Turkmenistan

Executive summary
In 2017, Turkmenistan’s was elected to the Executive Board of UNICEF, and the first Ombudsperson of the country was elected, both significant opportunities to further promote and protect child rights. The economy had been expected to grow at a steady pace, however austerity measures, an increase in kindergarten fees and the likely reduction of certain state subsidies may adversely affect the well-being of the population, including children.

The process of adaptation of measures to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continued. The United Nations initiated two Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) missions with UNICEF participation, to hold discussions with the Government on how to achieve the Turkmenistan SDG targets. The Government of Turkmenistan adopted an institutional structure to monitor SDGs, developed with the support of the United Nations.

UNICEF initiated a baseline assessment for 55 child-related SDG indicators, the first such exercise in the country and in the region to look into the availability of data, both at the national and disaggregated levels. The assessment capitalized on the 2015-16 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), the report of which was finalized and made public at the beginning of the year.

The Government endorsed a mechanism to implement the breastfeeding law, bringing it in line with the International Code on Monitoring Breast-Milk Substitutes and addressing the corresponding 2015 observation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Sentinel sites were established to obtain and analyse regular surveillance data on anaemia and other nutrition indicators.

UNICEF Turkmenistan and the Government conducted an Evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme for 2013-2017 with UNICEF support to plan, implement and monitor. The evaluation followed an ambitious timetable to prepare the findings and recommendations in time to develop the country’s Nutrition Programme 2018-2024. It was the first evaluation of a country’s programme supported by UNICEF and was challenging with limited data on criteria such as impact and efficiency, but useful for stakeholders to promote and instil the evaluation culture in the country.

A national action plan to implement the Every Newborn Action Plan was developed, informed by evidence from the confidential enquiry of perinatal death initiated by UNICEF and UNFPA. Turkmenistan launched the EarlyMomentsMatter campaign, bringing together the Government, civil society organisations and the private sector around a common cause.

Following the approval of the play-based pre-primary curriculum resource and parental empowerment documents, a professional network of early childhood educators was established and trained. The network will support the institutionalization of the documents across the pre-school education system.
A school safety assessment was conducted covering 10 per cent of the country’s schools to reinforce the resilience of children and communities. Drawing upon the tools and knowledge obtained, the Government plans assess the remaining schools in the coming years.

UNICEF Turkmenistan invested in emerging programme areas such as climate change adaptation and communication for development (C4D) both at the system level and via campaigns, important milestones given the changing socio-economic and political features of the country. The first climate landscape analysis for children was conducted, followed by a revision of the school curriculum to reflect climate-change adaptation and mitigation issues.

The National Plan of Action for Children was not adopted in 2017 despite deliberations among stakeholders to prepare the plan’s final text. The adoption of a new policy on Early Childhood Development (ECD) was delayed. The effort should be to remove systemic bottlenecks to implement programmes and policies for children, such as limited human resources, the lack of data on indicators, and limited results-based budgeting, policymaking, monitoring and evaluation.

**Equity in practice**

UNICEF Turkmenistan promoted and addressed equity issues in knowledge management, and supported generating data on child rights and the analysis of inequities in the realization of child rights, notably of children in remote areas and children with disabilities. UNICEF supported the State Statistics Committee (SSC) with the 2015-16 MICS to address data gaps on children’s and women’s rights and to establish baselines for the SDGs, including at disaggregated levels. The Country Office (CO) championed the discussion on data disaggregation as part of the SDG adaptation and integration process, and supported two MAPS missions in 2017. The baseline assessment for 55 child-related SDG indicators, started in 2017, was the first time the country operationalized the SDG monitoring system and will establish baselines at the national and disaggregated levels.

The MAPS mission recommended focusing activities to achieve SDGs at the sub-national level. UNICEF Turkmenistan actively promoted the sub-regional disaggregation to assure all children in the country benefit from the economic growth. UNICEF supported advocacy efforts to introduce a one-year pre-primary education in 2017, driven by sub-national disparities (children in some regions are up to three times less likely to attend pre-primary education than those in the capital).

The current country programme focused on children with disabilities, who are among the most disadvantaged groups in the country. In the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, UNICEF Turkmenistan strengthened the country’s capacity to improve access to quality and inclusive social support services for children with disabilities and their families. UNICEF advocated to transition to the social model of disability and support, for cross-sectoral approaches to address vulnerabilities and risk to survival and development of young children. Testing interventions on multi-disciplinary support to development and integration of children with disabilities was initiated in regions with the lowest child well-being indicators according to MICS and other data, indicating a two-layer focus on inequities.

A national concept on developmental paediatrics and early interventions was adopted. This endorsed the multi-disciplinary approach to address children’s development challenges by introducing a tool for monitoring child growth and development. A regulatory framework on neonatal screenings and referral pathways was developed. The CO advocated at the highest level to raise concern with the policy of a disability-centred housing scheme, and instead called
for disability-sensitive design in residential and commercial/public infrastructures.

It is relevant that the next Strategic Plan link data disaggregation to concrete, phased and systematic policy solutions for children, focusing on the most disadvantaged. This will require investment and data analytics skills to understand and reinforce the evidence-policy interface, particularly in data-poor environments.

**Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

There are strategic and transactional links between the Strategic Plan and the expected results of the 2016-2020 Country Programme Document (CPD) and the Turkmenistan-UN Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020. The mapping exercise planned in 2018 will align the country programme (CP) focus with the Strategic Plan. The current CPD contributes to four of the five Strategic Plan goal areas. The ongoing situation analysis and the Mid-term Review of the CP in 2018 are opportunities to reinforce the alignment and integrate equity and gender focus in programmes and policy/practice. UNICEF Turkmenistan will use the opportunity of the mid-term review to increase the alignment of outcome and output indicators with those of the Strategic Plan.

UNICEF Turkmenistan will continue to integrate health, nutrition and early childhood based on the life cycle approach, focusing on critical gaps for child survival, growth and development, and working closely with the health and education ministries and other key stakeholders.

The HOWs that will primarily be employed given the context will be programming at-scale results for children, gender-responsive programming, winning support for the cause of children, leveraging resources and partnerships, harnessing the power of evidence and working closely with other UN agencies.

In terms of the common chapter and key areas of collaboration, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is planning to discuss the recently approved SPs of the respective UN agencies to decide on how to further leverage agencies’ collaborative advantages in enhancing the national capacity for SDG implementation, particularly in addressing climate change, achieving gender equality and ensuring greater availability and use of disaggregated data. UNICEF will continue to draw upon its role as a co-chair of the Result Group on Quality Data and Progress Monitoring, one of the five results group established to implement and monitor the Partnership Framework for Development. In this regard, UNICEF Turkmenistan will continue supporting the SSC and other entities in establishing methodology and baselines for SDG indicators and contributing extensively to the design of the SDG measurement system together with sister agencies. The finalization of the SDG baseline assessment for 55 child-related SDG indicators adopted by Turkmenistan (going beyond 37 child-focused indicators at the global level) and support to the SSC in preparation for and conducting of the next round of MICS in 2019 will be key strategic engagement areas in support of SDG and Strategic Plan monitoring in Turkmenistan.

The main critical systemic bottlenecks will be the shortage of adequate human resources for at-scale implementation of programmes and policies for children, lack of data on some critical indicators and lack of a culture for results-based budgeting, policymaking, monitoring and evaluation. The CO will need to step up its engagement in the area of domestic budgeting for programmes that benefit children, while establishing partnerships to support the capacity development of government partners in results-based management.

In terms of the ENABLERS, UNICEF Turkmenistan aims at strengthening the staff capacity, particularly the skills for strategic engagement with new partnerships and continuous learning,
as a top priority. The CO is planning to undertake another independent evaluation with partners by the end of the Strategic Plan to reinforce the oversight function, but instil the culture of evaluation for state programmes and plans of actions.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**Climate change and children.** Due to its geography and climatic conditions, Turkmenistan is particularly vulnerable to environmental risks and damage. Climate change and environment degradation may have a negative impact on children’s well-being across Turkmenistan. Reductions in water and loss of water and air quality will have the most likely impact on children.

As a first step to comply with the Executive Directive, the CO initiated deliberations internally and with Ministry of Education (MoE) and donors in 2016 to re-position work on climate change and children with cross-sectoral interventions across programmes to address the issue. A concept paper was developed in March 2017 and discussed with the UNICEF Regional Office before being submitted to potential donors for support. Simultaneously, the CO conducted a climate landscape assessment for children (CLAC) to better understand the linkages between children, climate change, and environment and energy issues and to identify priority areas for UNICEF’s support for interventions in the area of climate change adaptation for children.

In 2017, UNICEF launched a joint initiative with the MoE to work on “Strengthening Resilience for Climate Change Adaptation for Children”, which includes better integration of the environment- and climate change-related issues into the school curriculum. The initial work to review the existing curriculum was conducted in 2017 and the suggested additions and adaptations were drafted. It is expected that the revised curriculum will be adopted in 2018, enabling children and teachers of Turkmenistan to think critically about sustainability, enhancing awareness and building resilience to climate change.

**Accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD).** In 2017, UNICEF together with partners continued development of integrated ECD services with a focus on children with disabilities and their families based on a multi-disciplinary approach endorsed by the National Concept on Developmental Paediatrics and Early Interventions. UNICEF supported the capacity development of health and education professionals in selected areas, including in five ECD centres, who are now able to deliver early identification and early interventions service. More than 600 children received early intervention services in 2017 at the national level ECD centres, after being referred from local levels. Selected multi-disciplinary teams are set to facilitate the transition to and inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education, which hopefully would contribute to deinstitutionalization and social inclusion of these children and their families.

UNICEF, jointly with Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MoHMI) and partners including the private sector, civil society organizations and media, launched the “EarlyMomentsMatter” campaign in Turkmenistan to bolster good parenting practices that focus on nutrition, play, positive and sensitive care and support fathers and mothers while they are taking care of their children. This was followed by organization of a Fathers’ Day event for the first time in the country; the main reason for targeting fathers specifically was low engagement rates of fathers as indicated by the 2015-16 MICS.

With UNICEF’s support, the MOHMI developed and endorsed a regulatory document and action plan for 2017-2021 on Young Child Feeding in Turkmenistan, which is now fully aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations and the International Code on Monitoring of Breast-milk Substitutes.
In 2017, UNICEF continued providing technical assistance to the Government in strengthening its ECD policy, including the development of an ECD strategy to cover 2018-2024. The adoption of such a strategy was reflected as one of the important measures to advance integrated ECD in Turkmenistan in the draft National Plan of Action for Children, awaiting its approval. Advocacy efforts with the Government resulted in an agreement to develop an operational plan for a potential introduction of a one-year mandatory pre-primary education programme, which will be closely pursued in 2018.

The draft MAPS report, developed after two missions and consultations with Government partners and UN agencies, proposed that ECD, specifically the first 2,000 days of a child’s life, be considered as adomain under the acceleration area of Social Development for All.

**Summary notes and acronyms**

**Notes**
Etrap  district; the second sub-national unit  
Velayat  province; the first sub-national unit

**Acronyms**
AMP  annual management plan  
ANC  antenatal care  
BCP  business continuity plan  
BOS  Business Operation Strategy  
C4D  communication for development  
CLAC  climate landscape assessment for children  
CMT  country management team  
CO  Country Office  
CPD  country programme document  
DFID  Department for International Development  
DdDRR  disability inclusive disaster risk reduction  
DRR  disaster risk reduction  
ECARO  Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (UNICEF)  
ECD  early childhood development  
ENAP  Every Newborn Action Plan  
FORTIMAS  Fortification Monitoring and Surveillance System  
HACT  harmonized approach to cash transfers  
IYCF  infant and young child feeding  
MAPS  Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support  
MICS  Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey  
MOE  Ministry of Education  
MOHMI  Ministry of Health and Medical Industry  
OMT  operations management team  
PBR  Programme Budget Review  
PRIME  plan of research, impact monitoring and evaluations  
SDGs  Sustainable Development Goals  
SitAn  Situation Analysis of Children’s and Women’s Rights  
SMT  Security Management Team  
SSC  State Statistics Committee  
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund  
UNIGME  United Nations Interagency Group on Child Mortality Estimation  
UNPPFD  United Nations Partnership Framework for Development  
UNRC  United Nations Resident Coordinator  
USAID  U.S. Agency for International Development
**Capacity Development**

UNICEF Turkmenistan with the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s office and the State Statistics Committee conducted five SDG workshops for the social sector authorities of velayats, focusing on tools and methods to monitor implementation of the SDGs. UNICEF, as the co-chair of the Partnership Framework for Development Group on Quality Data, assured that the group members were informed on developments in SDG monitoring and contributed to the development of an institutional structure for SDG monitoring.

Following the approval of play-based pre-primary curriculum resource and parental empowerment documents, a professional network of early childhood educators was established and trained to support the institutionalization of the documents across the pre-school education system.

The capacities of 112 medical professionals and teachers were fostered in the subject of child development, including in early interventions for children with disabilities. The training process included distance education with leading experts from the Ankara University and Baku Rehabilitation Centre. A training course on newborn care and neonatal resuscitation, based on updated neonatal protocols, was introduced into the International Training-Research Centre programme and the first group of neonatologists were trained.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the MoHMI to develop a risk communication plan to engage with local communities to prevent and respond to potential polio outbreaks. This resulted in a government decision to apply the plan to other priority public health issues.

The mainstreaming of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) was introduced with the preparation of 22 training of trainers, followed by trainings in selected pre-schools and rehabilitation centres to strengthen response during emergencies. The school safety assessment conducted by trained government representatives covered 10 per cent of the country’s schools. Capitalizing on the new methods, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has plans to cover the remaining schools with school safety assessment in the coming years.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

The report based on the 2015-16 MICS was finalized and made public with datasets and has served as a critical source of data for UNICEF and other agency advocacy initiatives, as well as for the baseline assessment of child-related SDG indicators started in 2017. UNICEF participated in two MAPS missions in 2017, ensuring that child issues were high on the agenda in deliberations on achievement of SDGs. The initial mission report included the issue of ECD as potential sub-areas under Social Development for All, as an investment to address inequality and improve outcomes later in life.

An assessment of the Programme on Development of Juvenile Justice System in Turkmenistan was started to assist the Government in reviewing programme achievements and identifying next steps in the area of juvenile justice system reform.

The evidence generated through a confidential audit of perinatal mortality, introduced by UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported health system managers understand the causes of child death and take actions that improve the quality of care of newborn and their mothers, reducing preventable deaths. The findings of the audit supported the development of an action plan for endorsement and implementation of the global "Every Newborn Action Plan" (ENAP).
Advocacy for increased digital opportunities and online security for children and young people through the *State of the World Children Report* launch was well received by UNICEF partners. This was the first launch of the flagship report in the country in recent years.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF Turkmenistan leveraged national and international opportunities to mobilize partnerships for financial and non-financial resources in order to deliver results for children under priority programme areas. Strategic partnerships for children were strengthened with government support in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and advocating on emerging areas for children.

UNICEF supported the MoE to access international expertise in DiDRR provided by an international NGO Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund in Georgia. A series of capacity-building and technical interventions for national education specialists and representatives of the civil society organizations were carried out under the memorandum of understanding.

The CO enlarged its strategic engagement with civil society organizations such as the National Red Crescent Society, and with the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs as the private sector partner. This resulted in public discourse on ECD issues under the ongoing communications campaign.

UNICEF partnered with UNFPA to engage children in the Y-Peer Network to mark World Children’s Day, and to share children’s voices with MAPS mission members on a country visit to discuss accelerators of and policy support for SDGs implementation. UNICEF linked with the newly-established SDG centre of Turkmenistan.

High profile partnerships were maintained with Food Fortification Initiative and Iodine Global Network to provide an international technical expertise to sustain and strengthen quality-control mechanisms for universal flour fortification and salt iodization.

Initial work with the newly established Ombudsperson’s office was initiated. The Ombudsperson participated in the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children/UNICEF Capacity Building Workshop for new Ombudspersons in Sofia.

**External communication and public advocacy**

In line with the Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy and UNICEF’s equity focus, the CO communicated ways to put the rights and well-being of vulnerable children at the heart of the social, political and economic agendas.

Communication and public advocacy efforts primarily targeted the Government as well as civil society, private sector, parents and communities, to shift public policy, fuel social engagement and increase private and public resources for children. Despite limitations in social media channels, the CO still reached the population, especially the young people, on Facebook and Vkontakte.

The launch of the *State of World Children* “Children in Digital Age” spotlighted digital opportunities for children and communicated the message to ensure open access to digital space for children’s learning and development.

Given the difficulties with online channels, the CO produced high-quality, engaging content to readers such as an annual report highlighting the lives of children positively supported by
UNICEF programmes. The CO shared the print and e-copy of the annual report through its networks and digital platforms to enhance regional and international attention and visibility to priority issues for children in Turkmenistan. For example, a human-interest story on breastfeeding was included in the global World Breastfeeding Week microsite.

The CO involved children and young people to voice their aspirations and recommendations to policymakers. Children communicated critical messages at the 25th anniversary of Turkmenistan’s accession to the United Nations’ event; on World Children’s Day with children’s takeover; at the MAPS mission; at the State of World Children launch, and at UN Debates among others.

Targeted messages including ECD, nutrition, access to information and equity and others reached audiences through Representative’s media statements, opening speeches, press releases, exhibitions, social media, and the website. The CO prepared to migrate to the new CMS that will help to develop a user-friendly and engaging website.

South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation
Originally facilitated through the UNICEF regional knowledge management network for Central Asia and South Caucasus for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), the CO used the memorandum of understanding with the Georgia-based NGO Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund to promote knowledge exchange and learning and technical assistance to introduce standards of the disability-inclusive and child-sensitive DiDRR to pre-school institutions and rehabilitation centres in Turkmenistan.

As Turkmenistan is prone to natural hazards, the MoE committed to strengthening DRRR by building resilience with school safety. A study visit for representatives of the Government and NGOs on DiDRR in was organized in Tbilisi, Georgia. The objective of the visit was to learn from Georgia’s experience of DiDRR model and replicate it in pre-schools and primary schools and rehabilitation centres to build safety and resilience as per the global framework for disaster reduction.

Following the visit, UNICEF and Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund organized a five-day training on disability inclusive and child-sensitive DRR in schools to mainstream DiDRR in the education sector. In June 2017, the national trainers on DiDRR carried out cascade training to introduce disability inclusive DRR practices in pre-schools and rehabilitation centres across the country.

National training facilitators used the adapted resource and learning materials from Georgia Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund. DiDRR education materials provided by Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund were adapted to the national context. Monitoring DiDRR in the national preschool education system was agreed by UNICEF and the MoE.

Identification and promotion of innovation
The MoHMI and the flour-mill industry committed to assess the effectiveness of the flour fortification programme in the country, with information and reliable and disaggregated data on fortified flour quality, and with documentation of expected improvement in micronutrient status of the population (i.e. the prevalence of anaemia and neural tube defects).

With scarcity of data to drive decisions, including data on nutrition of children and women, UNICEF Turkmenistan supported the Government in the initiation of surveillance data collection on selected nutrition indicators first, focusing on anaemia among pregnant women.
For this purpose, use of Fortification Monitoring and Surveillance System (FORTIMAS), a cost-effective and innovative approach to collect monitoring and surveillance data, was tested in a pilot sentinel site to track implementation and impact of the national flour fortification programme. It was agreed to establish six sentinel sites to cover the country and collect data using FORTIMAS starting in 2018, and to consider using the methodology to track progress of other indicators such as the level and impact of salt iodization. Use of surveillance data for monitoring the situation of children and women is a sustainable foundation towards the creation of evidence-based policymaking environment in the country.

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

Early childhood development, as the country programme focus, remained a fully cross-sectoral thrust of UNICEF Turkmenistan during the year, leading to better coordination of government partners in relation to child development and early identification/early intervention.

Following capacity development on organizational principles for early intervention services, selected childcare professionals from the health and education sectors were trained to operate multi-disciplinary support services in rehabilitation and ECD centres. Once operationalized, multi-disciplinary teams of professionals including pedagogues, psychologists, paediatricians, speech therapists and physical and occupational therapists will address the needs of children with disabilities and their families based on the social model of disability. One bottleneck in scaling up is the limited qualified human resources in the country, requiring a long-term and systemic analysis of current and future human resource needs of the country in social sectors.

Supporting early childhood development in the health and education sectors was complemented by: the advocacy of communication for development (C4D) including the launch of the EarlyMomentsMatter campaign; monitoring illustrated by analysis of MICS indicators; and strategic planning of SDG-related exercises such as the MAPS missions and ECD policy development.

UNICEF supported the Government in an evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme for 2013-2017, and with WHO developed a nutrition programme for 2018-2025. The work was supported and overseen by an inter-sector committee on nutrition to ensure a holistic approach to nutrition interventions and achieving optimal nutrition outcomes for the population.

The work on climate change, including a climate landscape assessment for children, and the revision of school curriculum, involved and engaged partners from many sectors.

**Service delivery**

UNICEF continued to support the Government in the planning and procurement of vaccinations and with the pre-mix supply for fortification worth US$ 6 million in 2017. This procurement service was rendered in a MoU signed with the Government for 2016-2020 and fully funded with the state budget. With UNICEF’s timely and quality procurement services, the vaccination coverage in the country was 95 per cent according to the 2015-16 MICS.

**Human rights-based approach to cooperation**

In 2017, the draft National Plan of Action for Children was refined after a final consultation with stakeholders. The adoption of the plan, recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in concluding observations, would promote and realize child rights in the country. The CO advocated with the MoFA and senior government officials to seek approval of the National Plan of Action for Children.
UNICEF Turkmenistan continued to advocate for the Government to adopt the third protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on communications. UNICEF participated in the development of the UNCT report for the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. UNICEF contributed inputs on preschool coverage, health and wellbeing of children with disabilities in the presentation of reporting on the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Principles such as the best interest of the child and child participation were at the core of all deliberations with partners. Work remains in regard to the principle of achieving the most with existing resources and with the best interest of the child.

The assessment of the Programme on Development of Juvenile Justice System in Turkmenistan was an opportunity to re-engage with the Government in the area of juvenile justice. The assessment, to be finalized in 2018, drew upon informant interviews and a visit to the juvenile detention facility granted after many years.

UNICEF supported the newly established office of Ombudsperson with exposure to the work of similar institutions in the region. UNICEF discussed the prospect of establishing a child rights monitoring mechanism within the Office of the Ombudsman. UNICEF successfully advocated with the partners Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to hold a roundtable to discuss strategic areas for support and establish a channel to coordinate assistance of partners to the Ombudsperson office.

**Gender equality**

The worrying findings in regard to fathers’ engagement in the development of young children (11 per cent according to the 2015-16 MICS) prompted UNICEF Turkmenistan to take a more proactive role in strengthening the fathers’ role. Turkmenistan joined 90 countries in celebration of Father’s Day; and the 'Super Dad' campaign underlined fathers’ essential role in a child’s early development, inspiring fathers and families to spend more time with their children and nurture a stimulating environment for them.

Issues of gender-based violence were raised during the UNICEF/MoE joint event to observe the International Day for Disaster Reduction. Participants had a chance to watch the video on the resilience of girls before and during emergencies in the Europe and Central Asian Region, which resonated among all the partners.

The introduction of a perinatal audit in two regions introduced confidential inquiry of perinatal death. The pilot of FORTIMAS to assess the quality of fortification helped generate and analyse gender-disaggregated data with 2015-16 MICS data and TransMonEE (database associated with the UNICEF MONEE project).

UNICEF Turkmenistan continued to support the Government in providing every nine-year old child with the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination.

Using data provided by the Gender Scorecard exercise, a joint UN Gender Programme for 2018 was developed. It will focus on building capacity and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation framework of the National Gender Programme. The programme was submitted to the Government and is under consideration.

The MAPS mission agreed to mainstream gender issues into each acceleration area, which are
related to inclusive and sustainable growth, social development for all and mitigation of climatic risks.

**Environmental sustainability**

In line with the Executive Directive, UNICEF Turkmenistan identified initial steps to increase engagement on issues related to climate change and children, with attention to SDG targets adopted by the country and capitalizing on previous work of DRR and school safety assessment.

With UNICEF Headquarters support, the first climate landscape assessment for children (CLAC) was conducted to understand the linkages between children, climate change, environment and energy issues and to identify priority areas to strengthen resilience for climate change for children.

Given the emerging challenges and the need to address climate change adaptation, UNICEF Turkmenistan initiated a two-year joint initiative ‘Strengthening Resilience for Climate Change Adaptation for Children’ with the support of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives and DFID. The programme raises awareness and empowers children in schools to adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change and environmental risks. It introduces a curriculum on ‘Environment, Climate Change and Energy’ as an interdisciplinary theme to include in subjects such as life skills, the environment and extra-curricular subjects at primary and secondary schools.

The initial review of curriculum was conducted in 2017 and suggested additions and adaptations were drafted. The revised curriculum should be adopted in 2018, enabling children and teachers to think critically about sustainability, enhancing awareness and building resilience to climate change.

In partnership with the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan, school-level interventions to raise awareness and strengthen the engagement of young people in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures were planned with funding from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives and DFID.

In terms of greening UNICEF, there was emphasis on two-sided printing, sharing information through email or common drive and prioritizing the use of ICT instead of travel. The recycling of waste paper was re-initiated. An application to the Greening and Accessibility Fund was made, including initiatives to install occupancy sensors and replace fluorescent lights to LED in some facilities.

**Effective leadership**

The year 2017 was the second year of the country programme and the CO invested in streamlining governance structures to improve equality of changes introduced in the previous year.

The country management team (CMT) and security management team (SMT) were critical in overseeing direction and strategic management support to ensure efficient and effective delivery of programme results, backed by clear and accountable work processes supported by Operations. The country management team met seven times in 2017 to discuss key management and programmes issues.

The terms of reference was revised to include roles such as review the design and monitor the evidence plan (PRIME) as a part of the research, studies and evaluation committee, and act as
the emergency management team in the case of an emergency. The country management team approved the draft action plan for implementation of the new emergency preparedness procedure and oversaw the update of the risks on the enterprise risk management platform as part of the annual management plan development. Annual management plan priorities were revisited and milestones measured regularly. UNICEF Turkmenistan adapted and adopted the Regional Standard Operating Procedures for Research, Studies and Evaluations.

The programme coordination meetings provided oversight to support the implementation of programme priorities and periodic monitoring of fund utilization and appropriation.

Oversight was maintained on committees’ functioning and regular feedback provided. The functions of the Property Survey Board committee were streamlined and processes related to individual and institutional contracts were revamped.

Staff welfare measures, such as flexible work schedule, work from home and breastfeeding time, were used. Throughout the process of General Staff Survey 2017, the leadership provided in ensuring staff participation and active engagement in delivering on the action plan.

**Financial resources management**

Updates on contribution management and harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) were standard items on the agenda of the country management team and periodically raised at programme meetings. The security management team and the country management team reported on the financial status, and timely course correction and directives were adopted and the value for money ascertained.

InSight-based budget utilization reports and key performance indicators were regularly generated, shared and discussed with budget owners. Fund utilization and performance indicator reports shared by the UNICEF Regional Office were reviewed periodically. The additional funds received in the support budget in 2017 alleviated funds for activities such as the initiation of the situation analysis. One hundred per cent utilization rate was reached on Institutional Budget (IB), Regular Resources (RR), Other Resources (ORR) and Other Resources Emergency (ORE) by year end.

There was not government approval to open bank accounts to enable partners to accept funding from UNICEF, so the direct payment was the HACT modality possible in the country. A refresher training on HACT was conducted for 23 representatives of 14 institutions, focusing on funding request and reporting.

Bank reconciliations were completed, uploaded and approved in VISION within the deadlines, with regular follow up of the reconciling balances. Monthly financial closure and review of accounts were performed. The office maintained an updated bank signatory panel.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

Additional funding opportunities were explored due to limited presence of traditional donors in Turkmenistan.

Out of 13 proposals, four were successful and four were pending. The CO reached out to the Russian Federation and UNICEF Gulf Area Office. The former is now integrated as part of the UNICEF Regional Office multi-country pitch. An attempt to raise funds for climate change adaptation was successful with the Canada Fund for Local Initiative through its Ankara-based Embassy (US$ 59,587 for 2018-2019). US$ 40,000 was received from regional DFID funds for
DRR and climate change adaptation. US$ 35,000 was raised from USAID for sustained salt iodization programmes.

The CO continued its advocacy with the Government to co-finance work plans from the state budget to increase predictable multi-year investments in child wellbeing.

The CO engaged with the European Union Liaison Office, particularly during the visit of European Union Ambassador and delegations, to influence child rights issues. UNICEF was an active member of the United Nations-led Donor Coordination Group and provided input during deliberations and directions, and led the sub-group on education as well.

The OR ceiling approved for the programme was US$ 5.5 million; 12 per cent of the ceiling was raised, leaving significant gaps in addressing neonatal mortality, under-nutrition among young children and their development, climate change and resilience-building.

UNICEF contributed to the development of the UN Resource Mobilization Strategy for 2017-2020 to guide the UNCT resource mobilisation activities and maximize opportunities for joint programmes in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

The accelerated Resource Leveraging Strategy enhanced capacity development of the staff in formulating concept notes and micro-proposals and supporting knowledge of the focal point on resource leveraging and mobilization functions.

**Evaluation and research**

UNICEF Turkmenistan and the MoHMI agreed to conduct an Evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme for 2013-2017 with UNICEF contribution to planning, implementation and monitoring. The evaluation had an ambitious timetable to provide findings and recommendations in the development of the national nutrition programme (2018-2024).

The initial and draft final reports were translated, discussed with partners, and reviewed by the UNICEF Regional Office and the Regional Quality Assurance facility for research, studies and evaluations. The report was in the process of finalization. This exercise, the first evaluation of programme supported by UNICEF Turkmenistan, was challenging due to lack of data on criteria such as impact and efficiency, but rewarding and useful for partners to promote and instil the evaluation culture in the country.

The implementation of the CO’s plan of research, impact monitoring and evaluations (PRIME), consisting of four studies and evaluations, was monitored throughout the year through CMTs and programme meetings.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

United Nations agencies moved to a new building in the first quarter of 2017. UNICEF’s contribution to common services increased by 11 per cent in 2017 (up to US$ 56,000), but with the expansion of working space by 65 per cent, the expenditure per square metre fell by almost a third. The office saved about US$ 26,000 by handling training sessions online with international consultants, and less venue costs with the new UN premise’s proper meeting facilities.

With a rise in the costs of local services in recent years, the CO explored the use of long-term agreements of other offices for services such as translation, branding items and travel, while closely monitoring the price changes.
In 2017, the CO continued to execute the policy effectiveness and efficiency strategy. Staff were encouraged to use natural lighting to save energy and use water economically. Skype for Business was the norm.

UNICEF adopted a Business Operation Strategy (BOS) as a joint UN initiative and participated in its formulation and rolling out. Areas of common facility services were identified as the most feasible to optimize the effective and efficient use of resources. UNICEF suggested saving the staff time of the operations management team meetings by reducing the number and duration of meetings and at the same time making them more efficient and precise. Potential gains in staff cost reduction were 15 per cent of duration and 10 per cent of number of meetings.

**Supply management**

Total supplies and services provided in 2017 amounted to US$ 6,222,546, of which about US$ 6 million was for procurement services. The procurement services provided to the Government strengthened national capacity in planning for supply through joint forecast exercise, selection of supplies and equipment and their effective delivery and distribution.

There were no construction projects or in-kind assistance received by the country. UNICEF does not oversee a warehouse in the country. The Government was responsible for stockpiling supplies in government warehouse facilities and distribution to end-users in five regions.

Efficiently coordinated by the CO throughout the year, the timely Vaccine Arrivial Report submissions continued to be at 100 per cent of all vaccine shipments.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF Turkmenistan Country Office</th>
<th>Value of all supply inputs(goods and services)(in US$)</th>
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<td><strong>TOTAL supplies and services received</strong> (including freight and procurement services)</td>
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**Security for staff and premises**

The safety and security of all staff was maintained throughout the year. UNICEF staff members were equipped with the handheld VHF stations. Regular radio checks, mandatory for all staff, were conducted on a monthly basis by United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). Follow up with staff was done regularly to address challenges with radio checks.

In 2017, UNICEF procured radio equipment including 18 mobile radio sets to comply with fully digital MOTOROLA Trunken Radio network at global UN SMS level. UNDSS purchased a new repeater for the radios and the switchover will take place in 2018.
UN premise security was considered during the renovation of a new UN building provided by the Government of Turkmenistan in 2017. Four security staff members were recruited and video control systems installed. The warden system coordinated by UNDSS continued in 2017. Three warden training sessions were conducted by UNDSS.

Elements of the office business continuity plan (BCP) were tested when staff members worked from home on a selected day. Staff security was discussed during the emergency preparedness workshop. The staff list was updated regularly and shared with UNDSS.

UNICEF Turkmenistan monitored that all staff and, as applicable, consultants obtained or refreshed their knowledge on security through basic and advanced security courses. Two staff members participated in the first aid training in 2017.

Human resources
After the approval of the global PBR exercise, the posts of administrative assistant, finance assistant and human resources assistant were established, as well as a procurement officer position funded by the Supply Division. The recruitment process is ongoing. The PBR process was participatory; staff members were consulted and informed throughout the exercise. During the reporting period, the recruitment for the IT assistant post was completed.

The Turkmenistan monitoring and evaluation specialist undertook a short-term assignment, supporting the Ukraine office for three months.

The timelines of the performance planning and individual work-plan development were monitored by CMT, with 100 per cent completion rate for 2017. Staff members were periodically encouraged to undertake performance discussions and feedback as part of the mid-year and annual performance review discussions.

Briefings on the General Staff Survey pre-launch, during, and post-launch were undertaken. An in-house survey was conducted to better understand the issues. A task force was constituted to work closely with all staff and oversee the development of an action plan for the office, which was eventually endorsed by the country management team. Adequate time and discussions were invested to ensure the action plan meets the actual requirements of the office.

Following the General Staff Survey findings, the office decided to focus on personal growth and development. Two team exercises, a staff retreat and the team coaching initiative were important investments in this regard and will facilitate the implementation of the action plan.

To reduce the impact of HIV in the UN workplace, a UNICEF Focal Point for UN Cares conducted a briefing session for UN personnel.

Thirteen staff members out of 18 were briefed on the new emergency preparedness procedures. The first draft of an action plan with specific activities was developed.

Effective use of information and communication technology
Turkmenistan was still the only country in the region with VSAT as a primary and secondary Internet connection. VSAT connectivity provided by EMC Inc. enabled Turkmenistan CO to operate in compliance with minimum corporate standards, although the sub-optimal internet connectivity slowed down office functionality often. The use of cloud-based corporate systems somewhat compensated the internet connection, in particular the introduction of and training on SharePoint and the creation of UNICEF Turkmenistan’s Teamsite, allowing simultaneous
collaboration. An Outlook-based office calendar was created to replace Excel-based files to improve planning. The process of improving the filing system and shared-drive started to prepare for the migration as part of the ECM project.

Additional funds for the support budget allowed a second internet line from UNDP that will be operational in 2018.

The office prepared for migration to Windows 10. Twenty new laptops and two new serves were purchased to be compatible with the requirements of the new software. The staff took relevant training.

UNICEF Turkmenistan had accounts on two social media platforms, Facebook and VKontakte. However, social media and video-operating websites (e.g. YouTube), channels for programme communication and advocacy, were not accessible.

**Programme components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1 Special Purpose Outcome**

**Analytical statement of progress**
The Turkmenistan Security Risk Profile was updated and measures were identified to strengthen security, resilience and preparedness of the UN and partners. Follow up actions included: ensure the quality of communication networks; improved security of the UN House and preparedness of the UN staff; strengthened national and local capacity in disaster risk reduction (through the education sector); strengthen resource mobilisation (in the context of Turkmenistan implies mobilization of public financial resources). These activities were completed or were in progress.

**OUTPUT 1 Premises and Security**

**Analytical statement of progress**
The safety and security of all staff was maintained throughout the year. UNICEF staff members were equipped with the handheld VHF stations. Regular radio checks, mandatory for all staff, were conducted on a monthly basis by UNDSS.

The issue of UN premise security was seriously considered during the process of the renovation of a new UN building, provided by the Government of Turkmenistan in 2017. Four security staff members were recruited and video control systems installed for better security. The warden system, coordinated by the UNDSS, continued in 2017. Three warden training sessions were conducted by UNDSS. BCP elements were tested when staff members worked from home on a selected day. Staff security was discussed during the emergency preparedness workshop. The staff list was updated regularly and shared with the UNDSS and OPSEN.

UNICEF Turkmenistan closely monitored that all staff and, as applicable, consultants, obtained or refreshed their knowledge on security through basic and advanced security courses. Two staff members participated in the first aid training in 2017.
OUTCOME 2 Office Management & Operations

Analytical statement of progress
The country management and security management team played a critical role in overseeing the directions and strategic management support to ensure efficient and effective delivery of programme results backed by clear and accountable work processes supported by operations. The country management team met seven times during the year to discuss key management and programmes issues. The AMP priorities were revisited and milestones measured regularly. UNICEF Turkmenistan adapted and adopted the Regional Standard Operating Procedures for Research, Studies and Evaluations.

The timelines of the performance planning and individual work-plan development were monitored by the country management team, with 100 per cent completion rate for 2017. Staff members were periodically encouraged to undertake performance discussions and feedback as part of the mid-year and annual performance review discussions.

Adequate briefing on General Staff Survey pre-launch, during, and post launch were undertaken. An action plan for the office was developed and endorsed by CMT. Two team exercises, the staff retreat and Team Coaching initiative, were important investments in this regard and will certainly facilitate progress towards the implementation of the Action Plan.

OUTPUT 1 Governance and Systems.

Analytical statement of progress
This being the second year of the country programme, the CO invested in streamlining the governance structures that led to sustained improvements towards ensuring the quality and results of the changes introduced in the previous year. UNICEF Turkmenistan maintained an updated list of established office committees as well as tables of authority and reference. Corporate priorities and their fulfilment were considered during country management team and programme coordination meetings. The country management team terms of reference was revised to include a role in reviewing the design and monitoring of PRIME as a Research, Studies and Evaluation Committee, and acting as an emergency management team in case of an emergency.

All oversight committees including PCA, CMT, central review body, Contract Review Committee, HRD, the joint consultative committee and the property service board functioned on a regular basis and served as instruments for internal control.

There was no governmental approval for separate bank accounts to enable partners to accept funding from UNICEF so direct payment is the HACT modality in the country. A refresher training on HACT was conducted for 23 representatives of 14 institutions, focusing on funding request and reporting.
OUTPUT 2 Financial Resources and Stewardship.

Analytical statement of progress
Updates on contribution management and harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) were standard items on the agenda of the country management team meetings, periodically brought up at programme meetings. InSight-based budget utilization reports and key performance indicators were regularly generated, shared and discussed with budget owners. Fund utilization key performance indicators reports shared by Regional Office were reviewed periodically. The additional funds received in support budget during the year allowed funds for activities such as the initiation of the Situation Analysis. One hundred per cent utilization rate was reached on IB, RR, ORR and ORE at the end of the year.

Bank reconciliations were completed, uploaded and approved in VISION under deadline, with regular follow-up of the reconciling balances. Monthly financial closure and review of accounts were performed. The office maintained an updated bank signatory panel.

OUTPUT 3 Human Capacity

Analytical statement of progress
After the approval of global PBR exercise, the posts of administrative assistant, finance assistant and human resources assistant were established, in addition to the procurement officer position funded by the Supply Division. Recruitment process was on-going. The PBR process was participatory and ensured staff members were consulted and well-informed throughout the exercise. During the reporting period, the recruitment for the IT assistant post was completed.

The monitoring and evaluation specialist took a short-term assignment, supporting the Ukraine CO for three months.

The timelines of the performance planning and individual work-plan development were monitored by the CMT, with 100 per cent completion rate for 2017. Staff members were periodically encouraged to undertake performance discussions and feedback as part of the mid-year and annual performance review discussions.

Adequate briefings on General Staff Survey pre-launch, during, and post launch were undertaken. An in-house survey was conducted to better understand the issues. A task force was constituted to work closely with all staff and oversee the development of an action plan for the office, which was eventually endorsed by CMT. Adequate time and discussion was invested to ensure the action plan meets the requirement for the office to enhance its efficiency and also the areas for improvement.

Following the General Staff Survey findings the office will focus on personal growth and development as an investment for staff development in 2017. A retreat was facilitated by an external facilitator who applied tools such as ‘The three colours of world view’ and ‘Everything Disc Workplace’ and generated individual and office profiles that were appreciated by staff members. The profiles continue to guide interpersonal and team interaction in moving the agenda for children progressively.

Following a staff retreat, the CO participated in the DHR-led team coaching initiatives in partnership with the Coaches Training Institute, a Singapore-based agency that focuses on
managerial and team coaching performance. The Team Coaching Initiative covered CMT and members benefitted from the exercise. Following a virtual session, the team received one 90-minute session of virtual team coaching as an opportunity for debrief. In addition, each participant of the team received three virtual one-on-one coaching hours with a Coaches Training Institute coach. In general, the CO made a substantive investment on personal growth and learning including career conversation in 2017 and staff members provided positive feedback and appreciation towards this support.

These staff development initiatives became part of the office human resource development and learning plan for 2017, which was prepared and regularly updated with collective inputs from all staff. The above comprehensive plan included various learning activities aimed at strengthening and tailoring individual staff as well as overall team capacities to achieve CO results.

Two staff members benefited from learning days.

To reduce the impact of HIV in the UN workplace, UNICEF Focal Point for UN Cares conducted a briefing session for UN personnel.

**OUTCOME 3** Programme Coordination

**Analytical statement of progress**
Programme effectiveness and coordination ensured a cross-sector approach to planning, monitoring and implementation during the year, and ensured mainstreaming of gender, resilient development, emergency preparedness, fund mobilization, child rights monitoring and support to SDG adaptation, monitoring and integration.

**OUTPUT 1** Programme Coordination

**Analytical statement of progress**
Program coordination strengthened accountability mechanisms, ensured a coordinated approach to adaptation and integration SDGs, raised awareness about child rights and improved data collection and analysis.

The UN initiated two MAPS missions with UNICEF to hold discussions with the Government on accelerators to achieve the SDG targets adopted by the country. The Government adopted an institutional structure for SDG monitoring, developed with the support of the United Nations.

UNICEF initiated a baseline assessment for 55 child-related SDG indicators, the first such exercise in the country and in the region to look into the availability of data, both at the national and disaggregated levels. The assessment capitalized heavily on the 2015-16 MISC, the report of which was finalized and made public at the beginning of the year.

The programme coordination meetings handled oversight and had a hands-on role to support the implementation of programme priorities and periodic monitoring of fund utilization and appropriation.
OUTPUT 2 External Relations.

Analytical statement of progress
In line with the Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy and UNICEF’s equity focus, the CO continued communicating messages to put the rights and well-being of vulnerable children at the heart of social, political and economic agendas. Communication and public advocacy efforts targeted partners in Government, civil society, the private sector and communities to support shifts in public policy, fuel social engagement, and increase private and public resources for children. Despite social media channels banned in the country, the CO succeeded in reaching an audience, especially young people, on Facebook and Vkontakte.

Launch of the State of World Children in Digital Age spotlighted digital opportunities for children and communicated the main message in the restricted internet environment to ensure open access to digital spaces for children’s learning and development.

To complement digital efforts, the CO produced high-quality, engaging content for readers. The annual report highlighted how children’s lives are positively affected by UNICEF support. The CO shared the print and e-copy of the annual report through its networks and digital platforms to give greater regional and international attention and visibility to priority issues for Turkmenistan children. For example, there was a human interest story on breastfeeding included on the global World Breastfeeding Week microsite.

Increasingly, the CO involved children and young people in voicing their aspirations and recommendations to policy makers. Children communicated critical messages during the 25th anniversary of Turkmenistan’s accession to the United Nations event, World Children’s Day with the children’s takeover, the state of the world’s children launch and UN Debates, among others.

Targeted messages on ECD, nutrition, access to information and equity reached audiences through the Representative’s media statements, event opening speeches, press releases, exhibitions, social media and the website.

The CO started preparation work to migrate to the new CMS that will help developing a user-friendly and engaging website.

OUTPUT 3 Operational support for delivery of programme results

Analytical statement of progress
Cross-sector programme support was provided by funding various contracts and agreements for office equipment usage, internet connection and common services budget share. UNICEF Turkmenistan ensured cross-sectoral planning and implementation in early childhood development, nutrition and climate change adaptation. Early childhood development, as the main focus of the country programme, remained a fully cross-sectoral thrust of UNICEF Turkmenistan during the year, leading to increased coordination of the respective government partners, in particular in relation to child development and early identification/Early Intervention. UNICEF supported the Government in an evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme for 2013-2017 and, together with WHO, on the development of a new nutrition programme for 2018-2025.

This work was closely supported and overseen by an Inter-sectoral Committee on Nutrition to
ensure a holistic approach to planning nutrition interventions and achieving optimal nutrition outcomes for the population.

The work on climate change, including CLAC and revision of school curriculum, involved and engaged partners from many sectors, including some non-conventional ones.

OUTCOME 4 Programme Outcome: Young Child Survival and Wellbeing by end-2020, all children, including children with developmental difficulties, have access to quality health services to ensure child survival, health and better developmental outcomes.

Analytical statement of progress

The MoHMI started the use of perinatal mortality audit as a key strategy for reduction of preventable deaths among mothers and babies, to help health system managers understand the causes of death and the contributing factors so that corrective actions can be taken to improve the quality of care. UNICEF with UNFPA provided support to the MOHMI in introduction of confidential inquiry of perinatal deaths with the analysis of foeto-infant mortality for the last three years, which increased as a percentage of infant mortality from 17.6 per cent in 2013 to 19 per cent in 2016. Antenatal stillbirths and early neonatal mortality, which prevail among newborns with normal birth weight, was the main reason for the increase. These deaths are preventable if the quality gaps in delivering life-saving interventions to young children and their mothers close. To address the issue and to achieve SDG Target 3.2, the Government was advocated to deliver on an action plan to endorse and implement the global ENAP with the support of UNICEF at the regional and country levels.

In the area of young child feeding, progress was made in implementation of the Law on Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding. With UNICEF support, the MoHMI developed and endorsed a regulatory document and action plan for 2017-2021 on Young Child Feeding in Turkmenistan, which addresses the corresponding Convention on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observation and is in line with the International Code on Monitoring of Breast-milk Substitutes.

UNICEF with Government of Turkmenistan conducted the External Evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme for 2013 -2017. The evaluation helped to define UNICEF’s role in supporting the country efforts in implementation of the nutrition-related SDG targets and to promote results-based management and evidence-based policy development. The evaluation report presented a review of progress with UNICEF’s specific contribution to system level changes to reduce bottlenecks in effective delivery of nutrition interventions. It documented the important progress with exclusive breastfeeding rates among children under six months old, increasing from 11 per cent in 2006 to 59 per cent in 2015.

The evaluation informed the development of a new nutrition programme for 2018-2025, supported by UNICEF and WHO. The new programme focuses on further strengthening the nutrition status of the mothers and children as per the Global Nutrition Agenda.
In 2017, UNICEF and partners continued development of integrated ECD services with focus on children with disabilities and their families with an intersectoral and multi-disciplinary approach, as endorsed by the National Concept on Developmental Paediatrics and Early Interventions for 2016-2020. These services were established in selected areas, which include two etrap-level and three velayat-level ECD centres.

Use of the International Guide for Monitoring Child Development allowed families and childcare practitioners to monitor children’s development from the start and enable them to reach their fullest potential. It emphasizes the strengthening of coordination mechanisms and referrals from local to national levels to provide effective, efficient, and quality services to children with developmental delays and/or disabilities and their families. More than 600 children received early intervention services at national level ECD centres, having being referred from local levels. The regulatory framework on the national scale up of neonatal screenings and referral pathways for all children in the country was developed with UNICEF’s support in 2017.

UNICEF continued to strengthen the national capacity in planning for supply needs in line with results-based budgeting principles and assisted in procurement services that included vaccine and cold chain equipment and their effective delivery and distribution to ultimate beneficiaries within the framework of an existing MOU.

A constraint was the lack of adequate human resources which led to the lack of institutional capacity for results-based budgeting. The CO will need to step up its engagement in the area of domestic budgeting for programmes that benefit children, while establishing partnerships to support the capacity development of government partners, including the MoHMI, in results-based management.

OUTPUT 1 Ensuring enabling environment: National policies, legislation, strategies and plans with budgets adopted in line with international standards for modelling innovative approaches and scaling up of evidence based high impact health interventions in MCH, nutrition and ECD.

Analytical statement of progress
With UNICEF support, the MoHMI developed and approved a comprehensive document that provides unified national guidance on Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and IYCF and reflects health service actions to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and to ensure timely, safe and age-appropriate complementary feeding, including actions to ensure IYCF in emergency.

The mechanisms for enforcement of the Law on Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding were endorsed with the order on IYCF. The order promoted establishment of a Technical Working Group and mandated approval of the National Action Plan for IYCF for 2017-2021 and included tools on ICMBS monitoring and feeding of children exposed to HIV/AIDS. With this by-law, the corresponding Convention on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observation was addressed.

Collaboration on the Flour Fortification Initiative continued with monitoring the quality of flour fortification. The Food Fortification Initiative considered the quality control and data collection systems at an optimal level and comparable to mills in other countries with strong fortification and food control systems. The importance of the FORTIMAS approach and Premix Usage Reconciliation Tool was demonstrated to 27 stakeholders of the flour fortification programme from inspection and production sectors. As concluded by the Food Fortification Initiative, the tool was understood and was being implemented in the monitoring and surveillance process of the
flour fortification programme. Turkmenistan’s FORTIMAS system was ready to track the coverage and impact of the national food fortification programme, including flour fortification with iron and folic acid, and salt iodization.

UNICEF Turkmenistan and the MoHMI agreed to conduct an Evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme for 2013-2017 and to UNICEF’s contribution to its planning, implementation and monitoring. The evaluation examined both the Government’s role and responsibilities in implementation of the programme and UNICEF’s role in supporting the scale up of direct nutrition interventions as well as mainstreaming nutrition in other sectors. The lessons learned, evidence and findings generated by the evaluation guide planning for the achievement of SDG2, including the development the National Nutrition Programme for 2018-2025.

The work on introduction of the ECD and home visiting modules (developed with support of ECARO) in State Medical University curricular continued. The lesson plans and training materials were developed, translated into Turkmen and ready for approval by the State Medical University Scientific Board.

UNICEF Turkmenistan provided technical expertise of 80 standard operating procedures (SOPs) on infection prevention to align them with international guidelines and to reduce preventable newborn death with implementation of the infection control mechanisms at maternitys, child hospitals and at the primary health care level.

The Order of MOHMI ‘On introduction confidential enquiry of perinatal death’ was endorsed in 2017 for the participatory, multi-disciplinary ‘no blame’ approach to determine the causes of perinatal and neonatal death, factors that lead to death, analyse management and to propose solutions to prevent deaths.

**OUTPUT 2** System strengthening to deliver essential quality health services for mothers and young children: Availability of and access to essential quality evidence based interventions, skilled human resources and delivery systems for mothers’ and children’s health care ensured through innovative demonstration models and scale up plans.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Within the framework of the National Concept and Action Plan for 2016-2020 on Developmental Paediatrics and Early Interventions, UNICEF continued to support the MOHMI in the establishment and scale-up of an Early Intervention system. The draft standards on Early Intervention services propose principles and algorithms of provision of Early Intervention services, roles, scope of activities depending on level of the facility, staffing and equipment.

The multi-disciplinary early intervention services were initiated in select areas with establishment of core groups of experts (27) from two districts and three regional level ECD centres. The 10 trainers trained were building capacity of health care providers in ECD and Early Identification of developmental delays. This work resulted in 112 specialists from across the country trained in child health, nutrition and development, including on early detection and intervention for children with disabilities. It is ready to scale-up at the national level. The training process included an innovative approach of online/distance education involving leading ECD experts from Ankara University, Turkey and Baku Rehabilitation Centre.
This year was marked by the introduction the perinatal mortality audit to strengthen institutional capacity to implement the Confidential Enquiry into Perinatal Deaths in Turkmenistan and assist a national team of experts in development and endorsement the audit standards, classifications and tools. With UNICEF support the technical workshop on Confidential Enquiry into Perinatal Deaths was conducted for 35 health specialists (obstetricians, neonatologists, pathologists) from two regions to learn and agree on methodology and standards for the participatory, multidisciplinary ‘no blame’ approach to determine the causes and factors of perinatal death and identify required interventions to prevent it.

A core group of MNCH specialists (24 chief paediatricians, obstetricians, and neonatologists) from across the country participated at Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) workshop organized with ECARO support and learned how to develop an action plan for implementation the global ENAP.

As a follow up to UNICEF/Israel Embassy partnership last year, the MoHMI introduced a training course on newborn care and neonatal resuscitation based on updated neonatal protocols into the training programme of International Training-Research Centre. In 2017, the group of core trainers helped 110 neonatologists from all regions to gain knowledge and skills to improve access to quality newborn care and resuscitation. In addition, all mid-level personnel of Neonatal Care department of the Ashgabat Perinatal Centre, which is providing high-level perinatal care as a referral point for whole country, received on-job training on updated neonatal protocols implementation for pre-term babies.

The MoHMI received technical assistance in developing a risk communication plan on engaging with local communities at risk to prevent and respond to polio and potential health outbreaks. The plan was developed through the capacity building of 38 frontline workers from five border districts. This resulted into the decision of health ministry to apply the plan on other priority public health issues with respective communities.

OUTPUT 3 Parental and community empowerment to ensure the best start in life for every girl and boy: Caregivers know the range and benefit of services available for antenatal, childbirth and young child survival, are empowered to provide stimulating and responsive care for their children, and have access to and use preventive and curative care.

Analytical statement of progress
The quality of mother, newborn and child health care depends on knowledge and skills of parents and caregivers on healthy child-rearing practices. UNICEF, with the MoHMI and partners including private sector, civil society organizations and media, launched a national public communication campaign on ECD ‘first 1000 days of child’s life the foundation for a happy future’.

Building on national experience in ECD, the roll out of the four-year national campaign aimed to bolster good parenting practices that focus on nutrition, play, positive and sensitive care and provides support to fathers and mothers while they are taking care for their children. This year the efforts were mainly to leverage partnerships and reinforce joint commitments to maximize on the global knowledge and national data by focusing on priority issues.

A detailed communication plan was taken by the partners and included exposure to the film ‘The Beginning of Life’, organization of the Father’s Day and building the capacity of parents in
positive parenting practices through national broadcast and print media, as well as other programme interventions. Further interventions will be focused on velayats.

The MoHMI received technical assistance to develop a risk communications plan on engaging with local communities at risk to prevent and respond to trans-boundary polio and other infections spread and potential health outbreaks. The plan integrated various approaches, including capacity building frontline workers, behaviour change interventions with families focusing on children under five, social mobilization and advocacy. The plan covered monitoring and evaluation and rumour management components.

Both the content of the ECD campaign and risk communication plan were informed by the evidence about family practices generated by the 2015 Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on rearing practices of children under six across the country.

Constraints: Frontline health workers are the main and trusted channel of conveying parenting information. They should be highly involved in community education, especially with the limited possibilities to use TV, radio and internet to reach parents and communities.

### Document centre

#### Evaluation and research

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#### Programme documents

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