile of the community water sub-sector with the establishment of a dedicated Community Water Services Department. UNICEF complemented these efforts by supporting the Rural Water Section of the NWS&DB to establish Community Forums in four districts. On the supply side, the government initiated several major
water schemes particularly targeting resettled communities and areas prone to water quality deterioration in the Northern Province, with support from UNICEF in mapping vulnerable areas. Government authorities also continued to improve WASH coverage in schools, with support from UNICEF in five provinces.

In the education sector, UNICEF continued to support the MoE in mainstreaming and scaling up the CFA, with a focus on primary schools. In this regard, a multi-sectoral action plan was launched in October 2014 to accelerate progress towards transforming all primary schools into child-friendly schools by 2016. UNICEF also collaborated with the National Institute of Education and the MoE to gradually introduce a more child-centred and inclusive approach to teaching and learning in targeted schools through teacher training manuals for grades one to four, a toolkit on inclusive teaching methods and teacher training. Through UNICEF’s support at the school level, more than 80 per cent of the 1,100 targeted schools conducted school self-assessments and developed school development plans in line with the CFA. School-level CFA initiatives aimed at increasing access to and retention in school, such as catchment-area mapping and school-attendance committees, were identified as good practices and are gradually being adopted in non-CFA schools in the targeted provinces.

UNICEF also worked in partnership with the Ministry and Department of Social Services to establish/strengthen Social Care Units through which more coordinated, multi-sectoral and effective responses could be provided for vulnerable families in targeted provinces. The provision of Income Generation Assistance enhanced the capacity of the most vulnerable families, particularly women-headed families, to improve their living conditions, reduce risks of malnutrition, ensure regular school attendance, prevent institutionalisation and increase their care and protection of children. UNICEF also supported the capacity building of social protection officers to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to facilitate effective social protection services, with particular emphasis on better identification and targeting of the most vulnerable children and their families. In 2014, UNICEF also continued to support child injury prevention programmes, particularly related to explosive remnants of war (ERW), which could be attributed to a 41 per cent reduction in mine/ERW incidents and a 38 per cent reduction in casualties in 2014 compared to 2012 (baseline year).

OUTPUT 1: By 2017 nutrition and care services are accessed by at least 90 per cent of families with children or pregnant and lactating mothers in underserved areas to reduce under-nutrition through multi-sectoral efforts

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Based on the MsNAP to reduce maternal and child malnutrition, UNICEF identified the most nutritionally vulnerable districts using as criteria their performance against critical nutrition indicators, namely stunting, wasting and underweight. UNICEF supported targeted interventions under the MsNAP, including training health and non-health staff on this plan to facilitate its roll-out. Additionally, under this action plan, UNICEF contributed to the launch of a national strategy to accelerate progress in reducing the prevalence of low birth weight.

To further strengthen the quality of nutrition interventions, particularly nutrition counselling for pregnant women and during complementary feeding, UNICEF built the capacity of health service providers on infant and young child feeding practices, the Integrated Nutrition Package and communication skills. UNICEF provided technical assistance to develop an Integrated Young Child Feeding Strategy for Sri Lanka and a related Action Plan to streamline interventions in this area. UNICEF also supported mothers’ support groups engaged in maternal
and child nutrition to improve access to nutrition services for the most vulnerable communities. Mothers’ support group continue to play a key role in establishing linkages with midwives for improved targeting of the most nutritionally vulnerable households and developing interventions that could support these families.

UNICEF facilitated Sri Lanka’s participation in two global workshops on ‘scale up nutrition’ and ‘stop stunting’, with the focus on reporting on the country’s achievements and sharing lessons learnt. As a result of the ‘stop stunting’ workshop, an action plan to address country-specific stunting issues was developed.

UNICEF partnered with the MoH in disseminating the results of the micronutrient survey, including discussions to determine the feasibility of fortifying staple food items to control anaemia. Further advocacy and multi-sector partnerships in this area were achieved through the celebration of nutrition month to create awareness on the importance of iron-rich foods, as well as promote good practices, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life.

UNICEF supported the piloting of the multiple micronutrient programmes in 12 priority districts to address micronutrient deficiencies among children aged 6-24 months. Assessment of this pilot programme and the one on mothers’ support groups were conducted to guide policy makers on the potential of scaling up in other nutritionally vulnerable districts. UNICEF also contributed to the treatment of severely acute malnourished children, reaching around 50 per cent of identified children.

**OUTPUT 2:** By 2017 improved quality health care and HIV/AIDS services have improved early childhood care and development and reduced infant mortality in at least 80 per cent of underserved areas

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
To enhance the quality of health care, UNICEF continued to be a close partner of the MoH and other key health institutions, and played a key technical role in the following: two conferences on maternal and newborn care; 10 progress reviews on maternal death audits; development of a technical guideline on Emergency Obstetric Care (EMOC); and seven training sessions on newborn care and neonatal/paediatric life support. UNICEF also supported the launching of an EMOC survey to assess service gaps in reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, the findings of which are being shared with relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, health workers and academics. Based on survey findings, the MoH is streamlining interventions that aim to reduce service gaps and minimise bottlenecks.

UNICEF supported a survey to assess coverage of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) of children under five years of age in the Northern Province. This survey validated data from routine reports, as well as generated information on the status of immunisation coverage in former conflict-affected areas. To sustain current coverage rates, particularly related to polio, UNICEF supported the printing of awareness materials for broad dissemination.

Through continued advocacy, PMTCT of HIV, including antenatal screening for HIV, was integrated into routine maternal and child health services. UNICEF supported the scale up of the PMTCT programme in all 25 districts through the dissemination of guidelines and capacity building of 100 health staff. HIV/AIDS awareness programmes were also conducted among the key affected adolescents.
In early childhood development (ECD), UNICEF advocated with relevant policy makers and stakeholders for quality improvements in maternal and child health care services. UNICEF continued to partner with the Family Health Bureau in the implementation of ECD standards within health centres in all districts and the scale up of related interventions. This initiative included the use of such standards in the screening of children aged 0-5 years by field health workers to detect early development delays and initiate appropriate stimulation interventions or facilitate referrals where necessary.

To improve access to adequate health and nutrition services, in particular for children and pregnant and lactating women, 17 Gramodhaya Health Centres and Offices for Medical Officers of Health were constructed in low-coverage/resettled areas of the North and East. In addition, equipment was provided to selected health institutions to facilitate improved data collection and dissemination.

**OUTPUT 3:** By 2017 increased national and subnational capacity to provide access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities for at least 80 per cent of the communities, schools and health facilities in targeted underserved areas

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF continued to play a key advocacy role through its support to the Ministry of Water Supply and Drainage in following up on commitments made at the 5th SACOSAN and the Sanitation and Water for All high-level meeting. UNICEF also provided technical inputs into Sri Lanka's first sanitation policy that establishes a regulatory and standards-based platform for sanitation as a stand-alone sector.

In the water sector, UNICEF’s advocacy on the protection of water catchment areas, within the broader water safety framework, led to the design of a pilot catchment protection programme by the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWS&DB) for a small-scale water supply scheme. More than 100 stakeholders, representing community members, administrators, industry owners and multi-disciplinary professionals, were engaged through this pilot. At the community level, UNICEF supported the NWS&DB to raise the profile of community participation in water supply, in line with the 3rd International Conference on Community and Water Services, by strengthening community-level institutional frameworks in four districts and engaging over 2,000 community members.

In partnership with the MoE, WASH in Schools continued as a flagship programme promoting best practices among children and young people, as well as the broader community. Through UNICEF’s support to child-friendly infrastructure development in 275 underserved schools in five provinces, approximately 110,000 students (60,000 males and 50,000 females) and 5,400 teachers gained access to improved latrines, water sources and hand washing facilities. Additionally, more than 50,000 students took part in the Global Hand Washing Day promoting hand washing with soap. To address qualitative data gaps, the first-ever national study on the knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours of school communities on WASH was conducted amongst 10,000 students in 400 schools island-wide. This resulted in a strong knowledge base for future planning and programming in this area.

In the former conflict-affected areas of the North and East, nearly 5,800 resettled persons gained access to improved water sources and another 1,700 persons to improved sanitation. UNICEF also supported the provision of safe water and sanitation in eight health centres benefitting nearly 12,000 people. As part of UNICEF’s disaster response, over 25,000
vulnerable persons in five drought-affected districts received access to safe water for a three-month period as an interim life-saving measure. Additionally, UNICEF contributed to the development of a customised tool to assess WASH needs and vulnerabilities as part of DRR efforts.

OUTPUT 4: By 2017 increase pre-primary enrolment and completion of grade nine in underperforming districts to reduce inequalities and improve learning outcomes

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF supported the MoE in developing an ECE policy (pending Cabinet approval) outlining national standards for curricula, teacher training, monitoring and funding modalities. In addition, UNICEF provided technical inputs in the development and pilot testing of a rapid assessment school readiness toolkit for children entering grade one. Once finalised, this toolkit will be used by teachers to adapt teaching approaches to individual learning styles. To further promote quality ECE, UNICEF worked with provincial government authorities to establish divisional level pre-school networks and ECE steering committees in the Eastern and Northern Provinces respectively. In Uva and Central Provinces, UNICEF supported the establishment of five model pre-schools and training of over 160 pre-school teachers to promote standardisation in services.

In the area of social cohesion, UNICEF’s ongoing partnership with the MoE and German International Cooperation (GIZ) resulted in an agreement to review the implementation status of the National Policy on Education for Social Cohesion and Peace. UNICEF collaborated with GIZ and the MoE in defining the roles and responsibilities of recently nominated Social Cohesion Coordinators at provincial/zonal levels to act as focal points; these will be formalised through a government circular in 2015. The curriculum of ‘Life Competencies and Civic Education’ for lower-secondary and ‘Citizenship Education and Governance’ for upper-secondary grades was revised and the civic education curriculum integrates social cohesion concepts. At the school level, UNICEF enhanced the capacity of 83 in-service advisors and 71 principals in integrating social cohesion concepts into teaching/learning activities.

UNICEF’s continued advocacy with the MoE for a policy on DRR in Education led to an agreement to initiate a policy dialogue in 2015, with support from a national steering committee. At the provincial level, UNICEF, GIZ and Save the Children built the capacity of Disaster Safety Education focal persons, and incorporated DRR into more than 900 school development plans island-wide. To facilitate implementation of the school-level plans, 300 principals were trained on emergency preparedness/response.

UNICEF supported the development of a national Action Plan on Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in line with the OOSC study recommendations. As part of this, school communities were engaged in catchment area mapping, tracking and re-integrating OOSC back into school. The establishment of district/divisional level fora to address the root causes of drop outs using a multi-sectoral approach resulted in approximately 31 per cent of identified OOSC (4,241) being reintegrated back into school in the UNICEF-targeted provinces.

OUTPUT 5: By 2017 access to quality care and social welfare services is improved in underserved areas to prevent, protect and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and injuries of women and children, as well as family separation due to violence, neglect and disaster

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, UNICEF continued to support the deinstitutionalisation programme under the Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS) in the Northern, Eastern, Uva and
Central Provinces. Through this programme, UNICEF supported the FIT Persons allowance scheme – legal fostering through a court order for children separated/at high risk of separation from their families – by providing allowances and psychosocial support to selected families. This initiative is seen to have contributed to the prevention of family separation and reunification of 1,269 institutionalised children (536 boys, 733 girls) with their family/extended family. UNICEF further collaborated with the DPCCS Northern Province in tracing and reunifying missing persons, particularly children. In addition to existing Family Tracing and Reunification Units, a Unit was established in Batticaloa District in the Eastern Province. In 2014, case reviews were conducted for 140 missing children (69 boys, 71 girls) resulting in the reunification of 11 children with their families and matching of 54 cases. To better track these vulnerable children, UNICEF is working with the Department to develop databases on children in institutions and ongoing tracing and reunification efforts.

To enhance the capacities of vulnerable families to care for, protect and educate their children, UNICEF continued to engage with the Ministry and Provincial Departments of Social Services in implementing family support programmes. These programmes assisted approximately 50,500 vulnerable families with cash grants for the purpose of income generation, education assistance and medical treatment, as well as access to psychosocial services. To facilitate such assistance, UNICEF supported the capacity building of 375 child protection officials from the targeted provinces on case management, counselling, family tracing and reunification. At the community level, UNICEF strengthened Village Child Rights Monitoring Committees in the Eastern, Northern and Uva Provinces reaching more than 13,000 children and their families through awareness-raising on child protection issues, child participation initiatives and referral services.

In partnership with national NGOs and the Humanitarian Demining Unit, 280,000 community members, including 28,412 school children, benefitted from mine risk education and child injury prevention education. This resulted in improved mine-safe behaviour as reflected by a 15 per cent increase in community reporting on explosive devices compared to 2013. It also contributed to a 41 per cent reduction in incidents and a 38 per cent reduction in causalities compared to 2013. In addition, 21 landmine and safety briefings were conducted for 1,500 officers from government authorities, international/national NGOs and the UN operating in mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) risk areas.

OUTCOME 2 By 2017 improved quality social services are available and utilised, so disparities and inequalities are reduced in child protection

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Justice to develop and establish a web-based case tracking system at the Attorney General's Department that enables the tracking of all child abuse cases and ongoing follow up with the police, judicial medical officers, government analysts and other officials. Within the Department itself, the web-based system enables those that supervise cases to generate reports that help them monitor the status of the case and follow up with the respective officers in order to enhance efficiency and reduce delays.

UNICEF continued to advocate for the establishment of child-sensitive courts and police procedures that give primary consideration to a child’s right to protection in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards, guidelines and laws. In addition, ongoing support to capacity building of officers from the juvenile justice system, such as magistrates, court staff, mediation trainers and family counsellors attached to the court,
contributed to a better understanding of how children experience the legal process and the key role court staff can play in facilitating child-friendly court procedures for children in the court system. It is encouraging to note that compared to the previous year, when no referrals took place, children's cases on minor offences were being referred to local Mediation Boards in 2014, thereby avoiding long criminal procedures through the court system and a criminal record.

The UNICEF-supported tracer study on employability after vocational training amongst a sample of 300 trainees from all four districts collected data on trainees; assessed the viability, quality, relevance and effectiveness of the training; and evaluated employability within and outside their vocation. Study findings indicated that due to delays in receiving the state certificate, only 40 per cent of those sampled were employed in their selected trade, and from those employed in all trades, 48 per cent were contributing 80-100 per cent of their earned income toward family support, with just 4 per cent not making any contributions. Overall, the study indicated that the training courses achieved their key objectives of enabling employment/employment potential in trained trades, with those employed generating an income, a majority of who are making contributions toward family support. The study further indicated that vocational training programmes, in general, sparked interest across all districts. It was also observed that certain vocational courses, such as plumbing and electrical works, had employment potential outside of the country. Among married trainees who utilised their earnings for their own family unit, including their children if any, some noted they made contributions toward the care of their parents, particularly in cases of illness and family emergencies.

OUTPUT 1: By 2017 justice system for children is strengthened

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF supported the development of a policy framework to amend the Penal Code to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility. An expert consultation led to a recommendation to increase the minimum age from eight to 12 years, and a new bill was drafted by the Ministry of Justice and shared with key stakeholders. In relation to other key pieces of child legislation, UNICEF technically supported the drafting of amendments to the Children and Young Person’s Ordinance (CYPO) to inter alia increase the protection of children from 16 to 18 years. A key challenge was agreement between the two key Ministries involved – Ministries of Child Development and Women’s Affairs and Justice – on the provisions of the CYPO. In addition, amendments to the Orphanage Ordinance were drafted in line with international standards on alternative care, and were reviewed by the Attorney General’s Department and Provincial Probation Commissioners.

To further strengthen the justice system for children, UNICEF advocated with the Ministry of Justice to institutionalise a system that would provide training of newly appointed Junior Magistrates. As an initial step, nine Junior Magistrates were trained on the handling of child abuse cases in a child-friendly and gender-sensitive manner. In addition, 353 selected court staff from the Northern Province and Colombo District received similar training.

As part of an initiative to address the long pre-trial delays in the criminal justice system, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Justice in supporting the Attorney General’s Department to develop an innovative web-based case tracking system to track child abuse cases, identify bottlenecks, and analyse the time spent in processing a case. The University of Colombo was contracted to develop this user-friendly case tracking system, which will be completed by March 2015. To address the issue of the backlog of child abuse cases, UNICEF supported the hiring of temporary lawyers and recruitment of seven full-time attorneys to work with the Attorney...
General’s Department, which resulted in the expedited processing of 3,592 backlog cases between January and July 2014. Of these, 1,222 cases (34 per cent) were concluded. UNICEF also promoted alternatives to detention, including diversion models for juvenile offenders and restorative justice that emphasises repairing the harm caused or revealed by criminal behaviour. This included the training of 68 key Ministry of Justice officials on how to respond to child offenders of petty theft using strategies of diversion.

OUTPUT 2: By 2017 young people, especially in vulnerable areas, are empowered and have access to quality youth-friendly services for information and skills to protect themselves against violence, abuse, exploitation and injuries and to actively participate in society

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development and the National Youth Services Council to promote the development and empowerment of youth and adolescents by: i) increasing access to quality vocational training; ii) enhancing life skills; and iii) empowering youth to be informed decision makers and active participants in the development of their communities.

With UNICEF’s support, 807 youth living in state children’s homes in Uva and Central Provinces received life skills education and vocational training as a means of facilitating their reintegration back into their community and enhancing their ability to earn an income. Another 1,327 youth (670 boys, 657 girls) living in former conflict-affected areas in the North and East took such training, thereby increasing their chances of gaining suitable employment in a highly competitive and limited job market. Of these trained young people, 86 per cent received job placements. A tracer study conducted to follow up on these students reveals that of the total 300 trainees sampled across all four districts, 40 per cent (120) were employed in their trained trades, with 47 per cent from the Northern region and 36 per cent from the Eastern region. Although the majority of the trainees did not report high earnings, averaging between US$ 61 and US$ 69 per month, the data shows that they were making contributions toward family support. In the North, East and Uva Provinces, an additional 9,445 (3,926 boys, 5,519 girls) received life skills training with post-assessments indicating that 95 per cent of learning objectives were achieved.

UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development in the construction and equipping of a new Vocational Technical College in Mannar, which has the capacity to reach 100 youth in each group of trainees. As of the end of 2014, 50 young people were engaged in courses with many more waiting to be enrolled.

OUTCOME 3: By 2017 strengthening provincial, central and local capacity for evidence-based policy, planning, and programme implementation

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, UNICEF contributed to strengthening provincial, central and local capacity for evidence-based policy, planning, and programme implementation through: i) improving the quality and availability of disaggregated data; and ii) monitoring and tracking of budgets for children to reduce disparities. UNICEF continued to play a key advocacy and technical role with government partners in strengthening routine data collection systems in the Northern, Eastern and Central Provinces. Progress in this area varied across districts, primarily based on the availability of human resources, commitment of government authorities and government prioritisation amongst competing priorities. In Uva Province, a pilot was initiated, with technical support from UNICEF, to establish a routine electronic monitoring framework that identified
undernourished pregnant women and children under five and referred them to required services. The system has now been further improved under the MsNAP and will be rolled out in 2015 nationally to all primary health service providers at the district level through the MoH. In the education sector, the collection of data against selected indicators under the CFA framework, such as school drop-outs, is being integrated into routine data collection mechanisms of the MoE.

During the year, based on identified gaps in programme sector information, UNICEF supported several studies that would contribute to the generation of data and knowledge, as well as inform future programming in the area; all reports were in draft status at the end of the 2014. The study on the status and quality of care in child care institutions and reasons for child institutionalisation provided critical baseline information and trends on the number of institutions, number of institutionalised children and standards of care. The study also highlighted the reasons for institutionalisation and exposed the fact that the majority of the children had one or both parents. This will be reviewed by the Probation Department in line with the policy of de-institutionalising children with at least one working parent. Other studies that generated preliminary evidence (requiring further analysis) were on female youth participation and the school canteen policy, both of which will feed into future programming and policy reforms in 2015.

To inform programming in the area of social inclusion, which refers to an improved policy environment and systems for disadvantaged and excluded children, UNICEF conducted two critical reviews: one on public expenditure in the social sectors and one on social protection systems. UNICEF Sri Lanka wanted to explore how it might engage on budget policy issues of importance for children’s rights, as the scale and composition of public spending on services for children has direct implications on the equity and quality of services for children. Addressing these budgetary issues is a natural part of UNICEF’s shift towards a more upstream mode of programming that contributes to improved government policies for children. In the area of social protection, globally, UNICEF adopted a Social Protection Strategic Framework (UNICEF 2012), which puts a strong emphasis on systems building. Although social protection has not to date been a significant area of work for UNICEF in Sri Lanka, the Country Office identified social protection as one of five future priority areas of work. The review helps to orient UNICEF programming in this new and important area by assessing the existing Sri Lankan cash transfer schemes from a child rights perspective. It also provided the UNICEF Country Office with suggestions for an initial agenda of work on social protection, to be carried out in partnership with the government and other development agencies.

Sri Lanka’s transition to more upstream programming requires UNICEF to shift its communication priorities towards more strategic advocacy-led goals. In this regard, UNICEF took the opportunity of the CRC@25 to put ‘rights’ back on the national agenda in Sri Lanka and to reposition itself as a rights advocate. UNICEF’s engagement resulted in a first-ever multi-party Parliamentary Pledge that brought together leading parliamentary members and ministers to re-affirm their commitment to children’s rights, and led to the creation of a Parliamentary Caucus for Children. As part of the anniversary celebrations, other events were also held with children and young people to encourage increased dialogue on child rights and the successes and challenges related to rights realisation. As part of a communication strategy for social media, UNICEF also supported wide-ranging visibility in both traditional and social media, with a concurrent increase in media coverage.

The UNICEF Country Office conducted its Country Programme (2013-2017) MTR in 2014, providing an opportunity to inform potential adjustments, as needed, given the changes in the
country context. To feed into the MTR, UNICEF commissioned the Institute of Policy Studies to prepare an update on the status of children and women in Sri Lanka. This involved secondary data analysis based on current or recently released data to gather evidence aimed at: (i) identifying current and emerging issues related to each UNICEF programme sector; and (ii) where data permits, identifying more vulnerable/disadvantaged population groups or geographic areas. The study also suggests areas for future research and analysis. In addition, UNICEF commissioned a perception study and stakeholder mapping that reflects stakeholders and partners’ perceptions towards UNICEF and its programme. The study provides knowledge and insights to enable UNICEF to effectively and smoothly move forward in facilitating new programming strategies/approaches while strengthening its brand presence in Sri Lanka.

OUTPUT 1: By 2017 improved quality of disaggregated data collection and timely availability at local level for evidenced-based programme development, planning and implementation

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF played a key advocacy and technical role with government partners in strengthening routine data collection systems, particularly in the areas of nutrition, health, water and sanitation, and education. In 2014, under the leadership of the central government, all provinces were strengthening routine data collection systems for improved planning, budgetary allocations and funds utilisation. Furthermore, UNICEF provided technical inputs to the Demographic and Health Survey to be conducted in 2015, including training of a Department of Census statistician on the tools and methodology of UNICEF’s Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

One study, conducted together with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services, assessed the current status and quality of care in child care institutions and reasons for child institutionalisation. According to the study, 14,179 children (60 per cent females / 40 per cent males) were living in 414 institutions across the country, reflecting an overall decrease in the number of institutions since the end of the conflict. Of these institutions, 95 per cent were registered, though conditions and standards of care varied considerably. The majority of children placed in institutions had one or both parents (81 per cent) and were institutionalised due to a disability/illness, or unfavourable conditions in the home. These findings will guide UNICEF’s work in this area and support care system reforms and formulation of new policies related to alternative care.

A qualitative study was commissioned by UNICEF, in partnership with the National Youth Services Council (NYSC) and the Federation of Youth Clubs, to ascertain the degree and quality of female participation in Sri Lankan social, economic and political spheres. Preliminary evidence highlighted a lack of gender sensitivity and inclusion amongst government officials, and an overarching patriarchal structure within which they work. The evidence generated will be used to advocate with the NYSC on the implementation/revision of existing policies with regard to young female participation. UNICEF will further use the findings to design programmes in partnership with key ministries, as well as the National Institute of Education for curriculum reform.

A study conducted to assess the current canteen policy for government schools in the Western Province revealed that although overall canteen facilities were acceptable, the food served did not meet ‘healthy food’ standards. Based on this, the MoE will revise the current canteen policy in 2015.

OUTPUT 2: By 2017 strengthened monitoring and tracking of child budgets towards improved resource allocation and utilisation to reduce disparities
Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, in line with UNICEF’s global focus on exploiting the potential to leverage domestic resources for children, UNICEF commissioned a macro-analysis of the public expenditure on children, particularly in the social sectors in Sri Lanka. Although social sector spending has had a fairly stable share of total government expenditure, it has been declining as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The combined public spending on education, health and social welfare (excluding public sector pensions) amounted to 4.1 per cent of the GDP in 2013. Despite this, coverage of most social sector programmes is generally very high, close to universal in the case of primary education and child and maternal health services. However, the analysis suggests that low levels of public funding may undermine quality and lead to inequities in the types of services that can be accessed.

To supplement this macro-analysis, UNICEF also reviewed social protection programmes – particularly those targeting women and children – to assess the coverage, effectiveness, targeting, institutional framework and financing of the schemes. The report covered a wide range of programmes, managed by different agencies, some at the national level and others under the provincial councils, including: income support programmes; nutrition-related transfer schemes and educational assistance programmes. The report indicated that if social transfers are adequate in value they can play a key role in:

• lifting families with children out of poverty;
• addressing other child deprivations (under-nutrition, school dropout); and
• improving human capital development and long-term growth and development.

While coverage of such schemes is high, weaknesses in the adequacy of transfer amounts, targeting, and institutional frameworks and administrative efficiency undermine their value. In 2015, UNICEF, together with other partners, will provide technical expertise in social protection to support well-targeted, adequately funded social transfers that help reduce child poverty and address other child deprivations. This may include the development of a national social protection strategy; capacity building; profiling of vulnerability; and review of alternative programme options. In 2015, UNICEF will explore areas of potential focus including: reviews of budgets and public expenditure in the social sectors; policy analysis on the equity of public expenditure; local governance and financing; costing of new programmes and plans and financing models; policy analysis on the efficiency of public expenditure; and investment cases and ‘value for money’ analysis.

OUTPUT 4: Strategic Communication/Visibility

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, UNICEF took the opportunity of the CRC@25 to place child rights back on the national agenda in Sri Lanka. This effort served as an opportunity to reposition UNICEF’s upstream work in the coming years as a rights advocate, as well as to dispel myths that rights are negative. Our engagement resulted in:

• A first-ever multi-party Parliamentary Pledge that brought together leading parliamentary members and Ministers to re-affirm their commitment to children’s rights, as well as the creation of a Parliamentary Caucus for Children.
• Dialogue with key ministries on rights realisation, including an initiative by the MoE to send out a Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) circular to all 10,012 government schools (4,037,157 children) on the CRC anniversary.

• A Special Session on Children at the Sri Lanka Model United Nations Association that brought approximately 700 secondary school students from across Sri Lanka to talk about the successes and challenges related to rights realisation.

• A first-ever Children’s Hackathon, in partnership with Microsoft, Google, the MoE and Sri Lanka’s Information Technology Agency, to showcase children’s innovative solutions to problems affecting them. Amongst the top winners were ideas to promote online safety, improve math skills and improve access to psychosocial counselling. The winning idea will be explored by the UNICEF Innovations Lab in 2015 for possible scale up.

• A successful three-day 150-photo exhibition, themed Children in Focus, which was the result of a nationwide photo competition, in partnership with Shutterbug-Rotaract and Cannon Metropolitan, to highlight rights. The winning photos will be inserted in a 2015 UNICEF Desk Calendar.

• An “Instagram CRC Baton” run that enabled UNICEF to partner with 11 renowned national Instagram users who talked about children’s rights for 11 weeks.

• Celebrity events with film stars and the English and Sri Lankan cricket teams.

To engage millennials in UNICEF’s work, the Office initiated the first-ever Youth for Children Dialogues to increase online and off-line conversations with youth interested in becoming activists for children. These dialogues focused on online safety and ethical photography and resulted in UNICEF commissioning a first-of-its-kind national study to understand the online behaviour of adolescents. This is poised to take UNICEF into the digital area of child protection – a subject that is receiving increasing interest from both government and civil society agencies.

OUTCOME 4 Programme Support

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The BSC established in UNICEF Sri Lanka in 2012 for centralised processing of transactions in VISION (UNICEF’s operating system) is now fully functional, resulting in improved efficiency and effectiveness such as faster payment processing times and efficient acquisition of products and services needed for programme delivery. In addition, internal systems to track and monitor requests (Push&Track) and to process local TAs and travel requests (Travel2Field) contributed to greater efficiency gains. In 2014, these systems were further enhanced with new features to support requirements in the region and increase effectiveness. UNICEF Sri Lanka also supported the roll out of the BSC and internal systems in ROSA and the Nepal, Bhutan, India (Kolkata) and Zimbabwe Country Offices. In addition, the Office generated monthly Key Performance Indicator reports to monitor the performance of Service Level Agreements and address bottlenecks, lapses in procedures and delays in services.

The UNICEF Country Office laid the groundwork to relocate to a new location in early 2015 closer to the UN Compound and other partner ministries, which will result in significant operational savings in terms of rent, maintenance and other administrative costs. This will
enable the Office to be more cost efficient and allocate the limited operational resources effectively.

OUTPUT 1 Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to closely monitor the DCTs over nine months through a focused and proactive approach. As of end December 2014, the Office had outstanding DCTs over nine months of 2.78 per cent out of the total percentage of outstanding DCTs. The delays of fund transfers through the Central Treasury to the Provincial Treasury and then to Government Implementing Partners were a key reason for outstanding DCTs over nine months. Collective discussions with other UN agencies and the Ministry of Finance and Planning were held to address these delays. In addition, the Country Office’s decision to reduce the overall number of DCT cash transfers by issuing transfers at the provincial level rather than the zonal level will minimise delays in cash transfers/liquidations in the future. Continued efforts on monitoring and follow-up are expected to bring the Office closer to the organisational Key Performance Indicator Target of 1 per cent in 2015.

The UN Development Group’s HACT Framework, adopted in 2005, was revised in 2014. Further specific guidelines from UNICEF’s Deputy Executive Director were shared in August 2014. The Office has been implementing the HACT based on a context-specific HACT Protocol developed in 2013, in line with the HACT Framework, internal audit observations related to inconsistencies in monitoring, regional best practices, and in consultation with key line ministries and UNICEF programme sections. UNICEF Sri Lanka addressed identified gaps and simplified processes to further improve both the frequency and standards of programme and financial monitoring. In 2014, the Office developed a revised HACT Protocol based on the updated HACT Framework, the policy issues raised by UNICEF’s Deputy Executive Director, and lessons learned from the previous year of implementation. In this regard, UNICEF continued to work closely with the UN Excom Agencies on harmonising macro and micro assessments and financial spot checks; strengthening on-site programme and financial monitoring; conducting additional refresher training for implementing partners and collaborating with the Department of External Resources. UNICEF is also working towards an automated database for HACT implementation to streamline the existing processes and ensure a systematic approach to fund transfers in terms of monitoring, reporting and risk management.

OUTPUT 2 Financial Resources and Stewardship

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The strong focus on internal controls and cost efficiencies in business processes was reinforced by enhancing internal systems developed to improve efficiency and effectiveness in operations, thereby generating significant cost savings. This included systems for monitoring Programme Cooperation Agreements / Small Scale Funding Agreements, fuel consumption, vehicle maintenance and telephone recovery. Further savings were achieved in utilities, such as electricity and water, through cost reduction strategies and the rationalisation of ancillary services. Further savings are envisaged through the office relocation in early 2015.

With close monitoring of budget implementation, UNICEF Sri Lanka successfully achieved an overall financial utilisation rate of 87 per cent (including both actuals and commitments), with 93 per cent utilisation of Regular Resources, 99.9 per cent utilisation of the support budget and 99.9 per cent utilisation of all grants that expired in 2014. Mid-year financial closures were
completed on time and the UNICEF Country Office carried out all month-end reconciliations in line with scheduled deadlines with no long outstanding unreconciled items. Year-end closure was underway at the end of the year in line with scheduled deadlines.

**OUTPUT 3 Human Capacity**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Overall progress of the results under the Human Resource component is on track. While key vacant posts are being duly filled, of the 16 positions that remain vacant, three are to be abolished with immediate effect. UNICEF Sri Lanka is striving to achieve gender parity in relation to staff with a current gender ratio for National Professional staff of 37 per cent female to 63 per cent male. In order to improve the gender balance, professional posts were re-advertised to attract female candidates. The Office ensured 100 per cent compliance rate with the global deadline for 2013 end-year performance review assessments and 2014 planned outputs.

A Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting was held in the last quarter to discuss specific staff issues, while other issues were taken up at monthly staff meetings. Staff learning and development initiatives in 2014 reflected the changes in the country context and the shift to upstream policy and programming work. The 2014 Learning and Training Plan focused on developing the skills, knowledge and competencies required for implementing the identified Country Office priorities for the year. Five country-level training and learning events were implemented on executive coaching; competency-based interview skills; programme planning procedures; dynamic leadership certificate programme; and staff entitlements. Staff were also encouraged to take advantage of the soft skills portal and follow UNICEF e-learning courses for professional development. Staff well-being continued to be a priority for 2014, particularly during the change management process, and counselling services were made available for all staff through group and individual sessions. The Office also went on an all-staff retreat in March to discuss the upcoming MTR and annual management plan processes, as well as engage in t

**OUTCOME 5 Development Effectiveness**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
While fundraising efforts during the current Country Programme cycle generated some resources, these are primarily earmarked for specific interventions, which tend to be more down-stream and activity-based, and/or for targeted geographical areas. This lack of flexible, multi-year funding meant that many of UNICEF’s planned activities remained unfunded at the end of the year.

During 2014, the office engaged in a Strategic Moment of Reflection leading up to the Country Programme (2013-2017) MTR to determine the strategic direction for the remainder of the Country Programme. Within the context of a middle-income country with depleted donor funding, a government that has adequate resources and partners like the World Bank engaging in UNICEF’s traditional sectors, UNICEF is placing a greater emphasis on systems building/strengthening and moving away from service delivery and project-related work. Service delivery and small projects divert UNICEF’s limited financial and human resources and have a limited impact on higher-level results for children.

The year 2015 will be a transition to more upstream-focused work, while continuing to deliver on existing donor commitments that may involve downstream project work and service delivery. UNICEF will explore a broader range of partners without neglecting its more traditional partners.
Academia, including university departments, research institutions, think tanks and thought leaders, will be considered for partnerships, as well as the private sector in their role of convenor and advocator. UNICEF will increase coordination and technical partnership with line ministries and avoid being seen simply as a source of funds for technical work. A vibrant and rolling mapping of partnerships will also be developed to help UNICEF and other partners stay abreast of sector developments.

**OUTPUT 1 Programme Coordination**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In 2014, UNICEF Sri Lanka continued to maintain close collaborative relationships with local delegations of donors to facilitate regular sector progress reviews and project-related discussions; advocate on sector-specific issues; and review future programme strategies and funding opportunities. This continued engagement was critical during a time when the Office is facing significant funding shortfalls for planned activities in 2014 and beyond.

UNICEF Sri Lanka has a comprehensive funds monitoring system with country-specific tracking tools that assists in close monitoring of grant contributions, allocations and utilisation. These tools form part of the knowledge management strategy to facilitate access to funding and grant information in order to improve the quality and timeliness of implementation. This system ensured that almost 100 per cent of the funding expiring in 2014 was utilised, thereby limiting the need to extend the duration of grants.

The internal control mechanism to monitor the timeliness and quality of donor reports resulted in all donor reports meeting UNICEF reporting standards and being submitted on time. Many leading donors expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the reporting and carried out field missions in the country that enabled them to better understand on-the-ground realities and the nature and impact of UNICEF’s programme interventions.

**Document Centre**

**Evaluation**

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