Executive Summary

The UNICEF Country Office (CO) in Uzbekistan and the Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) made significant progress in developing, respecting and protecting children’s rights in Uzbekistan during 2013. The CO continued to promote inter-sectoral collaboration to ensure synergy between programmes. Two positive examples of strengthened multi-sectoral linkages and coordination are the Mother and Child Health Coordination Council (MCHCC) the and inclusive and participatory process established under the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) which led to the first Education Sector Plan (ESP).

As a result of evidence-based advocacy and coordinated efforts between United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nation’s Fiduciary Principles Accord for Contribution Transfers (FPA) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) in partnership with the European Union (EU), a comprehensive strategy for further improvement of mother, newborn, child and adolescent health and development for the period 2014-2020 was developed and submitted for approval to the Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers.

Consistent advocacy with the GoU and collaboration with international partners for progressive elimination of child labour in the cotton sector led to the International Labour Organization International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour being invited to monitor the child labour situation during the harvest season. A positive report indicated no evidence of government sanctioned child labour, and therefore the significant progress in this area that is being achieved by the GoU to eliminate this practice. Joint negotiations conducted by UNICEF and the Bank resulted in Uzbekistan becoming a member of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and also in the submission of a revised grant application, which also reinforced the GoU’s commitment to elimination of the use of child labour.

The third and fourth Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) periodic report of Uzbekistan was reviewed in June 2013. In the concluding observations of the report, the CRC Committee urged Uzbekistan to continue to strengthen its efforts to develop a comprehensive system for collecting data affecting children's rights, which should be disaggregated by age, sex, geographic location, ethnicity and socio-economic background. Recommended areas of data-driven analysis that need attention include: child labour; children with disabilities; children of ethnic minorities; quality of teaching and learning outcomes; school attendance; quality of maternal and child health services; HIV rates; and adolescent needs and the impact of social protection.

The 2010-2015 Country Programme of Cooperation remained broadly on track in its fourth year of implementation. The 2013 Mid Term Review (MTR) confirmed the relevance of the Country Programme of Cooperation. The Government of Uzbekistan and UNICEF agreed to continue prioritizing the hard-to-reach and vulnerable children in order to achieve the Country Programme (CP) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in an equitable way, thus paving the way for the post-2015 agenda. The MTR recommendations also laid foundations for developing a new programme of cooperation for the period 2016-2020.

Data gaps and the difficulties of generating reliable and quality evidence with adequate disaggregation remains the most critical bottleneck for equitable fulfilment of children’s rights in the country. Data gaps hinder the identification of vulnerable groups of children and women, as well as the analysis of their situation, with respect to the great majority of their rights. Another bottleneck is the lack of integrated social services that would effectively protect vulnerable families and prevent institutionalization of children. Both of these areas will receive focused attention over the next year and in the new country programme.

Significant partnerships developed and strengthened in 2014 include the EU, GPE and the ILO.
Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

According to national statistics, Uzbekistan’s economy continued to grow in 2013. With a GNI per capita of US$ 1,720, Uzbekistan maintained the World Bank classification of a lower middle-income country. The Gini Index has not been published since 2009 and thus evidence-based analysis of income inequality trends is limited. The latest verbally-reported official poverty rate is 16 per cent with urban poverty at 11.6 per cent and rural poverty at 18.5 per cent. National poverty is calculated on the basis of 2,100 kcal per day per person, which is comparable to a measure of extreme poverty related to food consumption. In 2013, the GoU agreed with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Steering Committee to explore possibilities for changing the poverty measurement in coming years. In 2013, amendments to the regulation on social allowances restricted the number of qualifying families. In an effort to simplify the beneficiary selection process, new measures resulted in less priority being given to families with young children. These changes imply additional bottlenecks in ensuring adequate social welfare and in a reduction in inequalities.

At the MDG Round Table held in December 2013, the Government publically discussed migration issues, estimating remittances at 12 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As per the latest data from Russia's Federal Migration Service, over 2.7 million migrant workers from Uzbekistan were registered in Russia, out of which 16 per cent were women. Assessing the impact of migration on children remains an important pending analysis.

As a result of Uzbekistan's application to the GPE fund, the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2013-2017 was formulated and officially approved during 2013 with high priority being given to strengthening pre-school education. This emphasis responded to the low enrolment rates with high regional disparities that continues to remain a challenge. Coverage showed a minor increase in enrolment rates - administrative data recorded 22.7 per cent enrolment, with the highest coverage in Tashkent (56 per cent) and the lowest in Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya (10.9 and 11.6 per cent respectively).

The equity of quality education remains a priority area. The 2012 administrative figures showed 93 per cent of adequately qualified teachers were located in Tashkent city, and 60 and 62 per cent in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya respectively. According to official data, enrolment rates remained high. However, the Commission on Minors’ Affairs determined that non-attendance in general secondary schools (age 7-15) and colleges (age 16-19) needs to be addressed.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) reported that there were 81,120 children with disabilities under 16 in 2012 (less than 1 per cent of the child population). A 2013 small-scale survey in five districts confirmed that a major barrier to inclusive education is related to resistance from various stakeholders. Fifty six per cent of parents of primary school children have positive attitudes towards including children with disabilities in mainstream schools and 26 per cent of pupils would like to have their peers with disabilities studying in the same classes. Moreover, 65 per cent of pupils expressed an interest in learning more about people with disabilities, suggesting an important entry point for increased awareness surrounding inclusive education.

According to the latest official data, under-5 and infant mortality rates (IMR) (measured using the Soviet Live-Birth Definition) decreased to 13.8 and 10.2 per 1,000 live births respectively. According to the UN Inter-agency Group on Child Mortality Estimates (IGME), the same indicators are estimated to be 40 and 34 per 1,000 live births respectively in 2012. National statistics show that the infant mortality rate (IMR) in some regions is almost double the rate in others. The latest officially-reported maternal mortality ratio in Uzbekistan is 20.2 per 100,000 live births, while the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group estimated it in 28 per 100,000 live births in 2010.
A 2013 study confirmed that quality of health services is one of the main bottlenecks to reduce child mortality, to which Uzbekistan committed by signing "A Promise Renewed" (APR) pledge in 2012. The MoH and its partners continued their efforts to enhance quality and effective coverage of health services in the framework of the Maternal and Child Health sector reform. A presidential decree declared 2014 the “Year of the Healthy Child”.

By October 2013, approximately 28,000 HIV cases were officially registered, which constituted slightly less than 0.1 per cent of the population. However, different sources suggest the real figure may be 3-4 times higher. Official figures indicate a 10 per cent increase in new HIV cases in the country, from 3,584 in 2011 to 3,878 in 2012. An alarming fact is that around 20 per cent of new infections are in children. The proportion of women officially registered with the virus continued to increase. In this context, the Government continued to focus on preventing mother to child transmission through counselling and testing.

The latest available national data on micronutrient deficiencies registered 39 per cent prevalence of iodine deficiency disorders among children and 51.8 per cent anaemia prevalence among pregnant women. The MoH reported that the exclusive breastfeeding rate increased to 90 per cent on discharge from maternity centres. However the rate declines drastically to 30-50 per cent in the second month and further falls to 27-40 per cent at the end of six months. The MoH has been implementing several promotion strategies, including strengthening the capacity of healthcare professionals for counselling on adequate nutrition and maternal health.

In 2013, the Government started developing the State Programme on Child Care Reform 2013-2015. National statistics reported that approximately 34,000 children live in various types of residential institutions, including infant- and children-homes ('Mekhrionlik'), and several types of boarding schools for children with disabilities and from low-income families. The great majority of children living in institutions are children with disabilities. According to the Ministry of Public Education, 12 per cent of the children living in the mekhrionlik are orphans, 27.8 per cent have one living parent, and 32.5 per cent are children from low-income families.

In 2013 the ILO reached agreement with the Government of Uzbekistan to undertake monitoring of child labour during the cotton harvest. The official monitoring report on the findings of the ILO mission concluded that it "appeared that there was no systematic recourse to forced child labour" and the report is now available.

UNICEF continues to have limited access to data as well as to detention centres to assess the situation of children who come into contact with the law.

**Country Programme Analytical Overview**

Uzbekistan has made progress at national level in many of the Millennium Development Goals. However, regardless of economic growth inequalities and pockets of geographic and socio-economic disparities continue to be a crucial barrier in the fulfilment of children’s rights. Children from remote rural locations, children with disabilities, children in institutions, and children from low-income families are particularly vulnerable to socio-economic changes. Social protection needs to be made more relevant to the needs of different groups and regions.

To address these needs, disparity reduction continued to be a major strategy in the CP implementation. The 2013 MTR confirmed the importance of monitoring progress made to children’s well-being and suggested greater efforts be made in the remaining period of the CP to further prioritize equity and social
inclusion in public policy and decision-making, and to ensure strategic use of social statistics for policy formulation, budgeting and monitoring of sectoral programmes for children. The MTR emphasized the need for addressing children’s rights as being pivotal for the achievements of the MDG goals.

With this goal, through high-level advocacy and through challenging modelling of innovative approaches, evidence-based work and capacity development, UNICEF is assisting the GoU to optimize its fiscal capacity and expand social protection measures in favour of the most vulnerable children and families.

In preparation for the MTR, and as the basis for the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) plan, the CO conducted a bottleneck analysis of four IRs in the areas of early childhood education; child protection; mother and child health; and social protection. A combined human rights based approach (HRBA) and determinant analysis inter-sectoral discussion clarified the situation of the most marginalized groups, i.e. children with disabilities. Through a child-centred approach and through analysis of situations from a multi-dimensional and rights perspective, the exercise contributed to the identification of disparities affecting children with disabilities, synergies and systemic weaknesses as well as information gaps that the second part of the Country Programme will further clarify and address.

UNICEF’s consistent advocacy in collaboration with international partners for the progressive elimination of child and forced labour in the cotton sector led to ILO/IPEC being invited to monitor the cotton fields during the harvest season 2013. Country-wide monitoring was carried out in accordance with ILO principles and practices. According to the ILO report, no forced child labour was used on a systematic basis during the 2013 cotton harvesting. Identified cases of child labour were limited in numbers, and follow up actions were taken immediately. The ILO Board of Experts will review monitoring reports and will provide recommendations for possible ILO/IPEC-GoU programme cooperation.

As per the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP), the communication for development strategy is being increasingly used to raise awareness about child rights, to bring about behavioural and attitudinal changes to enhance the abilities of duty-bearers to develop, respect and protect these rights and also for rights-holders to claim them.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

Uzbekistan has been spared a major natural disaster in 2013. In the absence of a formalized humanitarian cluster approach, the UN Agencies mainly focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and UN agencies’ emergency preparedness and response capacity was strengthened.

UNICEF successfully invested in disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the education sector by developing the *Compendium of Teaching and Learning Materials on Disaster Risk Reduction in Education* in close collaboration with the Ministries of Public Education and Emergency Situations, state agencies and academic institutions. The materials were printed and distributed nation-wide.

**Effective Advocacy**

*Fully met benchmarks*

UNICEF advocated for child-centred legislative action by establishing a focus on international norms, standards and practices through six multi-sectoral stakeholder roundtables for Parliamentarians. Key issues discussed and analyzed were: child care reform; de-institutionalization; inclusive education; and preventing neglect towards minors and inclusion of children with disabilities. UNICEF technical experts, visiting Regional Advisors and the Deputy Regional Director addressed participating law-makers on different occasions.
The CO advocacy, through bilateral discussions, workshops and high level conferences, resulted in shifting the focus from an abrupt de-institutionalization process to a gradual, more comprehensive child care reform process, more effective ‘gate-keeping’ and social protection measures to support disadvantaged families to keep children at home and in a family-type environment.

UNICEF effectively advocated for improving access to quality Early Childhood Education through the development of the Economic and Social Policy and the application for funding from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). An initial allocation by the Ministry of Public Education of US$5 million for preschool education within the grant application was raised to US$ 20.7 million. Through this process, UNICEF was able to advocate for increased access, especially in remote rural areas, through quality alternative Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs.

Consistent advocacy in collaboration with international partners for progressive elimination of child and forced labour in the cotton sector led to ILO/IPEC being invited to monitor the cotton fields during the harvest season. Joint negotiations conducted by UNICEF and the World Bank resulted in a submission of a revised grant application to the GPE expressing commitment to stop the use of child and forced labour.

UNICEF stepped up its advocacy for improved data collection and reporting. In June, it supported a mission by the United Nations’ Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (IGME) to enable the MoH to resolve discrepancies between nationally collected child mortality data and international estimates. In collaboration with the Regional Office (RO) and WHO, UNICEF strongly advocated to implement the IGME recommendations to align with international standards. There are some indications from the Government that the International Life Birth Definition will be implemented during 2014 at all levels of reporting.

As a result of UNICEF’s initiative, SPIG was officially established in 2013 and advocated for Child Friendly Social Protection based on a coordinated and system-wide approach. The SPIG includes technical experts from key ministries such as Public Education, Health, Finance, Economy, Labour and Social Protection, as well as from civil society and local research institutions.

The CO advocated for equal rights for children with disabilities with a range of multi-sectoral partners and advocated for the GoU to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Two steps taken were the support to a high-level delegation to participate in the Central Asia Forum on Disability held in Tajikistan and a policy roundtable in Tashkent. Thereafter support was also provided to discuss outcomes as well as international best practices in inclusion, challenges and lessons learned highlighted in the State of the World’s Children 2013. Children and young people with disabilities, who participated in the event, identified stigma and a charity-based approach as key barriers to inclusion. The CO advocacy resulted in a new partnership with the Ministry of Finance to analyse social protection for children with disabilities.

**Capacity Development**

*Fully met benchmarks*

As the quality of Mother and Child Health (MCH) services was identified as one of the major bottlenecks for child survival in the country, UNICEF focused its support on the improvement of quality through capacity building of health professionals. Over 2,500 professionals enhanced their knowledge on new-born and child survival services, including nutrition. Twelve training modules were revised and adapted according to the new WHO recommendations. The MoH ensured that manuals were integrated into pre-service and in-service medical education curricula.

One hundred and twenty Primary Health Care (PHC) specialists from six districts of Karakalpakstan enhanced capacities on nutrition counselling and supported communities in practising optimal feeding for...
children of 0-2 years (breastfeeding and complementary feeding) and Micronutrient Powder (MNP) supplementation.

Seven hundred health professionals enhanced their capacity to provide prevention of mother-to–child transmission (PMTCT) services, which reached over 60 per cent of professionals involved in PMTCT services in intervention areas. Over 1,200 General Practitioners from five high-level prevalence regions are able to provide paediatric HIV services, contributing to new MoH policy to decentralize HIV treatment/care to PHC level.

As a result of UNICEF advocacy and technical assistance, the Ministry of Public Education (MoPE) increased in-service course hours for child centred education and early learning development standards (ELDS) for preschool teachers. UNICEF supported pre-service training: almost 50 per cent of pedagogical colleges nationwide increased the capacity of their instructors to deliver courses in child rights and child-centred education for preschool teachers.

Through trainings, 65 and 74 per cent of all criminal judges and civil judges respectively, enhanced their knowledge on international standards on the rights of children in contact and in conflict with the law. These trainings contributed significantly to the capacity building process and also positively impacting their daily practice.

Consultative workshops, discussion meetings and seminars contributed to a better understanding of key elements of the strategy to reform the state care system for children. This included the necessity to have strong support systems in place for children and caregivers as a precondition of deinstitutionalisation. As a result, key partners agreed to strengthen gate keeping and community based prevention services for all groups of children, but especially prioritizing the needs of children aged 0-3.

UNICEF supported the Faculty of International Journalism to offer special and optional credit courses in child rights. Of the students enrolled at masters and bachelor level, 75 per cent attended the course. Through this introductory course an improved understanding of child rights, related equity issues and tools to apply ethical principles of reporting were highlighted.

As a continuation of the Communication for Development (C4D) efforts to enable community advisors to effectively promote enrolment of children in ECE (based on first-hand knowledge of the barriers families faced in accessing pre-schools), UNICEF collaborated with the MoPE to build the capacity of community advisors at the sub-regional level to conduct community-based research using simple participatory research tools. The C4D support also enabled the community advisors to promote positive ECD behaviours at home among parents and caregivers. Community support groups for ECD promotion were formed in pilot districts of Bukhara and Karakalpakstan provinces and started producing small scale, yet strong local evidence in support of ECE promotion.

**Communication for Development**

*Fully met benchmarks*

C4D was used strategically to enhance cross-sectoral synergies and accelerate equity-focused programme results. This was done by developing inter-personal skills of service providers to effectively engage with communities and address social-norm related barriers and social and cultural practices. C4D strengthened Uzbekistan’s contribution to the key result areas of the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda, aimed at boosting UNICEF’s global efforts to achieve equitable results for children and their families.

A key C4D achievement was building the evidence for designing a community-based Behaviour Change
Communication (BCC) under the Mother and Child Health (MCH) programme, directly contributing to child survival and the commitment made through **A Promise Renewed**. Social and cultural barriers related to a package of essential household practices in health, hygiene, nutrition and child care were studied, and a Knowledge, Attitude and Practise (KAP) study provided information for design of participatory learning and action (PLA) intervention. This community participatory process promotes recommended behaviours and reduces cultural and social barriers at the family level. The collected quantitative and qualitative data create an established baseline against which the results are measured. An equitable focus was ensured by including caregivers of under five children, children with disabilities, children from poor families and ethnic minorities in the survey on ‘pilot’ and ‘control’ communities. Health workers, pre-school teachers, community advisors and religious leaders were also included as respondents.

Difficulties in coordinating multiple partners and obtaining timely inputs from them, posed a challenge to this multi-sector initiative. The lesson learned is to create a potentially win-win situation for all partners and highlight the benefits of community engagement for sustaining behaviour change.

In 2013, the CO progressed the issue of adolescent development and participation to a higher level, working in collaboration with members of the Youth Generation Council. UNICEF supported the **“Youth participation in community decision making” initiative**, that consisted of 238 peer-to-peer dialogues, 84 adolescent-to-adult dialogues and 14 regional roundtables that promoted civic engagement of adolescents and young people through a collective analysis of the key issues concerning them. The dialogues and roundtables used rights-based tools, such as the root cause analysis and the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Over 3,000 adolescents and adults were directly reached by the initiative and the impact was multiplied by media coverage in the regions. Results-based action plans for improvement of the situation of children in general, with a focus on the rights of children with disabilities, were presented to the Members of Parliament during a national roundtable.

The technical expertise of **Youth Generation Council** members was increased for child rights’ based analysis and advocacy. The Council members promoted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) principles at community level with in-depth participation of socially excluded and marginalized children, including those with disabilities, ethnic minorities and those living in institutions. Sensitivities around youth issues, a social norm against youth participation and fear of participatory processes constrained implementation of the initiative. To reduce these constraints, context-specific and more decentralized management of the participatory methodology in 2014-2015 has been agreed with the partners.

The entertainment education (EE) serial was designed cross-sectorally with the MoH and MoPE, an intervention to initiate public dialogue around issues that are not customarily discussed. This initiative is described in greater detail under the ‘innovation’ part of the report.

**Service Delivery**

*Fully met benchmarks*

Within the EU co-funded project on **Improvement of Mother and Child Health - Phase II**, and in support of the in-service capacity building process for health care professionals, 12 training centres were established and equipped in six target regions. The training centres will be a tangible programme legacy, and will contribute to sustainable health system reform.

With UNICEF support, around 2.8 million (99 per cent) children nationwide aged 6-59 months old, benefitted from two rounds of Vitamin A supplementation.

The results of the home food fortification initiative “Sprinkles” implemented, with UNICEF support in targeted districts of Karapakalstan, indicated a drop in anaemia of up to 40 per cent among children 6-24
months, thus confirming effectiveness of the ongoing micronutrient powder supplementation and nutrition counselling interventions. The implementation of this scheme to the entire region would have an important impact in the reduction of anaemia and the improvement of the nutritional status of children in the most deprived region of Uzbekistan.

More than 8,000 school age children benefited from "Hygiene championship initiative" in targeted regions, showing an increase to 70 per cent of hand washing with soap practices, compared with the baseline study (20 per cent).

With UNICEF support the existing network of seven day care centres across the country could increase coverage of psycho-social support for 2,400 children living with HIV, which represents more than 50 per cent of the total number of children living with HIV in the country. The provided support is focused on increasing adherence to anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment, raising awareness on issues associated with HIV and other opportunistic infections among HIV positive children and their families. The programme has expanded its support to around 400 adolescents with a special focus on disclosure of HIV status through psychological counselling.

**Strategic Partnerships**

*Fully met benchmarks*

UNICEF consolidated its partnership for “Improvement of the Mother and Child Health Services”, an initiative co-funded by the EU and jointly implemented by the MoH, UNICEF and WHO. In its second phase, the programme steadily rolled out cost effective, newborn and child survival interventions for a national scaling-up of system sustainable changes.

The establishment of the Mother and Child Health Coordination Council (MCHCC), based on UNICEF advocacy and support, made an essential contribution to improving coordination and partnership between the MoH, other government agencies and international partners. At UNICEF’s initiative, the MCHCC Secretariat conducted a mapping of MCH donor interventions to further ensure coordination and complementarity. The MCHSCC serves as a platform for policy dialogue among partners to support a comprehensive health reform that is system wide and sustainable.

A Joint Monitoring Team consisting of the MoH and international development partners (World Health Organization (WHO), KfW bank, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)), was established to revitalize MCH performance by focusing on the lessons learned and innovations. A partnership with WHO and GIZ to improve quality of MCH services and certification system resulted in a two-year joint work plan with defined roles and responsibilities for implementation.

As a sub-recipient of the Global Fund (GF) grant, UNICEF partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in PMTCT and paediatric AIDS. The CO also entered into a two-year agreement with United Nations AIDS to implement activities relating to PMTCT and Early Infant Diagnosis for which funds are provided by the Russian Aid Agency (RUSAID).

UNICEF facilitated the education sector engagement with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) as the Coordinating Agency, resulting in approval of the first-ever education sector plan, "Education, Foundation for the Future: 2013-2017". This five-year roadmap was developed in a participatory manner to bring out inter-sector synergies. It provides for improved delivery of quality education, supported by a monitoring framework with high-level outcome indicators.

UNICEF, as GPE Coordinating Agency and the World Bank as supervising entity for the grant application,
worked together to ensure a quality grant proposal which focuses on early childhood education, quality basic education, improved teacher training, and increased monitoring. In addition, the proposal includes monitoring of child labour within the project and the formation of a grievance and redress mechanism.

In the area of disability, UNICEF partnered with the Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children to launch the State of the World’s Children, 2013 report and used the opportunity to mobilize stakeholders to break the silence around children with disability. The Partnership with Special Olympics Uzbekistan, within UNICEF’s global partnership framework, also contributed to increased awareness of parents and teachers on the rights of children with disabilities and the importance of inclusive education.

Partnership with the Faculty of International Journalism, University of World Languages resulted in implementation of a child rights course for journalism students. Challenges faced were due to policy barriers to human rights reporting. The CO organized briefings on progress achieved and lessons learned in child protection, MCH, ECE, and child-sensitive social protection for international development partners and diplomats.

**Knowledge Management**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The CO continued to promote knowledge management by applying a range of different strategies, both internally and with partners, to promote important data, recommendations, and lessons learned, as well as to generate, collect, disseminate and promote the use of information.

During 2013, the CO supported national partners in conducting research in preschool financing, MCH services performance assessment, inclusive education, and a *Knowledge, Attitude and Practice* survey on nutrition and health seeking behaviour. Research results have been shared and distributed through national and regional roundtables. The research capacities of research institutes, national and regional authorities, and NGO’s have been increased as a result of the efforts.

During 2013, a very comprehensive Mid Term Review (MTR) was carried out involving a wide range of stakeholders, who facilitated knowledge exchange. The MTR represented an excellent way to involve UNICEF partners in a 360 degree process to reflect on the achievements and challenges faced over the past three years, contribute to drawing lessons learned, and discuss adjustments and recommendations for the coming years. In total, 153 participants from ministries, government agencies and institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), communities and media, from all governance levels were involved in the MTR.

Knowledge products that have been produced in print are:
1. DRR compendium of resources
2. Education Sector Plan: *Foundation for the Future 2013 – 2017*
3. Addressing Child Vulnerabilities through Social Protection in Uzbekistan
4. Preschool Financing Study

A website [www.ona-bolasalomatligi.uz](http://www.ona-bolasalomatligi.uz) has been launched in three languages (Uzbek, Russian, English), providing information on mother and child health, including availability of services, and practical advice for child-rearing.

A TV series provides information on issues of children’s well-being using an entertaining format. Children and youth were involved in all aspects of developing, writing, and producing the series.

The CO assisted national partners in accessing external knowledge sources through international study
tours and workshops in the areas of health, education and child protection. Knowledge has been shared through parliamentary roundtables, Parliament Resource Centre, the national library, and the national launch of SOWC 2012.

Efforts have been made to design and maintain systematic gathering, analysis and dissemination of information on interventions and on the situation of the most disadvantaged. A regional mapping tool was developed in order to disaggregate data by regions and compare inputs and outputs in a highly visual manner. In tandem with the Situation Analysis, a database of sources on the Situation of Children and Women was created along with a search engine to make the information easily accessible.

The Knowledge Management taskforce encouraged the sharing of knowledge within the office through monthly sessions where staff members shared information from external trainings and where visiting consultants shared technical expertise.

Nevertheless, the internal management of knowledge is an area for further improvement in 2014. Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit, with creation of an additional post in 2014, is a step forward, with new guidelines and procedures to be established for ensuring quality of knowledge products and strengthened capacity of the office to support local monitoring systems.

**Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation**

*Fully met benchmarks*

In 2013 a new Situation Analysis of Children was conducted to inform the MTR and the upcoming planning process for the new Country Programme of Cooperation. The Situation Analysis was approached from a life-cycle, equity and HRBA perspective, through a participatory assessment of the causes of eight main issues affecting children and women. A capacity gaps’ analysis of relevant duty bearers and rights’ holders was also conducted. Special attention was paid to causes and capacity gaps that are ultimately bottlenecks and barriers generating inequities in the fulfilment of child rights.

A combined HRBA and Determinant Analysis inter-sectoral discussion helped shed light on the situation of much marginalized groups of children, such as children with disabilities. By adopting a child-centred approach and by looking at the situation from a multi-dimensional and rights perspective, the exercise contributed to the identification of disparities affecting this group, synergies and systemic weaknesses as well as information gaps that the second part of the Country Programme will further clarify and address.

The Situation Analysis was complemented by a newly developed Regional Mapping Tool that visualizes and correlates regional disparities for key indicators at input/output and outcome level. Both were instrumental for informing planning and MTR discussions and for strengthening the Country-Programme’s emphasis on marginalized and excluded groups of children and women. In addition, the Regional Mapping Tool is being used to advocate for an increased focus on equity and on children and women’s rights in the discussions with the UN Country Team for the next UNDAF and the in-country post-2015 agenda.

The HRBA and the equity focus were embedded in planning and programming too. Building on the strategic directions set and revised at MTR, Multi-Year Work Plans and strategies as well as advocacy on national programmes were given stronger emphasis for addressing the bottlenecks and barriers that generate disparities. An example is found in the maternal and child health sector reform, where the programme component, as well as the recently adopted national priorities, have a strong focus on primary health care, which will address bottlenecks for quality of services especially in rural areas and in the most deprived regions which have higher child mortality and morbidity rates, such as in the Aral Sea area.
**Gender Equality**

*Partially met benchmarks*

The CO made progress towards integrating gender equality into its regular programming. However, major cultural barriers remain. The office ensured gender data disaggregation and analysis during the Situation Analysis conducted this year in preparation for the MTR and UNDAF. In addition, a holistic analysis of the situation of various groups affected by gender inequality - including women, girls, boys and lesbians, gays, bi-sexuals and transgenders - was conducted to inform policy and programme formulation. However, the analysis was constrained by significant information gaps.

Similarly, an ECD study looked at gender preferences for enrolment in pre-school and found some tendencies in the poorest regions toward preferences for boys’ enrolment. In addition, the Education Sector Plan 2013-2017, developed by the government partners under the technical support of UNICEF, includes a chapter on gender equality which covers gender dimensions in basic secondary, special vocational and higher education sub-sectors.

Advocacy, media and C4D strategies proactively promoted gender equality and encouraged partners and audiences to question gender-related stereotypes, with a particular focus on promoting responsible parenting by fathers and other male caregivers. C4D initiatives were undertaken by the Ministry of Public Education and Education Programme to encourage community residents (both female and male) to enrol their children in Early Childhood Education. The emphasis of this initiative was on male involvement in children’s upbringing, equal appreciation of both girls and boys and a fair distribution of the family budget among them. Likewise, a knowledge attitudes and practices study was conducted among caregivers (women and men) of under-five children to collect data and information on comprehensive and gender-informed insights into community mind-sets and normative beliefs.

Gender equality and gender stereotyping in society were included as cross-cutting issues in all 15 episodes of the Entertainment Education (EE) TV serial produced in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Public Education. Two episodes focused on gender equality in particular, and highlighted the importance of education and the opportunities for both girls and boys.

The CO participated at the Global Technical Consultation (GTC) on Gender in Bangkok and was involved in the subsequent follow up actions to move forward the agenda of inclusion and gender equality in the CEE/CIS region.

The Country Programme will continue to make progress towards the achievement of gender equality by establishing a Gender Task Force that will aim to “operationalize” gender equality at a more technical level, as well as increase the capacity of all staff to integrate gender into programming and other areas of the organization.

**Environmental Sustainability**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Two regions in Uzbekistan are more affected by environmental changes than others: the Aral Sea area in Karakalpakstan region and the Fergana valley. Natural long-lasting disasters, including droughts, affected the food security and nutrition status of children in these regions. The high population density in Fergana valley combined with the inappropriate WASH facilities, resulted in high prevalence of Soil Transmitted
Helminthiasis (STH), parasites and water-borne diseases. Malnutrition, a high prevalence of STH, parasitic and other infections contribute to relatively-high U5MR in the country.

The recent UNICEF study in Karakalpakstan showed an increased stunting rate from -1SD to almost -3SD among 6-month old children, who had been introduced to complementary feeding. Two main factors contributed to this situation: (1) a gap in the provision of essential food groups which include meat, fish and chicken; and (2) non-optimal feeding practices.

The study showed an important phenomenon that children from wealthier families have the same health problems (anaemia and parasites), as lower income groups, due to existing feeding practices, sanitation and hygiene situation in particular communities.

Moreover, school-age children, especially in remote deprived areas with poor overall WASH conditions, suffer from diarrheal and other communicable and non-communicable diseases, such as water-borne diseases, anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies, more frequently than urban communities.

Applying the equity approach, the Aral Sea region and Fergana valley were identified as priority areas for implementation of a comprehensive child-oriented nutrition and hygiene promotion programme framed in Sprinkles in Karakalpakstan and Hygiene Championship Initiative in Fergana Valley. As one of the major outcomes of the programmes, more than 900 families in Karakalpakstan enhanced child feeding knowledge and received MNP resulting in an increase of haemoglobin of 6-24 month old children from 85g/l to 115 g/l in average; and reduction of STH prevalence from 70 to 30 per cent on average in about 5,000 schoolchildren who received deworming medicine.

Both programmes showed substantial results as a result of empowering communities living in environmentally difficult conditions and providing them with basic knowledge on food and nutrition, as well as understanding the application of environmentally-friendly preventive measures included in School, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene SWASH/WASH. The communities in remote areas learned how to prevent water-borne diseases by applying appropriate sanitation and hygiene practices. Schools and communities learned about waste removal and the practice of open-air-defecation stopped. As a result, the number of hospital referrals decreased three times in communities where sanitation and hygiene promotion activities had been implemented.

In partnership with the MoPE, UNICEF supported the integration of a SWASH programme at postgraduate, pedagogical education, which resulted in increased awareness and improved managerial SWASH skills of teachers and school directors.

Based on the results of the Hygiene Championship Initiative, the MoH adopted the Hygiene Promotion and Deworming Strategy to further promote hygienic behaviour and to implement chemotherapeutic prevention of STH and parasitic infections among children. Moreover, the MoH has been working on further development and scaling up of the Sprinkles/MNP project nation-wide. Final results of the project will be available in March 2014.

**South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

In order to further promote the importance of child rights and child wellbeing, the CO supported and facilitated South-South Cooperation between partners in-country and those in other programme countries as follows:

Three delegates from the Ministry of Public Education and two delegates from the CO attended the ECD conference in Turkey. Presentations made by local partners in Turkey provided practical information on
alternative forms of providing Early Childhood Education. A field trip to a deprived region provided the opportunity for the Uzbek delegation to visit alternative programmes and to talk with school directors and local ministry personnel. As a result, the MoPE is interested in exploring more alternative programmes in order to increase access to quality ECE, especially for rural families.

A selected group of members from the De-Institutionalization Working Group were invited to Tbilisi to learn about child care reform in Georgia. A field visit to some alternative care premises took place. As a result, the GoU has agreed to conduct multi-phase research to better understand the causes of children’s placements in institutions and to build evidence that can be used to develop policy recommendations for a nationwide strategy for child care reform.

A high level government delegation was sponsored to attend a Central Asian sub-regional Child Protection Forum on children with disabilities in Tajikistan, during which government commitments were voiced.
Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results

Rep of Uzbekistan - 4630

**PC 1 - Improvement of quality basic services**

**On-track**

**PCR 4630/A0/04/001** By the end of 2015, children and mothers benefit from quality and increasingly inclusive social services for children.

**Progress: PCR 1**: Since the beginning of the Country Programme, progress has been made towards assuring increasingly inclusive access to quality social services for children in the areas of maternal and child health, education and child protection.

Quantitative evidence on progress will be available towards the end of the programme cycle. However, the reform of the Maternal and Child Health sector, the National Education Sector Plan 2013-2017 and the planning process for the National De-

**IR 4630/A0/04/001/001** By the end of 2015, the health system will provide quality services for mothers and children in line with adopted legislative and normative frameworks aligned with international standards.

**Progress:** In 2013 UNICEF support was focused on the improvement in the quality of services. The quality of mother and child health (MCH) services was identified as one of the major bottlenecks for child survival in the country and consequently a priority area for MCH sector reform. This issue was confirmed by results of UNICEF-supported quality assessment of MCH services. As a result of evidence-based advocacy and the coordinated efforts of UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and the MoH, a comprehensive strategy for further improvement of mother, newborn, child and adolescent health and development for the period 2014-2020 was developed and submitted for the approval by the Cabinet of Ministers. When approved, the document will serve as a guiding programmatic document for all agencies involved in the area of mother and child health for the given period. The GoU further prioritized mother and child health by declaring 2014 “the year of the healthy child”.

New-born and child-survival packages and nutrition were fully integrated into pre- and post- service medical education curricula. The new curricula are approved by Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education. The professors from Medical Universities from three regions gained further knowledge and skills to teach, based on the revised curricula. This work will continue in 2014 to ensure nationwide coverage. Additionally, over 2,500 MCH care professionals enhanced their capacities to provide the quality of new-born and child-survival services, including nutrition in their daily work.

Anaemia prevalence dropped from around 60 per cent to 40 per cent among children 6-24 months, as a result of enhanced nutrition counselling and micronutrient supplementation skills developed among key healthcare specialists in the Aral Sea high-priority areas. With UNICEF’s support, around 99 per cent of 6-59 months children nationwide benefitted from two rounds of Vitamin A supplementation.

As a result of joint UNICEF and WHO advocacy, the Government decided to introduce a new rotavirus vaccination from June 2014. Mid-level immunization managers from all regions strengthened their capacity to plan, manage and monitor the immunization programme at the local level.

With UNICEF’s support, the Government introduced and is implementing the revised paediatric HIV protocols. Fifty per cent of general practitioners, from five high prevalence regions, are able to provide paediatric HIV services, as part of IMCI at primary health care level. With capacity building support in 2013, priority regions reached the critical mass (over 60 per cent) of professionals with capacity to deliver such services according to international standards.

As a result of UNICEF support provided to day care centres, over 50 per cent of the total number of children living with HIV benefited from psycho-social assistance, including on disclosure of HIV status.

According to the end-line monitoring results of the “Hygiene Championship Initiative” project, implemented with the Ministry of Public Education, around 70 per cent of school age children in five priority regions (Andijan, Namangan, Ferghana, Surkhandarya and Sasmankand) wash hands with soap comparing with 20 per cent at the base line [1]. The initiative also resulted in a revised in-service training curriculum that includes SWASH subjects. The new curriculum is for professional development of school directors and teachers and all regional branches of the Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education acquired the capacity to train education professionals to use the new curricula.
UNICEF SWASH project report, 2013

IR 4630/A0/04/001/002 By 2015, the education system provides quality and increasingly inclusive services for children in line with the adopted legislative and normative frameworks aligned with the latest achievements of the world's science and economy.

Progress: IR.1.2 Education

A barrier to improving the quality of early childhood and basic education is the poor quality of methodological training and support for teachers in order to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. In this context, UNICEF focused its efforts in supporting the Government to enhance coordination and long-term planning, as well as to strengthen the normative framework and institutional capacity of in-service teacher training and monitoring of quality education delivery.

With UNICEF’s technical assistance, the Government ministries revised the Education Sector Plan 2013-2017. As a result, the Plan has an overall more inclusive approach that takes into account analysis of gender equity, regional disparities, and vulnerable groups. It also improved inter-ministerial long-term planning. The Local Education Group disseminated the Plan among relevant stakeholders in all 14 regions. The participatory approach enhanced inter-sectoral ties, ownership at the local level, and provided feedback that will be used to further improve and implement the plan. The Plan identifies areas requiring further funding and the government has prioritized Early Childhood Education, Basic Education, and Teacher Training for funding requests.

A new monitoring framework for Quality Basic Education was developed by the Scientific Research Institute for Pedagogical Studies. This framework defines principles and indicators that are based on the Child Friendly School principles of effectiveness, gender equity, inclusiveness, participation, and health, safety, and protection. The new framework is based on assessment for the purposes of improving education.

In order to provide teacher-training in response to teachers’ needs, a revised curriculum based on international experience was developed for In-service Teacher Training Institutions. A national survey of teachers provided the information to develop differentiated coursework.

As a result of UNICEF advocacy and technical assistance, the Ministry of Public Education increased the in-service course hours for Child Centred Education and Early Learning Development Standards for preschool teachers. Regarding pre-service training, through UNICEF assistance, almost 50 per cent of the pedagogical colleges nationwide increased the capacity of their instructors to deliver courses in child rights and child-centred education for preschool teachers.

Key barriers for increasing access to pre-primary programmes are the weak understanding of the importance of early childhood education (ECE) and the belief that quality preschool must be provided through an expensive, full-day kindergarten programme. In this context, evidence has been generated to understand causes of low enrolment and explore viable solutions for providing both quality full-day kindergartens and alternative groups. Communication for Development strategies are used by community advisors to increase understanding of ECE and encourage enrolment in programmes.

An important barrier to inclusive education is the resistance of different stakeholders at the school level. Special Olympic Uzbekistan, in partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Education, piloted school and community programmes to increase acceptance of inclusive education. A powerful champion is being sought to advocate within the government for inclusive education and for decreasing separate schooling for children with special needs. A regional compilation of resources for disaster risk reduction (DRR) included many teaching and learning materials created and tested in Uzbekistan. Copies of this compilation were distributed to departments of the Ministry of Public Education, teacher training institutions, and libraries. If increased funding is received in 2013, there will be renewed focus on mainstreaming DRR through policy review and teacher training, as well as piloting of vulnerability mapping.

In December 2013, the Government of Uzbekistan supported a CEE/CIS regional Call to Action and committed to include all children in quality learning by ensuring that every child is in school, every child is learning, every child is learning early and enrolling on time, and every child is supported by effective and efficient governance. These priorities are reflected in the 2014-15 Multiyear Work plan.

UNICEF will continue in its role as coordinating agency for the GPE process which includes a yearly Joint Sector Review of the ESP. While UNICEF’s strategies and priorities will not change, activities will be aligned to support the implementation of the ESP’s Five year work plan in the areas of early childhood education, basic education, teacher training, and inclusive education.
Progress: Effective advocacy

High level advocacy has been undertaken to promote the importance of child care reform with an emphasis on prevention and gatekeeping and development of social work services. This has included presentations in high level policy meetings and round tables, as well as individual meetings with Ministers, Deputy Ministers and presentations to the Oily Majlis (supreme state representative body). A high level government delegation was sponsored to attend a UNICEF conference ‘Call to Action – Prevention of Institutionalization of Children under 3 years of age’ in Bulgaria during which government made commitments. Furthermore, a selected group of members of the De-Institutionalization Working Group were invited to Tbilisi to learn the child care reform experience in Georgia including a study tour to visit some of the premises for alternative care developed in the country. As a result, the GoU has agreed to conduct multi-phase research to better understand the causes of placement of children in institutions and to build evidence that can be used to develop policy recommendations for a nationwide strategy for child care reform.

Programme components (report against IR indicators)

The lack of inter-sectoral coordination and resistance to innovations impede a protective environment for all children in Uzbekistan and are among the most substantial barriers and bottlenecks for the child protection programme. Child protection issues fall within the realm of different bodies. Although efforts have been made in establishing a continuum of services in the country, many of these services are still at the pilot stage, available only in limited numbers in few locations and sustainability remains still a challenge. Overall, child protection services in Uzbekistan are reactive rather than preventative i.e. emphasis is placed on response services and working with children and families after abuse and neglect have been committed. In order to overcome these challenges the following strategies have been implemented:

1) Strengthening of inter-agency cooperation for an effective realization of child care reform and promotion of justice for children’s international standards in the country.

Stronger inter-agency cooperation among frontline practitioners and different agencies working in child protection was the result of joint capacity building. This was built on the basis of social work with vulnerable children and their families and with justice for children’s principles and concepts, involving one third of total members of Commissions of Minors (CoM), Inspectors of Guardianship and Trusteeship (SPON) and Juvenile Polices from six regions of the country. Further inter-agency cooperation in justice for children was achieved, alongside sensitization on protection issues, through roundtables in five regions including representatives of departments of internal affairs, prosecutors’ offices, departments of education and representatives of child care institutions. Consequently, for the first time UNICEF could visit some children institutions, such as Centers of Legal and Social Assistance and specialized boarding schools for girls.

In addition, the Justice for Children Working Group - established by UNICEF in 2012 - has continued to meet regularly during the year and, although it has not been officially endorsed by the government, the group has provided an effective platform for the exchange of practices and information among representatives of Parliament, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Prosecutor General’s Office and other agencies.

UNICEF has also achieved additional milestones in the area of justice for children especially in building the capacity of key actors within the justice system. Through trainings, 65 per cent of all criminal judges and 74 per cent of all civil judges in the country enhanced their knowledge of international standards on the rights of children in contact and in conflict with the law. These trainings also made a significant contribution to the capacity building process which, according to a survey conducted by Penal Reform International (PRI), broadened the attitudes of participants.

The CO will focus on a broader concept of Justice for Children (J4C), with a particular emphasis on access to justice and prevention during 2014. The CO has started a dialogue with the Ministry of Interior and Police to introduce a child-rights based curriculum in the Police Academia as the latter provides both pre and in-service trainings for the police staff including juvenile police officers.

2) Advocacy efforts related to child care reform were located within a broader strategy of social welfare and social protection in order to achieve long-term and sustainable vision.

UNICEF’s advocacy efforts has led to child care reform in the country, with increased synergy between social policy and child protection sections, involving a combination of both programmes in providing assistance to the Government with a strong emphasis on preventing institutional placement, family based alternative services and development of social work services. Both sections jointly advocated with the Government and other partners for a coordinated and system-wide approach to child care reform. As a result of continuous cooperation and a holistic approach addressing the main bottlenecks and barriers, 2013 marked an important milestone for child protection in Uzbekistan, as the Government initiated a consultative process to develop the National Child Care Reform Programme for the period 2013-2015. The CO and the GoU have already initiated multi-phase research to better understand the causes of placement of children in institutions and to build evidence that can be used to develop policy recommendations for a nationwide strategy for child care reform.
In addition, after several advocacy efforts with the Moshe and partnership building with the National University of Uzbekistan (NUU), the University rector and other key stakeholders, the NUU decided to start developing a master degree project proposal on social work to be initiated in 2015. A review of the current delivery of the social work education programme of the NUU provided evidence to build a more systematic approach to guarantee sustainability of social work practices in the country. The CO will continue to invest efforts in the improvement of educational standards and university curricula to teach social work at three main universities of Uzbekistan. The CO will also initiate a partnership with the MoHE to increase the pool of practitioners who have academic degrees in social work, who can work in the area of child protection in general, and in the implementation of child care reform in particular.

### PC 2 - Strengthening national capacity building for policy development and implementation

- **On-track**

**PCR 4630/A0/04/002** By the end of 2015, the country fulfils the remaining observations of the CRC on child rights monitoring, evidence generation and resources for children

**Progress:**

**PCR #2 Progress Statement**

Since the beginning of the country programme, some progress has been made towards fulfilling the CRC’s concluding observations on child rights’ monitoring and resources for children.

Specific evidence on the evolution of the situation will be available towards the end of the programme cycle. However, the establishment of SPIG (Social Protection Inter-Agency Group under Cabinet of Ministers, with active participation of the Ministry of Finance) and its coordination work on assuring equitable access to early child education, child care reform and social protection of children with disabilities are important intermediate achievements that aim at prioritizing children, especially the most vulnerable, in the national agenda and budgets. The establishment of the Inter-Sectoral Working Groups for monitoring the Regional Plans of Action on Child Wellbeing and the gradual involvement of civil society in such groups are initial steps towards child rights monitoring.

- **On-track**

**IR 4630/A0/04/002/001 IR 2.1 - By 2015, national social protection and public finance systems adopt equity-focused, child-sensitive policies and practices**

**Progress: IR 2.1: National social protection and public finance systems adopt equity focused, child sensitive policies and practices**

UNICEF is supporting analysis of system level issues which will produce impacts in the mid and long term in the area of social protection. In particular, UNICEF is attempting to influence policy agenda, and increasingly advocates for challenging shifts in policies and interventions for the most vulnerable children and families.

Weak inter-sectoral coordination of policies is one of the main bottlenecks that constrain the effectiveness of the social protection system and equitable access to social services. The Social Protection Inter-Sectoral Group (SPIG), recently established by the Cabinet of Ministers as a result of UNICEF evidence-based advocacy, can be considered an important step forward in this regard. SPIG functions as a dialogue platform for capacity building and knowledge sharing between key ministries, civil society and think tanks, and facilitates consensus building on the social protection agenda. Partnership among key government partners resulted in agreement on prioritization of four major equity related issues: equitable access to early child education; deinstitutionalisation and child care reform; social protection of children with disabilities; and the establishment of an electronic registry system for social allowances.

Another important bottleneck is the dispersal of data on social allowance beneficiaries, thereby limiting availability of information for decision-making. Through stocktaking and UNICEF’s advocacy, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection agreed to pilot the single registry – a unified database of potential and actual social programme beneficiaries – as a tool for developing adequate social assistance interventions, reducing exclusions and protecting the interest of the most vulnerable children and families.

Regional disparities are not properly recognised as a pivotal factor in formulating national fiscal policy and budget distribution. This bottleneck leads to many of the children living in rural or remote areas having a limited access to essential social services. Through UNICEF advocacy and technical support in 2013, for the first time, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Education have actively encouraged and made use of evidence to develop strategic documents for a more child-sensitive and equitable approach to budgeting.

Based on this year’s lessons learnt, in 2014 UNICEF plans to partially revise its strategic approach to support the SPIG for
The lack of coordination for child rights implementation and monitoring continues to impede a unified inter-sectoral approach to data collection, analysis and reporting on the situation of children. Consequently, the approach continues to be fragmented and largely driven by the shifting priorities of the annual thematic government state programme. Unavailability of systematized and disaggregated data hinders evidence based decision making at all levels. UNICEF continues to advocate for the systematization of data collection, equity based resource allocation and prioritization of specific issues, in particular consideration of regional disparities.

UNICEF’s long term engagement with the President’s Academy was based on the mutual desire to improve the knowledge of civil servants at national and local levels through a comprehensive child rights curriculum aimed at building child rights knowledge and advocacy. Unfortunately, due to a change in management and the shift of organizational priorities, the agreed joint strategies did not progress much. UNICEF plans to mitigate this problem by entering into a partnership with the Women’s Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan to support re-establishing partnerships with the regional governments in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm. The Women’s Committee will support building the capacity of the Inter-sectoral Working Group for monitoring and addressing child rights related issues.

NGO capacity building has been successfully implemented with engagement of the regional Khokimiyat. The current programme has seen some delays, but is expected to be completed in 2014. To build on the developed skillsets of NGOs, UNICEF is planning to provide small scale funding to support initiatives designed to address the problems experienced by NGOs and local governments. Funding of NGO activities is quite challenging but ongoing discussions are being facilitated by the NGO inter-sectoral steering committee.

**PC 3 - Cross-sectoral costs**

**PC 4630/A0/04/003 Programme cross-sectoral**

On-track

**IR 4630/A0/04/002/002 IR 2.2 - By 2015, national and regional governments, civil service training institutions and NGOs partner effectively contribute to strengthen child rights system for integrated implementation and monitoring**

**Progress: I.R. 2.2: National and regional governments, civil service training institutions and NGOs partner and effectively contribute to strengthen child rights system**

One of the key determinants hindering the effectiveness of child rights’ monitoring is the non-existence of a special body at the inter-ministerial level for coordinated implementation and monitoring. UNICEF focused on addressing this bottleneck by building the capacity of Inter-Sectoral Working Group (IWG) on child well-being and NGOs to facilitate inter-sectoral coordination on child rights. The platform, created by the Government with the support of UNICEF, provided its sustainability and ownership by local and national governments. As a result of UNICEF advocacy efforts and technical support, regional Khokimiyats and NGOs developed action plans on specific child-wellbeing issues. The action plans represent an achievement especially in relation to the enhanced coordination between government agencies at the regional level, as well as the prioritization of children’s needs by paying full attention to improving quality of social services for children.

At the national level UNICEF advocated for the implementation of the latest CRC observations on addressing specific needs at local level, participation of civil society, and enhanced inter-agency coordination. As a result of UNICEF and UN advocacy, the National Human Rights Centre (NHRC) has committed to develop a National Action Plan on implementation of recommendations of Universal Periodic Review, the CRC and other Treaty bodies in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Thanks to UNICEF and UN technical support, this document is being drafted according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) guidelines and international benchmarking standards. In 2014 UNICEF is planning to continue cooperation with the NHRC on the implementation of the recommendations of the CRC and its two Optional Protocols providing technical assistance and international experience.

The lack of coordination for child rights implementation and monitoring continues to impede a unified inter-ministerial approach to data collection, analysis and reporting on the situation of children. Consequently, the approach continues to be fragmented and largely driven by the shifting priorities of the annual thematic government state programme. Unavailability of systematized and disaggregated data hinders evidence based decision making at all levels. UNICEF continues to advocate for the systematization of data collection, equity based resource allocation and prioritization of specific issues, in particular consideration of regional disparities.

**IR 4630/A0/04/002/002 IR 2.2 - By 2015, national and regional governments, civil service training institutions and NGOs partner effectively contribute to strengthen child rights system for integrated implementation and monitoring**

**Progress: I.R. 2.2: National and regional governments, civil service training institutions and NGOs partner and effectively contribute to strengthen child rights system**

On-track

**IR 4630/A0/04/003/001 IR 3.1 - By 2015 research-based advocacy, partnership and C4D strategies enable children, mothers and youth, especially the most disadvantaged, to access improved and inclusive social services, practice positive behaviours and realise their rights in a supportive and caring environment.**

**Progress: IR Statement: By 2015 research-based advocacy, partnership and C4D strategies enable children, mothers and youth, especially the most disadvantaged, to access improved and inclusive social services, practice positive behaviours and realise their rights in a supportive and caring environment.**
behaviours and realize their rights in a supportive and caring environment.

The CO faces two critical bottlenecks related to the development of advocacy and partnerships for children. The first bottleneck is the absence of child-rights based reporting in the media and a lack of, or inaccuracy, of data. Available data is often insufficiently monitored and quality-checked, and may contain significant gaps which limit its relevance.

To help address the impact of limited information, improve journalists’ understanding of child rights and promote issue-based media reporting, the CO has collaborated with the International In-Service Training Centre for Journalists and the Public Fund for the Support of Print Media.

The Faculty of International Journalism of Uzbekistan’s University of World Languages, with the CO’s support, has offered related courses in child rights in which 75 per cent of masters and bachelors students enrolled.

Over 1,700 journalists were oriented on child rights through workshops and follow-up meetings that resulted in increased coverage of mother and child health, immunization, exclusive breast feeding, nutrition, education, family care practices, preventing institutionalization, which resulted in more than 500 reports. Journalists were observed diversifying their sources, thus going beyond official briefings and press releases and there was consequently an increased use of key messages on children.

Advocacy for comprehensive child care reform with effective gate-keeping mechanisms and social protection measures was conducted through roundtables for parliamentarians and media briefings. The CO partnered with the Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children to launch the State of the World’s Children 2013 report, bringing the focus on ability rather than disability and focusing on the rights of children living with disability, instead of on a charitable approach.

C4D initiatives were undertaken by UNICEF’s Education Sector and the Ministry of Public Education, to encourage community residents in selected regions to enrol their children in Early Childhood Education. Community advisors were trained to promote positive early childhood development behaviours at home, while community support groups in Bukhara and the Republic of Karakalpakstan developed local evidence-based arguments to facilitate family decision-making in support of Early Childhood Education.

Community-based research and monitoring techniques were included into the national community advisors’ training programme. It facilitated a shift from a project perspective to an institutional approach for strengthening Early Childhood Education. An Interpersonal Communication Skills module was introduced into the MCH training package nationwide, and will directly contribute to planned results in health and nutrition by 2015.

A new focus was developed through pilot initiatives on adolescent participation in a social context where young people are usually not involved in the development of solutions to community problems. UNICEF collaborated with the Youth Generation Council, backed by the Association for Support of Children and Families, to help adolescents and young people to consider key issues that affect them as well as their communities, and to jointly develop innovative local solutions. These solutions have been presented to parliamentarians.

To inspire youths to play a key role in community development, an Entertainment Education (EE) TV serial has been produced in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public Education and all CO programme sectors. Fifteen episodes of the serial have been developed so far, with adolescents participating in all production stages. The serial will be presented in the first quarter of 2014.

C4D initiatives also addressed cultural practices and traditions related to child rearing and parenting practices that are posing certain social barriers to recommended behaviours at household level to ensure the health and wellbeing of children. An innovative participatory learning and action (PLA) methodology design was agreed with relevant partners, while a KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practices) study was conducted to establish a baseline for promoting positive household behaviours in selected communities. The PLA methodology has an equity focus, which will be ensured by working with caregivers of under-five children, including children living with disabilities, from poor families and from ethnic minorities.

Future plans include the further strengthening and implementation of C4D strategies, based on the recommendations of the mid-term review.

**On-track**

**IR 4630/A0/04/003/002 IR 3.2 - Throughout the Country Programme Cycle, the cross-sectoral M&E framework constantly adapts to the changing needs and informs CO’s evidence- and result-based planning and programming with HRBA**

**Progress:**

One of the critical bottlenecks for equitable fulfilment of child rights in the country is related to data gaps and difficulties in generating reliable and quality evidence with adequate disaggregations. This bottleneck presents a hurdle in the identification of vulnerable groups of children and women, as well as in the analysis of their situation with respect to the great majority of their
rights. This IR supported all Country Programme components in addressing this bottleneck.

In the context of the 2013 Mid-Term Review, a comprehensive Situation Analysis of Children and Women was produced and provided analysis from four different angles: child rights; human-rights based approach; equity; and life-cycle. The document, together with the participatory process that its preparation entailed, contributed to programmatic decision-making and enhanced cross-sectoral dialogue around key vulnerable groups such as disabled children, children in institutions, children from rural areas and children from low-income families, adolescents, women and girls.

An initial result of the Evidence Generation Strategy which was adopted in 2013 and provides a minimum package of quantitative and qualitative data available for programmatic purposes. For example, the proportion of TransMonEE indicators covered increased more than three-fold from 2012 to 2013.

Another component of the Evidence Strategy, the Regional Mapping Tool, contributed to the facilitation of the analysis of regional disparities and the correlation between key input and outcome indicators. The Tool was also instrumental in supporting the UNCT discussions about a common UN strategy on evidence-based policy-making.

The issue of metadata, whereby some indicators are aligned with international parameters, was developed further. A mission from the UN Inter-agency Group on Child Mortality Estimates contributed to evidence-based advocacy for the adoption of the International Live Birth Definition (ILBD) in official statistics related to infant mortality. The Minister of Health declared to the UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Director that ILBD will fully substitute the Soviet Live Birth Definition in the coming years.

Future plans include further implementation of the Evidence Generation Strategy in its short and long-term components. Data and information gaps are still significant and require further attention. Another constraint is the limited technical capacity of national research agencies that require constant quality assurance. The increased capacity of the M&E function, with one additional staff member starting in 2014, will help to address these constraints.

**PCR 4630/A0/04/800 PCR support**

**Progress:** Major achievements for this PCR include correct and timely processing and implementation of activities that enabled smooth functioning of CO operations and the office as a whole. Those activities, as described per IRs below, included administrative, financial, HR and ICT aspects of support to the office (including operations unit staff needed to support the office structure and programme). These activities also included administrative and operational tasks required to sustain office functioning on a daily basis and with timely provision of supplies, services and knowledge required to perform these required tasks.

**IR 4630/A0/04/800/001 IR 4.1- Effective and efficient Governance and Systems**

**Progress:** 2013 was the second year of the implementation of the Uzbekistan CO Multi-Year Management Plan (MYMP) 2012-2013. MYMP contains key management, programme and operations priorities, strategic partnerships and results, Multi Year Work Plans, the Terms of References of Statutory Committees, the Table of Authority, as well as revised work processes, among other key office documents. MYMP objectives, priorities and results were defined in a participatory manner with the responsible staff and performance indicators were outlined.

In 2013 the overseeing role of the Country Management Team and the coordination role of the ERM Task Force were reflected in the Multi-Year Management Plan 2012-2013. This allowed ERM to become a systematic management tool for the Country Office, to ensure a more structured approach to risk identification and mitigation measures proposed.

Throughout 2013, the CO advisory and review committees were active and functioning well. CMT, as main advisory body, took
major initiatives to improve operations and programme management performance and achieve quality assurance. This included approval of the 2013 Training/Learning and Supply Plans, review of IMEP, MTR and PBR strategic discussions, Audit follow up implementation activities, 2013 CO revised Financial Guidelines, revised updates of Statutory Committees, revised Country Programme Management Plan 2013-2015, as well as JCC related actions, including proposal for resolving the status of Ancillary Staff in Uzbekistan CO. In addition, CMT regularly reviewed, Office Performance Management Indicators, which have been revised in 2013 to align with new Organizational and RO priorities and benchmarks. This continuous monitoring throughout the year ensured that performance indicators and goals, including those related to programme and operations management, are routinely monitored. CMT minutes, once signed, were placed on the shared drive and further shared with all staff.

During the year, the CO continued to strengthen its management and oversight mechanisms as well as the sharing of information with staff members to ensure that all staff understood priorities, that key performance indicators were monitored on a regular basis and that operations and programme management performance was continuously improved, including through enhanced risk management.

During 2013, the Table of Authority (ToA) was updated to reflect the arrival of new staff and related staff changes and responsibilities. Additionally, delegation and acceptance of delegation for financial signing authority letters were issued and signed by new staff with SAP financial rights. Segregation of Duty (SoD) conflicts were reviewed and resolved. A reconciliation exercise of roles assigned in the Approval system and ZRole was also conducted.

In 2012, Internal Audit (OIAI) conducted an audit of the CO. OIAI noted overall satisfactory performance in all areas, including Governance, Programme and Operations Management, with eight observations issued for the CO to follow up. Shortly after issuance of the OIAI report, the CO began implementing observations and has, to date, closed five audit observations. The remaining three observations, dealing with HACT, Cash Transfer and Payments in US$ dollars to local consultants and contractors, are being finalized in coordination with, and for approval by, the UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Director and Comptroller, respectively.

On-track

IR 4630/A0/04/800/002 IR 4.2 -Effective and efficient Management and Stewardship of Financial Resources

Progress: The CO achieved all programmatic and operational activities within the planned budgeted resources. All planned funds (Regular Resources (RR)), Other Resources (OR) and IB) were fully utilized by the end 2013. Overall, CO successfully safeguards the financial and other assets of the organization and ensures efficient, timely and cost effective utilization.

All financial closures activities were successfully completed and in full compliance with prescribed deadlines, including on-going 2013 Accounts Closure activities. The bank reconciliations were all completed within deadline and there was only one non-reconciled item during 2013. Replenishment requests were promptly placed and funds received in a timely manner. The CO took full consideration of the exchange rate in the local market compared to the Treasury’s rate, to create foreign exchange gains from the transactions.

Disbursement of cash assistance to partners and liquidation of advances were implemented and recorded on cash liquidation basis, as Uzbekistan is not yet Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) compliant. For all implementing partners, the CO continued to request and review full documentation to support the liquidation of cash transfers.

The office continued to make effective use of its bank optimization and cash forecasting tools. The office also used Vision tools, such as Performance Management reports and the Manager’s dashboard as well as SAP-generated reports, for regular monitoring of financial and other assets. The financial trainings conducted in February 2013 provided counterparts with information on UNICEF financial regulations and on UNICEF reporting requirements, which have continued to be successfully applied as a financial and administrative risk minimizing control system. These mechanisms, together with the CMT review of Performance Management Indicators and clear accountabilities and strong communication with partners, resulted in zero outstanding direct cash transfers (DCTs) over a six and nine month period as of year-end, in line with UNICEF financial management standards.

As of 2012, the CO participated in the global Efficiency and Effectiveness global initiative and is a member of the Field Reference Group, working on identifying opportunities for simplification and efficiency gains in business processes and transactions and has, from the CO experience, proposed several processes for simplification and revision, including LTAs for Consultants and Contractors, HR Recruitment and CRB revisions. Furthermore, simplification is being sought at Operations Management Team (OMT) level, with UNICEF leading the process.

Uzbekistan is a Country Office piloting the Multi-Year Work Plans. Overall, utilization in 2013 was US$6.6 million, representing 96 per cent of planned funds. Detailed breakdown of IB, OR and RR are listed below:

Institutional Budget and Other Resources amounting to US$ 3.2 million were fully utilized.
Utilization of Regular Resources was 92 per cent. Out of US$ 3.7 million allocated, US$ 3.4 million were utilized. USD$ 300,000 of reminding funds were not utilized as a result of unforeseen delays in implementation of newly introduced interventions within MTR process 2013, and will be utilized in 2014.
On-track

IR 4630/A0/04/800/003 IR 4.3 - Effective and efficient management of Human Capacity

Progress: The CO recruitment was conducted throughout the year based on the needs and requirements of the CO Programme. It was grounded on the UNICEF Competency Framework which includes evaluation against core values, core competencies and functional competencies. Up to date in 2013, recruitments have been completed for the IP post of Child Protection Specialist and national posts of Child Protection Officer, M&E Officer, Receptionist, Driver as well as consultancies ranging from consultants for the EU MCH Project to translators, editors and photographers. Currently there is only one vacant post, that of Administrator and Finance Officer, for which recruitment is frozen given the E&E Initiative and the Executive Director’s guidance on hiring those vacant posts which had been frozen.

Performance management is undertaken systematically, with clear deadlines for the Performance Appraisal System (PAS) task definition and completion monitored by the CMT. The 2013 Mid-Year discussions were held and 2013 PAS/PER Year-End discussions are ongoing as per global deadlines. In addition to the official performance appraisals, staff members also have regular feedback discussions with managers and supervisors to discuss their work, aspirations, challenges and career opportunities.

The Local Training Committee approved the training plan during the first quarter in 2013 and at years end over 80 per cent of training requests were implemented. Two staff, one IP and one national staff participated in the development assignments during 2013, EMOPS at CEE/CIS Regional office and at Georgia country office, respectively. Staff who participated in these shared the experiences and knowledge obtained with all staff.

The CO applied UNICEF human resources policies on learning days, flexi-time and working from home with positive results. The office also applied compressed summer working hours in 2013, while maintaining a 40-hour work week.

In 2013, a staff retreat was held during which the office conducted several activities and trainings, including team building exercises as well as presentations on ethics and harassment, aimed at further strengthening knowledge of UNICEF policies and reinforcing team spirit and work relations. Uzbekistan’s all UNCIEF staff retreat is planned for February 2014 with a focus on conducting the 2013 Annual Review as well validating Multi Year Management Plan 2014-2015, including review of 2014 Priorities, staff accountabilities and ERM.

Ensuring staff well-being and maintaining high staff morale are constant priorities of the management and of the local Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). At years end, four Local Joint Consultative Committee meetings were held, bringing together management and staff representatives. This trend is on track, compared to 2012 when five JCC meetings were held. In 2013 the JCC reported on the completion of the 2012 Staff Morale Improvement Plan stemming from the 2011 Global Staff Survey. It also discussed issues related to use of the staff well-being fund, the local salary survey and its negative impact on local salaries as well as office lighting and the climate control improvement plan. Staff well-being funds and lighting/climate control improvement items have been resolved, while the issue of the local salary survey has been raised at the OMT and UNCT levels, as well as at the Regional Joint Consultative Committee (RJCC) and Global JCC levels.
Effective Governance Structure

2013 was the second year of the implementation of the Uzbekistan CO Multi-Year Management Plan (MYMP) 2012-2013. The MYMP contains key management, programme and operations priorities, strategic partnerships and results, Multi Year Work Plans, Terms of References of Statutory Committees, Table of Authority, as well as revised work processes, among other key office documents. MYMP objectives, priorities and results were defined in participatory fashion with responsible staff and outlined performance indicators.

In 2013, for the first time the overseeing role of the Country Management Team and the coordination role of the ERM Task Force were reflected in the Multi-Year Management Plan 2012-2013. This allowed ERM to become a systematic management tool for the Country Office, in order to obtain a more structured approach to risk identification and mitigation measures proposed.

Throughout 2013, the CO advisory and review committees were active and functioning well. CMT, as the main advisory body, took major initiatives in 2013 to improve operations and programme management performance and achieve quality assurance. During 2013 this included: approval of the 2013 Training/Learning and Supply Plans; review of Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP), Mid Term Review (MTR) and Programme and Budget Review (PBR) strategic discussions; audit follow up implementation activities; 2013 CO revised Financial Guidelines; revised updates of Statutory Committees; revised Country Programme Management Plan 2013-2015; as well as JCC related actions, including a proposal for resolving the status of ancillary staff in the Uzbekistan CO. In addition to this, CMT regularly reviewed, as per standing agenda item, Office Performance Management Indicators, which were revised in 2013 to align with new organizational and Regional Office (RO) priorities and benchmarks. This continuous monitoring throughout the year ensured that performance indicators and goals, including those related to programme and operations management, are routinely monitored. As per usual practice, CMT minutes, once signed, were placed on a shared drive and further sharing with all staff.

During the year, the CO continued to strengthen its management and oversight mechanisms, as well as the sharing of information with staff members to ensure that: all staff understood priorities; that key performance indicators were monitored on a regular basis; and that operations and programme management performance was continuously improved, including through enhanced risk management.

During 2013, the Table of Authority (ToA) was updated to reflect the arrival of new staff and related staff changes and responsibilities. Additionally, delegation and acceptance of delegation of financial signing authority letters were issued and signed by new staff with SAP financial rights. Segregation of Duty (SoD) conflicts were reviewed and cleaned up. A reconciliation exercise of roles assigned in the approval system and ZRole was also conducted.

In 2012, UNICEF Internal Audit was conducted in CO. OIAI noted overall satisfactory levels in all areas, including Governance, Programme and Operations Management, with 8 observations issued for CO to follow up. Shortly after issuance of the OIAI report, UCO began implementing observations and has, up to date, closed five (5) Audit observations. Remaining three (3) observations, dealing with HACT, Cash Transfer and Payments in USD to local consultants and contractors, are being finalized in coordination and for approval by the CEE/CIS Regional Director and Comptroller, respectively.
Strategic Risk Management

The CO made systematic use of risk management techniques. The overseeing role of the Country Management Team and the coordinating role of the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Task Force were reflected in the Multi-Year Management Plan 2012-2013. The ERM Task Force’s role was to identify and monitor risks as well as define and assess the mitigating strategies. The Multi-Year Management Plan reflected key mitigating strategies that were integrated into the management priorities, with connected directions to facilitate action and monitoring.

The CO’s self-assessment and risk analysis were reviewed and updated in early 2013. The Risk Profile Action Plan included clear steps to reduce the risks associated with the change to a new enterprise resource platform, Selection and Advisory Panel (SAP) and VISION performance management system, as well as other changes in the external environment. The resulting action plan provided a clear indication of individual and team accountabilities.

Given the newly adopted changes in the risk scale, comparison of 2013 risk levels with previous years is not possible. However, overall the assessment revealed different degrees of progress in relation to high and medium-high risks. Some risks remained stable, but further refining of the action plan and strategies were required to address underlying factors.

The CO continued to carry out targeted spot checks of the IP’s, in line with HACT principles, thereby increasing knowledge and capacity building of IP’s, while mitigating risks connected with cash transfers to IP’s. Given the deferred status of HACT in Uzbekistan, the CO will continue to advocate for the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and Uzbekistan Government, rolling out the full implementation, with related macro, micro and spot check activities, in accordance with HACT and the Paris/Rome Declarations.

The Early Warning and Early Action Plan was updated as well as the information on risk assessment. The Business Continuity Plan was updated in November 2013 to reflect the changing environment, responsible staff and other requirements. An all staff presentation of the Business Continuity plan, including a revised list of critical staff and evacuation routes took place in December. Testing of the ICT preparedness was conducted in mid-2013.

Related to UN Security, UNICEF continued to be an active participant in the UN security meetings and trainings. Staff were informed on security and safety issues accordingly. The CO continued to be MOSS compliant. The security plan, emergency lists, contact points for EPRP, and the Warden System Tree lists were updated regularly and warden exercises were organized regularly.

Required UN Security Management Team training was completed by the UNICEF Representative, a member, and Deputy Representative, and an alternate member of UNSMT.

Evaluation

The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) for 2012-2013 was reviewed and updated at the beginning of 2013, in discussion with Programme Sections, the Deputy Representative and the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to ensure that the plan is tailored to the priority information gaps. In the context of the Mid-Term Review, the Multi-Year IMEP 2010-2015 was also reviewed and updated based on the emerging programmatic needs.

There were no evaluations planned or carried out in 2013. However the planning phase of the Early Childhood Education programme evaluation commenced in the last quarter of the year. In addition, the Country Office contributed to the ongoing Multi-Country Evaluation on the Progress in
Improving Child Survival and achieving MDG 4 in UNICEF’s Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States.

Recommendations and follow-up actions extrapolated and prioritized from the participatory formative evaluation of the Integrated Maternal and Child Health Services Phase 1 were systematically monitored and their status updated in the UNICEF internal tracking system. Through the monitoring of follow-up actions, close observation on the progress of the Country Office, its national partners and the donor community in use of the evaluation findings and the CO’s demonstrated ownership of the evaluation. The extensive use of the finding by national partners in particular is considered an important achievement, considering lack of practice in the country to rely on evaluations to inform decision-making. Usually, the evaluation function is absent in the national institutional framework, and evidence is typically used to inform disciplinary measures.

The remaining Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan (IMEP) consisted of four studies which were completed. Two additional studies are at different stages of their planning phase and will be carried over to 2014 as planned. The in-depth Situation Analysis of Children and Women was completed in the third quarter of 2013.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

Continued and reliable availability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) networks, systems, data, resources, and effective user support were ensured in 2013, in accordance with Information Technology Systems and Services (ITSS) objectives and standards.

All UNICEF applications and interfaces, as per prescribed ICT practices and policies, were maintained in full. There were no incidents related to ICT and IT assets or access to UNICEF servers and sites.

Based on the 2013 adopted ICT Procurement Plan, necessary procurement for office ICT equipment took place. Most of the remaining desktops were replaced with office laptops, in order to fully support remote access to networks and to facilitate work from remote locations, including work from home.

Throughout 2013, the remaining physical servers were gradually migrated to the Hyper-V servers which now act as virtual machines. Migrating the physical servers resulted in a more efficient use of electricity and cooling energy in the server room, enabling suitable conditions for safe keep of servers and office ICT equipment. Currently, there are only three physical servers remaining which must be kept as the ICT server host for virtual machines.

Hewlett Packard tape backup equipment and hardware was replaced in 2013 with Veeainm Backup software. Additionally, Patch 3 was deployed. Currently all server backups are stored to the external USB HDD which enhances both the speed and quality of backups. As a result of this move, more economical usage of all ICT equipment and less time is required for possible restoration of data.

Two websites, [www.unicef.uz](http://www.unicef.uz) and [www.ona-bolasalomatligi.uz](http://www.ona-bolasalomatligi.uz), were developed by the CO and local ICT company. The [www.ona-bolasalomatligi.uz](http://www.ona-bolasalomatligi.uz) website was launched in 2013, and the [www.unicef.uz](http://www.unicef.uz) will be launched in the first quarter of 2014. To enable full functioning of the websites, a cloud server to host them was purchased from a local hosting company. The maintenance of the web servers, as well as websites, is being done by the CO ICT Assistant.
In order to provide expert assistance to the CO and local company in maintaining the websites and servers, the ICT Assistant completed Web development courses in 2013.

As per Property Survey Board (PSB) decision, obsolete ICT equipment was disposed of by the local company using environmentally secure/safe method. The CO thereby followed UNICEF’s global environment policy and standards, and promoted recycling.

One of the aspects of optimizing the CO ICT Management in 2013 was the issue of Internet connectivity. In 2012, the CO reviewed existing ISP contracts and reached agreement on a 40 per cent discount with two local ISPs. In the beginning of 2013, the CO reached an agreement with current ISPs to extend the 40 per cent discount through 2013, thereby adding to cost savings for the office.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

The Country Office submitted donor reports on time and in line with quality standards. By the end of 2013, a total of US$ 15,460,000 of Other Resources were mobilized for the six-year Country Programme of Cooperation. At this pace, it is likely that the CO will reach the OR ceiling of US$ 22,500,000 before the end of the Country Programme. Given the changing environment in the aid community and the global economic situation, Uzbekistan – a lower middle-income country with low priority for most donors – it is predicted that the fund-raising opportunities will decrease in the near future.

Currently, the main donor is the European Commission that supports the Country Programme in the area of Maternal and Child Health. The second source of Other Resources are UNICEF’s Thematic Funds, currently sustaining the Education, Maternal and Child Health and Child Protection programmes.

A two-tire management performance monitoring system tracks expiring grants in the programme section and programme coordination levels on a monthly basis. As a result, all grants that expired in 2013 were 100 per cent utilized. One no-cost grant extension was requested and agreed to due to a delay in transferring the grant from the donor’s accounts, which shifted the schedule of two months.

**Management of Financial and Other Assets**

The CO achieved all programmatic and operational activities within the planned budgeted resources. All planned funds (RR, OR and IB) were fully utilized by the end of 2013. Overall, the CO successfully safeguarded the financial and other assets of the organization. All financial closures were successfully completed and in full compliance with prescribed deadlines, including on-going 2013 Accounts Closure activities. The bank reconciliations were done timely, and UCO did not have any single case of the late reconciliation and only one non-reconciled item in 2013. Replenishment requests were placed promptly and funds received timely, with full consideration of the exchange rate in the local market compared to the Treasury’s rate to create foreign exchange gains from the transactions.

Disbursement of cash assistance to partners and liquidation of advances have been implemented and recorded on a basis of cash liquidation basis, as Uzbekistan is not yet HACT compliant. For all implementing partners, UCO continues requesting and reviewing full documentation to support the liquidation of cash transfers.
The office continues to make effective use of its bank optimization and cash forecasting tools. The office also uses Vision tools, such as the Performance Management reports and the Manager’s dashboard as well as SAP-generated reports for regular monitoring of financial and other assets. Financial trainings conducted by the Office in February 2013 provided to the counterparts on UNICEF Financial regulations and on UNICEF reporting requirements have continued to be successfully applied as a financial and administrative risk minimizing control system. These mechanisms, together with CMT review of Performance Management Indicators and clear accountabilities and good on-going communication with partners, resulted in having no outstanding direct cash transfers (DCTs) over 6 and 9 months as of year-end, in line with UNICEF financial management standards.

As of 2012, UCO participates in the global Efficiency and Effectiveness global initiative and is a member of the Field Reference Group working on identifying opportunities for simplification and efficiency gains in business processes and transactions and has, from the CO experience, proposed several processes for simplification and revision, including LTAs for Consultants and Contractors, HR Recruitment and CRB revisions. Furthermore, simplification is being sought at OMT level, with UNICEF leading the process.

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Institutional planned budget and Other Resources for 2013, amounting to US$ 3.2 million, were fully utilized. Utilization of Regular Resources was 92 per cent. Of US$ 3.7 million allocated, US$ 3.4 million was utilized. As a result of unforeseen delays in implementation of newly introduced interventions within the MTR process during 2013, US$ 300,000 was not utilized but will be utilized in 2014.

**Supply Management**

In 2013, all supplies were procured and delivered on-time. In the context of a middle income country, the supply component of the CO consisted of procurement of goods (US$ 506, 053) and procurement of services (US$ 801,876). Local Procurement accounted for 72 per cent of all supply activities, with the remaining 28 per cent being the activities relating to off-shore procurement. All supply activities were created in accordance with UNICEF rules and regulations and provisioned delivery dates. The CO Supply Plan was completed in March 2013 and reviewed throughout the year to ensure correct implementation. Monitoring of supplies, including status reports of the Supply Plan, was performed as part of the CMT review and was shared with all staff. Overall, the quality and timeliness of supply inputs facilitated and supported a more efficient supply process, including final delivery of goods and services to end users.

The CO assets were managed and accounted for as instructed by the new International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)-based UNICEF policies. These IPSAS based activities, as well as inventory counts, have been conducted as part of the Accounts Closure process and PSB was held in 2013 to reflect the current CO asset position.

With regards to CO procurement activities, among other procurements, UCO procured goods to equip EU funded MCH programme training centres with ICT, office equipment and furniture, as well as supplying with printing training manual. Overall, the strategic use of supplies has contributed significantly to key programmes, especially related to Health and Education sectors. UNICEF provision of different printed materials was also the key to advocacy and communication activities.
around Health and Education issues.

In order to support immunization efforts, UCO also assisted Uzbekistan Government in strategic sourcing of vaccines as well as cold room and related equipment for the Cold Chain. The procurement of these goods enabled capacity-building for Uzbekistan Government in supply chain management. The UCO is also involved in assisting the Government related to in-kind donation of Vitamin A.

UNICEF collaborated with other UN agencies on supply related to LTA of office supplies and consumables. Apart from off-shore supplies noted above, supplies were procured locally, thus supporting local markets and enabling procurement of quality supplies at competitive prices. The status of the local market is improving and the quality of services provided is generally good. UCO has been further assisting with our internal supply and ICT knowledge related to capacity development of suppliers that UCO engaged in area of Event Management and ICT Web Hosting.

As part of optimization and effective use of resources, bidding process have been conducted for conclusion of Long Term Agreement with potential technically qualified printing company for the next two years (2014-2015). Thorough supply and demand analysis were carried out in compliance with UNICEF Rules and LTA will be implemented as of January 2014. The utilisation of LTA will not only enable to effectively utilize time and other resources effectively, but also allow other UN agencies to benefit from this activity and achieve concrete results related to Delivering as One initiative.

In 2014, lessons learned will be incorporated into achieving greater synergy of inputs in terms of technical specifications and outputs in terms of goods and services for UNICEF and implementing partners. In 2014, UCO will, with other UN Agencies and as part of OMT, focus on further innovations and consolidations in area of procurement. To date, two potential areas have been identified, that of insurance of vehicles and procurement of office paper and they will be further instigated in 2014. This will enable greater efficiency and effectiveness in utilizing our resources, related to supply chain management, while enabling achievement of our UCO goals.

In order to further support and foster Supply knowledge, UCO supported Procurement Training for Supply Assistant aimed at obtaining Certificate in Public Procurement, Level 2 which should further enhance and support quality of expertise and inputs into programme delivery. This UNDP led training is planned to take place in early 2014.

### Procurement of Supplies

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<th>Good Procured</th>
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<td>Operational supply</td>
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<td>Overall supplies</td>
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### Services Procured

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<th>Services Procured</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Procurement of services</td>
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### Warehouse Supplies

<table>
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<th>Warehouse Supplies</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(emergency pre-positioned stock and other)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Human Resources

UCO recruitment was conducted throughout the year based on the needs and requirements of the CO Programme and it was grounded on UNICEF Competency Framework which include evaluation against core values, core competencies and functional competencies. Up to date in 2013, recruitments have been completed for the IP post of Child Protection Specialist and national posts of Child Protection Officer, M&E Officer, Receptionist, Driver (3 posts) as well as consultancies ranging from consultants for the EU MCH Project to translators, editors and photographers. Currently there is only one vacant post, that of Admin and Finance Officer, for which recruitment is frozen given E&E Initiative and Executive Director’s Guidance on hiring freezes on vacant posts.

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UCO applied UNICEF Human Resources policies on learning days, flexi-time and working from home with positive results. The office also applied compressed summer working hours in 2013, while maintaining a 40-hour work week.

In 2013, a Staff Retreat was held during which the Office conducted several activities and trainings, including team building exercises as well as presentations on Ethics and Harassment, aimed at further strengthening of our knowledge of UNICEF policies and reinforcing our team spirit and work relations. Uzbekistan All Staff Retreat is planned for February 2014 with a focus on conducting 2013 Annual Review as well validating Multi Year Management Plan 2014-2015, including review of 2014 Priorities, staff accountabilities and ERM.

Ensuring staff well-being and maintaining high staff morale are constant priorities of the management and of the local Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). At the end of 2013, four local Joint Consultative Committee meetings were held, bringing together management and staff representatives. This is an increase compared to 2012. In 2013 JCC reported on completion of the 2012 Staff Morale Improvement Plan stemming from the 2011 Global Staff Survey as well as discussed issues related to use of staff well-being fund, local salary survey and its negative impact on the local salaries, as well as office lighting/climate control improvement plan. Staff well-being funds and lighting/climate control improvement items have been resolved, while the issue of local salary has been raised at the UN Operations Management Team (OMT) and UN Country Team (UNCT) levels, as well as at the Regional JCC and Global JCC levels.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

Taking into account the office capacity and resource constraints, UCO applies a cost-effective rational approach. Efficiency gains and savings were achieved in 2013 through continued use of UNDP Long-Term Agreements for stationery and office supplies and through increased use of ICT technology (video conferencing and Skype for meetings, web-ex sessions and recruitment
purposes). Saved funds were invested in improvement of office overall working conditions. Only absolutely necessary ICT equipment was purchased during 2013 and the immediate replacement, as per useful life of ICT equipment, was delayed. This resulted in savings, also due to the foreseen changes to the new operating systems and technology and to avoid procurement of hardware that would be obsolete soon. The UCO has finalised LTA for printing which will be implemented as of January 2014 and which will further add to effective and efficient use of time and resources.

As part of OMT which UNICEF Chief of Operations chairs, UCO has started with the review of operational activities with the aim of establishing more cost effective and efficient utilization of funds as part of Business Operations Strategy of Delivering as One. The two areas identified were areas of Procurement and HR. The proposed procurement pilot projects related to insurance of vehicles and procurement of office paper will be instigated. HR area will focus on review and implementation of harmonised translators’ rates across all UN agencies These BOP activities aim to result in further reduction in the operating cost of the UN Agencies, including UNICEF, in 2014.

In 2014, the UCO will continue to review its expenditures in programme and operational areas to identify potential areas for more efficient and effective use of funds, including in areas of LTAs, security and maintenance, as part of our new MYMP 2014-2015.

**Changes in AMP & CPMP**

2013 was the second year of the implementation of the UCO Multi-Year Management Plan (MYMP) 2012-2013. MYMP contains key management, programme and operations priorities, strategic partnerships and results, Multi Year Work Plans, Terms of References of Statutory Committees, Table of Authority, as well as revised work processes, among other key office documents. MYMP objectives, priorities and results were defined in participatory fashion, with responsible staff and outlined performance indicators. All of these were reviewed by CMT, as part of the Management review.

It is anticipated that the UCO will be adopting the 2014-2015 MYMP by end February 2014. To facilitate drafting, review and endorsement of the 2014-2015 MYMP and to enable full staff participation and inputs, UCO will be organizing Workshop in mid February 2014. Part of this Workshop will be discussion and review of possible further steps CO can undertake, in addition to the already conducted savings, to increase efficiency and effectiveness of our CO activities, as part of the Global Efficiency and Effectiveness exercise in delivering results for children. In 2014, the UCO will continue to review its expenditures in programme and operational areas to identify potential areas for more efficient and effective use of funds, including in the areas of LTAs, ICT resources and security. Additionally, as part of the OMT Business Operations Strategy, UNICEF will advocate and take actions, where appropriate, to effectuate inter-agency actions related to Operational matters that may increase our efficiency and effectiveness while contributing to greater and more efficiency and harmonized implementation of UN activities in Uzbekistan.

With regards to CPMP, whose drafting and adoption was conducted within the MTR exercise, MTMR was conducted and has resulted in adjustments in structural changes within the remaining CP duration. To address the post MTR adjustments necessary within the CP 2010-2015, CEE/CIS RO PBR approved following staff changes effective 1 January 2014:

1. CO established two new posts, NOB M&E Officer and NOA Admin/Finance Officer. These are established to address the issue of restrictions of access to data in case of M&E function and to address currently under resourced Operations section in case of Admin/Finance Officer.
2. As a result of the MTMR and reflecting the 2009 PBR comments, CO has reviewed the reporting lines and has adjusted the structure to:
   a. Reflect reporting lines within the Health section to ensure individual accountability of the professional staff, and
   b. Adjust reporting lines that were not effectuated from 2010 PBR. All changes pertain only to a change in reporting line and GJP.

3. In order to reflect changes in the Operations section, Change of Title of previous post of Admin/HR Assistant was revised and new title as of 1 Jan 2014 is HR assistant.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

**Acronyms:**
ADB - Asian Development Bank
ARV - Anti-retroviral
ARVT - Anti-retroviral treatment
BCP - Business Continuity Plan
CEE/CIS - Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
CMT - Country Management Team
CO - Country Office
CP - Country Programme
CPAP - Country Programme Action Plan
CPD - Country Programme Document
CPMP - Country Programme Management Plan
CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child
C4D - Communication for Development
DCT - Direct Cash Transfer
DPG - Development Partner Group
DRD - Deputy Regional Director
DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction
ECD - Early Childhood Development
ECE - Early Childhood Education
ELDS - Early Learning Development Standards
EPC - Effective Perinatal Care
ERM - Enterprise Risk Management
EPRP - Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan
EU - European Union
GIZ - German Society for International Co-operation
GoU - Government of Uzbekistan
GPE - Global Partnership for Education
JICA - Japanese International Cooperation Agency
JCC - Joint Consultative Committee
HACT - Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
HR - Human Resources
HR - Human Rights
HRBA - Human Rights-Based Approach
HQ - Headquarters
ICT - Information and Communication Technology
IMEP - Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan
IMCH - Integrated Maternal and Child Health
IYCF - Infant and Young Child Feeding
LEG - Local Education Group
LSA - Local Staff Association
LTA - Long-Term Agreement (with suppliers)
MCH - Maternal and Child Health
M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation
MNP - Micronutrient powder
MoPE - Ministry of Public Education
MoE - Ministry of Economy
MoES - Ministry of Emergency Situations
MoF - Ministry of Finance
MoLSP - Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
  - Ministry of Health
MoSSE - Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education
MoI – Ministry of Interior
MoFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTSP - Mid-Term Strategic Plan
MTR - Mid-Term Review
MYMP - Multi-Year Management Plan
OIA - Office of Internal Audit
OR - Other Resources
PAS - Performance Appraisal System
PBA - Programme Budget Allotment
PBR - Programme and Budget Review
PEP - Post-Exposure Prophylaxis kit
PER - Staff Performance Evaluation Report
PHC - Primary Health Care
P-IMCI - Primary Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
PMTCT - Prevention of mother to child transmission
RO - Regional Office
RD - Regional Director
RR - Regular Resources
RoK - Republic of Karakalpakstan
SPIG - Social Protection Inter-Agency Group
SitAn - Situation Analysis
SSA - Special Service Agreements
SWASH - School Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
ToT - Training of Trainers
UCO - Uzbekistan Country Office
UN - United Nations
UNCT - United Nations Country Team
UNDAF - United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG - United Nations Development Group
UNDSS - United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO - United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF - United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UNOHCHR - United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNRC - United Nations Resident Coordinator
UPR - Universal Periodic Review
WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB - World Bank
WHO - World Health Organisation
WPs - Work Plans

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Document Centre

| Evaluation |
|------------------|------------------|
| **Title**        | **Sequence Num** | **Type of Report** |
| Uzbekistan IMEP 2013 | 2013/001         | IMEP              |
| UZBA.IMEP.2013_MIDYEAR.REVIEW | 2013/002         | IMEP              |
### Other Publications

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<td>Child-sensitive Social Protection Strategy</td>
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### Lessons Learned

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<td>A New Approach to the Situation Analysis of Children and Women</td>
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