Executive summary

In September 2017, the Committee on the Rights of the Child considered the combined third to fifth periodic reports on Tajikistan’s implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Committee noted that Tajikistan has worked to create the conditions to achieve its obligations to children according to the Agenda for Sustainable Development. There was indeed a high degree of political will to fulfill the rights of all children, and as such, notable efforts were made to articulate a significant number of strategies and plans benefiting children, as evidenced by Tajikistan’s voluntary Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) reporting in 2017.

The Committee also emphasized that, with just 13 years remaining to achieve the SDG targets, it was now critical to align and prioritize the elements of all current child rights plans into one national, multi-stakeholder programme focused clearly on the Committee on the Rights of the Child and SDG obligations. In a context of limited resources, such strategic prioritization will enable Tajikistan to meet these obligations while ensuring the predictability of and accountability for results across institutions.

Despite strong political will for child rights at the highest level, much of the social sector in Tajikistan continued to operate with constrained financing as a result of national and regional economic downturns, compounded by the ongoing prioritization of large-scale infrastructure projects across the country.

More specifically, the Committee noted urgent and substantive steps to be taken in specific areas: preventing violence against children, promoting inclusive education, ensuring adequate services for children with disabilities, accelerating access to quality maternal and child health services including water and sanitation, and guaranteeing the effective administration of juvenile justice.

Results for children, adolescents and mothers achieved over the course of 2017 included highlights in adolescence programming, health, nutrition, education and child rights monitoring.

New regulations for adolescent-friendly health services recognized adolescence as an area requiring greater attention. Foundational work on the adolescent mental health programme engaged a number of line ministries, including the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MOHSP) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES). Adolescent girls and boys also enjoyed more opportunities to voice their concerns and provide solutions to community issues through local platforms and initiatives. In one initiative, more than 5,000 adolescents took part in tolerance-building activities, with almost 1,100 of them serving as leaders in their communities.

UNICEF Tajikistan and the World Health Organization (WHO) enjoyed close collaboration with MOHSP on the measles and rubella initiative, with more than 1.9 million children aged 1–9 years, over 98 per cent of the target, being vaccinated. Meanwhile, 28 national and oblast (regional) immunization and health managers were provided training and supplies to be better prepared for any importation of wild poliovirus.
Work to address chronically high rates of stunting and acute malnutrition in Tajikistan continued in 2017. UNICEF Tajikistan’s partners included MOHSP, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the German Society for International Cooperation, WHO and the World Food Programme (WFP). A plan has been developed for a sustained national initiative focusing on infant and young child feeding practices in Tajikistan and designed to address the root causes of undernutrition.

In education, more than 800 additional girls and boys, many of whom live in border areas adjacent to Kyrgyzstan and are of diverse ethnic backgrounds, were able to access early childhood education. UNICEF, the World Bank, the European Union and other partners have jointly advocated for the development of a national programme on integrated early childhood development (ECD) in 2018. Efforts to educate mothers in the most remote areas of the country on how to manage their children’s health and nutrition needs continued, with the Maternal and Child Health Handbook reaching 45,000 women who are pregnant and living in the most deprived districts.

In the area of child rights monitoring, UNICEF supported the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights as it became fully functional and operated according to a plan of action for child rights. One important outcome is that children with disabilities are now a top priority for the Ombudsman’s office.

Lastly, on the challenge of financing for children, UNICEF Tajikistan with MOHSP and the Ministry of Finance finalized two costing exercises in 2017, on social protection and on reproductive, maternal, child and adolescent health. The outcome will assist the Government in ensuring adequate allocation of public resources to these critical areas for the most marginalized.

In 2018, Tajikistan will have an important opportunity to reiterate to all Member States that it treats child rights and equity as top national priorities. UNICEF Tajikistan looks forward to working with the Government and all partners to advance rights for all children.

**Humanitarian assistance**

Tajikistan remains prone to natural hazards that entail significant economic losses and human casualties. The country is at high risk of earthquakes, flooding and out-of-season glacial melting, all of which can quickly overwhelm national capacity and become localized crises. Children are among the most vulnerable to natural hazards, and their well-being suffers in the short and long terms. Population growth, urbanization and climate change continue to exacerbate the impact of disasters, which are expected to occur more frequently and intensively and to affect more people in the future.

In 2017, children in Tajikistan suffered five small-scale natural disasters, including avalanches, floods, mudflows and earthquakes, in addition to measles and rubella outbreaks. UNICEF Tajikistan continued to work closely with national authorities and civil society to reach the most vulnerable children and their families. The Country Office supported the Government in delivering assistance to affected children, in line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, particularly in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and health:
• UNICEF Tajikistan supported MOHSP to strengthen immunization efforts following the April measles and rubella outbreak. All 1.9 million children aged 1–9 years, irrespective of their immunization status, were administered measles and rubella vaccines through health facilities and outreach vaccination teams.

• UNICEF provided education-related emergency supplies, including temporary learning classes and basic school supplies, to ensure the continuity of education for 56 primary school children (30 girls and 24 boys) in Qaranliq village in Laksh District, which was affected by an earthquake of magnitude 5.9 on the Richter scale on 5 May 2017.

• UNICEF provided critical WASH-related emergency supplies to 105 affected families — that is, to 607 people, including 294 children (128 girls and 166 boys) — following the June mudflow and flood in Amondara village, Panjakent District.

• UNICEF delivered WASH-related emergency supplies to Ayni District to meet the immediate needs of 152 people, including 62 children (32 girls and 30 boys) who were seriously affected by the July mudflow.

• UNICEF provided an Emergency Health Kit (IEHK2011) from its emergency stocks to meet the public health needs of 170 people, including 102 children (55 girls and 47 boys), who were seriously affected by flooding and mudflow in Darvoz District in July.

As part of these emergency interventions, UNICEF Tajikistan also provided support through technical assistance and quality assurance. UNICEF’s emergency and preparedness response team (EPRT) and child rights monitors were deployed in the field when needed.

In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan signed additional contingency programme cooperation agreements with partners, pre-positioned emergency supplies with key partners in regions at higher risk, developed contingency plans in coordination with rapid emergency assessment and coordination team (REACT) partners, and trained staff on new global preparedness platform and standards. UNICEF Tajikistan maintained its humanitarian contingency stock of supplies sufficient for 10,000 people and foresaw considerable demand for these supplies to respond to the needs of affected people. UNICEF Tajikistan also focused on developing a social protection framework for emergencies and common strategic actions with programme sections to reinforce capacity for communication and inter-sectoral work in emergencies.

Meanwhile, UNICEF Tajikistan strengthened its partnerships with the Government and REACT partners by helping enhance emergency response systems and contributing to national policy and strategy setting on preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR). UNICEF EPRT members participated in a number of multisectoral training sessions as well as full-fledged and table-top simulation exercises through a humanitarian capacity-building initiative organized by REACT. These interventions developed key action points and recommendations to advance overall emergency response preparedness in Tajikistan. With United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) funding, UNICEF Tajikistan also supported the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in increasing the technical capacity of the REACT system to undertake preparedness and response activities by providing equipment for successful field testing of Kobo, a new open-source data-collection tool that allows aid workers to collect data in the field using mobile devices, tablets or computers.
Recognizing the significant disaster risks in Tajikistan, UNICEF Tajikistan maintained a robust disaster risk reduction (DRR) programme to build the capacity of government agencies, non-governmental organizations and educational facilities to better prepare for and respond to the natural disasters that frequently affect the country. With MOES and with funding from the European Union’s Disaster Preparedness European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Affairs Operations, UNICEF Tajikistan successfully implemented the programme in the education sector through a comprehensive school-based model to build resilient schools and communities.

**Equity in practice**

In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan continued advocating for the rights of the most vulnerable girls and boys and their families. In many instances, national partners have shifted toward applying an equity lens to programming and policy making. Five interventions can be highlighted for 2017, some building on work that started in previous years:

- **UNICEF Tajikistan** continued its partnership with the World Bank on the Listening to Tajikistan survey. This frequently conducted survey aims to capture the impact of the economic crisis on households and children in Tajikistan. In 2017, the results of previous surveys were analysed from a child rights perspective. A brief developed jointly with the World Bank will be used to advocate for relevant programmatic and policy responses to child deprivation in order to mitigate any negative impact of the country’s economic crisis.

- UNICEF joined efforts with the WFP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WHO to develop a vulnerability mapping exercise in close partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the custodian of SDG monitoring in Tajikistan. This exercise is intended to help identify priority districts, based on an evidence-based deprivation analysis, for joint or agency-specific interventions as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in partnership with the Government of Tajikistan. From UNICEF Tajikistan’s side, the exercise will primarily consider the 44 SDG indicators that are most important for children; these include 17 indicators that fall under the custodianship of UNICEF globally.

- In the learning section, an assessment on inclusive education was undertaken to gauge the level of access to and satisfaction with inclusive education efforts of girls and boys with disabilities and other key stakeholders in targeted schools. This initiative, along with a comprehensive approach to the inclusion of children and women with disabilities led by the protective environment section in partnership with MOHSP, are intended to promote the rights of girls and boys with disabilities, a priority that was also highlighted in the recent recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to the Government of Tajikistan.

- The Family Medicine Centre, with support from UNICEF Tajikistan, has introduced a maternal and child health (MCH) handbook in 12 districts selected through an equity analysis that considered level of investment by other development partners as well as child-related health indicators. The MCH handbook, based on good practice from Japan, was designed to address critical knowledge gaps among caregivers and to strengthen the relationship between families and the healthcare system. In a complementary effort, UNICEF Tajikistan, in partnership with the Centre for Strategic Studies, also undertook a small study to understand MCH planning and budgeting processes at the district level.
The study will contribute to equity-focused, evidence-based planning, budgeting and programming at local levels for the MOHSP.

- In the area of adolescent development and participation, a strategic partnership was initiated with the Centre for Strategic Studies under the President’s Executive Office, to jointly conduct a nationwide, innovative adolescent-focused baseline study. This study began at the very end of 2017 and will be completed by the end of March 2018. The partnership process, as well as ongoing dialogue with the main partner and a cross-sectoral steering committee established to guide the study, have been critical for ensuring both the quality of the study and its smooth implementation. The national partners have adopted the equity approach, which stresses the importance of reaching out to the most vulnerable adolescents, highlighting the specific vulnerabilities of girls, and better understanding the barriers faced by adolescents with disabilities and those who are out of school. The partners also championed the importance of actively listening to the voices of adolescents by adding qualitative methodologies to the survey.

### Strategic Plan 2018–2021

The UNICEF Tajikistan Country Programme 2016-2020 is already designed according to a life cycle approach with a focus on equity. The country programme has been enhanced through a stronger approach to integrated programming for early childhood and adolescent results as demonstrated throughout this report. In addition to these alignments, UNICEF Tajikistan has taken initial steps in designing climate change programming.

All efforts will be made to take the results to scale including by leveraging partnerships for results for children.

UNICEF Tajikistan will continue to mobilize resources and ensure that child rights and the SDG agenda for children remain central to the programme and policy-making agenda of the Government and its partners. It is also important to ensure that resources are available and allocated to scale up programmes that promise to deliver critical results for children. The upcoming 2018 High Level Conference on the new Water Decade (SDG 6) will be a great opportunity to advance the ECD and ADAP agendas and secure support from the Government and other partners.

### Emerging areas of importance

**Accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD).** In 2017, UNICEF continued to work closely with line ministries and development partners to advance ECD in Tajikistan. The Government’s National Development Strategy (2016–2030) set the ambitious target of increasing the early childhood education (ECE) rate from today’s 12.4 per cent to 30 per cent by 2020, and to 50 per cent by 2030. MOHSP has also accelerated its MCH efforts with development partners including UNICEF Tajikistan. The Development Coordination Council (DCC) in Tajikistan, comprised of key donors and partners, included ECD as a joint priority result area in 2016 in order to ensure further coordination and cooperation and enable the more efficient use of resources, capacities and investments to accelerate results for young children. Thus, UNICEF used the DCC human development cluster platform to convene a retreat with other development partners active in ECD to identify gaps and opportunities for cooperation.

Beforehand, a joint ECD concept note was developed based on the nurturing care framework and mapping conducted of ‘who does what where’ on ECD. The Development Coordination Council agreed to submit a joint letter to the Government to propose establishing a multi-
sectoral coordination platform to guide and oversee ECD activities and suggest that ECD be covered at the 2018 High-Level International Conference on Water Cooperation in Tajikistan.

Because using existing delivery platforms is good practice for accelerating integrated ECD programming, UNICEF Tajikistan will also partner with the Aga Khan Development Network to improve parental skills for child stimulation and also to expand ECD programming faster in remote areas by leveraging strengths and respective entry points.

In 2017, the MCH handbook pilot programme began in 12 deprived districts, and planning started for a ‘golden 1,000 days’ campaign focusing on infant and young child feeding and other critical parenting messages. In addition, ECE alternative model documentation led to some concrete recommendations and dialogue with national partners to boost the quality of ECE. With Queens University Belfast, the UNICEF Tajikistan took steps to boost national capacity for ECD research. New ECE centres opened, allowing more than 800 children in areas close to the border with Kyrgyzstan to attend ECE. Finally, development of a multilingual education module began.

**Greater focus on the second decade of life.** Adolescents comprise more than 20 per cent of Tajikistan’s population. In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan took further steps to better integrate adolescent programming. Peace-building and youth resilience funding, from the United Nations Peace-building Fund (PBF) and DFID, respectively, facilitated modelling and testing of this integrated approach in northern areas close to the Kyrgyzstan border (see the lessons learned and good practices sections).

UNICEF Tajikistan mapped girls’ education; reviewed competency-based education in formal, non-formal and informal education settings; and ensured that vulnerable adolescent girls and boys, such as those in institutions, in conflict with the law or from poor families, had opportunities to learn competencies and twenty-first century skills. Fit-for-Tajikistan Adolescent Innovation Labs (AILs) were designed with technical inputs from experienced UNICEF teams from Kosovo and Malaysia. The first two AILs were launched in 2017 with the MOES using centres for additional education; since there are 83 centres for additional education nationwide, this ensured accessibility for vulnerable girls and boys, sustainability and potential to scale-up. Additional outreach efforts were made to ensure that adolescent girls have access to innovation labs.

Work with the local non-governmental organization Youth Initiatives of Tajikistan will broaden support for competency-based learning and prevent adolescents from dropping out of school through engagement with student councils and parent-teacher associations. Efforts to design a gender-responsive adolescent mental health programme also advanced, with mobilization and capacity building of local and national counterparts, including a study tour to Germany. Training of frontline service providers should begin in early 2018 after training modules are finalized.

Teams began designing an integrated adolescent referral pathway in selected districts to link this work on adolescent mental health programming, now in its design phase, with work on early warning systems, rehabilitating children in conflict with the law and AIL initiatives. The process was documented in 2017 for further advocacy with the Government and development partners. The pilot will be rolled out in early 2018 using UNICEF resources.

The teams also discussed improved integration of adolescent programming with Government partners, including the Committee for Youth Affairs, Sports and Tourism, MOES, the Centre for Strategic Research, MOHSP and local authorities as well as academia and local non-
governmental organizations. As part of these efforts, technical working groups guided the adolescent baseline study (see the equity section of this report) and adolescent mental health programming.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIL</td>
<td>adolescent innovation lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>Commission on Child Rights</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CRPD</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities</td>
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<td>DCC</td>
<td>Development Coordination Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>disaster risk reduction</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>early childhood development</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>early childhood education</td>
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<td>EPRT</td>
<td>Emergency and Preparedness Response Team</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>HACT</td>
<td>harmonized approach to cash transfers</td>
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<td>MCH</td>
<td>Maternal and Child Health</td>
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<td>MOES</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOHSP</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Social Protection</td>
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<td>PBF</td>
<td>United Nations Peace-building Fund</td>
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<td>REACT</td>
<td>Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team</td>
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<td>SUN</td>
<td>Scaling Up Nutrition</td>
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<td>UNCT</td>
<td>United Nations Country Team</td>
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<td>UNDAF</td>
<td>United Nations Development Assistance Framework</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDSS</td>
<td>United Nations Department of Safety and Security</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNISDR</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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**Capacity development**

Capacity development is a core strategy for UNICEF Tajikistan. The equity section and the results areas of this report list several initiatives. This section concentrates on UNICEF Tajikistan’s work with the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights, which was established in May 2016.

UNICEF Tajikistan designed a multi-faceted approach to support the new Ombudsman for Child Rights in assuming her function based on international good practice. Hence, in February 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan organized a study visit to Oslo, Norway for the new Ombudsman for Child Rights and her team so they could learn from the experience of the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children. To facilitate the engagement of other government counterparts, UNICEF supported a multisectoral delegation to participate in the study visit, including representatives of the General Prosecutor’s Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Following up on the study visit to Norway, the Ombudsman for Child Rights decided to involve children and youth in developing the strategy for their office for 2018–2020. Upon exposure to the issues facing children with disabilities, the Ombudsman for Child Rights agreed to prioritize
access to education for children with disabilities in their strategy, in line with UNICEF’s efforts towards the inclusion of these girls and boys. UNICEF Tajikistan supported a national consultant in the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights during strategy development.

With PBF funding, UNICEF Tajikistan built capacity for child rights protection and a complaints mechanism; as a result, the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights added 21 representatives in the area of child rights protection. In addition, UNICEF Tajikistan extended support for designing an interactive website for the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights. The site includes a feature allowing children and/or their caregivers to lodge anonymous complaints on child rights violations with the Ombudsman. UNICEF Tajikistan also facilitated child monitoring visits with the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights to four residential childcare facilities, including boarding schools and institutions for children with disabilities. The Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights created a brochure that provides information on their services for children and their caregivers.

Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy

In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan continued generating new evidence and analysis as well as promoting the use of evidence and data for policy-making and programming. Highlights included the second annual National Nutrition Forum, hosted by the MOHSP and involving various line ministries, with technical and/or financial support from USAID, WFP, WHO, the German Society for International Cooperation, the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and the UNICEF Regional Director and Regional Nutrition Specialist. This event publicized the findings of the 2016 National Micronutrient Survey and other studies and surveys produced by partners. The National Nutrition Forum is one of the few forums in Central Asia in which a wide range of stakeholders discuss nutrition status and related solutions in an evidence-based and systematic manner.

Another 2017 highlight was the Education Joint Sector Review supported by the European Union Office in Tajikistan, UNICEF Tajikistan, the World Bank and other education sector partners. Years of capacity-building support to strengthen the Education Management Information System and promote data usage for planning has resulted in an evidence-based culture of reviews: MOES and partners presented and discussed indicators whose breadth and range were impressive.

UNICEF Tajikistan also engaged in discussions with the Government and development partners, including other United Nations organizations, about taking stock of SDG-related indicators with an added equity lens, as discussed in the equity section. This advocacy aimed to mobilize political will, resources and support to advance the 2030 agenda and benefit the most disadvantaged girls and boys.

Finally, UNICEF Tajikistan is developing a series of policy briefs, including region-specific ones that focus on nutrition, the impact of child poverty, integrated adolescent programming and children with disabilities. The 2017 Committee on the Rights of the Child recommendations for Tajikistan will be systematically incorporated in the briefs, which will be ready for dissemination and circulation in January 2018.

Partnerships

In 2017, UNICEF’s partnership with the World Bank yielded results across the programme. The World Bank-supported National Micronutrient Survey (2016) was the highlight of the National
Nutrition Forum. Aligning sample clusters from this survey with the findings of the World Bank’s WASH survey allows further analysis of correlations between nutrition and WASH, and of how both affect child health and survival.

A partnership among the MOES, the World Bank and UNICEF Tajikistan through the Global Partnership for Education engagement facilitated additional funding for education planning and evidence generation. The World Bank fully supported and co-championed the ECD agenda. Finally, UNICEF Tajikistan and the World Bank continued to produce data on and analyse child poverty and the impact of economic crisis on vulnerable children and their families (see the equity section).

Building on their good partnership for emergency response (an area where the two organizations have a contingency partnership cooperation agreement), UNICEF Tajikistan and the Aga Khan Development Network discussed leveraging comparative advantages to rapidly introduce an integrated approach for early childhood results. After drafting a global memorandum of understanding, the organizations plan to launch collaboration in early 2018.

With United Nations sister organizations, joint programming funded by PBF across the border with Kyrgyzstan was reviewed in 2017 and recommended for continuation, indicating success, albeit with a need for fine-tuning. UNICEF and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees signed a letter of understanding modelled after the two agencies’ global letter of understanding to formalize further collaboration to address the rights of refugees and stateless persons.

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement partnership continued in 2017, as discussed below. UNICEF Tajikistan also mobilized DCC around the ECD agenda as discussed above. Finally, UNICEF Tajikistan advocated increasing investment in children in several meetings with development partners, highlighting vulnerabilities, addressing equity, supporting the Government’s response to the recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child and moving the SDG agenda forward.

**External communication and public advocacy**

The interventions using this strategy are covered in other sections of this report, including those on partnerships, evidence generation and policy dialogue, and health results.

Furthermore, UNICEF Tajikistan has identified two key priorities under the UNICEF cause framework, namely ‘Early Moments Matter’ and child survival, for advocacy initiatives to be rolled out in 2018.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

The Fourth Central Asia and South Caucasus Knowledge Management Workshop on Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction was held at the end of a decade-long regional disaster risk reduction (DRR) partnership, UNICEF and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. The workshop, held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in July, offered a platform for supporting further improvements in child-centred DRR and strengthening coordination between DRR stakeholders in the region. At the workshop, governments presented their plans for sustaining and replicating child-centred DRR approaches and tools, and identified follow-up actions in DRR programming and climate change adaptation. Cross-cutting aspects on disability-inclusive and gender-responsive DRR were also explored.
Participants included 66 representatives from ministries of education, ministries of emergency situations, construction agencies, implementing non-governmental organizations, and UNICEF DRR focal points from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office and UNICEF Headquarters, as well as the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations global coordinator and Bangkok-based regional DRR coordinator. Key regional DRR actors attended from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the German Red Cross, the Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan Red Crescent societies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Save the Children, and the Almaty-based Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction. The diverse stakeholders directly contributed to a review of good practices and discussion of country-level action plans.

To advance adolescent mental health programming, UNICEF Tajikistan staff accompanied a multisectoral team from the Government, including MOHSP and MOES, to Hamburg, Germany, in May to learn about integrated mental health programming for adolescents. This well-designed study tour gave participants the opportunity to learn how different sectors can cooperate to address adolescent well-being in practical terms, including through counselling and suicide prevention initiatives. Following the tour, the teams reiterated their commitment to continued collaboration on this issue while recognizing gaps in capacity, both for counselling and referrals, that need to be addressed as a priority.

**Identification and promotion of innovation**

In the area of adolescent development and participation, UNICEF Tajikistan tested the applicability of innovative tools and approaches to the country context by adapting and rolling out adolescent innovation labs. Seeking new approaches to increasing participation, UNICEF Tajikistan and the University of Houston developed and piloted a foresight game called ‘Cinema’, an innovative tool that encourages adolescents’ education and active participation by gamifying engagement with a futuristic perspective. The foresight game’s pilot showed its great value for and applicability in Tajikistan’s context. In the national adolescent baseline study started in 2017, the foresight game is used to gather qualitative inputs from adolescent girls and boys about what they see as their future opportunities and challenges.

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

In the UNICEF Tajikistan Country Programme 2016-2020, cross-sectoral collaboration is a key strategy for achieving results for children. In two areas of programming specifically, adolescent development and participation and ECD (as highlighted under the emerging areas of interest section), UNICEF Tajikistan is pursuing models of integrated programming. The same is true of its approach to inclusion of children with disabilities and its work on peace-building. Within UNICEF Tajikistan, thematic results group areas, with their own terms of reference, were established following the 2017 annual management review to advance cross-sectoral collaboration, synergy and knowledge sharing across programme sections and in the areas mentioned above.

In its work with the Government, UNICEF Tajikistan has successfully supported the establishment of technical reference groups to design both adolescent mental health programming and an adolescent baseline study. Exercises such as the social protection costing and design of the inclusion strategy have also been used to convene multiple sectors and stakeholders to discuss issues of common interest. UNICEF and DCC have also engaged with
the Government about the possibility of establishing a multisectoral platform to guide the ECD strategy in Tajikistan.

In the meantime, partnerships around the SUN movement have strengthened, with technical support from Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition, UNICEF, and other partners, including long-term technical assistance to MOHSP to support its convening efforts and to develop a Common Results Framework. The Common Results Framework was developed in a participatory manner and presented to and approved by stakeholders at the second annual National Nutrition Survey in July. UNICEF, the German Society for International Cooperation and other partners will support MOHSP in continuing this work in 2018, including completing the important costing exercise for the Common Results Framework that will guide budgeting for and financing of nutrition efforts in Tajikistan.

Human rights-based approach to cooperation

In 2017, a delegation comprised of several representatives from the Government of Tajikistan presented its third to fifth periodic review on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. This presentation was the culmination of months of engagement with partners, including UNICEF Tajikistan. The Committee provided its concluding observations to the Government in September.

The Committee requested urgent actions in the following key areas: preventing corporal punishment; addressing the rights of children with disabilities; access to quality health and health services, in particular nutrition; and administration of juvenile justice. UNICEF Tajikistan has already extended its technical support in addressing existing gaps and upholding rights. As part of its efforts to promote a 2030 agenda for children to achieve the SDGs, UNICEF Tajikistan will ensure that the CRC recommendations are considered in relevant national plans.

In its efforts with other United Nations agencies, UNICEF Tajikistan continues to actively advocate that the Government sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). All opportunities are used to advocate for the rights of girls and boys with disabilities. As mentioned in the capacity development section of this report, the Ombudsman for Child Rights has selected access to education for children with disabilities as a key priority area in their strategic action plan for 2018–2020.

Gender equality

The enrolment of girls in compulsory education has steadily improved in recent years: the 2017 Joint Sector Review found a net enrolment rate of 95 per cent, with an overall gender parity index of 0.915 for all levels of education. However, national data masks disparities in access to and quality of education for preschool-age girls, girls with disabilities, girls from minority ethnic communities and adolescent girls in rural areas.

More gender-equitable access has been achieved for preschool education, with the gender parity index rising from 0.803 in 2016 to 0.819 in 2017. While girls’ transition to secondary education has also improved, it requires further support, particularly in remote areas. An assessment of inclusive education in targeted schools shows more children with disabilities attending than in the past, but a continuing low ratio of girls to boys. After reviewing the girls’ education intervention, UNICEF Tajikistan and MOES recommended including girls’ access as a component of inclusive education programming in order to more comprehensively address disparities. However, the partners recognize that promoting access to education for different
groups of girls and boys requires different and targeted strategies.

Meanwhile, UNICEF Tajikistan made specific and targeted efforts to increase the visibility of women and girls with disabilities, who were identified in 2016 as facing particular stigma, through the communication for social change strategy on inclusion developed in 2017. The Country Office also sought to ensure a gender-responsive approach to adolescent mental health programming given the higher rate of suicide among girls than boys, in part by designing a violence prevention programme to be rolled out in 2018. UNICEF Tajikistan made an effort to allow girls access to consultations and programming in cross-border areas, including among particularly conservative communities, by ensuring their safety. Girls not only participated actively and took leadership in peace-building efforts but also took part in cross-border cultural ventures and sports events, such as football matches. Finally, UNICEF Tajikistan undertook specific outreach to ensure girls' access to and active participation in AILs.

In 2017, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) conducted a gender scorecard exercise for which UNICEF Tajikistan provided inputs. The results are expected to improve gender mainstreaming through joint UNCT and United National Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) programming.

**Environmental sustainability**

In accordance with the Executive Directive on addressing the impact of climate change on children (CF/EXD/2016–002), UNICEF Tajikistan identified initial steps towards enhanced engagement in a child-centred approach to climate change.

In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan developed a comprehensive concept note on building climate change resilience of children in Tajikistan. It focuses on specific risks faced by children in a changing climate; ensuring that children's needs and capacities are central to adaptation and mitigation planning and implementation; increasing the voice of children in adaptation decision-making processes; and thereby protecting children's rights, such as the rights to life, safety, participation and development. In 2018, UNICEF Tajikistan plans to identify and partner with a development agency with Green Climate Fund accreditation to apply jointly to the Green Climate Fund.

UNICEF Tajikistan also contributed to developing the final draft of the National DRR Strategy through advocacy for mainstreaming child-centred disaster risk reduction and resilience-building into development programmes.

UNICEF Tajikistan continued to introduce and implement measures to minimize its carbon footprint, in line with the Greening UNICEF initiative. Following a call for proposals for office greening, UNICEF Tajikistan submitted a proposal on conservation of water and energy. The proposal was accepted and US$6,150 was allocated to UNICEF Tajikistan. In order to limit paper towel use through energy-efficient technology, electric hand dryers have been installed in the office toilets. These will reduce the use of paper in the bathrooms, ultimately saving trees.

**Effective leadership**

The 2017 annual management plan retreat adopted a strategic approach to identifying and setting office priorities. Various business processes were reviewed and revised. Following global UNICEF directives to simplify procedures, UNICEF Tajikistan reviewed and streamlined its committees for more efficiency. The table of authority was revised and staff provided clarity on internal controls and segregation of duties. All staff undertook a refresher on ethics.
In response to the Global Staff Survey results, at an annual retreat, staff reviewed and developed an action plan to address areas requiring improvement. UNICEF Tajikistan took the lead in signing a contract with the global long-term agreement holder to micro-assess 10 partners jointly with UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNICEF Tajikistan also organized two harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) orientation sessions for partners, in Dushanbe and in the field, as well as another for UNICEF staff.

UNICEF Tajikistan took over the chair of the United Nations Operations Management Team and as such it is leading the development of the business operations strategy for Tajikistan, which should save both financial and human resources.

In order to continue to facilitate the flow of information to all staff, weekly stand-up meetings continued as good practice in the office. The country management team also met four times in 2017. Six programme coordination meetings were held to review a range of thematic areas, monitoring reports and programme performance. The joint consultative committee met four times and discussed an office move, staff well-being, utilization of staff welfare funds, and security orientation. The Programme Cooperation Agreements Review Committee reviewed and recommended seven cases. The contract review committee reviewed and recommended 17 cases for the representative’s approval in 2017.

Refreshers were also conducted for all staff on policies and procedures relating to travel, supply and procurement, human resource reforms and the contract review committee.

**Financial resources management**

In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan continued to perform due diligence on financial management and internal controls. In consultation with UNDP and UNFPA, UNICEF Tajikistan conducted micro-assessments of 10 partners from both the Government and civil society. As required by HACT guidelines, five spot-checks and 43 programme visits were also conducted. Two training events on HACT and financial workflow processes were held by operations for the 25 implementing partners in Sughd Region and in Dushanbe as well as one for all staff.

The internal control audit of MOHSP was finalized jointly with UNDP in 2017. Direct cash transfer and open items monitoring continued as a good practice in 2017. As a result, open commitments carried over from 2016 were fully spent and those for 2017 were accurately monitored and handled by the respective sections.

Coordination with the Global Shared Services Centre is good, with consistently acceptable response times from initiation of transactions to settlement.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

Given Tajikistan’s diverse resourcing landscape, as outlined in the Resource Mobilization Strategy 2016–2017, UNICEF Tajikistan engaged both traditional and emerging donors to fundraise for priority programme areas facing funding gaps. Joint handover or signing ceremonies with media presence were held with the representatives of the governments of Japan and the Russian Federation. UNICEF Tajikistan conducted two joint field visits, one with DFID to Sughd Region and the other with Japan’s ambassador to Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region. These visits aimed to take stock of joint results achieved for children in Tajikistan and identify new areas of potential cooperation.

UNICEF Tajikistan also convened two meetings with bilateral and other donors, including
international financial institutions, to discuss priorities for Tajikistan’s children, the first during the visit of for the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office director to Tajikistan and the second for the new UNICEF representative in November 2017.

UNICEF was active in joint United Nations programmes in 2017 and successful in joint efforts to extend the funding timeframe for two such programmes, both active since 2015, one funded by PBF and the other by the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The former effort is a partnership with UNDP, UN Women, FAO and WFP in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the latter with UNDP and WHO, with UNICEF Tajikistan as the coordinating agency. Following a successful review of the PBF project, the participating agencies submitted a cost extension request for the programme for another 18 months, until June 2019. This request was approved by the PBF board in December 2017. An extension was also recently granted for the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities project.

In 2017, all donor reports were submitted on time. UNICEF Tajikistan reviews all reports for results reporting before submission. The funding gap stands at 40 per cent over the programme cycle.

Evaluation and research

UNICEF Tajikistan did not conduct a new evaluation in 2017. However, it engaged in a number of evaluative activities, including an external review of the peace-building programme (multilateral fund) for cross-border interventions between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The review findings were used to revise the theory of change for the programme’s next phase.

UNICEF Tajikistan also conducted documentation of the early childhood education model. The recommendations, after validation by the national education centres and stakeholders specializing in ECE, are being used for national level in-service teacher training institutions and are also used for INSET package (curriculum, training modules) in order to improve the quality of services. The review also informed the strategic priorities of a new education action plan for Tajikistan. The recommendations were agreed in a consultative manner to improve the coverage and quality of ECE services.

UNICEF Tajikistan conducted an inclusive education assessment, with results expected to inform the next steps in inclusive education approaches in Tajikistan. Findings will be shared with the stakeholders for further discussion and analysis in early 2018.

UNICEF Tajikistan also actively pursued the management response to the evaluation of the targeted district approach that was concluded in 2016. The ECE documentation above is one of the follow-up actions. UNICEF Tajikistan is conducting a vulnerability mapping exercise with other United Nations agencies to identify districts with the highest levels of deprivation to target in future programming to advance the SDG agenda and leave no one behind. This exercise will inform the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework and baseline for future interventions.

Efficiency gains and cost savings

During 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan continued implementing the following measures to reduce transactional costs:
• Purchasing non-refundable instead of full-fare air tickets. This saved an estimated US$76,000;
• Establishing 22 long-term arrangements, including one common United Nations long-term arrangement, for core programme supplies and services in order to increase business efficiency
and reduce transactional costs;
• Timely travel planning and coordination, early booking, collecting travel options and rationally calculating travel days;
• Selecting low-cost venues for meetings and other events, using UNICEF Tajikistan’s conference room and government stakeholders’ conference facilities for small meetings;
• Saving on utility expenses, especially by turning off lights, air conditioning, computers, printers and other equipment when leaving the office;
• Outsourcing office-cleaning services to a company realized savings of US$6,515.
• Installing handdryers in the bathrooms saved US$560.
• A common services approach on office premises utilities management saved US$2,800.

**Supply management**

During 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan received programme supplies and services amounting to US$4,004,785.32. Details are included the table below.

<table>
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<th>UNICEF Tajikistan 2017</th>
<th>Value of all supplies (goods and services) received in 2017 (US$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
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<td>Operational supplies</td>
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<td>Services</td>
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<td>International freight</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,004,785.32</strong></td>
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</table>

Division, the Government, UNDP, UNFPA and subordinated agencies of the MOHSP. UNICEF Tajikistan continued supporting the Republican Immunization Centre in strengthening its temperature-controlled supply chain system. Thanks to funding from GAVI Alliance, UNICEF is planning to procure cold chain equipment up to a value of US$1 million in 2018.

Under the HACT framework, UNICEF Tajikistan only authorizes partners to conduct low-value procurement, such as the provision of catering services and stationery.

A non-expendable property physical count was carried out once in December 2017, with no discrepancies found.

Twenty-two long-term arrangements were established in 2017 to provide emergency supplies, event management, fuel and design services.

UNICEF Tajikistan continued using two warehouses to store emergency supplies: the Republican Medicine Procurement Centre warehouse for perishable items and the Committee on Emergency Situations warehouse for non-perishable supplies. The details of both warehouses are indicated in the table below.
The total value of supplies that the warehouses received was US$6,512.00, while supplies released from the warehouses totalled US$170,496.01. The current value of inventory is US$80,629.25.

**Security for staff and premises**

During 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan continued to engage with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to prepare for a joint office move with United Nations sister agencies. A taskforce was formed to work with UNDSS and make the new office compliant with Minimum Operating Security Standards.

UNICEF Tajikistan also implemented the recommendations of a UNICEF security advisor from Geneva who visited Dushanbe in January, and later those of the security advisor from UNICEF Headquarters in New York who visited following the move in September. The recommendations included enhancing entrance security, night lighting, following standard operating procedures at the entrance, controlling access to UNICEF offices and installing a fire alarm system. UNDSS dedicated one staff member for the premises. UNICEF actively participated in Security Management Team and security focal point meetings.

The inter-agency cost-shared security budget was prepared by UNDSS and approved by the UNCT. It not only covers the operational cost of UNDSS but also training of United Nations staff. One UNICEF staff member also attended the UNDSS Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments training in December.

Other security measures included:

- Weekly radio checks for Security Management Team members, agency security focal points and wardens;
- Security briefings for all visitors (staff and consultants);
- Regular security updates, including daily updates on road conditions, received from UNDSS and shared with staff;
- Dissemination of any necessary security alerts immediately on receipt from UNDSS;
- Headcounts in case of any emergency;
- New staff guided by human resources to complete online basic and advanced security training.

The business continuity plan was updated in 2017. Management and focal points updated Tajikistan's early warning, early action plan. UNICEF Tajikistan also piloted the new Emergency Preparedness Platform that will be rolled out in 2018. The pilot provided an opportunity to orient staff to emergency preparedness and risks.

**Human resources**

Following human resources reform in UNICEF globally, UNICEF Tajikistan implemented the required changes in human resources practices. UNICEF Tajikistan benefited from the UNICEF
Division of Human Resources and the Europe and Central Asia human resources team capacity-building activities for human resources practitioners and managers throughout the year.

To ensure transparency and fair recruitment, the talent management system and local newspapers were used to advertise positions. In 2017:

- Eight recruitment cases (fixed-term and temporary appointment) were completed;
- Five additional fixed-term and temporary appointment cases are ongoing;
- Thirteen recruitment cases of consultancies or individual contractors, both international and national, were completed through the talent management system;
- Contracts were extended for four security guards and four national United Nations volunteers through UNDP;
- Two interns were hired to assist programmes.

In 2017, one national officer was appointed to an international post.

The 2016 personnel appraisals were done in the ACHIEVE performance management system successfully and on time. Enhanced performance management was incorporated as part of office culture with regular PER conversations of staff members with their supervisors and managers to discuss professional challenges and career development throughout the year.

UNICEF Tajikistan conducted various training events, including a three-day training in public speaking for all staff and SPSS training. Staff actively used the Agora online platform to identify learning opportunities.

In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan extended support to and received support from other country offices: three national professional staff had stretch assignments of six to nine weeks in UNICEF offices in Iran, Pakistan and Ukraine. Two general service staff from Kyrgyzstan had stretch assignments to fill a maternity leave staffing gap.

In 2017, 65 per cent of staff participated in the Global Staff Survey. Based on the results of the survey, UNICEF Tajikistan developed an action plan to address areas identified as low performing over two years.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

In October 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan completed all tasks related to information and communication technology that were planned for the office relocation process.

UNICEF Tajikistan continued to actively use cloud-based technologies, such as Microsoft Office365 applications. As a result, the staff significantly improved its mobility and productivity in terms of online collaboration and the accessibility of business-critical information.

In response to increasing demand for Internet bandwidth because of the use of cloud-based technologies, UNICEF Tajikistan initiated a tendering process to improve the office’s Internet connection speed.

To improve the overall productivity of office information technology hardware, UNICEF Tajikistan continued upgrading business-critical segments such as the security gateway, the satellite modem and the servers.
In addition, a meeting room in the new office was equipped with information technology and presentation facilities, as well as improved Wi-Fi coverage, to increase UNICEF Tajikistan’s capacity to use its own facilities optimally and efficiently for conferences.

Remote connectivity tools, such as Citrix, virtual private networks and mobile Internet modems were actively used throughout the year to improve staff mobility and deliver programme results.

In preparation for an organizational switch to Windows 10 in early 2018, the office has taken steps towards upgrading all computers to be fit for purpose.

Programme components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Special purpose

Analytical statement of progress
The year 2017 saw higher economic growth and a slight increase in the volume of remittances and local production. However, large segments of the population have not benefitted from these improved macro-economic indicators. Indeed, the proportion of children suffering from multidimensional poverty and deprivations remains a cause for concern. Solid evidence that has been generated in Tajikistan on children’s and women’s well-being – in close collaboration among UNICEF Tajikistan, the World Bank, WFP, WHO and other development actors – is now being used to build cases and influence decision-makers to take timely action to address these persistent inequities. For example, advocacy initiated in 2017 to make the targeted social assistance programme more child-sensitive and more responsive in emergencies will be pursued in 2018 in partnership with the World Bank.

Two years into the implementation of the country programme, some of the building blocks needed to create a protective environment that prevents and responds to violations of child rights are in place. However, critical decisions that are needed to ensure that the policies and programmes supported by UNICEF Tajikistan and other development partners lead to tangible positive changes in the lives of vulnerable children are still pending. These include the approval of the costed Social Protection Strategy, the adoption of a new regulation for baby homes and the effective provision of foster care to reduce institutionalization.

On several occasions, the Government expressed its commitment to promoting alternative family-based care and supporting the central role of families in raising and protecting their children. This commitment is reflected in the National Commission on Child Rights’ 2017 plan of action and was reiterated by the Tajikistan delegation at the 76th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. However, the number of children in residential childcare institutions remains unchanged and the unnecessary placement of young children in baby homes continues. The increased number of day care centres receiving government grants – which in and of itself represents clear progress towards community-based rehabilitation – did not significantly reduce the number of children with disabilities in specialized residential childcare institutions. Another potentially positive move towards reducing child institutionalization is the decision of MOES – which has authority over most childcare institutions – to amend the boarding school regulation limiting the eligibility criteria for children’s admission.

The Communication for Social Change Strategy, developed with UNICEF support, has informed
the design of a national awareness-raising campaign to promote the social inclusion of children and women with disabilities. The participatory and inclusive approach used throughout this process has set a precedent for the meaningful participation of adults, youth and children with disabilities. The main objective of the first campaign is to challenge stereotypes about people, especially children and women with disabilities, and to improve public knowledge about disability. Emphasis will also be placed on the importance for girls and boys with disabilities growing up in caring family environments and being enrolled at mainstream schools.

UNICEF Tajikistan has started using the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s September 2017 concluding observations on Tajikistan’s periodic report to advocate for better protection of the most vulnerable children and their families. This support will be extended to the Department of Child Rights Protection in the presidential executive office as it develops the Government’s plan of action to implement the Committee recommendations in early 2018. Assistance provided by UNICEF Tajikistan to the Ombudsman for Child Rights has contributed to its institutional strengthening and visibility. This included exposure to best practices of national human rights institutions for children; staff training; the development of a three-year Strategic Plan; and the creation of a website and printed information materials. Capacity building of the Ombudsman for Child Rights will be continued and in the coming months will focus on how best to establish and manage a child-friendly complaint mechanism that is also accessible to children living in residential care facilities to enable them to report cases of abuse and seek redress.

As child protection is now formally part of the MOES mandate, UNICEF engaged with MOES to support the development of the much-needed regulatory framework to implement the 2015 law on child protection. Progress has been very slow, which has negatively affected the rollout of the foster care model developed in 2015–2016. The Government has planned to address gaps in legislation on the prevention of violence against children in all settings, as per the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review’s second cycle, though concrete action is not expected before 2018. The findings and recommendations of the ongoing UNICEF-supported functional assessment of commissions on child rights and child rights units will be available in January 2018 and should help the Government adopt a comprehensive approach to child protection that addresses not only legislation, but also capacities, resources and accountability, among other things.

UNICEF advocacy for legal reform to bring national legislation into greater compliance with international standards on children in contact with the law has not yielded the expected results. The Government states that budgetary constraints are the main bottleneck to embarking on comprehensive legal reform. Further, UNICEF was unable to influence the ongoing revision of the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, because the process exclusively involved government officials.

**OUTPUT 1** Protection systems are based on sound policy and legal frameworks aligned with international standards, are adequately resourced, evidence-based and equitably executed through strong inter-sectoral coordination both at central and local levels.

**Analytical statement of progress**
In 2017, UNICEF Tajikistan continued providing technical assistance to national partners to address the rights of the most vulnerable boys and girls.
Supporting the establishment of a social protection system able to mitigate the risks of poverty:
UNICEF Tajikistan provided technical assistance to MOHSP to cost the new social protection strategy before its submission for approval, expected in early 2018. This costing exercise was a unique opportunity for MOHSP and other relevant line ministries, such as the Ministry of Finance, to learn about the costing methodology and better understand the need to base policy-making and budget decisions on sound financial information. MOHSP analytical and monitoring capacity for social protection was also further enhanced. The MOHSP Social Protection Policy Analysis Unit, established with UNICEF support, developed data collection tools that are now being used to compile, analyse and utilize data on social protection interventions.

Children affected by the economic crisis:
UNICEF and the World Bank's partnership on real-time monitoring of child and family well-being through the Listening to Tajikistan survey continued in 2017. The knowledge generated over nine months has been used to develop a joint analytical paper highlighting issues affecting children living in multi-dimensional poverty, using a set of child rights-related indicators. This evidence will be used jointly by the two agencies in early 2018 to advocate with policy-makers at national and municipal levels, and with development partners to address the various deprivations identified.

Children in institutions:
The process of developing alternative family-based care options, including foster care and family support service centres instead of existing baby homes, has progressed slowly, partly because of institutional changes made in 2016. MOES requires capacity and knowledge support to deliver its new mandate for child protection. The transformation of baby homes requires extensive consultation with multiple stakeholders, which delayed the final submission of the revised baby home regulation for approval. The ongoing UNICEF-supported functional assessment of commissions on child rights and child rights units at district and provincial levels will inform the Government on the functionality of existing child protection structures and recommend actions to address identified gaps.

Upholding child rights:
The institutional strengthening of the Ombudsman for Child Rights was pursued with UNICEF technical and financial assistance. Following an experience sharing visit to the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children in Oslo, the Ombudsman for Child Rights developed its strategic plan for 2018-2020 focusing on access to education for children with disabilities; created an interactive website; and conducted child rights monitoring visits to eight residential childcare facilities and boarding schools for children with disabilities. Twenty-one ombudsman's office staff (7 women and 14 men) were trained to handle complaints from children and provide appropriate assistance.

With UNICEF technical assistance, the Ministry of Justice-led Inter-Agency Working Group developed the National Plan of Action on Justice for Children System Reform for 2017-2021. The Plan was approved by governmental decree, giving it more power and increasing the likelihood that the Government will monitor implementation closely.

OUTPUT 2 National and local authorities have increased capacity to provide quality child protection services and social benefits, including during emergencies, for children most at risk and their families
**Analytical statement of progress**

Children affected by emergencies: In order to explore innovative, cost-effective and time-efficient ways to deliver humanitarian assistance, UNICEF conducted a feasibility assessment of cash-based interventions during emergencies in Tajikistan. The exercise helped identify potential opportunities for implementing cash-based interventions through the national social protection system and other humanitarian channels. The assessment findings will be discussed with governmental and non-governmental partners to consider piloting a cash transfer programme with the purpose of expanding opportunities for affected populations to meet their priority needs.

Girls and boys with disabilities living in eight underserved jamoats in Rasht district were assisted through community-based rehabilitation outreach services. With UNICEF financial support and technical guidance, the local NGO Musaffo and the Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities of Rasht provided assistance to 120 children with disabilities (62 girls and 58 boys) and their caregivers, in the form of physiotherapy, counselling and para-legal advice on how to apply for the disability benefit, and how to enrol children with disabilities in schools. Thirty-nine of these children (18 girls and 21 boys) were referred to specialized services.

To ensure that children in contact with the law have their rights upheld, UNICEF supported the capacity development for law enforcement and justice professionals. Ten new judge master trainers and 10 new police master trainers (3 women and 17 men) were trained and are poised to play a leading training role in their respective institutions on completing the full training programme in early 2018. Twenty new prosecutors (3 women and 17 men) enhanced their capacities on justice for children and are now better equipped to deliver child-friendly justice.

In addition, under a partnership between UNICEF and the Union of Lawyers of Tajikistan, 18 practicing lawyers (4 women and 14 men) were capacitated in the area of child rights protection. Discussions are underway with the Union to introduce a child rights protection course at the lawyers’ capacity-building centre to enhance sustainability.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Justice to deliver a three-day, tailor-made orientation on child rights and child protection to 11 mid-level officials (four women and seven men) from various ministries. The foundational knowledge that these government officials have acquired will help them take into consideration child protection and child rights as they fulfil their duties.

A total of 143 children (29 girls and 114 boys) who had committed minor offences were diverted from the criminal justice system to six district centres for additional education and one rehabilitation centre in Sughd region between January and November. With UNICEF financial assistance, the juvenile support services provided psychosocial support to these children and guidance to their parents to prevent re-offending. In addition, 24 professionals (para-social workers, centre for additional education directors and child rights units officers (15 women and 9 men) increased their knowledge on social work and children in conflict with the law.

**OUTPUT 3 Social protection management and monitoring and evaluation**

**Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF continued to mobilize and coordinate efforts for the inclusion of boys and girls in communities, as well as women with disabilities. This work was made possible by funding received from the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities (a joint programme with UNDP and WHO) and the David Beckham 7 Fund.

Informed by the findings of the 2016 ‘Baseline study on knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and practices related to women and children with disabilities in Tajikistan’, UNICEF developed a five-year communication for social change strategy and designed an awareness-raising campaign to promote social inclusion of children and women with disabilities in Tajikistan. The development process was highly participatory and inclusive. Some 85 participants took an active part in a workshop on inclusion of children and women with disabilities held in April in Dushanbe to produce prototype communication materials for use during the awareness-raising campaign. These participants included four children, four women and eight men with disabilities from across the country, as well as artists, government officials and representatives of six disabled people’s organizations, two associations of parents of children with disabilities and media organizations. This was followed by a capacity-building workshop on communication for development in relation to social inclusion of children and women with disabilities. Fifty-two participants – including seven men and three women with disabilities – who represented 16 disabled people’s organizations, nine associations of parents of children with disabilities, nongovernmental organizations, the Government and media organizations learned how to solicit support for public awareness campaigns; focus on training across all sectors, including persons from non-governmental organizations/disabled people’s organizations; and reach out to children, teachers, healthcare workers and middle-level community leaders about disability issues. The first campaign that will be rolled out over six months is expected to be launched in January 2018 and will contribute to creating momentum, as the Government is preparing to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The campaign will aim to challenge prevailing stereotypes and misconceptions about persons with disabilities by portraying examples of children, women and men with disabilities contributing positively in their communities and society overall. The right of children with disabilities to grow in a family environment will be among the key messages of the campaign.

The process of design and engagement has been deliberately long and step by step in order to ensure built-in capacity development, and ownership among all stakeholders, including government officials, in a context where mass national campaigns planned to run over extended periods of time on this topic are relatively rare.

UNICEF Tajikistan also developed a number of human interest stories showcasing positive efforts towards inclusion, particularly in remote areas of the country, as examples of what is possible even where resources are scarce. It is expected that all of these efforts will create momentum for the signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Government of Tajikistan, a commitment that it made following the 2016 Universal Periodic Review.

### Document centre

#### Evaluations and research

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2017/004</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mapping the vulnerable and excluded groups of adolescents and youth in Tajikistan</td>
<td>2017/003</td>
<td>Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baseline study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours and Practices related to children and women with disabilities in Tajikistan</td>
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### Lessons learned

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<td>Lesson Learned</td>
<td>Building Resilience of Adolescents through Peacebuilding initiatives</td>
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### Programme documents

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