For UNICEF Uzbekistan, 2017 was a challenging but successful year of transforming risks and uncertainties into opportunities and achievements for children. The political change that started in late 2016 brought about new visions, revised priorities and changes in the way development is viewed and managed. In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan witnessed changes in the mandates or management of some of its implementing partners, and a record number of government decrees, programmes and regulations were issued. Keeping abreast of these developments, aligning UNICEF activities with these new directions without losing sight of the country programme and exploring new horizons with existing human and financial resources was challenging. Nevertheless, UNICEF Uzbekistan achieved most of its work plan results and engaged with its partners in new areas of work.

UNICEF Uzbekistan enhanced its advocacy efforts to ensure recommendations made by the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child were being followed up by the Government. A major achievement was the generation of the political will needed to establish the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and to support the drafting of the requisite legislation. UNICEF Uzbekistan also successfully advocated for and supported the establishment of the Inter-Agency Convention on the Rights of the Child Coordination Council as recommended by the Committee. After successfully negotiating exclusive and first-time access to places of deprivation of liberty for children, UNICEF Uzbekistan launched programming aimed at reducing the number of children in these facilities and their integration into families and communities.

The fast-paced economic reform agenda of the Government required UNICEF Uzbekistan to revisit its approach to social protection in order to protect children from economic shocks. New partnerships were established, and agreements reached with the Ministries of Finance, Economy, and Employment and Labour Relations to engage UNICEF Uzbekistan in the revision of the targeting system for social allowances and identification of vulnerable groups. Partnering with the Youth Union of Uzbekistan, UNICEF Uzbekistan promoted its approaches to adolescent development.

In line with the recommendations of the previous country programme evaluation, UNICEF Uzbekistan enhanced its system-level engagement to influence government programmes and policies, thereby establishing the organization as a trusted partner on issues related to children. Among other things, the State Programme on Improving the Situation of Persons with Disabilities was extensively informed by UNICEF advice. UNICEF Uzbekistan also provided recommendations on the 2018 Annual State Programme.

UNICEF Uzbekistan was requested to provide advice on the revision of the Law on Education and to lead the development of the 2018-2022 Education Sector Plan. Policy recommendations on early childhood development (ECD) and early childhood education (ECE) were included in the State Programme on Pre-school Education. UNICEF also advised the Government on
financing models for this sub-sector in order to increase low levels of ECD services. The Quality Education Framework developed by UNICEF Uzbekistan enabled objective assessment and monitoring of the quality of education. Resources were prepared to introduce disaster risk reduction (DRR) and safe behaviour education in schools in nine grades.

Following an agreement on observing rigorous quality assurance standards for data collection, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the country’s first national nutrition survey. Interventions to strengthen district health systems in two target regions significantly improved regional health system performance as measured by overall quality scores compared to 2016. UNICEF Uzbekistan also continued supporting the Ministry of Health in reforming home visiting and the costing of perinatal care. Funded by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the Government in improving the system of planning, procurement and storage of vaccines in order to reach self-sufficiency and sustainability of its immunization programme.

Despite the challenging programme environment, UNICEF Uzbekistan was able to significantly expand its work in the area of child protection. Advice was provided on comprehensive amendments to the Criminal and Civil Procedural Codes, including protection of child victims and witnesses of crimes, introduction of restorative justice and expansion of alternatives to deprivation of liberty. Judges were trained on child-friendly procedures and the concept of restorative justice, and the first child-friendly investigation room was established to safeguard the rights of children at the pre-trial stage. The reform of the child protection system began with an assessment of gaps, the modelling of family and child support services and the introduction of social work as a professional specialization.

A lack of reliable and internationally comparable data was a key bottleneck across sectors. Following UNICEF Uzbekistan advocacy for improvement of data collection and reporting the Government expressed renewed interest in conducting a Multiple-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), despite previous unsuccessful attempts. Standards for quality assurance in data collection and reporting developed by UNICEF guaranteed the reliability of data produced by UNICEF-supported programmes and were adopted by the UN Country Team to improve the quality of all UN-led studies.

### Equity in practice

Although UNICEF Uzbekistan is primarily engaged at the national level with advocacy and programmes for system reform, the office continued working at the local level to facilitate efforts to address equity issues. In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan extensively supported capacity development of the intersectoral working groups established by the Government at the regional level to analyse the situation of children and women to reduce inequalities in priority areas. The subsequent recommendations informed regional development plans and strategies. For instance, in Ferghana region, inadequacy of the existing social protection measures for single mothers was identified as a priority to be addressed in planning. In Jizzakh and Khorezm regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, families of children with disabilities faced major challenges in the quality and availability of services, including community support services.

The District Health System Strengthening Programme implemented in selected districts of target regions of Khorezm and Surkhandarya was developed with a strong equity approach. UNICEF Uzbekistan supported local healthcare authorities to collect and analyse data on access of children and mothers to quality healthcare services. This helped them identify the most vulnerable groups and develop interventions that ensure better access.
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools was another UNICEF Uzbekistan intervention with a focus on equity. A programme in remote areas was supported that facilitated access for girls to menstrual hygiene in safe and protective environments, thereby strengthening health and education outcomes (For details, see Output 3.3).

UNICEF Uzbekistan supported human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) day-care centres in providing psychosocial support to children and adolescents with HIV. This is helping to increase adherence to HIV treatment for the most marginalized and vulnerable groups.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**Greater focus on the second decade of life.** In 2017, enhancing youth policy and its implementation became a key priority for the Government. This was demonstrated by the President’s Decree “On measures to improve the effectiveness of state youth policy and support the activities of the Union of Youth of Uzbekistan.”

Concerned with the socio-economic marginalization of youth, the Government acknowledged the need to accelerate efforts to support young people in marginalized urban, rural or remote settings. The envisaged support includes the provision of formal and non-formal education opportunities, and leisure, community and employment support, so that young people may realize their full potential and ultimately contribute to society. This provided an important entry point for UNICEF Uzbekistan to engage with the Government on important issues of positive adolescent development agenda and social cohesion. With support from UNICEF NY Headquarters, UNICEF Uzbekistan developed a conceptual framework with seven pillars for enhancing a youth policy for greater social cohesion for advocacy and policy dialogue with the Government.

Building on this initial engagement and interest from the Government, UNICEF Uzbekistan developed a work plan with the State Adviser on Youth Issues and the Youth Union to study aspirations, needs and risks of youth in Uzbekistan. This will inform further strengthening of the State Youth Policy, foster youth engagement and build the Government’s capacity in youth policy development and implementation.

**Migration and children.** UNICEF Uzbekistan did a preliminary review of the situation of children affected by migration, identifying a significant data gap in this area despite the scale of the issue in the country and the potential effect on children. This analysis became the basis for the European Union (EU)-funded sub-regional project “Protecting children affected by migration in South-East and Central Asia” that is due to start in 2018.

**Summary notes and acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>country management team</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>civil society organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRR</td>
<td>disaster risk reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>early childhood development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>early childhood education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELDS</td>
<td>Early Learning and Development Standards</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAVI</td>
<td>Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HACT</td>
<td>harmonized approach to cash transfers</td>
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</table>
UNICEF in Uzbekistan has a strong focus on system-level engagement, therefore, the majority of UNICEF-supported programmes have strong elements of capacity development to empower duty bearers to better fulfil their obligations. UNICEF also engages in capacity development interventions to ensure sustainability.

In 2017, the District Health System Strengthening initiative was a good example of such a programme. Health managers at the district level were trained to apply analytical skills for better understanding of the situation and develop programmes to address issues. In immunization, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported strengthening the capacity of cold-chain facilities. With UNICEF support, tools were developed for improved budgeting for vaccine procurement, thereby enabling the Government to move towards self-sufficiency in this area.

In education, a team of Ministry of Public Education (MoPE) experts were trained by UNICEF Uzbekistan to undertake a reform of the national curriculum. Additionally, with the introduction of elements of the quality education monitoring framework, MoPE increased its capacity to measure quality and plan for improvement. MoPE also now has trained staff and resources to conduct simulation exercises in schools and develop preparedness plans to increase readiness and capacity for emergency response.

In child protection, UNICEF Uzbekistan worked with partners to introduce a new concept of social work into the social protection system. To ensure that adequately trained staff are available in the long run to provide social work services, UNICEF worked closely with the National University to develop a programme for social work education at the tertiary level.

UNICEF Uzbekistan actively sought opportunities for policy dialogue and advocacy. Positioning itself as the major actor in child-related areas, UNICEF Uzbekistan gained access to children’s places of deprivation of liberty, an opportunity granted to no other international organization in recent years. This event resulted in programming to reduce the number of children in these facilities.
UNICEF Uzbekistan initiated policy dialogue on strengthening the social protection system and provided policy advice on institutional reform, targeting a mechanism for social allowances and the establishment of a single registry of vulnerable populations.

With one-third of Uzbekistan’s population under the age of 18, a demographic analysis informed policy advocacy for investing in children to leverage the demographic dividend in the coming decades. This created the opportunity for UNICEF to use a sharper life-cycle approach to the programme.

Despite the challenging context related to data, UNICEF Uzbekistan leveraged opportunities that would lead to the production of internationally comparable data on key child-related indicators for the first time in decades. A proposed agreement for collaboration on MICS with the State Committee on Statistics (SCS) was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. UNICEF supported the first nationwide nutrition survey, which will inform national-level programming in 2018. UNICEF led the adoption of UN Common Standards for Data Quality and presented recommendations for the Presidential Decree on Measures to Improve Activities of the SCS.

UNICEF Uzbekistan actively engaged in legislative and programmatic reform, including support for drafting the law on the establishment of the Office of the Children’s Ombudsperson, revising the Law on Education, designing the State Programme on Improving the Situation of Persons with Disabilities, and drafting amendments to the Criminal and Civil Codes on Child-Sensitive Procedures.

A costing analysis of perinatal healthcare services in selected regions with the Finance and Health Ministries was used for improved efficiency in allocating resources. In addition, an analysis of teaching workforce legislative frameworks and the ECD policy was supported by UNICEF Uzbekistan to improve programming.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF Uzbekistan boosted its efforts to reinforce existing partnerships or forge new ones to ensure its programme is well resourced and results are effectively translated into changes in systems or lives of children and women. A partnership was established with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that ultimately resulted in the fulfilment of one of the 2013 recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, namely the establishment of an Inter-Agency Convention on the Rights of the Child Coordination Council. The Council together with the National Human Rights Centre (NHRC) is responsible for developing and monitoring the National Action Plan to address the observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF also worked with the Centre for Action Strategy, a recently established government organization responsible for national planning and provided input into different programmatic areas to be included in the State Programme for 2018.

Collaboration with the Prosecutor General’s Office was significantly strengthened as many legislative and policy reforms are led or coordinated by this office. As part of this cooperation, a first State Programme on Improving the Situation of Persons with Disabilities was developed that included nearly all UNICEF Uzbekistan’s recommendations. This partnership also resulted in UNICEF’s access to children’s places of deprivation of liberty in the country.
In partnership with the National Association for Electronic Mass Media and Vodiy Sadosi Radio, UNICEF Uzbekistan promoted public discussions on nationwide television and radio networks on issues such as prevention of crime among young people, ECD and the father’s role, gender equality and women’s empowerment, breastfeeding, mother and child health, children living with HIV, children’s participation and children with disabilities.

With financial support from telecom operator Ucell, UNICEF continued to support a WASH-in-Schools programme. This partnership will continue in 2018, with a shift in focus to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in development.

**External communication and public advocacy**

UNICEF’s external communications and public advocacy efforts were focused on informing the public of the achievements of the Cooperation Programme of UNICEF Uzbekistan and the Government, and raising awareness on child-related topics, especially in the fast-changing development context of the country.

In collaboration with the National Association of Electronic Mass Media and radio stations, programmes were produced and broadcast on issues such as youth crime prevention, gender equality, ECD, breastfeeding, mother and child health, children living with HIV and children with disabilities.

UNICEF Uzbekistan worked with News Apps for smart phones and local online media such as Gazeta.uz and Kun.uz to foster public dialogue on critical topics such as violence in educational institutions, children deprived of liberty and children with disabilities. Overall, more than 84 news articles on UNICEF activities were tracked on online portals.

The online campaigns during World Immunization Week, Early Moments Matter and World Breastfeeding Week increased public engagement on social media and on the UNICEF website. The number of visitors to UNICEF’s trilingual website increased from 32,493 in 2016 to 54,660 with almost 12,025 returning visitors. There was a significant increase in the number of people reached through social media platforms in 2017, such as Facebook (increased to 382,924 with engagement value of 34,641), Instagram (increased to 216,153 with engagement value of 19,978) and Twitter (messages appeared 2,220,600 times with engagement value of 53,545).

UNICEF Uzbekistan engaged with Ucell telecom operator and retail chain Korzinka.uz to raise awareness on children’s issues. While Ucell disseminated SMS messages on different topics to its subscribers, Korzinka.uz organized public advocacy events on breastfeeding and disabilities.

As part of the Youth Participation Initiative, UNICEF trained adolescents aged 14 to 18 to present their concerns to local authorities for solutions. These adolescents also formulated and presented their recommendations to Members of Parliament and key decision makers at the regional level.

**South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan intensified its advocacy for the accelerated implementation of the National Action Plan to address recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. One important area was the establishment of the Ombudsperson’s Office for Children. To this end, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported participation of representatives from the NHRC, the Ombudsperson’s Office and the Women’s Committee at the Human Rights Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, which brought together ombudspersons from Europe and Central Asia.
The conference created an opportunity for the participants from Uzbekistan to learn about experiences of other countries with regard to the ombudsperson for children role. The participants are now members of the working group established by Government that is developing regulations for the country’s Ombudsperson for Children.

UNICEF Uzbekistan is supporting the Government to attain self-financing in vaccine procurement by 2020. UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the participation of representatives from the Ministries of Health and Finance in a Vaccine Procurement Practitioners Exchange Forum that took place in Copenhagen in October 2017, providing an opportunity for government representatives to engage with officials and experts from 22 other countries. During the conference, participants from Uzbekistan exchanged information with and learned from the experiences of Belarus, Kenya, Moldova, Nigeria, Romania and Ukraine about sustainable self-financing in immunization, cold chain, certification and procurement of vaccines.

Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages

Much of UNICEF’s work in Uzbekistan lies at the intersection of various sectors. UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the establishment of the Inter-Agency Convention on the Rights of the Child Coordination Council, which not only fulfils one of the Committee recommendations, but also facilitates and promotes a cross-sectoral approach within the Government to programming for children. The Council provided a platform for policy advocacy and brought renewed attention to the Committee recommendations not addressed by the Government. It played a dual role of monitoring implementation as well as developing a national Convention on the Rights of the Child action plan. The Regional Inter-Sectoral Working Groups supported by UNICEF also promoted a holistic view of children and thus an approach to programming that is not confined to sectoral solutions.

Responding to the Government’s renewed focus on youth, UNICEF Uzbekistan developed seven pillars for enhancing youth policy towards positive adolescent development and social cohesion. Cross-sectoral at its core, this approach incorporates ECD, media, juvenile justice and education, and provides a foundation for policy dialogue.

With its partners, UNICEF Uzbekistan advocated for strengthening the social protection system in the context of ongoing economic reforms to protect the most vulnerable from unforeseen shocks. The Government is demonstrating increasing commitment to social protection reform, and requested UNICEF’s support in improving social allowance targeting mechanisms, developing integrated approaches to lifting families out of poverty and building a single registry. UNICEF Uzbekistan built the Government’s capacity through workshops and technical advice on targeting. Similarly, UNICEF Uzbekistan developed an administrative reform proposal for a social protection system for the Government’s consideration.

Human rights-based approach to cooperation

UNICEF Uzbekistan as the co-chair of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Result Group on Social Protection and the key partner in the UN Joint Programme for Situation Analysis of Persons and Children with Disabilities, used the information and data made available in this analysis to inform and help design the State Programme on Improving the Situation of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were used in the development of this programme, which was approved by a Presidential Decree. The establishment of an effective monitoring system of the rights of persons and children with
disabilities and ratification of the relevant Convention are among the elements of the state programme that can promote a human rights-based approach to government programming.

Promoting programming with a rights-based approach regarding analysis of the situation of children and women in the country was a major focus of the programme in 2017. At the national level, UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to promote the use and maintenance of a comprehensive database of key indicators about children and women in the framework of the regional Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity initiative. At the sub-national level, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported regional governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) in equity-based programming by developing capacity for conducting local analyses of the situation of children and women. The local-level interventions resulted in the development of improvement plans in target regions with a focus on children and women.

**Gender equality**

UNICEF Uzbekistan supported transforming the environment in selected schools to become more adolescent girl-friendly. A knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) study on WASH in schools had identified menstruation as a cause of absenteeism of adolescent girls. To address this issue, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the building of improved hygiene facilities in four remote schools in pilot regions to ensure privacy for adolescent girls. In addition, UNICEF provided assistance in revising the school curriculum at two in-service teacher training institutions to include menstrual hygiene in the school curriculum. The skills of teachers, school administration officials and caregivers of adolescent girls from 30 targeted schools were strengthened to teach adolescent girls menstrual hygiene practices.

UNICEF Uzbekistan supported implementation of a nationally representative survey on nutrition status and immunization of children under five and women of reproductive age. The study supported UNICEF’s advocacy efforts to improve access to quality and gender-sensitive disaggregated data in this area and will facilitate the translation of the evidence generated into policy recommendations and advocacy. The data will help UNICEF Uzbekistan and its partners develop gender-sensitive policies and programmes.

In Ferghana, one of the focus regions for UNICEF programmes, social protection measures were enhanced for single mothers and their children through prioritization of these issues in regional development plans following a UNICEF-supported study on the situation of single mothers conducted by Regional Inter-sectoral Working Groups and CSOs.

Nationwide media networks disseminated six television and four radio programmes on gender equality and women’s empowerment with participation of celebrities, influencers and UNICEF Uzbekistan. Mass media and social media campaigns were launched to impart messages related to gender-based violence as part of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” and the “Day of the Girl Child” campaigns.

**Environmental sustainability**

To promote environmental sustainability among partner organizations, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the training of lecturers in medical colleges on immunization waste management. A total of 643 teachers of medical colleges had their capacities enhanced to deliver information to students on correct disposal of contaminated injection equipment and development of immunization waste-disposal plans. In the long term, this will contribute to decreased emissions of harmful substances into the environment.
To reduce its environmental footprint, UNICEF Uzbekistan allocated US$10,500 from Greening and Accessibility Funds to procure more environmentally friendly air conditioning equipment for office use. The inverter-type air conditioners are more energy efficient and reduce the level of emissions. Furthermore, as part of the organizational commitment to implement greening initiatives, the office continued to encourage staff and partners to reduce travel and use video conferencing or other online meeting provisions.

Although not the direct and intended result of UNICEF’s programme, in six of the one-minute video spots produced by aspiring journalists aged 16 to 18, the importance of environmental sustainability was highlighted. The young journalists who participated in the workshop organized by UNICEF produced videos that aimed to raise awareness on issues such as household waste management, air and soil pollution and the negative consequences of humans’ impact on the environment. These videos were broadcast on regional and national television channels.

Effective leadership

In 2017, the UNICEF Uzbekistan country management team (CMT) focused on improving leadership in two areas: internal management of office business and external engagement with partners.

The membership of the country management team was revised to improve effectiveness. An annual management plan and an enterprise risk management action plan were developed and monitored regularly. All required office committees were established and functioned to ensure effectiveness and transparency in decision-making. Following an analysis of the findings of the Global Staff Survey, and with the assistance of a management consulting firm, an improvement plan was developed to ensure the office environment is conducive to quality work. In addition, the country management team took part in a UNICEF NY Headquarters-led leadership programme to improve effectiveness.

Externally, UNICEF Uzbekistan played a leading role in many areas and tried to further establish itself as a key player in child-related issues. Together with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, UNICEF as the Co-Chair of the UNDAF Results Group on Social Protection brought together government agencies and development partners not only to monitor progress of UNDAF but also to influence programmes and policies in this area. In education, UNICEF continued to play a leading role in the local education group, which coordinates the efforts of all actors in this wide sector.

In 2017, the Government demonstrated renewed interest in adolescents and youth. Drawing on its global and country-level resources, UNICEF Uzbekistan responded to this emerging need in a timely and effective manner. Effective engagement with different influencers and actors helped UNICEF appear as a key player in this area. As a result, the UN Country Team assigned UNICEF the coordinating role in adolescent and youth programming.

Financial resources management

Budget utilization was reviewed monthly. UNICEF Uzbekistan completed all programmatic and operational activities within the planned budgeted resources. Overall utilization of institutional budget, Regular Resources and Other Regular Resources funds in 2017 was US$6,542,104, representing 100 per cent of allocated funds. A total of US$833,554 was committed for 2018, representing 13 per cent of total allotments. This includes US$482,255 of Regular Resources funds (11 per cent), US$305,964 of Other Resources funds (16 per cent) and US$40,647 of Institutional Budget funds (10 per cent).
All financial closures activities were successfully completed within prescribed deadlines. Bank reconciliations were done in a timely manner, replenishment requests were placed promptly and funds were received on time.

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to make effective use of its bank optimization and cash forecasting tools, as well as VISION tools such as the admin/finance dashboard, performance management reports and SAP-generated reports for regular detailed monitoring of financial and other assets. These actions continued to be successfully applied for financial and administrative risk minimization.

Comprehensive training on updated financial regulations was provided to counterparts. Together with the review of performance management indicators by the country management team, assigning clear accountabilities and ongoing communication with partners resulted in having no outstanding direct cash transfers at year-end.

UNICEF Uzbekistan adopted the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HA CT) facilitated by the HACT Focal Point. HACT activities and programmatic visits were outlined in the developed assurance plan, which was updated and monitored by the HACT focal point and the country management team on a quarterly basis.

**Fund-raising and donor relations**

The fast-evolving development context in the country, initiated by political changes in late 2016, positively affected UNICEF’s operating space in some programme areas. UNICEF Uzbekistan, trying to take advantage of emerging opportunities, boosted its fund-raising efforts to respond to the new programmatic demands.

There were some openings in the area of child protection. As a joint initiative with UNICEF’s Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, UNICEF Uzbekistan developed a proposal for the EU for protection of children affected by migration. The total value of the allocation for UNICEF in Uzbekistan was US$503,000, which was approved towards the end of 2017.

In the first two years of the programme cycle, UNICEF Uzbekistan was engaged in a great deal of national-level policy work, legislative assistance and programming. In 2018, it is expected that the improved enabling environment will begin to impact the access of children and communities to quality services. To ensure availability of funds for local-level interventions, UNICEF Uzbekistan joined the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in making a funding proposal to the EU for local development. The proposal, which is accepted favourably at the country level, focuses on child health, preschool education and improving services for families with children in institutions. UNICEF’s share of the total value of the proposal is US$9,854,000.

In 2017, a GAVI mission visited Uzbekistan to review progress on its programme. During the mission, UNICEF Uzbekistan facilitated consultations with government partners, which resulted in enhancing the monitoring framework of the programme.

By the end of 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan had used US$1,494,000 of Other Resources. While the main donor to UNICEF Uzbekistan was GAVI, UNICEF also utilized the global thematic funds for education and WASH.

All donor reports were quality assured and submitted on time.
Evaluation and research

The online plan for research, impact monitoring and evaluation (PRIME) is institutionalized within UNICEF Uzbekistan to ensure evaluations, studies and research (RSEs) are coordinated and aligned with the Country Programme 2016-2020. In consultation with senior management, PRIME was used as a strategic prioritization process to address key knowledge gaps identified in the country programme, resulting in a smaller number of strategically positioned RSEs.

To ensure quality, UNICEF Uzbekistan established an RSE Steering Committee to provide strategic guidance and oversight to the RSEs and ensure they meet UNICEF’s quality assurance and ethical standards.

No evaluation had been planned to be completed in 2017, however, based on a set of selection criteria and preliminary discussions with a multisectoral evaluation advisory group, Uzbekistan was identified to participate as a case-study country in two global UNICEF evaluations: Strategies and Programme Performance to Strengthen Child Protection Systems; and Approach to Health System Strengthening. Both studies were commissioned by UNICEF NY Headquarters’ Evaluation Office. UNICEF Uzbekistan identified the child rights monitoring programme as a strategic area to be evaluated in 2018 to provide information on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of this intervention and guide improved programming.

UNICEF Uzbekistan ensured that management responses to all evaluations were implemented and reported in a timely manner.

Efficiency gains and cost savings

Savings were made in the area of ICT by extending the useful life and usage of equipment. UNICEF Uzbekistan also saved on staff time and financial resources through a number of office-based long-term arrangements. UNICEF Uzbekistan continued outsourcing ancillary services, including office maintenance, as well as security and cleaning through UNDP, while maintaining the same level of security and preparedness.

UNICEF Uzbekistan is participating in the joint UN review of procurement, human resources and ICT activities. This effort aims to establish more cost-effective and efficient utilization of cross-agency activities as part of the Business Operations Strategy of Delivering as One, which is expected to be cleared by the operations management team in January 2018. This will set clear action plans and savings for the remaining years of the UNDAF cycle 2018-2020.

UNICEF Uzbekistan made operational cost savings by increasingly using offshore procurements or payments in US currency to mitigate the challenges of official and unofficial exchange rate differences and high banking transaction costs negatively affecting UNICEF transactions.

The currency liberalization policy in place since 15 September 2017 led to a significant devaluation of the local currency, and thus resulted in programme and operational cost savings for payments made in local currency.

Supply management

UNICEF Uzbekistan developed a comprehensive supply plan to enhance planning in procurement of goods and services. All supply activities were completed and the quality,
delivery and after-sales services were closely monitored. The breakdown of the total procurement of US$2,020,498 (excluding freight) is outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supply and logistics key figures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Total value of procurement performed by UNICEF Uzbekistan, including on behalf of the other Country Offices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement for own office</td>
<td>2,020,498</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programmatic supplies including PS-funded</td>
<td>177,513</td>
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<tr>
<td>Channelled via programme</td>
<td>177,513</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operational supplies</td>
<td>251,166</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>1,591,820</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL procurement performed by the office</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,020,498</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Total value of supplies and services received (irrespective of procurement location)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programmatic supplies including PS-funded</td>
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<td>Channelled via regular procurement services</td>
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<td>Channelled via GAVI</td>
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<td>Operational supplies</td>
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<td>Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Freight</td>
<td>745,135</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL supplies and services received</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,026,466</strong></td>
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<td>(3) Total value of supplies managed in UNICEF Uzbekistan’s controlled warehouse(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total inventory in controlled warehouses</td>
<td>165,491</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-positioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total supplies issued from controlled warehouses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL supplies managed in UNICEF Uzbekistan’s controlled warehouses</strong></td>
<td><strong>199,035</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ICT equipment, printing, nutrition survey laboratory supplies, event management services, construction work and evaluation services comprised the main categories of supplies and services procured. Local procurement accounted for 44 per cent of all supply activities, while the remaining 56 per cent was procured offshore. Thirty-six per cent of institutional contracts were sourced from international expertise, with the remaining 64 per cent sourced nationally.

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued effective utilization of long-term arrangements in order to minimize duration of procurement and standardization of services. The arrangements covered specific areas of office stationery and supplies, offset printing, event management services and travel management, and communication-related research, all of which successfully served
programme activities and needs. Performance of service providers and suppliers within the framework of the agreements was closely monitored.

UNICEF procurement services totalling US$17,438,345 were provided to the Ministry of Health, UNDP and GAVI.

The value of emergency pre-positioned supplies in UNICEF Uzbekistan’s warehouse amounted to US$199,035 at the end of 2017. A regular stock count is performed as per UNICEF rules.

Security for staff and premises

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to undertake measures to maintain its security and preparedness standards.

Regular security preparedness exercises were conducted with the participation of all staff. These included fire drills and communication tree testing as per actions endorsed by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the Security Management Team. Senior management and security focal points attended regular radio checks conducted by UNDSS. Information on key office staff, essential staff lists, and satellite, vehicle and radio lists were regularly shared with UNDSS and the Security Management Team.

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to be fully compliant with Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). All staff received refresher training on security and safety issues. In addition, UNDSS provided training on the usage of radio equipment for office drivers, security focal points and wardens, training on safety for security guards, and training on safe driving for all staff. Three drivers were trained on advanced safe driving in extreme situations and first aid.

The business continuity plan was updated to reflect the most recent risk assessment, endorsed by the country management team and shared with all staff. An exercise to test the plan was conducted in July, 2017.

As part of the early warning early action update, the emergency management team improved their knowledge on ‘preparedness for emergency response’ procedures in a training workshop. UNICEF participated in an emergency simulation exercise in November 2017 jointly with UN agencies and the Ministries of Emergency and Interior.

Human resources

UNICEF Uzbekistan operates in the context of a middle-income country experiencing political transition and shifting priorities. UNICEF Uzbekistan staff members, especially those working on programmes, need to be able to function as technical advisers for the government, engage in policy advocacy and help reform systems. UNICEF tried to fill some of its vacant posts, such as the Deputy Representative, chief of education and chief of health, with professionals with such skills and experiences in their profiles. The recruitment process for the first two went rather smoothly. However, UNICEF faced challenges in the selection of the chief of health as the profiles of the applicants did not match the requirements of the programme.

In the reporting period, a new post of social policy and economic analysis specialist was established and filled to respond to the Government’s renewed attention to social protection. Additionally, the following recruitments were completed to fill positions that had become vacant because of the departure of staff or had been newly created: immunization officer, supply
assistant, health project assistant, administrative assistant and two drivers.

Recruitment was ongoing at the end of the year for newly established posts: monitoring and evaluation (child rights monitoring), admin/finance officer, administrative officer and administrative assistant. In addition, individual consultants and contractors were engaged throughout the year to perform specific tasks as required by the programme and communications teams. Gender distribution among UNICEF Uzbekistan staff was maintained at 47 per cent female/53 per cent male.

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to invest in staff development. Staff actively participated in training and workshops through webinars and face-to-face events. Four national staff participated in stretch assignments to the Bangladesh, Bostwana and Kosovo Offices and the UNICEF Regional Office in Switzerland. In addition, UNICEF Uzbekistan received the support of an international professional staff member from NY Headquarters on a stretch assignment.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to deploy effective and efficient ICT solutions, upgrade and extend ICT infrastructure and popularize usage of cloud-hosted services.

For the first time in UNICEF, Microsoft Nano Servers were deployed in the office. This resulted in decreasing the number of running servers and saving maintenance costs. The migration to Windows 10 was completed, resulting in increased usage of cloud-based solutions.

ICT facilities were also used effectively for programmatic purposes. Data collection and real-time and secure communication of data with servers was made possible by using tablet computers with internet connectivity. Engagement with the public was also increased through social media and ICT (For details, see text under External Communication and Public Advocacy).

**Programme components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1** 3. By 2020 mothers and children, especially the most vulnerable, have access to quality healthcare services (individual and population-based), including in emergency

**Analytical statement of progress**

Low quality of healthcare services remains the key factor affecting child survival in Uzbekistan. UNICEF interventions in health-system strengthening addressed key bottlenecks and barriers in provision of quality mother and child health services.

Past efforts in technical capacity development of health professionals and service providers have not been sustainable due to limited capacity in healthcare management. UNICEF Uzbekistan support to district health system strengthening resulted in improvements in regional health system performance, measured by overall quality scores compared to the 2016 baseline District Health System Bottleneck Assessment, by 33 per cent in Surkhandarya region and 28 per cent in Khorezm region.

The country is facing a challenge with the sustainability of safe immunization programming. In the current state, it is likely that once international community support stops, the coverage of immunization could be negatively affected. UNICEF Uzbekistan, as the major implementing
agency for more than 75 per cent of the US$17 million in GAVI funding, is supporting the Government in improving the system of planning, procurement and storage of vaccines. Specifically, UNICEF is working on improving infrastructure at the national and regional levels, strengthening human resource capacity nationwide and budget forecasting. These interventions, together with government investment in district-level cold-chain facilities and World Health Organization (WHO) work improving guidelines and standards, are strengthening the system for self-sufficiency and sustainability.

In Uzbekistan, equitable access to health care is affected by a gap between policy formulation and implementation. Current legislative and budgeting frameworks in the health sector do not effectively respond to the needs of communities, particularly the most vulnerable. Financial bottlenecks contribute to delayed and ineffective implementation of health services, resulting in low and ineffective coverage and quality of care. Lack of reliable and comparable data related to immunization, caregivers' knowledge and practices of child health and development, water and sanitation, nutrition and micronutrient status of women and children are the key bottlenecks in the understanding of the current situation for child well-being and measuring the progress and coverage of national health programmes in Uzbekistan.

UNICEF is supporting the Government with efforts to improve financing of the hospital perinatal care system. The current financing system is bed-based and does not cover all costs of services. In the reporting period, UNICEF conducted a costing of perinatal care services and generated evidence to demonstrate inadequacies and gaps in the current system. As a result, advocacy efforts were undertaken to reform the system.

In previous years, the Government, UNICEF Uzbekistan and some other key stakeholders have invested in improving the nutrition of women and children in Uzbekistan. Despite these efforts, available data is not showing major improvement in some areas. This can be due to ineffectiveness of programmes or unreliability of data. In general, data in the area of nutrition is either unavailable or contradictory. UNICEF Uzbekistan is supporting the Ministry of Health with programming for improved results in nutrition of children and women, for which accurate and reliable data is fundamental. In 2017, UNICEF supported the implementation of the first national nutrition survey in the country; the analysis of results was ongoing at the end of 2017.

OUTPUT 1 3.1 By 2020, health managers have increased capacity to implement evidence-based and equity-focused district health system strengthening plans, including in emergency

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF’s approach to address the bottlenecks in management of health service provision is decentralization through building capacity of health managers on evidence-based planning, budgeting, supervision and monitoring of priority interventions, known as district health system strengthening. In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the development of district and facility-level healthcare quality improvement plans in two targeted regions of Surkhandarya and Khorezm. In particular, with UNICEF support, 118 district health managers learned how to identify bottlenecks in delivery and utilization of services by children and women and develop plans to improve quality. In addition, more than 1,000 health professionals in targeted regions received training on evidence-based newborn and child survival packages. Training of 42 health professionals on supportive supervision was conducted jointly with WHO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Using GAVI health system strengthening funds, UNICEF Uzbekistan renovated and reconstructed vaccine storage facilities, procured refrigerator vehicles for vaccine delivery,
upgraded cold-chain equipment and introduced a vaccine logistics information management system. In 2017, locations for fifteen cold-chain storage units nationwide were assessed, which revealed lack of capacity and low quality of existing infrastructure. The structural studies and designs for 50 per cent of new cold-chain facilities in twelve regions were developed. Cold-chain facilities in two other regions were renovated per WHO and UNICEF standards for cold-chain infrastructure. A list of cold-chain equipment was developed together with the Ministry of Health, and UNICEF’s Supply Division initiated the required procurement.

In 2017, 643 teachers of medical education institutions improved their knowledge and skills on immunization. UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the Ministry of Health with development and implementation of vaccine forecasting and a budgeting tool that was updated in 2017. Refresher training was also provided to key partners.

OUTPUT 2 3.2. By 2020, national authorities have increased capacity to formulate evidence-based regulatory framework and budgets for key maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (MNCAH) packages of interventions

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the Ministries of Finance and Health in conducting a costing of perinatal healthcare services in two selected regions. The findings demonstrated that in both regions, funds allocations, and therefore actual costs for most interventions, and conditions are lower than the normative unit costs. Consequently, there is a funding gap of approximately US$1.8 million per year in Khorezm region, and US$2.6 million per year in Surkhandarya region. The funding gap represents about 6 per cent of each region’s annual public health budget. Study findings and recommendations were presented at a national validation meeting and discussed with partners. The study findings are expected to improve budget formulation and allocations for delivery of perinatal care.

UNICEF Uzbekistan provided support to the Ministry of Health to conduct the national nutrition survey. Information from 4,100 households was collected, and interviews conducted with more than 1,800 children’s caregivers and over 2,100 women of reproductive age. In addition, anthropometric measurements of women and children were performed, and samples of salt and flour and more than 3,700 blood samples were collected to conduct bio-specimens tests. The survey findings will inform development or revision of government nutrition sector policies.

Around 99 per cent of children aged between 6 and 59 months nationwide benefited from two rounds of UNICEF-supported vitamin A supplementation.

OUTPUT 3 3.3 By 2020, health providers and communities have increased capacity to provide counselling and support to caregivers and children from pregnancy to adolescence

Analytical statement of progress
Lack of access to quality MNCAH and nutrition services and limited caregivers’ knowledge of MNCAH are the key bottlenecks in effective coverage of communities with these services. In addition, insufficient psychosocial support to adolescents living with HIV and their families is one of the bottlenecks in ensuring adherence to antiretroviral therapy and treatment. Improvements in quality of MNCAH and caregivers’ childcare knowledge and practices could be achieved through effective home visiting and counselling. UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the
implementation of the universal-progressive model of home visiting in two regions, and
developed a road map for implementation. In 2017, UNICEF jointly with partners updated the
implementation plan to bring it in line with country’s new primary healthcare reform agenda. A
communication strategy to promote caregivers’ positive child health and development practices
at the national and subnational levels was drafted.

To improve caregivers’ knowledge on immunization, proper nutrition, knowledge of danger
signs, health care-seeking behaviours and handwashing, UNICEF supported the production and
broadcasting of TV programmes on national television for an audience of almost 20 million
people. Radio versions of the programmes were broadcast with a potential reach of two
million. Similarly, more than four million people were reached with SMS messages. Online
media portals and news applications for mobile phones ensured a reach of 350,000 readers,
with an engagement rate of 30,000 people. UNICEF posted interviews with celebrities,
infographics and critical information on its website, with social media links.

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued providing support to children living with HIV through a network of
seven day care centres. A total of 2,886 boys and 2,178 girls and their families received
psychosocial support, and information about HIV, opportunistic diseases associated with human
immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and adherence to
antiretroviral treatment. To address psychosocial issues of children living with HIV and their
families, UNICEF Uzbekistan conducted two training activities on healthy lifestyles for 60
adolescents and their caregivers. Furthermore, UNICEF engagement in social media with
groups of adolescents living with HIV facilitated the dissemination of good practices and
promotion of peer-to-peer psychosocial support.

The Ministry of Health with technical support from UNICEF Uzbekistan revised national
standards on sanitation and hygiene in schools. Support was also provided for the development
of a training programme on handwashing and hygiene for five in-service teacher training
institutes.

UNICEF Uzbekistan provided support for ensuring sustainable access to safe drinking water,
adequate sanitation and promoting handwashing and good hygienic practices in 30 most-
deprived schools in five regions of the country. In particular, a water pipeline was constructed in
one school, and water tanks installed in eighteen others, ensuring 4,680 children and
community members have access to safe water. Sanitation facilities were built in four target
schools improving sanitation and hygiene conditions of 1,000 children, including conditions for
girls to perform menstrual hygiene practices. In addition, 1,000 school staff and 700 parents and
community members increased their knowledge about the benefits of handwashing and hygiene
with UNICEF Uzbekistan support. Three hundred school managers and teachers were trained
on monitoring of school-level water and sanitation activities.

OUTCOME 2 4. By 2020, girls and boys benefit equitably from improved preschool education
and enhanced quality of basic education including in emergencies

Analytical statement of progress
Virtually full access to basic education has long been provided in Uzbekistan. The major
challenge the country is facing is improving quality of education. The quality of services is low
for several reasons: inadequate school readiness caused by low coverage of ECD/ECE
services, lack of an effective system of assessing, monitoring and evaluation of quality,
inadequacy of quality inputs such as curriculum and qualified teachers, low quality of educational management processes, and fragmented policy and regulatory frameworks.

To address the above, UNICEF Uzbekistan is collaborating with relevant line ministries and other key stakeholders in developing policies for services (e.g. ECE policy), normative regulatory frameworks (such as the Teaching Workforce Policy), reforming curricula, developing educational management systems, improving teaching/learning materials (e.g. DRR and safe behaviour textbooks) and professional development of teachers.

Programme and policy products developed by UNICEF Uzbekistan were used in different ways by the Government. Late in 2017, the Government established the Ministry of Preschool Education (MoPSE) to implement a five-year preschool education programme that was developed in 2016 with indirect input from UNICEF Uzbekistan. The newly established ministry has taken up two of the fundamental products of UNICEF programmes, namely the Quality Education Framework (see output 4.2) and ECD/ECE policy recommendations (see output 4.1) to guide its work in increasing access to quality preschool education. Additionally, the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) developed with support from UNICEF in the previous country programme, were adopted by the Ministry to serve as the basis of the preschool curriculum. The ELDS will be revised in 2018 with UNICEF support to further improve quality of services. The decision to use ELDS was made following a successful experience using these standards in half-day preschool programmes, another of UNICEF Uzbekistan’s previous interventions.

In 2017, the Government also took up the challenge of revising the Law on Education. Given the role UNICEF Uzbekistan is playing in the education sector and its interventions at the level of system reform, UNICEF was asked to provide support for this important task. The Quality Education Framework developed with UNICEF direct support, focusing on a systematic approach to education, is forming the basis of the revision. UNICEF Uzbekistan experts at the country level are engaged directly with the Ministries of Public Education, Preschool Education, and Higher and Secondary Specialized Education to help revise the Law.

In 2017, the Government decided to extend the coverage of basic education from 9 to 11 years. Given the experience that the Ministry of Public Education has had with UNICEF in reforming the school curriculum (see output 4.2), UNICEF Uzbekistan was asked to extend its support in developing the curriculum for the two additional grades. Once the process of curriculum reform is completed, the education ministries will have the required technical capacity to develop effective curricula, and children will benefit from a competency-based system of education instead of the current knowledge-based system.

The Ministry of Public Education was equipped with the required resources to introduce DRR and safe behaviour education in schools in nine grades. In addition, schools can improve their emergency preparedness using tools and resources developed by UNICEF Uzbekistan.

UNICEF Uzbekistan is also directly involved in the long-term planning for the country’s education sector. At the request of the MoPE, UNICEF in partnership with the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education began the process of developing the 2018-2022 Education Sector Plan.

**OUTPUT 1** 4.1 By 2018, MoPE has revised ECE policy frameworks for improved access to equitable quality preschool services
Analytical statement of progress

Gaps in the ECD/ECE policy were identified as a key bottleneck by UNICEF and its partners. It was agreed that the current normative framework is not conducive to increasing access to quality ECD/ECE services. A policy review supported by UNICEF examined gaps in the ECD/ECE policy that restricted the delivery of quality preschool education services. Existing legislative frameworks were reviewed and mapped against international best practices, mainly the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/EU frameworks. A set of recommendations was developed through a consultative process, stating that the Government should:

- ensure that all children be entitled to at least one year of free and compulsory preschool education and services in a progressive manner, prioritizing the most vulnerable children;
- develop a clear statement of the principles of the service, its target audience, objectives and how it fits into the continuum of education, defining determinants of its quality;
- consider the expansion of services for different age groups, and introduce more flexible delivery options to reach the most vulnerable;
- consider needs of working women;
- include principles of teacher qualifications, recruitment, development, attestation and remuneration; and
- ensure improvement of data collection and reporting systems.

UNICEF Uzbekistan is providing technical expertise to develop the institutional capacity of MoPSE and the SCS to establish a preschool Education Management Information System (EMIS). The needs assessment identified the main gaps as follows: absence of a unified data collection and monitoring system; lack of disaggregated data with very limited reporting on children with disabilities; absence of key information being collected with limited scope of indicators; lack of routine indicator generation, reporting, monitoring and use of data for decision-making; and lack of transparency. Preliminary findings revealed the need to improve capacity in the data management system. The work will be finalized in 2018 with the development and testing of an EMIS. A robust EMIS will not only enable improved data collection and analysis for evidence-based decision-making in the ECE sub-sector, but also enable the Government and other stakeholders to monitor the provision and quality of ECE services.

UNICEF Uzbekistan also provided technical expertise to improve existing policies and legislative frameworks on inclusive education. Initially, available programme documents were mapped based on General Comment No.4 to Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the right to inclusive education.

The initial findings of the review demonstrated the need for:

- changing the current medical and charitable attitude to the social model of disability;
- revising segregation approach into the principles of inclusiveness based on the concepts of early interventions, inclusion of all children in all activities, holistic approach, access to quality education through rights to the same curriculum, and adapted access and assessment procedures;
- strengthening the system capacity to support children with disabilities, parents and families; and
strengthening data collection on children with disabilities based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.

A review report was drafted and once verified will be ready for dissemination in February 2018.

OUTPUT 2

4.2 By 2019, MoPE has increased capacity to deliver and measure learning in line with a competency-based curriculum

Analytical statement of progress

Improving quality of educational services was hindered by the lack of an adequate monitoring framework for quality. This was in turn due to the absence of a conceptual framework defining quality in terms of inputs, processes, outputs and relevance of the education system to external realities.

To address this issue, the Contextualized Quality Education Framework and its monitoring system for Uzbekistan was developed with high-quality technical support that UNICEF Uzbekistan provided to the MoPE. The Framework elaborates the results framework and relationships between quality outcomes and their determinants. More than 50 per cent of the monitoring tools and guidelines needed for measuring the quality of education in Uzbekistan were developed in 2017. In 2018, these tools and guidelines will form the basis of a monitoring system to be used by the State Inspection on Monitoring the Quality of Education in order to strengthen the quality of education in Uzbekistan.

To prepare students for life-long learning, UNICEF Uzbekistan is supporting MoPSE, MoPE and Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education to transform the education curriculum from knowledge-based to competency-based. In preschool education, this implies revision and operationalization of the ELDS to ensure quality services and a smooth transition to school. UNICEF strengthened the capacity of experts of the Inter-sectoral Curriculum Revision Working Group, who are currently engaged in the revision of the curriculum from preschool to general education (grades 1 to 11). During the training programme, the experts improved their knowledge and skills in competency-based curriculum development. As the result of the training programme, four basic competencies were developed to reflect continuity from preschool education through to life-long learning: communication competency, information competency, competency of self-improvement, and socio-cultural and active civic position competency. In addition, school subjects were clustered into six subject areas – linguistic subjects, social subjects, exact sciences, natural sciences, arts and technology and practical subjects – which helped to mainstream the number of subject-specific competencies from 51 to 13. The State Requirements for Preschool Education and General Education Curriculum are being revised with the assistance of technical support provided by UNICEF Uzbekistan.

In 2018, the revised preschool and general education curriculum will be piloted in selected preschools and schools, and the efficacy of the new approach will be assessed. UNICEF will also be supporting MoPSE in developing the standards for one year of compulsory preschool education.

OUTPUT 3

4.3 By 2020, local education authorities and communities are equipped with tools and skills to encourage demand for quality basic education and preschool services
Analytical statement of progress
The Government’s efforts to improve quality of services need to be paired with demand for the services from the community. To ensure demand for quality ECE services, communities need to be encouraged to use them. UNICEF Uzbekistan therefore supported the Government by initiating a study to understand both the prevailing knowledge, attitudes and practices towards ECE and the enablers of and barriers to the demand and utilization of ECE services.

Improving quality of education without increasing participation of parents and communities in school-level decision-making is impossible. Promoting community participation also calls for an understanding of the impeding cultural beliefs and social norms. To increase efficiency, UNICEF supported the Government through a KAP study to understand the current trends in community participation in school management; assess the level of community involvement in school decision-making processes; and identify the enablers of and barriers to communities’ involvement in school decision-making.

It is not possible to report tangible results in this area at the current stage. UNICEF Uzbekistan experts provided the Government with technical support in designing the KAP studies, which are expected to be conducted in 2018. UNICEF will use the results of the studies to support the Government with designing an evidence-based communication strategy, which will also include developing programmatic recommendations to improve demand for ECE services and community mobilization.

OUTPUT 4 4.4 By 2020, line ministries are equipped with tools and skills to promote safe behaviour practices among children and communities before and during emergencies

Analytical statement of progress
As Uzbekistan is prone to a range of natural and anthropogenic hazards, UNICEF Uzbekistan developed educational materials for the delivery of integrated lessons on DRR and safe behaviour practices in schools. These will ensure that children are aware of such risks and have access to relevant information. The set of materials, developed with direct support from UNICEF Uzbekistan experts to the MoPE working group, included a student book, teachers’ manual, teaching aids, and a manual for teacher training institutions. The materials were tested during the 2016-2017 academic year at three selected schools in disaster-prone areas of Kashkadarya and Samarkand regions and Tashkent City.

Information collected during the testing of materials demonstrated that the knowledge and skills provided are effective and relevant to the lives of children. Moreover, this process helped to collect feedback from teachers and students on materials for incorporation into the final products, which were finalized through a workshop and shared with MoPE for scaling-up at the national level.

To translate DRR knowledge into relevant practices, formative and KAP studies among selected communities will be conducted. A scoping meeting was organized with partners to discuss the objectives of the studies and the key behaviours to focus on, and to identify target regions. This should inform the development of quality study protocols and questionnaires in 2018.

OUTPUT 5 4.5 By 2020, key relevant stakeholders have drafted a revised teaching workforce policy that promotes quality of education in line with the national quality education framework
**Analytical statement of progress**

Improving the quality of education at all levels requires enhancing the quality of inputs, chief among them the capacity of the education workforce. However, the low capacity of the education workforce in Uzbekistan is not simply the result of lack of individual capacities. The workforce needs to operate in a favourable environment governed by a policy that promotes excellence, improving low performance and weeding out corruption.

To achieve this, UNICEF Uzbekistan provided technical expertise to the Government to revise the teaching workforce policy. The activity was initiated with a comprehensive review of available policy and programme documents, including their implications for recruitment, development, retention and remuneration of teachers. A mapping and analysis of the existing documents and legislation related to the teaching workforce in Uzbekistan was done in line with the World Bank Systematic Approach to Better Educational Results (SABER) Teacher Policies Framework, one of the most comprehensive models available.

The review revealed the most gaps and limitations in the areas of initial teacher education, recruitment and employment, professional development, teacher appraisal and school leadership. Chief among these findings are that 1) in initial teacher education and in-service professional development programmes the overwhelming emphasis is on theory, with limited attention to practical experience and action research; 2) too many official documents exist to regulate the teaching profession, yet the majority of the regulations concern bureaucratic and organizational features rather than technical and professional aspects; and 3) there is a lack of specific guidance in important areas related to teacher quality and effectiveness. Initial recommendations with a view of supporting reform in the teaching workforce in Uzbekistan were provided. These recommendations are set in the context of promoting the quality of education in line with the National Quality Education Framework (see output 4.2 above). The review will inform the policy revision, as well as the revision of teacher qualification requirements in 2018.

**OUTPUT 6 4.6** By 2020, key relevant stakeholders have devised a unified system of teaching workforce development that supports the national quality education framework

**Analytical statement of progress**

Weak educational management and coordination result in reduction of teacher workforce efficiency and effectiveness. To support the Government in removing this bottleneck, UNICEF Uzbekistan provided technical support to the Government in introducing a supportive supervision methodology into the education sector.

As a result of initial inception meetings of UNICEF Uzbekistan experts with national stakeholders and visits to educational institutions, bottlenecks in the field of teacher professional development at the school level were identified and distilled into a set of requirements on the methodology of supportive supervision in the education sector. Based on this, the draft conceptual framework for introduction of the methodology was developed and agreed with government partners in November 2017. At the end of 2017, guidelines and tools for the introduction of the supportive supervision methodology were in development for testing in pilot preschools and schools in 2018.
OUTPUT 7 4.7 By 2020, MoPE has increased capacities to promote healthy, safe and protective school environments in line with the child-friendly schools principles

Analytical statement of progress
Available information suggests a low level of preparedness for emergencies and a lack of capacity at the school level to prepare children for emergencies.

In order to address this gap, UNICEF Uzbekistan improved the guidelines for school preparedness for emergencies. In addition, a monitoring system was designed, assisting the education authorities to assess the preparedness levels in schools and provide support where needed. The revision was carried out in line with Comprehensive School Safety Framework and existing normative documents in Uzbekistan.

In order to ensure that schools can test and evaluate their emergency preparedness plans, reference and resource materials were developed to enable school management to design and conduct simulation exercises. Both the monitoring system for school preparedness for emergencies and school-level simulation exercise guidelines were validated during a workshop with the participation of local and international emergency and education experts.

To promote healthy school environments, UNICEF supported MoPE with WASH activities in selected schools. In one pilot school a newly installed water pipeline ensured that children have access to safe water. Sanitation and hygiene conditions of four remote schools in Khorezm, Surkhandarya and Djizzakh regions were improved, and conditions for girls to perform menstrual hygiene practices were enhanced. Three hundred school principals and teachers were trained to monitor WASH activities at the school level. Moreover, 1,000 school staff and 700 parents and community members were informed about the benefits of handwashing and hygiene. To promote such activities in other schools, a special training programme and methodological recommendations were developed for five in-service teacher training institutes. An end-line KAP study was initiated in December 2017 to assess the effectiveness of UNICEF interventions in the area of WASH in schools.

As part of the promotion of a protective school environment, a two-day workshop was organized with the participation of 62 education specialists in Tashkent region to increase their knowledge on child abuse and neglect. UNICEF Uzbekistan provided technical assistance to MoPE to develop a training package on case management processes for children at greatest risk of neglect and abuse.

OUTCOME 3 5. By 2020, the most vulnerable girls and boys increasingly access prevention and response services to address violence, neglect and abuse

Analytical statement of progress
In 2017, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chair of the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan issued an instruction to line ministries and other relevant state bodies to include in their plans for 2018 key recommendations for strengthening the child protection system at the national and district levels. These recommendations were derived from a UNICEF Uzbekistan-supported assessment.

For the first time, the modelling of family and child support services under the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan was carried out in Tashkent using normative frameworks and the Regulations for Family Counselling Centres drafted by UNICEF Uzbekistan. The formal
establishment of these family counselling centres is expected to be approved through a Presidential Decree in early 2018.

In 2017, the Government established a Specialized Department of Social Work in the National University of Uzbekistan, with the capacity developed through UNICEF Uzbekistan interventions, such as designing of curricula and training of instructors.

Supported by UNICEF Uzbekistan, the inter-agency expert group on legislative reforms led by the Prosecutor General’s Office prepared a set of comprehensive amendments to the Criminal and Civil Procedural Codes. These included protection of child victims and witnesses of crimes, expansion of legal safeguards and alternatives to deprivation of liberty for children in conflict with the law.

The Government took steps to further enhance the protection of children in contact with the law, as well as the introduction of modern forms and methods of investigation, including video-recording of interrogation of children, which prevents repeated interviewing. The Ministry of Interior established a pilot child-friendly investigation room at pre-trial stage to enhance protection of the rights of child victims and witnesses of crimes. In this area, UNICEF Uzbekistan played a crucial role and provided technical assistance in designing a specialized approach to child victims and witnesses of crimes.

UNICEF and the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan drafted an action plan to improve the situation of children deprived of liberty in correctional-educational facilities for girls. The action plan focuses on measures to reduce the referral of children to places of deprivation of liberty and facilitating their integration into families. This is expected to result in the reduction of children in places of deprivation of liberty, and the ultimate closure of such locations. The action plan was drafted following high-level advocacy on the part of UNICEF Uzbekistan, particularly a joint visit with the Prosecutor General’s Office to the prison for juvenile offenders and two correctional-educational facilities. It is important to note that permission to visit the facilities has been granted to few international organizations in the past. This is considered a step toward in fulfilling one of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to Uzbekistan in 2013 concerning the situation of children deprived of liberty.

The Government initiated the drafting of the law on establishment of a Children’s Ombudsperson Office, with UNICEF technical support. Responding to a UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommendation calling for a more coordinated approach, UNICEF Uzbekistan facilitated the establishment of the national inter-agency Convention on the Rights of the Child Coordination Council under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister to oversee implementation and monitoring of the recommendations, as well as assess progress on the status of non-accepted recommendations. The status of non-accepted recommendations was reconsidered due to UNICEF Uzbekistan’s high-level advocacy with the support of Justice Renate Winter, Convention on the Rights of the Child Committee Chairperson.

Regional authorities and CSOs conducted analyses of critical equity issues affecting the situation of children with disabilities and single mothers aimed at informing policy making at the regional and national level.

OUTPUT 1 5.1 By 2020, Government has increased capacity to apply a systematic approach in addressing child protection issues in line with international good practices
Analytical statement of progress
Although components of a child protection system exist in Uzbekistan at the institutional level, they are not functioning effectively due to human resource gaps, insufficient funding and weak inter-agency coordination. Child protection services target mostly one category of children – those deprived of parental care – who are placed in residential care institutions. Services and interventions for prevention and response to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation are underdeveloped. Social work as a profession is not well developed and such services are mostly provided only in residential care institutions.

As an initial step to address this situation in 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan together with the Women’s Committee developed a framework for child protection system strengthening and presented it to the Government to be included in the country’s broader and ongoing administrative reform agenda (2018-2021). The reform recommendations include: 1) development of a National Action Plan for Children, including child protection system strengthening; 2) investment in the social work profession delivered through a case management approach; and 3) creation of a Department for Children and Families through merging the Guardianship and Trusteeship Authorities and the Inter-Agency Commission on Minors at the regional and district levels.

UNICEF Uzbekistan also conducted a functional analysis of child protection bodies, as a follow-up to the assessment, which demonstrated gaps in legislative frameworks and within the human and financial resources in Guardianship and Trusteeship Authorities, as well as the Inter-Agency Commission on Minors. The analysis also identified the absence of a case management approach in community-based social work as a major bottleneck.

To address the human resource capacity gaps in the current child protection system, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the National University of Uzbekistan in designing a Social Work Programme. In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan also supported the development of Standards and Regulations for the Establishment of a Specialized Department of Social Work. This was made possible through sharing of international best practices at the First National Conference on Social Work. Additionally, a training programme for social workers at the case-manager level was prepared by UNICEF Uzbekistan experts and delivered to the National University of Uzbekistan.

OUTPUT 2 5.2 By 2020, justice professionals have increased capacity to manage cases involving children in contact with the law according to international standards

Analytical statement of progress
In criminal and in civil proceedings, children are not fully provided with legal guarantees. The Inter-Agency Commission on Minors that is responsible for coordinating juvenile justice activities has a punitive rather than a restorative approach. Prevention of crime among juveniles is assigned to the police and not to social welfare bodies. Since 2006, the UN Committee on the Rights on the Child has expressed concern about the use of solitary cells as punishment in juvenile prisons and lack of access on the part of the international community to observe the situation of children deprived of liberty.

The work on amending the Criminal and Civil Procedure Codes that started in 2016 was completed in 2017. A set of amendments and additions for protecting the rights of children in conflict with the law, victims and witnesses of crimes and children in civil proceedings were drafted with support from UNICEF Uzbekistan. The amendments include child-sensitive procedures for dealing with children in contact with the law, with provisions to ensure their
compliance with international standards. The amendments were reviewed by the expert group on legislative reforms led by the Prosecutor General’s Office for submission to the Parliament. To successfully complete this exercise, UNICEF also supported a study visit for representatives of justice sector agencies working on justice for children. The delegation gained first-hand experience of the justice for children sector in Germany and Switzerland.

UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the introduction of a specialized approach towards children in contact with the law. As a component of this approach, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Interior to establish the first child-friendly investigation room at the pre-trial stage in Uzbekistan. This will help protect the rights of child victims and witnesses of crimes. Further, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the High Judicial Council with drafting of the Inter-Agency Resolution and Action Plan for establishing specialized procedures for protecting child victims and witnesses of crimes at the pre-trial and trial stages. To advocate for these changes, UNICEF convened a series of workshops to present experiences of specialized approaches and alternative sanctions practised successfully in other countries to 30 justice professionals. Along with the development of the methodology for protecting child victims and witnesses in criminal procedures, the consultations also led to the identification of preferred diversionary measures for Uzbekistan and the development of a concept note to introduce a restorative justice model.

In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan prepared a report on the situation of children in places of deprivation of liberty. The report was used to draft an action plan to address these children’s needs and their re-integration into families, and to reduce the number of referrals of children to such facilities. This was made possible after a high-level visit of a UNICEF team to two of the four facilities and one prison for boys in September 2017. Very few international organizations have been given access to such facilities. The access was granted to UNICEF following intense and high-level advocacy efforts on the part of UNICEF Uzbekistan.

**OUTPUT 3**

5.3 By 2020, education and health front-line workers have increased capacity to identify children at most risk to suffer from violence and abuse and apply referral protocols

**Analytical statement of progress**

Children who experience violence, abuse, neglect or non-accidental injuries do not always receive appropriate protection services. In many cases, they are placed in residential care institutions due to capacity gaps in the child protection system. The recent assessment of this system in Uzbekistan indicated that local government authorities and education and health professionals are not equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills or tools to identify children in need of protection and address their needs.

In 2017, with UNICEF Uzbekistan support, 200 deputy heads of local governments, teachers, health workers, and directors of residential care institutions received basic knowledge on social work with families and children. The training programme was developed by a working group set up within the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan and with direct technical support from UNICEF experts. The training programme consisted of modules on violence against children and mechanisms for identifying cases of child abuse in family and institutional settings.

In 2017, UNICEF Uzbekistan experts drafted the Regulation for Family Counselling Centres of the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan, as well as normative frameworks and documents for the operationalization of these centres. UNICEF also supported the drafting of the Presidential Decree on Reforming the Structure of the Women’s Committee at National, Regional and District Levels, which will ensure the establishment of child protection services within the structure of the Women’s Committee. For drafting these normative frameworks, UNICEF
Uzbekistan convened a two-day workshop for local authorities of Tashkent region to present findings of the child protection assessment exercise and discuss roles and responsibilities of the family counselling centres.

**OUTPUT 4 5.4 By 2020, authorities at all levels and CSOs have increased capacity to effectively contribute to CRM and reporting**

**Analytical statement of progress**

The Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child conducted high-level policy advocacy to increase acceptance of Committee recommendations based on a joint UNICEF Uzbekistan and NHRC assessment on the implementation status of the Convention.

Responding to a recommendation by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and calling for a more coordinated approach, UNICEF Uzbekistan facilitated the establishment of the national Inter-Agency Convention on the Rights of the Child Coordination Council under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister. This body will oversee implementation and monitoring of the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommendations and assess progress on the status of non-accepted recommendations.

At the national level, the Government was supported by UNICEF Uzbekistan to review the implementation status of each recommendation by the Committee and commit to the implementation of additional recommendations. The identified risks of the programme were addressed through an inter-agency collaboration mechanism and development of joint work plans for advocating action to address the recommendations on child protection.

The NHRC initiated the development of a draft law to establish the Children’s Ombudsperson with UNICEF Uzbekistan technical assistance and sharing of international best practices. Several advocacy events were organized to draw attention to the Paris Principles and the need for the creation of an independent Ombudsperson for Children. A delegation consisting of the NHRC, the Ombudsperson’s Office and the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan were supported to participate in a Human Rights Conference in Astana that gathered Children’s Ombudspersons to discuss best practices and functions in child rights monitoring.

Jointly with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UNICEF Regional Office in Bishkek and the NHRC, UNICEF Uzbekistan supported capacity building of the Inter-Agency Working Group under the Ministry of Justice on drafting the state report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the Convention.

Regional authorities and CSOs in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the Khorezm and Jizzakh regions conducted analyses of critical equity issues affecting the situation of children with disabilities and single mothers. These efforts were aimed at informing policy making at the regional level and on the part of the Convention Coordination Council.

**OUTCOME 4 1. Management Outcome**

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF Uzbekistan made efforts to ensure effective and efficient use of its human and financial resources. As a result, some of the required additional funds, mainly other resources regular, were mobilized, and all allocated resources (Regular Resources, Other Resources Regular, and Institutional Budget) were 100 per cent utilized. Most of the required human resources, including staff, consultants and contractors, were recruited in a timely manner to ensure continuity of
programme implementation. However, there were challenges recruiting the chief of health, despite significant efforts. Using the global UNICEF talent pool, two instances of advertising the vacancy and using social media such as LinkedIn did not yield the expected result until late 2017. By the end of the year, however, the selection process had almost come to an end and the outcome will be presented for approval in January 2018.

OUTPUT 1 1.1 Governance and Systems

Analytical statement of progress
Governance of UNICEF Uzbekistan was ensured through the development, implementation and review of the 2017 Annual Management Plan in a participatory manner, and with fully functioning office statutory committees and clear table of authorities. These measures ensured transparency, simplified work processes and addressed bottlenecks. Office performance was reviewed during monthly country management team meetings for all key performance indicators, scorecards and other key indicators for the office.

OUTPUT 2 1.2 Financial Resources and Stewardship

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Uzbekistan improved the process of cash transfers to implementing partners by developing adequate assurance activities in view of limited access to partners’ financial records. UNICEF Uzbekistan advocated for implementing HACT with partners at country-level UN Operations Management Team and UN Country Team meetings. As a result, the UN Country Team approved plans to orient key government officials on HACT issues.

UNICEF Uzbekistan closely monitored direct cash transfers (DCT) to partners to address any outstanding payments in a timely manner before they reached the six month deadline. DCT reports were discussed at CMT meetings as part of the office indicators. A more efficient application to manage DCTs, namely e-ZHACT or electronic HACT, was rolled out at the end of October 2017 as planned after training of all concerned staff.

Cash liquidity was ensured while mitigating financial risks and keeping balances to a minimum following the bank optimization policy. As a result, bank balances at the end of each month were maintained in accordance with policy benchmarks. Efficient and cost-effective operations of administration and ICT functions were also achieved. To meet the office roll-out of MS Windows 10, the required up-to-date ICT equipment was acquired. Internet bandwidth was significantly increased compared to 2016 to meet expanding demand.

Funds utilization was monitored, shared with concerned staff on a biweekly basis, and discussed in detail at monthly CMT meetings. This resulted in a 100 per cent utilization rate at year-end closure.

OUTPUT 3 1.3 Human Resources Management

Analytical statement of progress
Overall management of human resources administration and payroll as well as staff well-being services were effectively and efficiently provided to UNICEF staff, meeting established key performance indicators.
UNICEF Uzbekistan took advantage of global Human Resource Reform initiatives and included human resource enhancements as a key priority result to be achieved in 2017. All staff completed their 2016 performance appraisals and 2017 planning discussions on time. UNICEF Uzbekistan used the UNICEF talent management system to hire staff. UNICEF Uzbekistan is addressing the results of the Global Staff Survey in close collaboration with the staff association and supporting staff career development through key strategic learning opportunities and stretch assignments. UNICEF Uzbekistan held a staff retreat facilitated by an international management consultancy firm to address issues identified in the Survey and other staff concerns. The outcome of the retreat was an improvement plan developed by staff. The country management team agreed to extend the contract of the facilitator for a limited period to continue supporting staff in addressing their concerns and help with implementation of the improvement plan.

To respond to emerging needs in the country, UNICEF Uzbekistan established a social policy and economic specialist post, which was approved together with additional posts in the operations section to improve efficiency.

OUTCOME 5 2. Programme Effectiveness Outcome

Analytical statement of progress
Result-based planning, monitoring and reporting of country programme results contributed to enhancing programme effectiveness.

Despite the challenging context related to data, UNICEF Uzbekistan leveraged opportunities that would lead to internationally comparable data on key child-related indicators for the first time in decades. A proposed agreement for collaboration on MICS with the SCS was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. UNICEF supported the first nationwide nutrition survey, which will inform national-level programming in 2018. UNICEF led the adoption of UN Common Standards for Data Quality and presented recommendations related to the Presidential Decree on Measures to Improve the Activities of the SCS.

UNICEF Uzbekistan also enhanced programme effectiveness by increasing the visibility of key messages and generating public dialogue on important topics such as youth crime prevention, gender equality, ECD, breastfeeding, mother and child health, children living with HIV and children with disabilities. UNICEF worked with eminent opinion leaders and influencers to engage in the discussions and challenge social norms. Different types of media were used intensively to enhance the effectiveness of communication campaigns.

OUTPUT 1 2.1 Programme Coordination

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Uzbekistan used a multi-tiered system for effective implementation. Weekly oversight meetings facilitated programme coordination, which ensured that programmes were implemented to the maximum extent possible. On a monthly basis, the Deputy Representative reviewed utilization rates, donor reporting commitments and expiring grants to ensure that progress was on track. At the end of every quarter, a programme meeting was organized to review progress and take corrective action as required to deliver results as planned.

While oversight and coordination was instrumental in ensuring programme implementation by
UNICEF Uzbekistan, the capacity of programme staff on results-based management was also developed.

UNICEF Uzbekistan also conducted quarterly meetings to coordinate knowledge management in a systematic way. Knowledge sharing was encouraged through organized “Learning Hours”. This initiative is optimal for transferring technical knowledge and raising awareness on programmatic and organizational issues, as well as capitalizing on visiting experts and guest speakers on various topics of relevance to the office.

UNICEF Uzbekistan supported the process of developing the biannual Joint Work Plans with other UN agencies to deliver on results as defined in the UNDAF.

UNICEF Uzbekistan co-chaired the UNDAF Results Group on Social Protection with the Ministry of Labour. UNICEF Uzbekistan coordinated the programme for achieving the outcomes for social protection with all UN agencies and played an active part in the other results groups. This was also crucial during the process of localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**OUTPUT 2 2.2 External Relations**

**Analytical statement of progress**
Increased engagement with local media was one of UNICEF Uzbekistan’s biggest achievements in the area of external relations. In 2017, UNICEF formalized an agreement with the National Association of Electronic Mass Media to collaborate in production and broadcasting of TV and radio programmes. Programmes on youth crime prevention, gender equality, ECD, breastfeeding, mother and child health, children living with HIV and children with disabilities are examples of this cooperation.

Cooperation with Ucell telecom and the retail chain Korzinka also helped UNICEF Uzbekistan to disseminate messages to the general public.

**OUTPUT 3 2.5 UNICEF staff and partners are provided tools, guidance and resources for effective advocacy and partnership on child rights issues with stakeholders**

**Analytical statement of progress**
Cash liquidity was ensured while mitigating financial risks and keeping balances to a minimum following the bank optimization policy. As a result, bank balances at the end of each month were maintained in accordance with policy benchmarks. Efficient and cost-effective operations of the administration and ICT functions were also achieved. To meet the office roll-out of MS Windows 10, the required up-to-date ICT equipment was acquired. Internet bandwidth was significantly increased compared to 2016 to meet expanding demand.

In 2017, the number of office-based long-term agreements was increased to improve efficiency.

UNICEF Uzbekistan rented additional space for staff and consultants and worked to improve the working environment and office security by installing new access controls and CCTV systems.
OUTPUT 4 2.4 UNICEF staff and partners are provided guidance, tools and resources to effectively plan and monitor programmes

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to use PRIME to prioritize needs for data and information on children into ten strategically positioned studies. Whereas six studies were expected to be finalized in 2017, only two were completed. The final report of Costing of Regionalized Perinatal Care Services was rated ‘excellent’ upon completion and will inform advocacy for improved efficiency in allocating resources. Despite delays due to the political transition in 2016 and 2017, the remaining studies were on track for completion by the end of 2018.

With key opportunities emerging in improving international comparability of data, a proposed agreement for collaboration on MICS6 outlining implementation and quality assurance mechanisms with the SCS was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. The SCS participated in the regional MICS6 Survey Design Workshop organized by UNICEF’s Europe and Central Asia Regional Office.

Responding to data quality challenges while taking lessons from previous surveys, UNICEF Uzbekistan developed a risk mitigation strategy resulting in formal agreements with government partners on quality assurance mechanisms in the nutrition survey and disability situation analysis. UNICEF led the adoption of UN Common Standards for Quality Assurance of Data and presented UN recommendations related to Presidential Decree 3165 on Measures to Improve the Activities of the SCS. Key emerging opportunities in data quality were analysed in a Review of the Statistical and Monitoring System.

UNICEF Uzbekistan continued to reinforce its partnership with SCS and relevant ministries to compile data in key strategic areas and maintain a comprehensive database of key indicators about children and women within the regional Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity initiative.

With one-third of Uzbekistan’s population under 18 years of age, a demographic analysis informed policy advocacy for investing in children to leverage the demographic dividend in the future.

Findings of the analysis of legal and institutional frameworks for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthened partnership with the Prosecutor General’s Office enabled the inclusion of all recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on children with disabilities into the State Programme on Persons with Disabilities.

Responding to the limited availability of quality disaggregated nutrition data, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health are implementing a nationally representative nutrition survey to inform government policy. Data collection took place in September 2017, while the analysis was ongoing as of the end of 2017.

Social policy’s contribution to building high-level partnerships with the Senate and the Cabinet of Ministers on child rights brought renewed attention to the recommendations of the Committee on the Right of the Child not addressed by the Government.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) section reviewed and provided inputs for quality assurance of studies and facilitated their external quality assurance and ethical review. A knowledge management strategy was developed with a strong component on evidence
generation and quality assurance. A steering committee was formed that will be responsible for overall guidance on quality assurance in research.

Senior management and the M&E section ensured timely updating of ongoing management response plans. The section supported result-based planning, the adaptation of theories of change to a shifting environment, and monitoring and reporting for the Annual Management Plan, the Country Office Annual Report, UNDAF and budgeting.

OUTPUT 5 2.5 UNICEF staff and partners are provided tools, guidance and resources for effective advocacy and partnership on child rights issues with stakeholders

Analytical statement of progress
In partnership with the National Association for Electronic Mass Media, a series of television and radio programmes were produced. UNICEF designed the content on children’s issues, covering prevention of crimes among minors, gender discrimination, stigma faced by children living with HIV and with disabilities, parenting practices, and mother and child health.

Decision makers who participated in these media events expressed their commitment to children’s issues, specifically to a more child-friendly justice system, and to providing social assistance to families with children with disabilities. This result was particularly important because some issues raised were considered sensitive for public discussion.

Other topics covered in media were women’s empowerment and ECD. Families and youth used this platform to speak about their concerns, and celebrities amplified the messages, ensuring the reach of the messages to potentially millions of citizens.

There was an increased in social media campaigns. The reach of the Facebook page increased to 382,924 with an engagement value of 34,641. On Instagram, the reach increased to 216,153 with an engagement value of 19,978. On Twitter, messages appeared 2,220,600 times, with an engagement value of 53,545. The number of visitors to the trilingual website increased from 32,493 in 2016 to 54,660, with 12,025 returning visitors.

Some of the campaigns supported through traditional and digital media focused on World Autism Day, World Immunization Week, Early Moments Matter and World Breastfeeding Week.

Capacity development of 20 television journalists was undertaken to ensure children’s rights are included in their TV programmes. Since the workshop, television channels have reported that they have been producing child-centred programmes.

In order to scale-up efforts to strengthen children’s participation, UNICEF trained 80 young journalists aged 16 to 18 years of age in Fergana, Samarkand, Khorezm and Karakalpakstan to express their views through the production of one-minute videos. Eighty video spots were broadcast on television channels regionally and nationally.

UNICEF engaged celebrities and influencers to enhance the voices of children. These influencers attended public events and participated in television shows, which led to greater visibility of the issues and enhanced discourse in the public domain.

As part of its strategy to engage with youth for social development, UNICEF trained 42 adolescents aged 14 to 18 to work with their peers at the regional level to identify their issues
and discuss them with officials from various levels of government. For sustainability, a youth participation initiative was carried out in partnership with the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. The voices of youth were presented to local administrations in the regions. On 20 November, these adolescents engaged with parliamentarians to express their views about decisions that affect their lives.

To mark the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF Uzbekistan organized a special event called Activation Forum. On this day, several eminent people living with different disabilities presented their stories and challenges to a group of influencers, decision makers and the media.

As part of the “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence” campaign, UNICEF Uzbekistan posted a video on social media platforms that reached over 100,000 people. This was highlighted by NY Headquarters as exemplary for greater global reach.

### Document centre

#### Evaluation and research

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#### Lessons learned

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