Executive summary

In 2017 Sudan transitioned through significant geopolitical and socioeconomic changes, resulting in a potentially positive outlook for the future. In January, the United States Government decided to ease the sanctions imposed on Sudan since 1997 and in October they were entirely lifted. This was a positive step toward improving humanitarian access and helping to create a solid platform for positive dialogue and sustainable development for the country. Cooperation between the Sudanese Government and the international community was also enhanced. New partnerships were established to respond to the migration crisis.

As Sudan is on the list of states that sponsor terrorism, it is ineligible for debt relief and investments from international financial institutions and World Bank. Despite the prospects of a sustainable peace brought by the National Dialogue and ceasefire efforts in the five Darfur States, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, long-term conflict, natural disasters, epidemics and economic underdevelopment in Sudan continue to affect children’s lives. The protracted crisis, with more than 2 million people displaced, and the persistent and chronic malnutrition situation, are compounded by new emergencies, such as acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) and a massive influx of South Sudanese refugees.

Sudan is one of the countries that has adopted the pilot ‘new way of working’ to bridge the humanitarian-development-peace divide, including the multi-year humanitarian strategy 2017-2019. UNICEF Sudan positioned itself as a leader and convener in this area, pushing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus forward and advocating for joint UN planning and implementation of UN common approaches. This resulted in increased harmonization between UN agencies and positioned UNICEF as a partner of choice for donors and the Government.

In 2017, with support from UNICEF and its partners, the Ministry of Health (MOH) managed to sustain the impressive coverage gains in community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) achieved in 2015 and 2016 by treating 210,873 children affected by severe acute malnutrition (SAM) between January and November. Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services were further scaled up with a total of 3,000 mother support groups counselling 624,388 caregivers. UNICEF and partners also continued to provide technical and financial support to the MOH on routine immunization services. By September, a marked improvement was achieved in the proportion of children under one year of age who received measles vaccinations. As of September, 953,862 children were vaccinated in 2017, 84 per cent of the number of children under one, an increase from 2013 when the number vaccinated was 60.9 per cent of the children under one.

Technical and financial support provided by UNICEF and implementing partners to the Ministry of Education (MOE) enabled 220,736 out-of-school children (47 percent girls) from rural areas, nomadic, refugee and emergency-affected communities to access basic and alternative learning programmes (ALPs). This was achieved through the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms with gender-sensitive toilets and water facilities to improve the teaching-learning environment. To offset the cost of schooling for poor and emergency-affected communities,
schools received social assistance through distribution of teaching and learning materials and school supplies.

The rights of Sudanese children affected by the armed conflict took an important step forward through engagement with the Government of Sudan and other parties to the conflict, including Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North) and Darfur armed groups, achieving major milestones to prevent and end child recruitment. Sustained community dialogues and enhanced social movement by women, children and youth led to positive social change to abandon female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage.

In collaboration with the MOH and the Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity (MOWRE), UNICEF provided lifesaving gender-sensitive improved drinking water supply for 2,909,285 people (half of them females). During the peak of the acute watery diarrhoea crisis, UNICEF’s extensive efforts ensured disinfected water was provided to 2 million people per month, UNICEF efforts also provided 429,083 people with access to improved sanitation facilities and scaled-up hygiene promotion interventions to 8.6 million people.

UNICEF Sudan faced funding shortfalls and constraints due to donor conditionalities. UNICEF continued to ask for more flexible and multi-year funding for use in such a complex protracted emergency setting, in line with the ‘Grand Bargain’ commitments.

Strong partnerships were critical to responding to the needs in 2017, including with UN Agencies, GAVI, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Global Fund for Malaria, HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis and the Government.

**Humanitarian assistance**

Multiple disasters and violence such as acute watery diarrhoea, floods and armed conflict continued to affect 2.3 million children in Sudan in 2017 (UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2017). However, there was a significant improvement in conflict-related displacements in Darfur, South and West Kordofan, and Blue Nile states due to unilateral ceasefires by the Sudanese Government and armed groups. The number of newly displaced persons across Darfur was 8,200 down significantly from 82,000 during the same period last year.

Partly as a result of UNICEF advocacy, humanitarian access to affected populations continued to improve in 2017, allowing UNICEF and partners to meet life-saving needs of children that had not been receiving humanitarian support for several years. UNICEF was granted access, for example, to some hard-to-reach areas in Blue Nile State and the Jebel Marra area in Central and South Darfur. Aid agencies were able to access Deribat in East Jebel Marra, South Darfur for the first time in seven years.

In March, an inter-agency survey conducted in some parts of the newly accessible Jebel Marra areas revealed high rates of global acute malnutrition (GAM) as well as severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases. Together with UNICEF, the MOH led the development of an integrated response plan and launched four rounds of ‘Find & Treat’ campaigns delivering packages of life-saving services. The campaigns screened 115,428 children and identified 1,133 children with severe acute malnutrition who were all admitted for treatment. In Blue Nile, an intensive community mobilization campaign in newly accessed areas screened 3,101 children in November, out of which 441 were so affected and required inpatient care.

An outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea that started in August 2016 re-surge throughout 2017
causing, during its peak, more than 36,000 suspected cases and an average of 30 deaths per week across Sudan’s 18 states. In collaboration with the MOH, WHO and partners, UNICEF carried out integrated interventions reaching more than 2 million people (1 million children) monthly.

Due to the intensified conflict in South Sudan and the deteriorating food situation In 2017, there was a major influx of 186,002 South Sudanese refugees (SSRs), of which approximately 65 per cent (120,901) were children. In 2017, family tracing and reunification (FTR) efforts by UNICEF and partners supported 2,490 unaccompanied and separated refugee children by either reuniting them with their families or placing them in alternative care arrangements. A total of 12,000 school-age refugee children were provided access to education through the construction/rehabilitation of 88 learning spaces and the provision of essential supplies.

In March, to end and prevent grave violations against children, the Sudanese Government and the United Nations (UN), extended to October the action plan for the protection of children from violations in armed conflict. In October an agreement was reached that key steps of the action plan were completed and work would continue to strengthen the child protection system and to sustain the gains made through awareness raising and training. Monitoring and verification missions to military barracks were concluded in all conflict-affected states, including receipt of command orders from all security forces prohibiting recruitment and the use of children. Trainings of 1,280 security personnel were conducted. The UN continued to engage with the non-state armed groups listed in the United Nations Secretary General’s global report on children and armed conflict to end and prevent recruitment and use of children.

A total of 114,616 children (50 per cent girls) received psychosocial support through child friendly spaces and home-based visits by social workers and 5,103 separated and unaccompanied children were either reunited with their families or received alternative care arrangements in 2017. Safe learning spaces also helped 22,411 emergency-affected children continue their studies and a total of 223,446 children received emergency education supplies and recreational materials.

Access to primary health care services was provided to 2,280,000 emergency-affected people. A total of 402,713 children under one year of age received their first dose of the measles vaccine. Timely treatment was also provided to 210,873 children 6-59 months old suffering from SAM, and 609,858 caregivers received infant/young child feeding counselling.

A total of 312,260 additional emergency-affected people, including internally displaced people, South Sudanese refugees, people affected by acute watery diarrhoea and flood and conflict-affected populations benefited from access to new and improved drinking water sources. A total of 89,053 emergency-affected people benefited from access to new and improved sanitation facilities, and 1,485,120 people were reached with hygiene promotion and sensitization.

UNICEF Sudan supported the Government in developing a resilience strategy and a water safety programme, and its plan to pursue the goal of eliminating open defecation by 2019.

**Equity in practice**

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan developed a comprehensive situational analysis (SitAn) of children in Sudan in coordination with the Government. The SitAn revealed that despite the dire situation in Sudan, positive gains have been made for children. Significant reduction in under-five mortality was recorded, down from 128 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 70 per 1,000 in 2014. Progress also was made in education, as the net attendance rate increased from 68.4 per cent to 76.4
per cent, while the Gender Parity Index in primary school improved by 0.04 per cent.

The SitAn also identified critical priorities issues for children related to ‘Child Survival, with 2 million children under the age of 5 suffering from acute malnutrition, including 550,000 severely acutely malnourished and at risk of death. Neonatal mortality remained at 30 per 1,000 live births; only one- third of the population had access to safe water; and none of the states were open-defecation free. There were an estimated 3.1 million out-of-school children. The report also identified critical child protection issues, including female genital cutting, child marriage, violence against children, separated and unaccompanied children and children on the move. Children from poorest families were more at risk of death from illness or to be stunted in comparison to children from non-poor families.

The evidence from the SitAn informed the development of the new Country Programme Document (CPD) 2018-2021, which places greater emphasis on gender equity and the rights of vulnerable and marginalized children. Partnering with the Ministry of International Cooperation, UNICEF facilitated a series of strategic debates and dialogues with various stakeholders, including children, resulting in prioritization and investments for promoting child rights.

UNICEF Sudan continued to geographically target the most vulnerable communities in Sudan, addressing significant disparities and focusing on the most vulnerable children and their families based on evidence generated from vulnerability and multiple deprivation analyses, household economic profiling and multi-sector assessments.

Through the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), UNICEF Sudan partnered with UNESCO and WHO to improve access of children with disabilities to education. The joint project was initiated in 2015 against a background of limited access to education for children with disabilities in Sudan, with almost half of children aged 6-9 years old living with disability being out of school, compared to 37.1 per cent of children without disabilities being out of school (Sudan Household Survey, 2010). Girls with disabilities were particularly disadvantaged, with more than 55 per cent of girls in the 6-9 year olds with disabilities being out of school, compared to 38.7 per cent of girls without disabilities. (Information regarding the education of children with disabilities in other age groups was not available.)

UNICEF supported the printing of 1,000 sign language dictionaries to be used by teachers (final product will be available by January 2018). In order to ensure that school facilities are accessible to children living with disabilities, UNICEF supported revision of the national school construction standards to incorporate accessibility guidelines. The revised construction standards were approved by the Ministry of Education and will guide all school construction in Sudan.

With UNICEF’s technical and financial support, the 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Education Management Information System (EMIS) statistical year books were finalized and published in December 2017, providing timely and quality data.

UNICEF Sudan also developed the Environment Sanitation & Hygiene master plan for El Fasher Town in North Darfur covering urban and peri-urban areas as well as the two IDP settlements of Abu Shouk and El Salam. El Fasher was chosen as a pilot site because it hosted internally displaced persons in camps and peri-urban areas, had available water resources, institutional leadership, and the commitment and capacity to implement the changes as well as potential cost recovery of the services. The intervention prioritized access to sanitation services
in peri-urban areas and camps for internally displaced persons and access for girls and people living with disabilities to WASH in schools in town.

A general challenge in terms of promoting equity was the lack of availability of data, due to lack of funds or sensitivities and lack of agreement by counterparts to gather or publish data.

**Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

The development of the new UNICEF country programme of cooperation 2018-2021 was approved by the Executive Board in September 2017. Efforts to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the national development plan offer unique opportunities to establish the foundation for the implementation of the Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021 in Sudan.

UNICEF engaged the Government, civil society, UN agencies, donors and other stakeholders in strategic debates to align the CPD and Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) to the five goal areas of the SP 2018-2021, as relevant to key priorities for children in Sudan. The new country programme includes five outcomes and 18 outputs that are in harmony with the expected five outcomes and 20 outputs of the SP and will ensure adequate contribution of Sudan to the achievement of the SP. Extensive efforts have also been made to align the CPD and CPAP strategic results with the SDGs 2030, the Gender Action Plan 2018-2021 and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2021. The new CPD and CPAP are also in line with the Government’s 25 year national strategic plan, the 4 year national strategic plan 2017-2020, and other national strategies such as the reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) strategy and the nutrition investment case.

Sudan benefited during 2017 from the UN Inter-Agency mission support for Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support for the SDGs (MAPS 2). This resulted, following consultations with Government, UN agencies, donors and civil society, in the development of five Sudanese Government priorities for accelerating the reaching of the SDGs in 2030. These include: increase agricultural productivity, increase access to clean energy and electricity, build a comprehensive pro-poor social protection system, increase access to quality basic services focusing on education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and improve capacity for climate, land and water resilience for sustainable livelihoods.

Those priorities will be the basis for developing a national SDG framework that is supported by a financing strategy and institutional capacity from the Government, international community and civil society. UNICEF influenced the prioritization process and two of the Sudanese Government’s top five priorities for accelerating SDG implementation -- social protection and access to quality basic social services-- focus on the children’s agenda in line with the SP 2018-2021. UNICEF also led the largest focus area of UN joint investment in Sudan related to social services (the third focus area of UNDAF) and actively participated in the development of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Plan for the UNDAF 2018-2021, creating an additional opportunity for monitoring the SDGs.

The Sudanese Government is setting up new sector coordination platforms to regularly monitor progress against the SDGs. With support from UNICEF, UN agencies and partners, the Government is organizing sector-wide joint reviews of health and nutrition, education and WASH led by the Government and involving all humanitarian and development actors in the sector.

The lifting of US economic sanctions and the increased interest of donors in investing in building
the humanitarian-development-peace nexus provided opportunities for Sudan. This new positive attraction of bilateral and multilateral public and private partnerships, if sustainable, will likely contribute to greater achievements of the SDGs and Strategic Plan targets.

Weak prioritization of public investment in social sectors and the unavailability of updated data for measuring progress of impact still presented enormous challenges. Efforts made by the Government with UNICEF’s support to make the Routine Education Statistics Year Book 2015-2016 and Health and Child Protection Administrative Data available were promising. The Government’s expected approval for the conduct of the nutrition multi-sector survey (S3M) in 2018 and a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2019 with UNICEF support will address some of these challenges. These nationwide household data collections will, when carried out, provide sound evidence in measuring outcomes and impact of the SP, UNDAF and CPD for children in Sudan.

### Emerging areas of importance

**Refugee and migrant children.** In 2017 Sudan remained a source, transit and destination country for a high number of migrants and refugees. The focus of the development policy of the European Union and various European donors shifted to address the issue of migration in Sudan. With support from Germany (KfW), UNICEF Sudan provided integrated education, child protection and WASH services in Eastern Sudan to address the vulnerabilities of 250,000 targeted children from the mainly Eritrean refugee and migrant community and the host communities in Kassala and Gedaref states that suffer from under-development and chronic poverty.

UNICEF supported South Sudanese refugees, especially women and children, both in camp and out-of-camp settlements, mainly in White Nile, East Darfur, South Darfur, West Kordofan and South Kordofan. Child protection, education, health, nutrition, and WASH services were recognized as important needs for out-of-camp refugee settlements that host 79 per cent of the South Sudanese refugee population (as of 15 December 2017), two-thirds of which are children. Together with UNHCR, UNICEF was engaged in strong advocacy with the Government of Sudan to ensure that children, representing more than 60 per cent of the refugee population, are able to access basic social services.

In 2017, family tracing and reunification (FTR) efforts by UNICEF and partners supported 2,490 unaccompanied and separated refugee children by either reuniting them with their families or placing them in alternative care arrangements. A total of 12,000 school-age refugee children were provided access to education through the construction/rehabilitation of 88 learning spaces and the provision of essential supplies.

A total of 9,000 refugee children were reached with life-saving nutritional services in their first 9 months of life. Polio and measles immunizations were provided to 624 and 303 children, respectively, and more than 15,000 out-patient consultations were held for children under five years of age.

**Greater focus on the second decade of life.** UNICEF Sudan integrated the needs and rights of adolescents into programming in 2017. Adolescents represented 24 per cent of Sudan’s population (Central Bureau of Statistics, Population Census and Population Projections for 2017).

A manual was finalized as a reference for teachers to incorporate life skills and civic education
Integration of life skills into the national curriculum was being planned, along with the national curriculum review. These skills were integrated under the child-friendly schools framework in both formal and non-formal education, responding to the needs of 95,736 adolescents (49,934 boys and 45,802 girls). An additional 19,250 adolescent learners benefited from UNICEF’s support to enhance their meaningful engagement and participation in school committees and clubs.

Adolescents were explicitly targeted in several sectoral strategies, including the ALP strategy, the School Health Strategy, the 5 in 10 Mothers, Child and Adolescents Health Strategy. Insufficient funding to implement planned activities was a challenge.

In preparation for the development of the National Youth Policy (NYP), an analysis of the situation of adolescents and youth, as well as a stakeholders consultation was conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

This emerging area will be further supported by including adolescents as part of the responsibilities of all child protection, education and nutrition and health staff, by appointing programme focal points in relevant sections and through development of specific indicators to achieve cross-sectoral results for adolescents.

**Climate change and children.** UNICEF continued to promote climate change adaptation into sectoral programmes, policies and interventions. By promoting integrated water resources management (IWRM), focusing on climate resilient technologies and waterpoints guided by geophysical investigations and catchment studies, UNICEF contributed to minimizing the adverse impact of climate change and to a sustainable and equitable use of water resources among multiple users, preventing potential conflicts and associated migration. The adoption of hand-pumps for shallow and low-yielding aquifers and the use of solar power for motorized boreholes helped reduce carbon footprint and over-exploitation of ground water. Promotional activities aimed at minimizing water waste and preventing water source contamination supported these activities, including through community-led total sanitation (CLTS).

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

**Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALP</th>
<th>alternative learning programme</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>antenatal care</td>
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<td>AWD</td>
<td>acute watery diarrhoea</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCP</td>
<td>business continuity plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>cash advance planning</td>
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<td>CCEOP</td>
<td>Cold-Chain Equipment Optimization Platform</td>
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<td>CLTS</td>
<td>community-led total sanitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMAM</td>
<td>community management of acute malnutrition</td>
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<td>CMT</td>
<td>Country Management Team</td>
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<td>CPAP</td>
<td>Country programme Action plan</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Country Programme Document</td>
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<td>CPMP</td>
<td>Country Programme Management Plan</td>
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<td>DCTs</td>
<td>direct cash transfers</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for international Development (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DWSU</td>
<td>Drinking Water and Sanitation Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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Progress was made in engaging with households and communities on critical child survival and development issues. Under the Alshuffa Alsoghar (Little Children) Communication Initiative, direct community engagement interventions on essential family practices were implemented in nine states, reaching 730,000 households (4 million people).

In anticipation of disease outbreaks, especially acute watery diarrhoea, 290 health promoters, 1,897 community promoters, 20 education sector partners and 30 teachers acquired skills and knowledge on positive behaviour change. A total of 278 service providers, including medical doctors, medical assistants and midwives, were trained to provide quality maternal and newborn delivery support. A total of 283 vaccinators and 65 cold chain technicians were trained.

UNICEF also continued to support the national community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) and infant and young child feeding programmes as well as the nutrition management information system, providing support to train 1,929 staff on the provision of CMAM services, 1,050 community members on the identification and referral of children with severe acute malnutrition and 1,465 staff on IYCF.

In partnership with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, standards for child rights, protection principles and justice for children were integrated into the national training manual of the National Judicial and Legal Sciences Institute and trainings were provided for 2,770 judges, prosecutors, students and the police (low and mid-ranked).

Capacity for the development and implementation of school improvement plans also increased thanks to 1,760 members of Parent Teacher Associations and School Improvement Planning Committees from 636 schools. A total of 6,634 teachers were equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement child-friendly, inclusive and learner-centred methodologies through various in-service trainings.

By training 580 WASH sector partners on community-led total sanitation, solar system technologies and water safety planning, UNICEF effectively contributed to enhancing the capacity of WASH sector partners. At community level, 3,889 community members were trained in operations, management and maintenance of WASH facilities.

For the first time, in partnership with MOE, MOH, Social Welfare and the National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW), UNICEF Sudan facilitated a situation analysis on violence against children in schools, Quranic/Religious schools and institutions that accommodate children with disabilities in Khartoum. The findings revealed levels of different types of violence against children. As a result, the Government developed an integrated plan to address the gaps on prevention and response to such violence.
The study on costing and financing of the basic education sector was adopted by the Government in 2017. It revealed that, although government expenditure on basic education increased nominally, 94 percent of expenditures were for recurrent costs. The study also revealed that Sudan spends only 1.3 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and approximately 11 percent of its total public expenditure on education. The largest education costs are paid for by families/parents. In collaboration with the MOE, UNICEF supported the development of an advocacy strategy to increase the allocation for the education sector in the 2018 national budget, based on the evidence generated from the findings of the study. This included organizing a national symposium to discuss key findings and recommended policy options of creative financing for universal basic education.

A girls’ education mapping study was undertaken to generate state-based data on the key barriers for girls’ access to education. The mapping exercise revealed key barriers to girls’ education in Sudan, mainly linked to poverty, household chores, lack of parental support, early marriage and poor school environment (lack of sanitation facilities in schools).

A participatory process of policy formulation in favour of the equity agenda was organized with UNICEF’s technical and financial support. The drafting of Sudan’s first National Social Policy Strategic Document represented a step toward a platform for social protection.

**Partnerships**

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan invested in capacity building for national partners and development of integrated multi-sectoral approaches. UNICEF Sudan implemented eTools to improve the quality of information and reduce the costs of managing partners. More than 30 partnerships with national and international NGOs were developed in 2017, many also covering 2018. UNICEF Sudan maintained 113 partnerships with 63 implementing partners in 2017. Partnerships with academic institutions were expanded to include Ahfad University for Women, University of Kassala, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

UNICEF participated in the preparation process for the new funding model for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, covering 2018-2020. In this model, the MOH is the principal recipient while UNICEF supports supply chain management and the procurement of medical supplies and long lasting insecticide treated nets.

UNICEF continued to support capacity building of the MOH in 2017 and participated in the development of two proposals to GAVI for a cold-chain equipment optimization platform amounting to US$10 million for the elimination of measles. Partnerships with UNFPA and WHO to support Sudan Free of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting were maintained. In a strong partnership with the Group of Friends, UNICEF and UN partners pushed the global and national agenda toward the protection of children in armed conflicts. UNICEF, the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) continued to co-chair the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism. The education sector analysis done in 2017 resulted from UNICEF’s continued cooperation with the Global Partnership for Education. UNICEF continued to chair the UN network to support the Scale Up Nutrition movement and a common UN inventory of investments which will form the basis of a joint UN action plan.

Increasing engagement with national private sector partners for programme delivery was achieved.
External communication and public advocacy

Several advocacy milestones were achieved during 2017, including scaling up and amplifying community engagement on the Sudan Free of FGM/C Campaign on both digital and traditional media, advancing the nutrition agenda through support to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement and the SDGs and positioning children at the centre of advancing the SDGs in Sudan. This resulted in an increase of public declarations and awareness on female genital mutilation/cutting among youth groups in 10 states.

In 2017 private sector partnerships were scaled up significantly. These included partnerships with 14 business entities, including Unilever, Bank of Khartoum, Faisal Bank, MTN, Sudatel, EL Teital and Appitize, as well as with local Sudanese entrepreneurs, artists and musicians.

Five media briefings were held in 2017, covering Sudan Free of FGM/C, End Violence, World Humanitarian Day, the International Day of the Girl Child and World Children’s Day. World Children's Day was also marked by a “takeover” of the UNICEF Sudan office, with approximately 60 children from 4 to 14 years old from the Khartoum area given the opportunity to discover more about UNICEF’s mandate, activities and role in advancing the rights of all children in Sudan.

The International Day of the Girl Child, (hashtag #gadaya_banat), was a major public advocacy initiative with a social media campaign including a Facebook live presentation by key influencers including representatives from the Government, academia, the business community and an Ambassador.

As part of the mass public advocacy campaign to address the high levels of AWD, World Children’s Day celebrations began with a five kilometre run promoting hand washing with soap and sanitation (hashtag #LetsRun).

South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation

In September 2015, to support developing countries in achieving the SDGs, the President of China had announced China’s ‘Six 100s’ initiative, Maternal and child health are key parts of this initiative. China’s South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SSCAF) was set up then specifically to assist developing countries in accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Then in March 2016, encouraged by China’s commitment, UNICEF coordinated a meeting with China and selected African countries where maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) remain a huge challenge. As part of this meeting, delegates from Sudan reviewed and detailed preliminary gaps and demands in their MNCH programming and identified specific areas where they believed Chinese aid and UNICEF could strategically support them towards achieving the SDGs.

In 2017, in collaboration with the Sudanese Government, UNICEF Sudan developed a proposal worth US$1 million focusing on strengthening newborn care service delivery in one state.

The overall goals of the South-South collaboration to accelerate MNCH supported by UNICEF are to develop Sudan’s capacity for achieving SDG targets and specific national or local policy goals in nutrition, health and early childhood development, to support Chinese partner agencies in developing capacity to deliver health aid programmes in selected African countries where
they have a comparative advantage and to support the development of long-term South-South exchange mechanisms between China and Sudan.

**Identification and promotion of innovation**

In March 2017, in its first partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) D-Lab, UNICEF Sudan organized a design workshop on interactive learning to train various Sudanese educators on innovative child engagement and life skills promotion. The workshop integrated the design process, which is usually only applied to concrete innovative solutions, into life skills education. It benefitted 30 adults from MOE, vocational training centres, teachers, child-friendly space (CFS) animators, life skills education trainers and youth. By developing educators’ capacity to use and teach the design cycle, students will acquire necessary life skills and understand how to design a solution.

UNICEF Sudan also continued, in partnership with War Child Holland and the MOE, to support the development and piloting of the ‘Can’t Wait to Learn! – eLearning Literacy’ initiative, which started in 2013 and aimed to develop viable, scalable alternative learning approaches for conflict-affected children who are excluded from the traditional education model. As of year-end, the program, which focused on the Eastern States of Sudan with plans to scale up to other areas in 2018, reached approximately 75,000 vulnerable, out-of-school, nomadic and displaced children, including girls in areas where no formal schools exist. The ‘Can’t Wait to Learn!’ programme uses education technology as part of a model of education that is offering certified curriculum level content through applied gaming and personalized pupil engagement.

To ensure the quality of nutrition services, UNICEF utilized innovative approaches such as the use of nutrition consultants to mentor nutrition program staff at the State Ministry of Health and smartphone technology using KOBO (http://www.kobotoolbox.org) for real-time transmission of monitoring findings, analysis, response and feedback. UNICEF also undertook frequent monitoring visits jointly with state and locality level staff, which was critical in areas where the UN had limited access.

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

During 2017, birth registration was integrated in the primary health care programme, mainly in the expanded programme on immunization system, through an integrated child protection approach with the health sector and in close coordination and collaboration with NCCW, State Councils for Child Welfare and Civil Registry.

The integrated and timely emergency response to education and child protection needs benefited 22,411 emergency-affected children. A total of 223,446 children received emergency education supplies and recreational materials and benefited from referral services for psychosocial treatment when needed. Capacities of 104,550 vulnerable adolescents were enhanced on protection, life skills, rights of citizenship and meaningful engagement and civic participation. Adolescents’ participation and engagement was promoted through education, protection, health/nutrition, and humanitarian programmes.

As part of an integrated response to addressing severe malnutrition cases, UNICEF and implementing partners provided lifesaving water interventions to the most deprived in the areas of Jebel Marra in Darfur. These areas were newly opened after being inaccessible for many years due to security reasons. Approximately 52,000 people gained access to improved water sources.
The DFID-supported Joint Resilience Project, a partnership between FAO, UNICEF and WFP, presented a coordinated, holistic approach to increase resilience by addressing the effects of flood and drought shocks on the health and nutrition status of women and children in four localities in Kassala state, Eastern Sudan. The affected populations’ nutritional status was improved by implementation of a combination of evidence-based direct nutrition interventions focusing on the first 1,000 days in combination with health, WASH, agriculture and livelihood interventions. The four localities targeted by the joint intervention reported fewer cases of acute watery diarrhoea.

Service delivery

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan focused on building systems at both Federal and State Ministries of Health as well as community systems to deliver health and nutrition services. By establishing a pool of national trainers, institutional capacity was built for newborn care (kangaroo mother care), infant and young child feeding, nutrition in emergencies and equity analysis (EQUIST tool). UNICEF also seconded the MOH’s technical staff to strengthen health systems, including supply chain and use of mobile technology for equity-informed needs analysis, planning, monitoring and reporting. UNICEF continued to support reproductive health service delivery, especially the strengthening of antenatal care (ANC).

Through mobile and outreach clinics, UNICEF provided integrated nutrition, health and WASH services in conflict areas that were reachable for humanitarian assistance for the first time in seven years. UNICEF also worked with the Government to establish fixed service delivery points. UNICEF also established a WASH sector-wide service delivery monitoring system that allows WASH officers at state and national levels to monitor the delivery and quality of targeted services before, during and after implementation and through which achievements are captured on a monthly basis. With UNICEF support, 167 schools were provided with access to improved sanitation facilities. A total of 75,000 students (35,226 boys and 39,774 girls) gained access to gender sensitive and child-friendly latrines.

To enhance timely and quality child protection and education services in inaccessible and remote areas with scarce presence of social welfare and justice professionals, UNICEF worked with government and CSO partners to support community-based structures such as community-based child protection networks to provide initial psychosocial support, report violations, sensitize communities and attend to other social service needs. The focus was on the quality of services and roll-out of a national programme on integrated psychosocial support to provide services using child friendly spaces, mobile teams and learning settings through learning spaces and schools.

Human rights-based approach to cooperation

Through continued advocacy, technical and financial support and strong partnership with Parliamentarians, particularly the Women’s Caucus, Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary, Ministry of Interior and NCCW, UNICEF Sudan continued to address challenges related to legal reform affecting children, including criminalization of female genital mutilation/cutting, setting a minimum age of marriage, and rules and regulations for the implementation of the Child Act.

UNICEF continued to facilitate dialogues and capacity building of the Government and armed groups to implement the provision of the signed action plans to protect children in armed conflict, as per Security Council Resolution 1612. Progress made in the protection of children in armed conflict was noted during the Security Council Working Group’s visit in November. During the visit, gaps and challenges were assessed. Child protection issues were placed high on the
Sudanese Government’s agenda. And at least 100 UNICEF staff and 300 government counterparts gained an improved knowledge of human rights-based approach to programming (HRBP) and could integrate a human and child rights focus in programming and reporting of results within Sudan’s development and humanitarian actions.

Significant progress was achieved in 2017 toward ending denial of humanitarian access for vulnerable and highly deprived children and their families in areas in Jebel Marra. These areas had been inaccessible for more than seven years. In 2017, integrated life-saving WASH, health, nutrition, education and protection services were provided for 115,428 children. A total of 8,854 children (46 per cent girls) were supported for final examination and transition to secondary education.

Access to some areas in Jebel Marra, Blue Nile and South Kordofan under control of armed groups continued to be a challenge. UNICEF continued to press for access to those areas on the principle of non-discrimination of aid.

UNICEF sought every opportunity to empower and build resilience-guided human rights based principles, providing 132,783 vulnerable adolescents with improved education on protection, life skills, citizens’ rights and meaningful engagement and civic participation.

**Gender equality**

UNICEF Sudan made progress in 2017 on mainstreaming gender in programmes and achieving Gender Action Plan (GAP) results. Progress in meeting the GAP targets was noted in both female genital mutilation/cutting and early marriage indicators, UNICEF contributed to the reduction in the prevalence of such mutilation or cutting for girls 0-14 years old and to the development of a National Strategy to end child marriage.

The education sector in Sudan has also made progress towards gender equality, increasing girls’ intake rate in basic education from 81.1 per cent in 2014 to 83.9 per cent in 2016 and girls’ Gross Enrolment Rate from 68.2 per cent to 69.6 percent.

In partnership with the MOE and partners, UNICEF conducted community-driven school enrolment campaigns in 2017 that enabled 103,746 out-of-school girls to access education in formal and non-formal schools. Social assistance, educational materials, school uniforms and/or dignity kits were provided to a total of 184,936 vulnerable girls, which reduced or offset the high cost of schooling.

UNICEF supported the MOE in updating and reviewing the implementation of a girls’ education strategy for 2018-2022 linked to the Education Sector Plan 2018-2022 and designed to address girls’ education barriers. To support adolescent girls’ attendance and retention in school, UNICEF developed new sanitation packages that were distributed to 7,500 girls in the Blue Nile and Kordofan states as a pilot intervention. Enrolment in those areas increased and the Gender Parity Index (GPI) registered significant progress, increasing from 0.93 in 2014/15 to 0.98 in 2015/16 as more girls enrolled.

In December, 2017, the National Alliance on Accelerating Efforts to Abandon Child Marriage was established, with the involvement of the Government, academia, civil society organizations and UN agencies. The Alliance aims to maximize impact and harmonize actions to reduce child marriage in Sudan.
Environmental sustainability

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan ensured that environmental sustainability was properly taken into consideration while implementing its programmes. UNICEF Sudan established a greening committee with eight members under the leadership of the Deputy Representative, and developed an action plan to promote the greening of the office. This included comprehensive energy and water assessments to be conducted in early 2018 and an analysis of staff behaviour to pave the way for operational cost savings, better workspace conditions, and ultimately, a reduced environmental impact. The proposed action plan also includes a series of initiatives in line with the global guidance on improving the eco-efficiency and inclusiveness of UNICEF’s premises.

UNICEF Sudan’s environmental considerations included the installation of solar water pumps where possible and the procurement of solar-powered refrigerators to store vaccines and medicines at a reduced environmental footprint. Considerations also included the construction of environmentally friendly incinerators to minimize the environmental risks of medical waste and the use of concrete or plastic slabs instead of wood logs for latrine construction to preserve the natural tree cover, and the selection of water supply technologies taking into consideration the capacity of the underlying groundwater aquifers.

UNICEF Sudan also contributed to environmental preservation and climate change adaptation through promoting an integrated water resources management (IWRM) approach that focuses on the coordinated development and management of the different water resources for maximum equitable benefits without compromising the environment. In partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNICEF mainstreamed IWRM principles to secure sustainable water access in 45 communities in the five states of Darfur. The Joint Resilience Project, a multi-sectoral initiative of FAO, UNICEF and WFP, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), also worked to address the impact of El Niño, focusing on the provision of improved drinking water sources and the elimination of open defecation.

Effective leadership

The country management team (CMT) is the central management body for advising the Representative. In 2017, the team met monthly, including 10 regularly scheduled meetings and two extraordinary meetings. Each regular meeting included items for decision making, which reviewed proposals to address areas of (possible) weakness and a review of key management accountabilities and office documents. Each meeting also included monitoring of both country-level performance management indicators such as the scorecard and performance management indicators of selected sections and field offices, on a rotational basis. The CMT meeting agenda also included monitoring of audit and evaluation recommendations, the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP) implementation, and visit recommendations.

Toward the end of 2016, membership of the country management team was expanded to include section chiefs and chiefs of field offices. In the October 2017 meeting, the team agreed to maintain the expanded membership. Strengthened governance and monthly monitoring of the team action points enhanced senior management’s ability to make risk-informed decisions. The country management team also agreed to develop a proposal to improve the functioning of its meetings, including additional focus on strategic and forward-looking issues.

While the 2017 Global Staff Survey (GSS) showed improvement in all areas, staff well-being
remained a priority for the CMT and the Representative, especially during the country programme management plan (CPMP) process. Based on the GSS results, staff association and senior management agreed on an office improvement plan for 2017/2018 focused on personal empowerment, work/life balance, career and professional development, office efficiency and effectiveness.

The business continuity plan (BCP) was updated in 2017 and planning assumptions were tested in the various offices while continuing day-to-day work. The enterprise risk management (ERM) library and mitigation measures were monitored and updated and the 2018-2021 ERM was developed as part of the new country programme document and country programme management plan.

**Financial resources management**

As part of cash management, cash advance planning (CAP) has narrowed the gap between cash forecasting and cash utilization by sections and field offices. To mitigate the risk of uncertainty of the fund transfer request to UNICEF Headquarters, a cut-off date for submission of payments was introduced.

UNICEF Sudan met its authorized benchmark thanks to the finance team summing up total valid payment requests after the cut-off date and concurrently requesting the last fund transfer from Headquarters in adherence with the benchmark level of keeping no more than US$500,000.00.

A total of 16,370 invoices were processed by the Global Shared Service Centre (GSSC) for UNICEF Sudan per the case management report on different transaction modalities, including invoice processing and general accounting. UNICEF Sudan focused on assuring the submission of quality documents while transactions were done remotely by the GSSC.

As of 31 December 2017, and considering some of the direct cash transfers (DCTs) liquidated in 2016, 70 per cent of all DCTs liquidated in 2017 were liquidated within six months from the disbursement date and 67.1 per cent were outstanding for 0-3 months, 30 per cent for 3-6 months, 2.8 per cent for 6-9 months and only 0.1 per cent were outstanding for more than 9 months.

As for disbursements related to partnership cooperation agreements (PCAs), a total of US$6,463,077.50 (26 per cent) was transferred to partners within the deadline of payments processing against approved PCAs (ten working days). A total of US$18,417,718.78 (74 per cent) was transferred to government partners.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan continued to mobilize resources in line with its resource mobilization and partnerships strategy. UNICEF Sudan mobilized as much diversified, predictable and long-term funding as possible while moving toward leveraging local public and private sector resources for children. UNICEF Sudan also worked to improve accountability in the use of government resources and strengthened donor confidence. To increase engagement with Sudanese local partners, a new local partnerships consultant was brought onboard.

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan raised US$45 million against its development programme (target US$42 million) and US$47 million for its humanitarian appeal (target US$96 million), leaving a humanitarian funding gap of US$49 million. UNICEF Sudan also requested an internal Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) loan from Headquarters to respond to the urgent
humanitarian needs in mid-2017. As of 11 December 2017, UNICEF Sudan’s utilization was US$93 million, of which US$18 million was core resources, US$40 million was emergency funds and US$35 million was development funds.

The majority of UNICEF Sudan’s funding continued to come from a limited number of ‘traditional’ bilateral donors. The EU, Germany, Sweden and the United States were the top donors. Additional funding came from Canada, Italy, Japan, Korea, Norway, Qatar, and the United Kingdom, humanitarian pooled funds (CERF, SHF), the private foundations Alwaleed Philanthropies (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Education Above All (Qatar), GAVI and the Global Fund. UNICEF Sudan closely engaged with the National Committees of Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The lifting of US sanctions created momentum and several donors looked at Sudan as an example of programming along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

The overall funding landscape remained limited and the lack of flexible funding continued to pose operational challenges.

In 2017 UNICEF Sudan monitored donor conditions and expiry of funds, improved report quality through an additional layer of editorial quality assurance and submitted a total of 95 donor reports.

Evaluation and research

The country management team was the platform for decision-making regarding the strategic prioritization of studies and evaluations as well as the management response to recommendations from evaluations. The IMEP 2017, as approved by the CMT, included one evaluation and nine studies/surveys. One third party vulnerability assessment was originally included in the IMEP but was removed since this is part of regular programme activities. Of the 10 planned IMEP activities, three studies/surveys were completed, three were ongoing, and three were postponed to 2018.

High-level advocacy by UNICEF Sudan resulted in a commitment from all government stakeholders to undertake the first independent evaluation of the justice system for children with specific emphasis on the effectiveness and impact of the family and child protection units (FCPUs), which were established in Sudan in 2007. This evaluation is expected to be completed in 2018.

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan finalized and validated the report for the independent Evaluation of Humanitarian Action: Child Survival in North Darfur 2010 – 2015, which was completed in 2016. UNICEF Sudan worked toward implementation of the 11 recommendations derived from the evaluation, including regular monitoring of those recommendations through the country management team. Following this evaluation, UNICEF Sudan worked to strengthen its supply chain to avoid leakages.

UNICEF Sudan assessed the prioritization and mainstreaming of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-2017 through an independent Analytical Gender Review of the Country Programme 2013-2017. The analysis found that the four gender priorities of the GAP had not been integrated in the 2013-2016 CPD/CPAP. Gender mainstreaming was then ensured during the implementation of the CPD/CPAP. The following gender priorities were identified for the new Country Programme 2018-2021: girls’ education, female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage.
**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

Measures were taken by UNICEF Sudan in 2017 to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and ensure value-for-money by capitalizing and maintaining the reduced level of operating expenses and prioritizing essential expenditures. Major capital investments were put on hold, including the purchase of furniture and vehicles. UNICEF Sudan continued to re-negotiate local contracts in US dollars to mitigate losses from currency devaluations and made efforts to lower internet providers’ bills and negotiated lower costs for inter-agency common services.

The newly established greening committee will complete an energy and water assessment in 2018. This should pave the way for further operational cost savings, better workspace conditions and ultimately a reduced environmental impact, in line with the global guidance to improve the eco-efficiency and inclusiveness of UNICEF’s premises. Capitalizing on the efficiency gains of 2016, UNICEF continued to manage joint premises in Kassala together with UNDP and UNDSS, which allowed for considerable cost savings.

**Supply management**

Due to funding constraints, only US$19.8 million (42 per cent) programme supplies were ordered from the annual total Supply Plan of US$47.4 million, of which US$1.4 million was international freight. Sixty per cent of supplies were locally procured, 39 per cent from offshore and 1 per cent by direct ordering. Through Procurement Services, US$26.3 million worth of supplies (48 per cent through GAVI, 38 per cent Global Fund and 16 per cent Government of Sudan) and US$405,000 of operational supplies were procured for UNICEF Sudan use. A total of US$7.3 million worth of institutional services were contracted, of which US$2.8 million (38 per cent) was construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Value (US$)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child protection</td>
<td>790,685.97</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,281,618.65</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>695,078.00</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total value</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,767,382.62</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Programme supplies worth US$14 million were delivered to partners, along with US$32.4 million of procurement services supplies, mainly to FMOH, including those ordered in the previous year.
Inventories in the five warehouses were valued at US$2.1 million of which US$116,000 was pre-positioned. US$13.3 million of inventories were distributed, of which US$239,000 were pre-positioned supplies.

The Central Bank of Sudan’s restriction of automatically converting vendors’ US dollar payments into local currency at a fixed exchange rate below the open market rates eroded the benefits of setting up locally procured kits.

In-kind contributions in the form of 300 computers worth US$35,875 were received from Endless Computers and were distributed to government ministries at central and state levels.

During the acute watery diarrhoea emergency, long-term arrangements for chlorine powder and water tanks were established for chlorine tablets for domestic water treatment.

Through advocacy with ministries, delays in shipment clearance at ports of entry were drastically reduced, from an average of four months to one to two weeks, using a pre-clearance facility in which all approvals were obtained prior to shipment arrival.

In consultation with the UNICEF Regional Office and Supply Division, an institutional contract for ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) supply chain analysis was prepared to assess the current nutrition supply chain and provide recommendations for improvement, including complementing current efforts to strengthen capacity of partners through upgrading their warehousing facilities with temperature control. Supply chain practitioners from 12 partner organizations in North Darfur were trained in efficient supply chain management and monitoring systems.
Security for staff and premises

UNICEF Sudan reviewed all requirements to upgrade the security of premises, starting with the main office building in Khartoum. A CCTV system was installed, overhead protection for official vehicles was erected, the security of reception area was reviewed and a new access control system including enforced security doors and mantrap systems was underway.

The dramatic increase in the US dollar exchange rate against the Sudanese Pound impacted the prices of almost all commodities in the country.

After police reports of increased criminality rates and house break-ins in Khartoum, fresh Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards (MORSS) assessments were conducted for staff residences with measures taken to ensure compliance.

In Darfur, construction of a new security reception area for El Fasher field office was done and will be ready to operate in early 2018. Upgrades for other field offices in Darfur were underway, to include new re-enforced entry/exit doors and mantrap systems.

Stakeholders in Darfur and in Khartoum were engaged in order to grant UNICEF access to areas in Darfur. Assessment missions were conducted in Golo, Sortoni and other parts of Darfur.

UNICEF Sudan also coordinated with the local security apparatus and the diplomatic community in monitoring the threat in Sudan. Monthly meetings were convened and information was shared on a daily basis.

UNICEF Sudan coordinated with UNAMID training section to certify staff on safe and secure approaches to the field environment (SSAFE), In 2017, 10 staff members were SSAFE certified or recertified through a refresher training.

The international post in Darfur was abolished and will be replaced by two national posts in Darfur. Another national post of a security assistant will also be created to support the South and West Kordofan field offices.

Human resources

In 2017, 94 posts were abolished (of which 21 were vacant posts) and 67 posts were established that were in line with and responded to the needs of the new Country Programme. UNICEF Sudan worked with the UNICEF Regional Office and Headquarters to place international staff on abolished positions, through Phase One Mobility Exercise. To date, four international staff have been reassigned. Twenty nine recruitments were completed under regular recruitment. A total of 78 individual contractors and consultancy contracts were issued.

UNICEF Sudan organized a visit of the Regional Staff Counsellor, who provided individual and group support for staff on abolished posts. A survey on cost of living was conducted, leading to an increase in post adjustments from 38.7 to 41.9. The Survey on Hardship led to Khartoum and Port Sudan being classified to B from C duty stations. As a result, these two duty stations have become less attractive to international staff.

In collaboration with UNICEF Division of Human Resources, workshops were organized workshops in all offices to sensitize staff and encourage supervisors to embrace the culture
change toward performance management. Two important workshops were conducted for 180 staff members in Khartoum and the field offices in Kassala, Damazine, Nyala, El Geneina, El Fasher, and Kadugli.

The transition and final takeover of Human Resources and Finance transactions by the GSSC as well as the digitalization of all national staff official status files were completed. In response to the AWD outbreak, UNICEF Sudan facilitated hiring of surge capacity staff as well as individual consultants and contractors.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

Resources were leveraged to support Windows 10 and MS Office 2016 rollouts, while users were encouraged to enrol in online trainings to be fully acquainted with the software. The hardware layer was reengineered to be lighter, reducing the total cost of ownership by US$20,000. At the infrastructure layer, to support business continuity assumptions without incurring additional costs, asymmetric internet services were replaced by a dedicated internet service. Through effective negotiation with local Internet service providers (ISPs), the secondary internet link capacity at Khartoum level was doubled to 16Mbps along with an additional link of 4Mbps configured for wireless to improve services provided to consultants and other authorized users. For more flexibility and mobility, the universal WiFi project was successfully completed at the main office, with expansion expected in 2018.

At field office level, a dedicated internet link of 1Mbps was extended to Ad-Daein office, the unstable iDirect 1Mbps VSAT service in Ad-Damazine office was frozen and replaced by a dedicated 2Mbps link, and the Kassala office move project was carried out as planned with zero downtime and within the available resources and timeframe.

UNICEF Sudan continued to effectively and efficiently use MS Office 365, Outlook, Skype for Business, OneDrive and Team Site along with video conferencing facilities internally and externally to respond to ongoing emergency and complex operations. The Sudan Team Site access and use increased significantly, with additional pages added for partnership and resources mobilization.

The limited cash flow and lengthy process of procurement represented major bottlenecks to aligning with global standards and equipment life cycles. The recent lifting of the United States embargo may present an opportunity to overcome these challenges.

**Programme Components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1** At least 3.8 million of the most vulnerable children (girls and boys) including children affected by humanitarian crisis have access and use scaled-up proven sustainable, high impact, integrated quality services for life saving, learning, development and protection in the most deprived localities in Sudan.

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, 210,873 children received treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) (figures as of end of November), representing 84 per cent of the annual target and consistent with the results achieved in 2016. Based on the exponential growth in service delivery, UNICEF decided in 2017 to maintain the coverage achieved in 2016 while improving the quality of services. During the 5-
year country programme, the national CMAM programme rapidly expanded from 122,919 SAM children treated annually in 2013 to more than 225,000 SAM children treated annually in 2016 and 2017 (estimated based on data available up to November 2017). More children affected by humanitarian crisis had access to quality lifesaving immunization and maternal and newborn services in 2017 compared to 2013. The annual nationwide coverage of routine measles vaccination of children under 1 increased from 60.9 per cent in 2013 to 88 per cent in 2017. The target of 95 per cent was not achieved, mainly due to difficulties in reaching children in inaccessible areas. The proportion of live births attended by skilled personnel (doctor, nurse, midwife or auxiliary midwife), increased from 79 per cent in 2013 to 92 per cent in 2017, exceeding the target of 90 per cent.

UNICEF’s assistance effectively contributed to the provision of safe drinking water to approximately 2.9 million vulnerable people in emergency, AWD-prone and/or unserved rural areas in 2017. This represented a significant increase from 700,000 beneficiaries in 2014, and was double the 2017 target of 1.4 million people. Compared to previous years, more new water facilities were constructed in 2017, offering long-term durable solutions to vulnerable people. Water interventions also benefited nearly 45,000 school children in 85 schools and patients and caregivers in 44 health and nutrition centres, contributing to the prevention of water-related diseases.

In 2017, a large outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) occurred in all 18 states of Sudan (more than 36,000 cases and 818 deaths), which diverted resources from other programmes to the diarrhoea outbreak. Most available WASH funds were prioritized for water supply rehabilitation and chlorination and hygiene promotion activities, while sanitation interventions were underfunded, adversely impacting results in this area. Integrated WASH, health, nutrition and communication for development interventions carried out with WHO, enabled containment of the AWD outbreak from its peak of 2,000 cases per week to less than 40 cases per week as of the end of November.

Modest progress was made regarding children’s access to education. The enrolment in basic education (grades 1 to 8) increased from 5,037,618 children (46.4 per cent girls) in 2011/2012 to 5,877,324 children (47.5 per cent girls) in 2016/2017. The Gender Parity Index rose from 0.87 to 0.90 during the same period, indicating that more girls are enrolling in basic education, possibly due to the successful implementation of the Girls Education Strategy that was developed with UNICEF’s support.

In 2017, UNICEF supported 220,736 out-of-school children in accessing formal or non-formal education, reaching a total of more than 1.8 million previously out-of-school children during the course of the country programme. This represents a reduction in out-of-school children by 58 per cent from the number reported in the 2010 EMIS.

There are still worrying trends in drop-out rates, with only two of three students who start grade 1 completing basic education. There are also worrying trends in quality of education, with the 2016 National Learning Assessment reporting that 40 per cent of grade 3 students were not able to read.

In 2017, 462,172 children (41.3 per cent girls) at risk and victims of violence, abuse and exploitation benefited from preventive and responsive child protection services. The number of children in contact with the law who were diverted outside of the justice system increased significantly over the past three years, from 1,226 children (78 per cent boys) in 2015 to 2,227
children (77 per cent boys) in 2017, indicating a positive change in the justice system increasingly focusing on children in contact with the law as victims. The number of children in detention decreased from 238 per 100,000 in 2016 to 218 per 100,000 in 2017. UNICEF strengthened alternative family-based systems and de-institutionalization without parental care. Through strong partnerships with the Government and CSOs at national and state level, UNICEF ensured that 5,033 abandoned children were reunified or placed in family-based alternative care services or in Kalafa (Islamic Adoption) in 2017, up from 3,491 children in 2015.

Sudan is one of the pilot countries that adopted the ‘new way of working’ to bridge the humanitarian-development-peace divide, including the multi-year humanitarian strategy 2017-2019. UNICEF Sudan positioned itself as a leader and convener in this area. This resulted in increased harmonization between UN agencies and in positioning UNICEF as a partner of choice for donors and the Government.

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan developed its new CPD 2018-2021, which was approved by the Executive Board in July. As a step toward a platform for social protection in Sudan, UNICEF supported a participatory process of policy formulation, in support of the drafting of Sudan’s first National Social Policy Strategic Document. The capacity of 312 government counterparts was strengthened in results-based management.

Despite the progress made, wide disparities in service coverage by geographic, rural-urban, gender and wealth quintile dimensions still existed. This was worsened by the complex operating environment in Sudan, restriction of access to certain areas, limited funding, limited government investment in social services, high training costs and high turnover of government staff. UNICEF tried to mitigate some of these constraints through continuous advocacy, integration of services and increased public and private partnerships.

**OUTPUT 1** At least 250,000 of severely malnourished children in the most high-prevalence and high burden localities are reached with CMAM services (including national wide interventions)

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF supported the development and implementation of the joint national CMAM scale-up plan (MOH / UNICEF / WFP). As a result, the national coverage of treatment for children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) increased from 18 per cent in 2012 to 41 per cent in 2016. In 2017 UNICEF maintained the 2016 expanded level of coverage while improving the quality of services.

In total, 862,325 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were treated during a 5 year period. Ninety per cent of the target of 250,000 of these children were treated annually in 2016 and 2017, with the support of Ministry of Health, UNICEF and partners. Children were treated across the country and in both emergency and non-emergency settings in 180 out of 190 localities, including in the newly accessed areas such as the Jebel Mara region and Blue Nile states, and South Sudanese Refugees both within and outside of camps. This includes a total of 664 outpatient treatment programmes (OTPs) in 72 out of UNICEF’s 75 high-priority localities and camps (The three remaining localities, Al Buram, Heiban and Umdorein, remained inaccessible) as well as 42 OTPs serving the SSR populations. At end of October 2017, there were 1m374 primary health facilities offering functional SAM treatment services, increasing the percentage of health facilities with SAM treatment to 48.4 per cent.

During the last two years, UNICEF increased its emphasis on active case finding through
community-based mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screening done through mothers of children already undergoing treatment for SAM and mothers support group members. UNICEF provided support to Ministry of Health for targeted MUAC screenings in the poorest performing localities to identify and refer new cases of SAM.

In 2017 UNICEF aimed to improve the quality of CMAM services across Sudan through the use of real time mobile technology for on-site monitoring and reporting. At national level, the program achieved a cure rate of 87.8 per cent, a defaulter rate of 9.5 per cent and a death rate of 1 per cent, all exceeding minimum standards and showing improvement compared to the previous year (which had an 85.6 per cent cure rate, an 11.6 per cent defaulter rate and a 1.2 per cent death rate). Performance indicators were also monitored at locality and centre level, and 80 per cent of the out-patient feeding centres reported having reached the minimum SPHERE standards in 2017. Other quality improvements included a reduction in the number of OTPs experiencing stockout of key nutrition commodities, from 159 in 2016 to 23 in 2017.

With the generous support from its donors, both financially and in-kind, and with a significant financial contribution by the Government of Sudan, UNICEF supported the delivery of SAM treatment through the national CMAM services. In 2017 UNICEF supported part of the procurement and the entire distribution of the RUTF pipeline of 218,313 cartons, which allowed the supply pipeline to be maintained for the entire country without any breaks during the year.

**OUTPUT 2** By the end of 2016, at least 80% of under five years children and 50% of new-borns in targeted localities are benefiting from integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI), essential new borne care, postnatal care and immunization services at health facility and community level (including nationwide interventions).

**Analytical statement of progress**
In 2017, no stock out of measles vaccine was reported at the national level. Eighty eight per cent of children were vaccinated against measles by November 2017 (EPI Administrative Data). The established target is 95 per cent elimination 2020.

A total of 2,065,645 (100 per cent) of children aged 6 months to 15 years received one dose of measles vaccine during a measles outbreak response campaign conducted in Gezira state in May. An additional 953,862 infants nationwide received the first dose of measles through routine immunization. UNICEF supported the procurement of vaccines and operational costs, together with the Ministry of Health. As part of the polio endgame strategy implementation, UNICEF supported two rounds of Polio Sub National Immunization Days (SNIDs), during which 4,017,216 children under five years of age (99.6 per cent) were vaccinated.

More than 1.5 million women of childbearing age (15-49 years), accounting for 88 percent of the target, received two rounds of tetanus toxoid vaccinations through campaigns conducted in 45 at-risk localities. A total of 4,421 children under the age of 2 years were protected against measles as part of the emergency response to the Jabal Marra crisis in Central Darfur. UNICEF supported basic and refresher training for 283 vaccinators and 65 cold chain technicians nationwide and equipped them with the required knowledge and skills to deliver quality vaccination campaigns.

The national coverage of IMCI services increased from 65 percent in 2016 to 72 percent in 2017. The coverage of integrated community case management of childhood illnesses (ICCM) services stood at 56 percent. In 2017 UNICEF focused on advocating and supporting expansion
of IMCI in health facilities in the targeted 72 localities. Of the pregnant women who attended ANC in PMTCT centres, 36 per cent were tested for HIV. A total of 76 pregnant women tested positive between January and October 2017. UNICEF also supported active referral to ART centres as well as capacity building of health care providers. The low percentage of women tested for HIV is as a result of prolonged shortages of HIV test kits due to procurement challenges (stock out from March to October 2016) and a three month period of retraining health staff on new HIV test kits.

Through the primary health care expansion programme, the cumulative number of community midwives with skills to perform safe delivery in target communities increased from 520 in 2016 to 1,020 in 2017. UNICEF supported additional capacity building through the training of 208 maternal and newborn health service providers on early essential newborn care, including Helping Baby Breathe and Kangaroo Mother Care. UNICEF also provided 260 midwives with essential midwifery equipment (including newborn resuscitators). These efforts benefited 68,700 newborns (87.6 per cent of the target) with essential newborn care services at health facilities and at community level, and contributed to 92 per cent coverage with skilled health personnel at birth.

OUTPUT 3 Annually, at least 1.4 million most vulnerable population in emergency affected and underserved areas have equitable, sustainable and gender sensitive access to new and rehabilitated improved drinking water sources.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF and implementing partners successfully provided a lifesaving gender sensitive improved drinking water supply for 2,909,285 vulnerable people (1,440,946 males, 1,468,339 females) in conflict and acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) emergency affected and severely underserved rural areas (208 per cent of the target of 1.4 million people). UNICEF contributions represented 68 per cent of the WASH sector achievements on water. Due to the major AWD crisis, most of the available funds were prioritized for water supply rehab/chlorination and hygiene promotion activities. The bulk of the water supply results came from rehabilitation and chlorination activities (85 per cent). Allocations for sanitation interventions were underfunded, adversely impacting the results for sanitation in 2017.

A total of 428,880 completely unserved people (312,260 emergency affected and 116,620 vulnerable rural population) gained access to newly constructed sustainable improved water facilities (107 per cent of the target of 400,00 people) and 2,332,764 conflict and AWD affected people were provided with improved water supply through sustained operation and maintenance water disinfection of water at point of collection, transport and in households.

UNICEF Sudan played an important role in the development and operationalization of the national AWD response plan with MOH, DWSU and WHO, which led to the successful containment and reduction of AWD. As of November 2017 (week 45 of the outbreak), there was a significant tapering down of the weekly AWD cases, from approximately 2,000 cases in June 2017 to 39 cases. A total of 36,608 cases and 816 deaths were reported across all 18 affected states. With UNICEF support, approximately 2 million AWD affected/at risk population in the most affected states and localities had access to safe water through the massive disinfection program targeting water sources, water transporters and households. UNICEF also deployed experienced staff to the key affected states to support a coherent and integrated AWD response.

As part of an integrated response to addressing severe malnutrition cases, UNICEF Sudan and
implementing partners provided lifesaving water interventions to the most deprived in the newly opened areas of Jebel Marra in Darfur, previously inaccessible for many years due to security reasons. This resulted in 52,000 people gaining access to improved water sources through construction and rehabilitation of improved water facilities.

Communities management for operation and maintenance (CMOM) of WASH services was one of the main thrusts of UNICEF’s work aimed at ensuring community ownership and long-term sustainability. As a result, 86,000 internally displaced persons in Al-Neem camp of East Darfur now financially/administratively manage the operation and maintenance of their WASH services, and have demonstrated viable water tariff collection and management. An additional 150,000 internally displaced persons in the two major settlements around El Fasher and Zalingei towns of North and Central Darfur states, respectively, were progressively transitioning from full dependence on aid to self-reliance. Sustainable water infrastructure and water tariff systems were being established with full community consultation/participation. Sixty four communities were supported to manage their WASH services (64 per cent of the target of 100 communities).

OUTPUT 4 At least 50% of out-of-school vulnerable girls and boys in selected localities have access to formal and non-formal inclusive and equitable education opportunities

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF technical and financial support has enabled 1,805,519 previously out-of-school children to gain access to education opportunities in basic schools and alternative learning programme (ALP) centres in 15 states, representing 99.5 per cent achievement against the 1.3 million target for the CPD (2013-2017). Of those children, 220,736 (47 per cent girls) were supported in 2017. Only 84 per cent of the 2017 out-of-school children target was achieved, mainly due to inadequate funding.

Approximately 2 million children were provided with adequate teaching and learning materials and/or other supplies such as school uniforms and/or dignity kits during the period of 2013-2017. In 2017 alone, 545,389 children were reached with teaching and learning materials. Of those, 184,936 vulnerable girls received a full package of social assistance that included school uniforms and/or dignity kits in addition to the teaching and learning materials. The availability of the educational materials and other social assistance helped to offset the direct and indirect cost of schooling for poor families and thereby encouraged enrolment and retention.

A total of 761,263 children affected by emergencies in different parts of Sudan were able to access formal and non-formal education in child friendly learning environments established with UNICEF support. In 2017, a total of 22,411 (48 per cent girls) out of an annual target of 115,000 were able to access formal and non-formal education in child-friendly learning environments through the establishment of 350 classrooms with teacher’s offices and 52 blocks of gender sensitive toilets.

UNICEF also provided teaching and learning materials and recreation kits for 223,415 emergency affected children (52 per cent girls). Only 19 per cent of the annual target of 115,000 was achieved due to lack of funding. Cumulatively, a total of 1,039,791 children were reached with teaching and learning materials and recreation kits between 2013 and 2017. Education in emergencies is not seen as a lifesaving priority by many donors. Further sensitization and advocacy is needed to illustrate its importance.

A total of 6,420 grade eight conflict-affected children (3,194 boys, 3,226 girls) were supported to
take their examinations as a prerequisite for completion of the basic education level and transition to secondary education. The children were supported with travel, room and board costs during Grade 8 Examination week in Central, South and North Darfur and White Nile states. Of these, 926 children were South Sudanese Refugees (SSR) (423 girls and 503 boys) living in refugee camps in White Nile state. The pass rate among the SSR was 86 per cent (81% for girls and 91% for boys).

OUTPUT 5 At-risk boys and girls including adolescents have improved access and benefit from age specific integrated psycho-social support, and child friendly policy, legal, diversion and alternative measures to detention and alternative care.

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017 UNICEF Sudan achieved significant progress in strengthening the continuum of care and protection and in increasing the number of girls and boys benefiting from essential child protection and social welfare services. With funding from the Common Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Germany, Norway, the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and UNICEF, life-saving quality integrated child protection services were provided in hard to reach areas in Jebel Marra, Kurmuk and Nuba mountains in a timely manner. More than 187,962 children (95,805 boys and 92,157 girls) benefited from quality and integrated psychosocial support (PSS) through child friendly spaces, education settings and home-based visits in 59 localities (out of the 72 targeted) in 12 states. More than 132,783 adolescents (63,130 girls and 69,653 boys) from South Sudanese refugee population and their host communities benefited from life skills and PSS. UNICEF’s support enabled partners to ensure that 3,934 separated and unaccompanied children (2,244 boys and 1,690 girls) were reunited with their families or placed in family-based alternative care. To address the root causes of migration, UNICEF provided vulnerable families and children with an essential package of social services and supported 500 children, half of whom were children on the move, providing life skills and vocational training, as well as cash assistance.

Children born to unwedded parents continued to be among the most vulnerable children, particularly boys, who are difficult to place in Kafala (Islamic Adoption) due to Sudanese tradition. Through UNICEF’s support to the Ministries of Social Welfare at national and state level, approximately 1,017 abandoned children (452 boys and 565 girls) benefited from a protective family environment under the Kafala.

Through strong partnerships with the family and child protection units (FCPUs), Ministry of Social Welfare, Judiciary, Prosecution, and civil society organizations and with UNICEF financial and technical support, a total of 108,705 children (63,212 boys and 45,493 girls) in contact with the law in 62 localities in 18 states benefited from child friendly protection services and referral provided by FCPUs during 2015-2017. In 2017, 2,170 children (1,481 boys and 689 girls) in conflict with the law were diverted out of the judicial system, accounting for almost 27 percent of the total number of 8,124.


More than 993 parent teacher association (PTA) members (12.8 per cent female) and 6,634 primary education teachers (32 per cent female) were equipped with knowledge of PSS and
protection of children.

Despite the Government’s increased investment in the child protection sector, the sub-national institutions are not functioning well due to limited financial resources, number of social and capacities, weak cross sectoral coordination and the high turn-over of government staff. Mitigation strategies included advocating for sector-specific financial and human resources, including for social workers at the decentralised level, and capacity development.

OUTPUT 6 Strengthened national capacities and systems for results based planning, coordination and performance management including Emergency Preparedness & Response at national level and in 12 targeted States

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, at least 312 government counterparts from sector line ministries in 12 states of Sudan gained solid skills, knowledge and capacities on results-based planning and management. Through a partnership with RedR-UK, a 5 day results-based management (RBM) training based on UNICEF’s global RBM training modules was organized at the state level. This investment in capacity building created a new common vision and engagement of State Government stakeholders for focusing public financial investment and accountability/reporting on results that demonstrate change in the well-being of children in the context of decentralization and local development.

In 2017 UNICEF Sudan was elected as co-lead of the social development sector for the national adaptation of the SDGs in Sudan. UNICEF led the basic social services pillar of the UNDAF, resulting in the prioritization of health, nutrition, education, WASH and social protection in the new UNDAF 2017-2021.

In 2017, the practice of decentralization of annual planning was enhanced through the bottom-up approach of annual programmatic and budget planning completed for 12 states and 5 sectors in co-leadership of state Governors and chiefs of field offices and sector line ministries in collaboration with chief of sections at federal level.

OUTCOME 2 Children, especially adolescents (both boys and girls), families and communities in the most deprived localities are resilient and adopt appropriate practices to reduce their vulnerability.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF continued to support resilience building and strengthening of the utilization of social services by communities through sensitization of the poorest and the most vulnerable households. 2017 was the final year of the DFID-funded joint UNICEF/WFP/FAO nutrition-resilience project (JRP) in eastern Sudan, delivering an integrated package of health, WASH, nutrition, food security and livelihoods services to improve households and communities’ resilience to droughts and floods, with a focus on improving maternal and child nutrition. The joint project built the resilience of communities to respond to the effects of floods and droughts and achieved a 10 per cent reduction in stunting among children aged 6-24 months. During the 2017 AWD outbreak, there was not a single AWD case in the project localities, despite having the same exposure risks as non-project localities.

UNICEF prevention of malnutrition support during the 5-year country programme focused on
community-level interventions in 22 deprived localities, through a network of 3,000 mother support groups that provide individual counselling, support and information to mothers to promote breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices, as well as improved hygiene and care seeking practices. In 2017 alone, counselling was provided to 285,070 caregivers, and an additional 339,318 caregivers were reached through facility-based counselling.

UNICEF continued roll-out of the Alshuffa’a Alsoghar communication initiative to promote six essential family practices with women of child-bearing age. The six family practices include use of bed nets, breastfeeding, correct use of ORS, handwashing with soap, taking children for vaccination and promoting antenatal care (ANC). To date, the initiative has been rolled out in 12 out of 18 states and has reached approximately 94,500 women, who each reach an average of six households every month with key messages on essential practices. This amounts to a total of 3 million individuals reached. The community engagement component of the Alshuffa’a Initiative consists of Habuuba clubs where women come together to discuss child survival practices. This element has been rolled out in seven states. In 2017, 210 facilitators, each responsible for 30 Habuuba clubs, were trained. As a result of the Alshuffa’a Initiative, the proportion of pregnant women who attended ANC at least four times during their pregnancy increased from 50.7 per cent in 2013 to 79.1 per cent in 2017.

To increase access to improved sanitation services, UNICEF supported the construction and provision of sanitation facilities, the promotion of improved sanitation practices, and community approach to total sanitation (CATS) in emergency-affected, AWD-affected and under-served rural areas. In 2017, nearly 430,000 people (31 per cent of the target) were reached with these activities, CATS interventions resulted in 77 open defecation free communities, and 75,000 school children (53 per cent girls) in 167 schools gained access to child friendly and gender sensitive sanitation facilities and learned about proper sanitation and hygiene practices.

Sanitation coverage fell short of the planned target mainly because of the limited availability of funding, low capacities of partners and the diversion of available UNICEF and Government resources to AWD prevention and control. The success of CATS and the ongoing development of a ‘National Roadmap for the Elimination of Open Defecation in Sudan’ are promising for the ‘Scaling-Up Sanitation Agenda’ that UNICEF will focus on in the coming years.

In response to the AWD outbreak, nearly 8.6 million affected people (551 per cent of the target) in 18 states were reached with hygiene and promotion messages, constituting a major line of defence against AWD.

The percentage of children staying in school to grade 8 increased from 56.5 per cent in 2013 to 63.4 per cent in 2017, indicating an improvement in resilience among children to stay in basic schooling longer. Life skills education and extracurricular activities in child clubs focusing on building resilience among adolescents may have contributed to this. Girls registered a slightly better grade 8 success rate of 84.9 per cent compared to 81.3 per cent for boys. UNICEF supported building resilience and adaptability of children in marginalized communities through capacity building of School Improvement Committees in developing, implementing, financing and monitoring school improvement plans (SIP) to enhance quality and inclusive education and contributed to the long-term goals of improved learning outcomes, retention and completion rates among students. In 2017, UNICEF supported 1,760 PTA and SIP committee members from 636 schools.

Ongoing barriers to education enrolment and retention were insufficient government allocation for basic education, out-of-pocket expenses, opportunity costs of schooling, long distances to
schools, lack of qualified teachers, limited community participation in school management, and social norms.

To expand knowledge on child protection and reduce children’s risk to being subjected to harmful practices, UNICEF, in partnership with the national and state councils, civil society organizations and donors, scaled up community engagement programmes, which resulted in 1,008 communities declaring the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting. UNICEF and partners completed the third phase of the Saleema evaluation, which suggests that one in seven women use the word Saleema to describe an uncircumcised girls, that 88.6 per cent of women with knowledge about Saleema favour the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting, and that continuing campaign efforts will likely decrease the harmful practice in Sudan.

A regional child marriage study conducted in 2017 suggests that child marriage has recently begun to decrease.

Despite the progress made in 2017, financial barriers and quality and affordability of services remained the main bottlenecks of use of basic services in Sudan.

OUTPUT 1 Enhanced knowledge in 80% of targeted communities for improved IYCF practices for children under-2 years in prioritized localities.

Analytical statement of progress
Good nutrition is closely linked to exclusive breastfeeding; however, in Sudan, while 87 per cent of mothers initiate breastfeeding at birth, only 55 percent of babies are exclusively breastfed for six months (MICS 2014). This is mainly due to the widely-held belief that introducing water during the first six months of breastfeeding is not contrary to exclusive breastfeeding. Challenges also remain for parents to provide adequate complementary feeding for children aged 6-23 months.

To address this challenge, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and partners to develop and rollout a national infant and young child feeding (IYCF) strategy that aims to improve how young children are fed, from birth up to 2 years of age. UNICEF supported the interpersonal counselling, support and information sharing to caregivers through community-based structures to enable them to provide better feeding, including breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices, care including improved hygiene and care seeking practices for their children through the support. Implementation of the IYCF strategy began in 2015 with establishment of 660 mother support groups (MSGs) in 22 high-priority localities in 11 states, expanded to 1,480 MSGs in 2016. By the end of 2017, UNICEF had supported the establishment of 3,000 community-based mothers support groups (MSGs), primarily located in communities in 22 of the most deprived localities.

Through the established MSGs, 285,070 caregivers were provided with counselling in 2017 and an additional 339,318 caregivers were reached through facility-based counselling, including counselling of SAM mothers at OTPs. Ownership of the community counselling approach by the FMOH and SMOH and both international and national civil society groups led to establishment of more groups than planned in the initial phase and subsequent counselling of a higher number of caregivers.

UNICEF also provided support for vitamin A supplementation for children aged 6-59 as well as
the provision of iron folate supplements for pregnant women. UNICEF was unable to reach its target for Vitamin A distribution in 2017. This target was planned during the midterm review (MTR) based on an assumption of mass vitamin A distribution campaigns to be administered alongside polio vaccinations. However, since Sudan was declared polio-free shortly after the MTR, national vaccination campaigns have stopped. Instead, Vitamin A supplementation campaigns are only carried out at hoc at sub-national level with short timeframes for the preparations, including very little notice provided to the Department of Nutrition or UNICEF. As a result, challenges were experienced with ensuring adequate supply during the latter part of the country programme. While vitamin A supplements were provided across states, only the children of the five Darfur states received both the first and second dose of Vitamin A, resulting in the very low coverage of this indicator.

OUTPUT 2 At least 80% of mothers including pregnant women in selected communities in targeted localities have comprehensive knowledge and capacity to seek appropriate neonatal, child, and maternal health care, including HIV/AIDS (including nationwide interventions).

Analytical statement of progress
At national level, the percentage of mothers and caregivers with knowledge of at least 5 of the UNICEF essential family practices is estimated to be more than 85 percent by November 2017 (anecdotal evidence from program reports from NGO partners and MOH), which is higher than the previous year. This was largely because of the extensive mobilization activities in the roll out of the Ashuffa strategy. An impact study is planned for the first quarter of 2018.

UNICEF supported interventions to promote comprehensive knowledge on key family practices and appropriate care seeking behaviours as part of the Jebal Mara Response Plan implemented in West, North and central Jebal Mara localities through a partnership with SMOH and Sawa Sudan Organization. Through this partnership, 17,343 home visits were conducted by trained community health promoters (CHPs) to increase the knowledge and skills of 104,058 individuals to adopt key family practices.

At the federal level, a national communication plan for routine and supplementary immunization was drafted and is expected to be finalized in early 2018. Social mobilization activities were implemented during the polio, measles and TT vaccination campaigns, which contributed to high vaccination coverage levels for each of the antigens.

The percentage of pregnant women receiving an HIV test while attending ANC at PMTCT centres increased from 10 per cent in 2013 to 36 per cent in 2017, which falls short of the target of 55 per cent. This shortfall is related to the stigma that is still associated with HIV/AIDS in some states, as well as prolonged stock out of test kits from March to October 2016 and the fact that no HIV tests were conducted during the first quarter of 2017.

OUTPUT 3 1.4 million most vulnerable population in emergency affected and underserved areas use sustainable, equitable and gender sensitive improved sanitation facilities and practice proper hygiene.

Analytical statement of progress
A total of 429,083 emergency affected and vulnerable rural people gained access to improved sanitation facilities duly considering the privacy and safety of women and girls. Thirty four percent of these (146,193 people, 55 percent females) were internally displaced persons and
refugees in Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Nile, and White Nile States. Of the total, 89,035 people (40,065 males, 48,970 females) in humanitarian situations were provided with access to improved sanitation through the construction of new sanitation facilities. Through Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS), UNICEF and partners enabled 155,031 people (51 percent females) in the rural areas, especially in priority localities in Kassala, South and West Kordofan, five Darfur States and Blue Nile states, gain access to improved sanitation facilities. A total of 77 communities were declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF).

2017 marked a milestone for the scaling up of sanitation in Sudan. A high level Institutional triggering workshop was organized by Ministry of Health jointly with UNICEF and Plan International. Workshop participants endorsed the development of a Roadmap for ODF Sudan.

The Environmental Sanitation & Hygiene Master plan for El Fasher town North Darfur, the first in Sudan, was developed and launched with funding from DFID. Elimination of open defecation by encouraging households to build and use latrines is the top priority of the Master Plan. Youth groups were involved for the first time on sanitation marketing and hygiene promotion in the Eastern States of Sudan. The youth were trained on construction of different types of low cost household latrines, entrepreneurship, business plan development and latrine promotion. Engaging youth is a key strategy to accelerate locality-wide sanitation, leading eventually to an open defecation free Sudan.

Despite higher results on sanitation achieved in 2017, progress in sanitation coverage continued to be low due to low budgetary allocations within the states for sanitation promotion and follow-up. With one-third of households practicing open defecation, coupled with poor hygiene practices, inadequate treatment and storage of drinking water, under-served communities continued to be vulnerable to high incidence of diarrhoeal diseases and malnutrition among children.

A total of 8,591,951 emergency affected and vulnerable rural people (53 percent females) were reached with hygiene promotion interventions focused on hand washing with soap (551 per cent of the 2017 target). The behaviour change with regard to hygiene promotion among the beneficiary population will be measured through a KAP survey in 2018 or MICS in 2018/19.

Community volunteers played a major role in facilitating community discussions and for the first time, the Ministry of Health, with support of UNICEF, organized a marathon in Khartoum to raise awareness about the importance of handwashing with soap and sanitation.

With UNICEF support, 167 schools (111 per cent of the 2017 target) were provided with access to improved sanitation facilities. A total of 75,000 students (35,226 boys and 39,774 girls) gained access to gender sensitive and child-friendly latrines.

**OUTPUT 4** Schools in deprived localities are empowered to enhance quality and inclusive education.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education on institutional and individual capacity building for adaptation and roll out of child friendly school standards using school self-assessment and improvement plans. A total of 17,931 parent teachers association (PTA) members were trained with UNICEF support between 2014 and 2017 to enhance their capacity for development, implementation, financing, and monitoring of school improvement plans to enhance quality and
inclusive education using child friendly schools principles. In 2017 UNICEF continued to roll out PTA trainings and 1,760 PTA and school improvement planning (SIP) committee members (40 per cent females) in 636 schools were trained and 229 schools (114.5 per cent of the target of 200 schools) from seven states (five Darfurs, Kassala and Gadaref) had developed SIPs and received school grants to implement them. Cumulatively, 641 schools have developed child friendly school-based improvement plans with school grants between 2014 and 2017. The PTA capacity development also included trainings in education-in-emergencies and psychosocial support to manage schools and to enhance resilience of humanitarian affected children to cope with displacement and adverse effects of violence. In 2017, a total of 993 PTA members (12.8 per cent females) were trained on education-in-emergencies and psychosocial support.

Psychosocial support and life skills education for adolescents were provided through child clubs to strengthen adolescents’ coping mechanisms and increase peace building education. A total of 286,575 adolescents in formal and non-formal education participated in skills-based extracurricular activities during the period of 2014 to 2017. With UNICEF support, in 2017, 132,783 adolescent students (48.1 per cent girls) increased social and emotional life-skills (SELS) to promote self-control, negotiation skills, reconciliation, joint problem solving, and leadership skills through trainings on various life skills and citizenship education topics. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to revise the child club training manual to incorporate life skills education. The revised training manual incorporating life skills education was finalized.

In 2017, 6,634 primary teachers (32 per cent females) were equipped with knowledge and skills to implement child-friendly, inclusive, learner-centred methodologies through various in-service teacher trainings supported by UNICEF (96 per cent of target of 6,910 teachers). Of these, 983 teachers have increased knowledge and competencies on how to develop life skills and citizenship education. A total of 492 MoE staff were trained on data collection, analysis and reporting on EMIS at school, locality and national levels. A total of 13,769 primary school teachers were trained with UNICEF support since 2015.

UNICEF Sudan, in partnership with World Bank Basic Education Recovery Project (BERP), used the lessons learned and supported the Ministry of Education to develop guidelines for national rollout of SIP, utilizing the child-friendly school framework. The SIP guidelines for national rollout were approved in 2017.

Programme implementation was affected by the ongoing conflict, weak capacity among government partners and inadequate availability of flexible funds. Early marriage and child labour (household chores), especially in rural areas among poor uneducated families, continued to be major barriers, especially for girls.

OUTPUT 5 Communities, families and children including adolescent equipped with knowledge and life skills to protect them from separation, violence and traditional harmful practices

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF, in partnership with national and state councils of child welfare and CSOs, and through support from DFID and the Global Joint FGM/C Programme, mobilized women, children and youth in 48 communities affected by armed conflict and displacement in Blue Nile and North Kordofan toward the abandonment of FGM/C. This led to eight public declarations in Blue Nile and four declarations in South Kordofan against the practice in 2017, which brings the cumulative number of community declarations to 1,008 (compared to 995 in 2016).
A total of 30,158 community members (18,359 females and 11,799 males) participated in community dialogues on abandonment of FGM/C in 20 localities in 10 targeted states. A pool of 800 trained community facilitators sustained the effective engagement of women, men, youth and boys and girls groups on abandonment of FGM/C and child marriage. UNICEF provided technical and financial support to Ministries of Education and SCCWs to launch Saleema sensitization and dialogues in 182 girls’ primary schools in Gezira and River Nile states. A total of 65,800 girls and boys were reached with positive messages on the abandonment of FGM/C and child marriage.

With technical and financial support from UNICEF and in partnership with SCCW, MoE, Health, Agriculture and States Universities, more than 6,000 adolescents, including 114 out-of-school adolescents, were involved in life skills training and were empowered to effectively establish, run and lead 126 school associations in Northern State and North Kordofan State.

A total of 88 girls’ clubs in 88 primary schools (35,000 members) provided the space and venue to participate, lead and decide on their own issues and empowered them to be more vocal and engaged in such dialogues. They are leading weekly discussion and advocacy sessions on FGM/C and child marriage.

Through life skills training and open discussion, 500 youth were empowered to become change agents and hold inter-generational community dialogues. The state government authorities in North Kordofan, Khartoum and Gazira endorsed the youth conference. More than 132,783 adolescent students (48.1 per cent girls) strengthened their social and emotional life-skills and were equipped with skills to exercise self-protection.

With financial and technical support from UNICEF, more than 5,000 members of 676 community-based child protection networks (CBCPNs) in 16 states effectively contributed to the prevention and emergency response, including PSS, FTR, GBV, MRE, referral to services and awareness raising on issues related to child protection in emergency. These networks also supported monitoring and response to grave violations against children. Some of these networks also supported other child protection interventions on social norms and harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage.

In December of 2017, the National Alliance on Accelerating Efforts to Abandon Child Marriage was established with the involvement of the Government, academia, civil society organisations and UN agencies, with aim of maximizing impact and harmonized actions to reduce child marriage in Sudan.

**OUTCOME 3** Evidence and coordination enables government, communities and partners to improve capacity and systems for equity-focused funding, advocacy, policies & legislation, strategies, planning & supply chain management to scale up results for children.

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF Sudan continued to play a leadership role in promoting evidence and knowledge for children that was used for public advocacy and awareness of children’s rights in a challenging and evolving aid environment marked by low national capital investment in the social sectors. The results from MICS 2014, published in 2017, were widely disseminated. Six evaluations, reviews and other studies were completed, including the Situation Analysis of Children of Sudan and the study on costing and financing of the Education Sector, serving as key strategic evidence for influencing political commitment and public financing. UNICEF
contributed to strengthening of the Government’s capacity for SDG monitoring through support for the development of SudanInfo, a web-based, interactive mobile phone application by the Central Bureau of Statistics. SudanInfo facilitates easier access, visualization and use of infographics data for monitoring progress against SDG indicators for children.

The Government’s commitment to nutrition continued to increase. While the functionality of the Scaling Up Nutrition coordination mechanisms, including the high-level Food Security and Nutrition Commission, faced some challenges, financial contributions for nutrition increased, bringing the Government’s contribution to the CMAM supply chain up to US$ 10 million in 2017. Nutrition, as a collective outcome, was included in the Multi-Year Humanitarian Response Plan, providing an entry point for bridging the humanitarian-development nexus in Sudan.

UNICEF and partners, including GAVI, continued their advocacy with the Government for the co-financing of traditional vaccines. Despite the successes of the National EPI programme, the vaccine programme is mainly dependent on traditional partners (GAVI, UNICEF and WHO). With Sudan now entering the transition phase toward self-financing from GAVI and Polio GPEI support, it is imperative that the Government gradually take over this cost as well. During the various GAVI missions to Sudan in 2017, there were joint efforts to advocate with MoH and MoF on the importance of self-financing traditional vaccines as a big step toward program sustainability. The Ministries of Health, Finance and International Cooperation have committed to address this in 2018.

By co-chairing WASH sector coordination forums, UNICEF reinforced sector coordination, influencing sector prioritization, planning and implementation in 12 states and at the national level. UNICEF contributed to the ongoing WASH sector reform, including mainstreaming climate change considerations, thereby helping shape the WASH priorities for SDG-6. UNICEF actively contributed to bridging the humanitarian-development divide through the development of long-term strategic plans (water and sanitation master plans for El Fasher town) that encapsulate the needs of internally displaced persons along with the overall needs of the residents.

Increased resources were made available to the education sector thanks to a successful application for US$76.5 million from the Global Partnership in Education to support implementation of the Basic Education Recovery Project (BERP). UNICEF, as a coordinating agency, played a significant role in the application process. The 2017 BERP project status report indicated significant progress in many components, including procurement of approximately 12.9 million textbooks. However, the share of government expenditures allocated for education remained static at 10.3 per cent during the period 2013- 2015, despite the Government’s financial commitment to increase the GDP share of education from 2.7 per cent by 1 per cent annually. UNICEF and development partners supported the Ministry of Education to develop a five-year Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018- 2022). The costing and financing study was completed in 2017.

The rights of Sudanese children affected by the armed conflict took an important step forward through engagement on recruitment and use of children with the Government of Sudan and other parties to the conflict, including SPLM and Darfur armed groups. With funding from Canada, Germany and Sweden, UNICEF’s advocacy and technical support and joint dialogue of UNICEF, UNCT and UNAMID, major milestones were achieved regarding the implementation of the Action Plans to Prevent and End Recruitment of Children signed in 2016.

Since the midterm review, new evidence on child protection was generated and snapshots on female genital mutilation/cutting, child marriage and sexual and gender based violence data are
now available and used for advocacy for positive changes toward girls’ equity and empowerment. The evidence also informs the direction of policies and programmes and strengthens behavioural and social changes.

UNICEF, through its financial and technical support and long-term partnership with Parliamentarians, promoted the inclusion of child rights and child protection into the draft new National Constitution. There was increased investment in the child protection system through allocation of ZAKAT (Islamic tax) fund for vulnerable children, including victims of violence and children with disabilities. The Government allocated more than US$224,719 for Mine Action and Mine Risk Education and US$28,000 for the operational cost.

UNICEF’s advocacy strategy was revised to reflect political, economic and social changes. Advocacy milestones achieved during the course of the year included: scaling up and amplifying community engagement on the Sudan Free of FGM Campaign on digital and traditional media platforms and channels; advancing the nutrition agenda through support to the SUN initiative, the SDGs and Me; and positioning children at the centre of advancing the SDGs. Partnerships with the media were fostered, with five key media briefings held during the course of the year covering Sudan Free of FGM/C, End Violence, World Humanitarian Day, International Day of the Girl Child and World Children’s Day.

**OUTPUT 1** Strengthened national capacity to advocate, legislate and plan for scaling up nutrition (SUN).

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF continued to support national efforts for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) in Sudan. The UNICEF-supported S3M survey in 2013 found that nutrition issues existed across the country and were highly prevalent in both emergency and non-emergency contexts, nutrition started to rise on the political agenda in Sudan. The Government of Sudan officially joined the SUN movement in October 2015 and, with the support of UNICEF and WFP, the Nutrition Investment Case was developed in 2016, further establishing the strategic importance of nutrition for both human and economic development.

In 2016 the SUN UN Network was created among WFP, UNFPA, WHO, FAO, IFAD and the World Bank. The Government of Sudan also led the formation of the civil society network and the private sector network. In 2016 and 2017 UNICEF advocated to donors to establish the SUN donor network, but the functionality of the network remained very limited in 2017. UNICEF, as chair of the UN network, took several initiatives in 2017 to improve the network’s functionality. UNICEF undertook a UN inventory of investments, which will form the basis of a joint UN action plan for supporting the SUN movement in 2018.

The commitment of the Government of Sudan for nutrition remained strong, with an increase in government support for nutrition programming, including financial support for the National CMAM program by more than US$9 million in 2017. Challenges remained in terms of the functionality of the national high level coordination mechanism for nutrition. Discussions were ongoing between key ministries, including the Ministry of International Cooperation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health, to identify the means to improve coordination. In 2017 the Ministry of Agriculture established the Agricultural Forum for Food Security and Nutrition to coordinate the Zero Hunger initiative in the country. UNICEF led advocacy efforts, in collaboration with other UN partners, to ensure nutrition is not seen only as
a food security issue and that a truly multi-sectoral approach in national planning is developed for nutrition.

UNICEF continued to support the Nutrition Information System, providing technical support and regular quality-checks of the CMAM database at state and federal level. The CMAM database was functional and complete for all of Sudan’s 18 states. In 2017 UNICEF supported the development and initial rollout of the IYCF monitoring and reporting tools, which will contribute to improved quality of the data included in the National IYCF database. UNICEF supported the collection of the community nutrition surveillance data in six states (five Darfur states and Blue Nile) and there three years of trend data for nutrition status and program monitoring indicators is now available.

OUTPUT 2 The DHSS approach is scaled to targeted localities to improve coverage of child survival interventions in the most disadvantaged localities.

Analytical statement of progress
A total of 45 localities were enrolled into DHSS by end of December 2017. Among these localities, only seven were effectively monitoring the action post-bottlenecks analysis – all seven were from North Darfur State and were concentrating on immunization services. At the federal level, a pool of national facilitators was put in place to provide technical support to states and localities. UNICEF introduced the EQUIST tool to sharpen the analysis of inequities and bottlenecks from an evidence-based data perspective. Sudan is planning to decentralize the use of EQUIST down to state and locality levels. A pool of EQUIST users was created at the national level who are now applying their skills to build a case for newborn care – to be extended to other critical programmes during the upcoming years. A comprehensive advocacy package for investing in newborn care in Sudan was under construction and the initial situation analysis generated from EQUIST has driven Sudan toward investing in addressing the major causes of neonatal mortality in the country.

During 2017, UNICEF procured cold chain equipment worth more than US$300,000 to equip 103 health facilities in the most at-need states and localities. This contributed to increasing cold chain functionality from 61 percent in 2015 to 81 percent by November 2017 and ensured that the cold chain system was up to standard to deliver quality vaccines. UNICEF was an integral part of the proposal development team that provided technical support to MoH in the development of the Cold Chain Optimization Platform proposal to GAVI. Through the Partnership Engagement Framework (PEF) with GAVI, a consultant was recruited to support an assessment of a unified approach to the cold chain in Sudan.

A qualitative study to understand the barriers to immunization in the communities reporting the lowest immunization coverage was designed. Findings from the study will inform the design of appropriate communication messages and activities to be implemented in these states.

The provision of TT vaccination to women of child bearing age through three rounds of properly spaced mass vaccination campaigns is an important strategy for the elimination of Maternal and Neonatal tetanus (MNTE). During 2017, more than 1.5 million women of childbearing age (15-49 years) received two rounds of TT vaccination through two campaigns conducted in 45 at-risk localities.

Progress on development of the policy for home visits of newborns was slow, due to rapid turnover of senior staff in the Government managing the child health and reproductive health
programmes. A number of activities were undertaken by the Ministry of Health, with support from UNICEF and other partners, to advance the implementation of critical activities to address newborn care. A roadmap for the reduction of neonatal mortality was developed. Using the EQUIST tool, UNICEF supported two workshops, the outcome of which will be turned into an investment case and advocacy package.

OUTPUT 3 A Compact on the Sudan Sanitation and Water for All commitments is established and operationalized to scale up improved sanitation and water services.

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF contributed to the realization of Sudan’s five commitments made under Sanitation and Water for All, focusing on sanitation promotion; establishing active overall WASH and sanitation coordination mechanisms and enhancing sector monitoring systems. Through effective advocacy, technical and financial support and follow-up, national and state WASH sector coordination forums were coordinated by Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity (MOWRE) (100 per cent of the target) and 11 national and state sanitation high councils/committees were maintained by MoH.

UNICEF Sudan contributed significantly to bridging the humanitarian-development divide by supporting policies/strategies and strengthening government systems and capacities to deliver durable solutions. The recent launch of the joint UNOPS-UNICEF Water Supply and Sanitation master plans for El Fasher town is an example of this contribution.

A national sanitation promotion capacity building programme benefited 50 Master Trainers and was attended by senior Government officials, donors and WASH partners. Under the leadership of Drinking Water and Sanitation Unit (DWSU) and with UNICEF support, draft WASH Sector M&E Needs and Gaps Assessment and Action Plans were developed. UNICEF was in the process of engaging a consultant to support the update of the national WASH information management system, linking it to mobile and web-based platforms. UNICEF enhanced the capacity for WASH Sector M&E through an M&E training course benefiting 25 WASH M&E government officers from 12 states.

UNICEF advocacy efforts led to the inclusion of WASH (under basic social services) as a priority area for the Government’s planned Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper as well as to its SDG Agenda. UNICEF continued to support efforts aimed at attaining SDG-6 targets, with a focus on targets - 6.1 (basic water), 6.2 (basic sanitation) and 6.5 (Integrated Water Resources Management, or IWRM). UNICEF contributed to the organization of the first high level national conference on sustainable Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and presented a paper highlighting UNICEF’s contributions to mainstreaming IWRM in the development and sustainable management of rural community water supplies. The conference was particularly relevant to Sudan given its vulnerability to frequent floods and droughts.

UNICEF, in partnership with DWSU, MoH and RedR-UK, prepared a set of interactive learning video films to build the WASH sector partner’s capacity on WASH programme vision, objectives, approaches, strategies and interventions. Seven WASH technical guidelines and manuals were updated to reflect WASH emergency context requirements. With full strategic partnership and funding from WHO and UNICEF, the first Sudan draft National Water Safety framework was developed. The National Water Safety framework is of critical importance to pave the road for holistic national water safety planning programme for scaling up access to safely manged water sources.
UNICEF effectively contributed to the enhancement of WASH sector partners’ capacity. A total of 580 WASH sector partners (314 males, 266 females) were trained on key WASH technical and managerial issues, mainly community-led total sanitation (CLTS), M&E, solar system technologies and water safety planning. At community level, communities’ capacity was strengthened through the training and orientation of 3,889 community members (2,184 males, 1,705 females) in operations, management and maintenance of WASH facilities, water disinfection, hygiene promotion and latrine construction.

**OUTPUT 4** Sound evidence-based education plans are developed, implemented and monitored at sub-national level in synchronization with national level.

**Analytical statement of progress**

With UNICEF technical and financial support, significant progress was made toward timely and quality EMIS data. The 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 EMIS statistical year books were finalized and were expected to be published in early 2018. This was achieved through capacity building of 1,640 MoE staff in data collection, data entry, analysis and reporting as well as provision of relevant IT infrastructure equipment. UNICEF provided IT equipment (computers and other required computer accessories) to enhance IT infrastructure of EMIS labs for the eight states that were not supported in 2016 to support data entry, analysis and reporting. Data entry for 2017-2018 was in progress and the report was expected to be issued in the first quarter of 2018. The strengthened EMIS will ensure quality and timely data for evidence-based planning for equitable quality education.

With Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funding, the Federal Ministry of Education conducted the education sector analysis (ESA) UNICEF supported the work and served as a coordinating agency. The initial review by the education partners’ group (EPG) on the draft Arabic version of the ESA report was completed in October 2017. The updated version of the ESA report based on the feedback received from the EPG is expected to be finalized and translated into English by the end of December 2017. The development of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2018-2021 was underway and the first draft of ESSP was expected by year end. In its role as coordinating agency, UNICEF significantly contributed to the ESA and ESSP preparation by providing technical assistance to the processes and contributing to formulating the partners’ consolidated feedback.

The cost and finance study report was finalized and approved by the Federal Ministry of Education on 18 July 2017. The findings indicated low public education expenditure in Sudan compared to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Sudan spends 1.3 per cent of GDP on education and approximately 11.3 per cent of the government budget is spent on education. A policy paper based on the findings from the cost and finance report to include strategic directions and options for education cost and finance reforms was being developed. The policy paper will be used to advocate for increased finance to education. Both the Cost and Finance report and the policy advocacy paper are expected to be launched in 2018.

In 2017 UNICEF successfully organized three education partners group meetings to discuss the overall Education sector performance and the Basic Education Recovery Project (BERP). This resulted in improved coordination for education sector results. The coordinated advocacy through the education partners group and orchestrated efforts with UNICEF partners resulted in GPE issuing a new financing and funding framework in March 2017 that availed Sudan with
access to GPE finance. With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Education conducted a comprehensive Joint Sector Review in December 2017.

**OUTPUT 5** Evidence and enabling environment for child protection is available and used to sharpen the child protection system and legislative framework.

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Welfare and NCCW, facilitated the drafting of a situation analysis on violence in schools, Quranic schools, and institutions accommodating children with disabilities. The findings revealed alarming levels of physical, emotional and sexual violence against children. The Government developed an integrated plan to address these gaps.

With technical and financial support from UNICEF, NCCW rolled out nationwide monitoring of FGM/C abandonment activities and generated systematic monitoring of FGM/C prevalence, community engagement, social mobilization and public declarations. Thirty six focal points were trained on results-based management to improve the next round of data collection of child protection indicators. Ongoing consultations by UNICEF and NCCW and National Bureau of Statistics were taking place throughout the year on refining the quality of the FGM/C indicators.

UNICEF, UNAMID, and the UNRC office, in partnership with the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict, led by the Swedish and Canadian Ambassadors, were able to push the national agenda toward protection of children in armed conflict in Sudan, including child recruitment. Through the multi-stakeholder partnership, UNICEF leveraged resources and institutional support and expedited the process of dialogue and capacity building of the Government and other parties to the conflict to implement the previously signed action plans to protect children in armed conflict. The Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict visit in November, facilitated by UNICEF, UNAMID and UNCT, guaranteed strong commitment from the Government to address remaining gaps in the implementation of the Action Plan, including compliance monitoring and verification in all states.

UNICEF partnered with Save the Children and NCCW and Ministry of Finance to implement the Expenditure Review of the Social Welfare sector at the Federal level. The results confirmed that the Government expenditure in social welfare sectors is low and goes to wages and recurrent expenditure. Targeted child protection and social welfare services were mostly funded by external aid. However, this review did not include the ZAKAT and the existing social funds.

For the first time, UNICEF had access to Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), People Defense Forces (PDF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) facilities through joint monitoring visits with the members of the technical committees of the Action Plan in Blue Nile, South and West Kordofan, five Darfur States and Khartoum. In 2017, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations against children produced three bulletins. Work was in progress to improve the tracking of and response to the reported incidents to enhance victim support and the evidence basis for programming.

UNICEF continued its advocacy, technical and financial support and strong partnership with Parliamentarians, particularly the Women’s Caucus, Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary, Ministry of Interior and NCCW. UNICEF moved some recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) related to children into action. The amendments of the Criminal Law (1991) and the personal law, including prohibition of FGM/C and setting minimum age of marriage, were received positively by the National Assembly and are awaiting final discussion and adoption.
Evidence on the situation of the most vulnerable children is generated and utilized to increase the child-equity focus policies, strategies and scaling up social sectors systems and investments.

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017 UNICEF planned 10 strategic studies and evaluations that served as key evidence-based strategic programming for the new country programme of cooperation 2018-2021 and other sector strategic plans. A comprehensive Situational Analysis of Children in Sudan was developed in coordination with the Government, along with the study of costing and financing of the Education Sector.

A participatory process of policy formulation in favour of the equity agenda was organized with UNICEF’s technical and financial support. The drafting of Sudan’s first National Social Policy Strategic Document represented a step toward a platform for social protection. The policy document addresses different kinds of policy needs in Sudan, including social security, education, employment, health and wellbeing. Evidence generated from MICS 2014, National Household Poverty Survey 2014-2015, Pro-poor Public expenditures review undertaken by the World Bank and findings from other studies were considered, highlighting key issues of inequalities in the Social Sector that justify the proposed strategy of scaling up the multi-scheme Safety Nets Programmes in favour of the most disadvantaged and extreme poor in Sudan.

An independent gender review of the country programme 2013-2017 was completed in 2017. Based on the recommendations of the review, the new country programme 2018–2021 incorporates key priorities of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2018-2021. Girls’ education, FGM and child marriage were identified as UNICEF Sudan’s key strategic gender focus areas for the next country programme.

UNICEF Sudan, in partnership with CBS, launched a multi-sectoral household survey (child protection, education, health, nutrition, and WASH) in Gadaref, Kassala and Red Sea, in particular to provide data for the migration project. The survey focused on generating data on migrant and host community children’s access to and use of basic social services, as well as assessing the push and pull factor of mixed migration flows. Different types of forced child migration, including issues of smuggling and trafficking, and the dynamics of children on the move, such as those in groups with other children, with caretakers, or unaccompanied, were also being assessed. The survey and the accompanying qualitative study were expected to be completed in January 2018.

An analytical report which maps the availability of basic services at the community level in the prioritized 72 most disadvantaged localities was completed in 2017. UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to the Department of Planning at the State level in data collection, data entry and analysis/reporting to highlight the availability as well as the gap in basic services. This information was considered for strategic reflection and discussions with the Government related to the prioritization of geographic focus areas in the new cycle of the country programme.

**OUTPUT 7** Gender sensitive Information, Management & Performance Monitoring and National Reporting Systems are in place.
Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Sudan rolled out eTools in 2017 to reinforce planning, monitoring, and better managing results for children. The rollout of the partnership module in eTools further enhanced partnership management for achieving better results for children. Due to some issues and technical constraints at Headquarters level, the rollout of the trip management module was delayed until early 2018.

The Ministry of Finance – Planning Department, with technical support of CBS at state level, developed socio-economic profiles for four states (South Darfur, West Kordofan, Kassala and Blue Nile). The state socio-economic profiles improved access of information on economic performance and achievement of social indicators at the state level, and a scale up to other states is being planned. National fact sheets and interactive state profiles were developed and disseminated.

Dissemination tools for SudanInfo (Dashboard, Profiles and Mobile App) were developed by the CBS with support from UNICEF and technical support from Community System Foundation. SudanInfo serves as a data platform with tools to facilitate data management, retrieval, interpretation and dissemination for national monitoring and evidence-based decision-making.

Humanitarian Performance Monitoring indicators were monitored to inform on progress on all 2017 humanitarian partnership agreements, and to support reporting of Sector (Cluster) and UNICEF results as part of the humanitarian response plan. As result, results-based reporting of humanitarian action was enhanced.

In response to the MoH Plan of action in addressing the recurrent acute watery diarrhea outbreaks in Sudan, UNICEF strengthened the capacities of the Ministry of Health for better information management and data analysis at federal and state levels. In total, 66 officers were trained in using smartphones on GPS and online web GIS and 175 government and UNICEF staff were trained on GIS mapping and database management.

In 2017, UNICEF’s technical and financial investments contributed to strengthening the capacity of CBS and government counterparts at federal and state levels on geo-referential information management for better identification and localization of vulnerable children and mapping of basic social services. As a result, Sudan obtained the geographic boundaries of 17 newly created localities that had been missing from Sudan’s shape files since 2013. Thirty CBS national officers, including five officers from the states, were trained in GIS basics and advanced skills. The availability of GIS - geographic boundaries of all localities of Sudan has enabled holistic information management and localization, vulnerability analysis and mapping of the most vulnerable children for better humanitarian preparedness, coordination and investment and has contributed to information-sharing between UN agencies and CBS, and the creation of the Dashboard Emergency Alert System.

OUTPUT 8 Strengthened alliance and partnerships with traditional and non-traditional

Analytical statement of progress
The lifting of US sanctions in the second half of 2017 created a momentum and several donors seemed to be looking to Sudan as an example of programming along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Despite this renewed engagement and interest, the overall funding landscape for UNICEF Sudan remained very limited. In 2017, UNICEF Sudan continued to mobilise resources in line with its Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Strategy. UNICEF
focuessed on mobilising as much diversified, predictable and long-term funding as possible, while moving toward also leveraging local public and private sector resources for children. The majority of UNICEF Sudan’s funding continued to come from a limited number of ‘traditional’ bilateral donors (members of OECD-DAC). UNICEF Sudan also engaged with the National Committees for UNICEF of Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and the US and received some funding from them and their private partners. To increase its strategic engagement with Sudanese local partners, a new national partnerships consultant was brought onboard in the last quarter of 2017.

Several advocacy milestones were achieved in 2017, including advancing the nutrition agenda through support to the SUN movement and the SDGs and ME. UNICEF was further positioned as a lead advocate for children and as a partner of choice by expanding its engagement and reach with partners and influencers. In 2017, private sector partnerships were scaled up with 14 business entities, including Unilever, Bank of Khartoum, Faisal Bank, MTN, Sudatel, EL Teital and Appitize, as well as with local Sudanese entrepreneurs, artists and musicians.

Partnerships also were fostered with academia, especially around innovation and girls’ education. Partnerships also were strengthened with the media and sports celebrities. UNICEF’s National Ambassador strongly engaged with the Sudanese public on issues such as girls’ education, health, nutrition and well-being. There was also stronger engagement with government entities, including NCCW and the Ministry of Education, especially around Film Making for Children initiatives, the International Day of the Girl Child, the 5K Run, World Children’s Day and the End Violence Campaign.

Eight ICON articles were developed and published in 2017.

The UK National Committee visited Sudan to collect material for advocacy and engagement purposes, the first visit of its kind in several years in Sudan.

The lack of flexible funding continued to pose operational challenges. Areas of major interest for donors were migration, and the nexus was also increasingly getting attention. UNICEF Sudan requested an internal Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) loan from UNICEF Headquarters to respond to the urgent, prioritized humanitarian needs in mid-2017.

UNICEF Sudan monitored donor conditions and expiry of funds meticulously throughout 2017, and improved report quality through an additional layer of editorial quality assurance. A total of 95 donor reports were submitted.

**OUTPUT 9** Increased engagement with media at federal, state and community levels and other public platforms to facilitate behavior and social change and promote the rights of children in Sudan

**Analytical statement of progress**

A comprehensive media strategy was developed in 2017. Its full implementation proved challenging due to the limited staffing within the MER section, including the absence of a National Communication Officer. Efforts to partner with the UN Communication Group on training of journalists on humanitarian principles proved challenging. Sudan remained a highly censored environment for both traditional and digital media engagement. Coverage of UNICEF programmes in the field by journalists was still challenged by bureaucratic processes and
requirements, even for nationals. During 2017, five press briefings were held and some 20 press releases were published covering all programme areas, including the three evolving emergencies: acute watery diarrhoea South Sudanese refugees and high levels of malnutrition in the newly accessible areas of Jabel Marra and Blue Nile.

Public advocacy engagement was scaled up on social media platforms. The number of Facebook followers increased from 10,000 to 21,000, and there were 5,896 new Twitter followers. Twenty five media products, including stories and photo essays, were published on the Medium blog and 10 videos were posted on YouTube. There was stronger and more engaging multimedia Arabic content, which significantly increased reach and engagement. The UNICEF Sudan webpage on the UN Sudan website continued to be updated with current data, human interest stories and press releases. The UNICEF Sudan website was revamped based on Red Dot 2.1 CMS and will be further developed in 2018.

For UNICEF Sudan and NCCW collaborations, 2017 was a year of increased engagement with children and adolescents. A training of children as videographers and child journalists in print, electronic and social media was conducted, and UNICEF engaged with the Children’s Parliament for development of a Child Strategy for Sudan. This engagement will be a key advocacy strategy going forward; 2018 will be declared by the Government of Sudan as the National Year for Childhood.

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