TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary

2. Trends and Progress in the Region as affecting Children and Women

3. Analysis of programme strategies and results in the region

4. Management and Operations

5. Evaluations, Studies, Surveys and Publications completed in 2012 (by the Regional Office)

6. Report on UN Reform and Inter-Agency Collaboration

Annex 1: Summary Table of PCR and IRs

Annex 3: List of Evaluations, Research, Studies and Publications completed in 2012
1. Executive Summary

Significant socio-economic and political changes, as well as EU accession processes, continue to influence UNICEF engagement in CEE/CIS. Twelve of the 21 countries with a UNICEF presence are now classified as upper middle-income. However, this masks acute equity gaps in a number of areas related to child rights, which affect predominantly the hardest to reach and the most vulnerable: children with disabilities, children of minorities including Roma, children of migrant workers, rural children and children in impoverished urban areas and, in many cases, girls. These inequities make up the bulk of the ‘pending’ Child Rights Agenda in the Region.

Such fast changing environment prompted greater demands in 2012 for UNICEF to (a) produce and manage knowledge on the situation of children and on policy models in carefully selected priority result areas, (b) explore new modalities for partnering with host governments.

In support of the first objective, a Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA) was developed and is being implemented across CEE/CIS, under the leadership of the RMT. Focussing on key priority result areas, the RKLA provides a framework through which UNICEF can engage with governments to identify where there is evidence that the cooperation has produced results towards the progressive realization of Child Rights while at the same time reducing equity gaps (MoRES Level 4), where national systems for children have achieved levels of performance equivalent to international standards (MoRES Level 3), and where country experience can be shared across borders, thus facilitating horizontal cooperation.

To this end. Terms of Reference for five multi-country, MoRES-based evaluations were prepared as part of the RKLA and evaluations are ready to begin in 2013 to document how to translate a “systems approach” into concrete results for children. It is expected that the evaluations will further advance the on-going efforts to strengthen the documentation and analysis of practices, innovations, strategies and approaches in CEE/CIS which effectively contribute to the removal of critical bottlenecks. The evaluations also represent the first attempt in UNICEF to simultaneously assess results across a number of countries using the MoRES determinant analysis framework. They will thus lay the foundations for strengthening UNICEF in CEE/CIS and with European Union institutions as an authoritative source of information and analysis beyond national averages.

UNICEF in 2012 strengthened its engagement in evidence-based advocacy and leveraging strategic regional partnerships and alliances, which resulted in a reinforced consensus and commitment from governments, UN agencies and multi-lateral organisations on key regional programme strategies and result for children. Particularly noteworthy is the Ministerial Conference in Bulgaria (“Ending the Placement of Children Under 3 in Institutions: Support nurturing families for all young children”) which secured strong political commitment and clear Action Plans from 24 countries towards accelerating child care reform and ending the placement of children under three in institutions (RKLA area 1). In addition, UNICEF heightened the political momentum among 19 countries in expanding access to early learning services around the regional ECE initiatives (RKLA 4); while a new alliance with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is promoting the rights of Roma children out of school, complementing the existing partnership agenda between UNICEF and the Council of Europe (RKLA 8). Another notable success in 2012 has been UNICEF’s work in various regional fora in support of A Promise Renewed, which secured all but two CEE/CIS countries’ signature to the pledge.

Multi-country consultations with regional partners in 2012 helped to advance new specialised juvenile justice systems and the adoption of effective child development approaches that reduce exclusion and drive improvements in service quality. Links built with centers of excellence are providing technical exchange on paediatric AIDS in CIS. The generation and dissemination by the RO of research and analysis has increased countries’ application of new protocols, and informed UNICEF policy advocacy positions at country level.

This first year of RKLA roll-out showed that partners place significant value on UNICEF facilitating horizontal cooperation and cross-border knowledge sharing, experience and lessons on children’s issues and fostering the exchange of technical expertise. Highly valued is also UNICEF’s ability to leverage innovation, strategic partnerships with regional and national entities and their resources to accelerate results for children. These
practices gathered momentum in 2012 and are beginning to influence the adoption by partners - including governments and public institutions, international and regional organisations, civil society and the private sector - of successful approaches to tackle rights violations and related equity gaps and to accelerate results for children.

UNICEF has in 2012 redoubled its efforts to leverage the European Union accession process and, to this end, CEE/CIS strengthened its strategic collaboration with institutions of the European Union, contributing to the EU Consultation in preparation for the European Commission Communication on Social Protection, which largely follows the approach of the UN System in the Social Protection Floor initiative, and is infused with numerous indirect references to UNICEF's social protection strategic framework and equity concerns. A key message from the Communication is the commitment to place social protection at the center of the dialogue on national development strategies with the objective of achieving equitable and universal systems that can cater to the most vulnerable: children and people with disabilities. The EC also supports a 'transformative' view of social protection as an engine for social change beyond the traditional income and consumption support.

Also noteworthy is the visit of the Regional Director to the Council of Europe in July 2012 which re-affirmed the strong collaboration between the two entities on a number of issues, including the promotion of the Rights of Roma Children and initiatives on Violence against Children. There has also been in 2012 further development in UNICEF CEE/CIS alliance with ECHO on Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Asia and the South Caucuses.

In response to the growing demand by governments for new forms of partnership with UNICEF that can enhance their efforts to address child rights, not only domestically but also beyond their own borders, Country Offices increased their dialogue with national authorities about a range of different engagement modalities to enable the effective and efficient fulfillment of UNICEF global mandate.

In line with corporate initiatives to examine future UNICEF engagement in Upper Middle Income and High Income Countries, CEE/CIS expanded its analysis of more strategic collaboration with governments and inter-governmental organisations by assessing potential modalities of collaboration with Croatia, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Romania and Bulgaria. In support of COs on-going dialogue with host government, the RMT is considering new, effective and value-adding strategies to best leverage the political and financial influence of these countries to address major elements of the ‘unfinished’ Child Rights Agenda in the CEE/CIS and beyond, with particular focus on excluded children and addressing the social determinants and bottlenecks to close equity gaps. Dialogue with the Russian Federation on a new partnership with UNICEF is ongoing through a liaison function established at the RO under the guidance of the Regional Director.

A significant elements preventing further progress is the politicisation and inconsistent availability, accuracy and transparency of data on the wellbeing of children. This continues to be major constraints in the CEE/CIS, as, in many cases, data is not disaggregated sufficiently to allow proper analysis, a fact which impairs the completeness and accuracy of situation monitoring of the wellbeing of children. To counter these conditions, in 2012 the RO continued to support the collection of new and sex-disaggregated data through MICS4 and strengthened the content of the TransMonEE database in the areas of child protection, juvenile justice and social protection.

UNICEF in CEE/CIS has also stepped up its pace to become more cost-efficient and agile in its operations, and there have been documented steps and solutions for rationalization in the region which can make a contribution to global effectiveness and efficiency processes. These include practical measures with regards to telecommunications, namely the systematic use of video conferencing, VOIP and Skype. In addition, flexible arrangements are in place among offices to manage risk and gain efficiencies, through within-country processing and the intense use of mentoring and Peer Reviews in operations, as well inter-office exchange of programme staff, ranging from the short-term deployment of staff to exchange advice, know-how or best practices to extended missions that incorporate the generation of specific strategic positioning. This often leads to increased strategic positioning and enhanced engagement, mutual learning and fostering horizontal cooperation among countries.
2. Trends and Progress in the Region as affecting Children and Women

Social exclusion, poverty and disparities and the Right to Social Protection
In the CEE/CIS Region absolute poverty remains a severe problem in low-income and lower-middle-income countries. But in all of the regions 21 countries, vulnerable groups of children continue to live in extreme poverty, particularly in families of four or more children, those from rural areas, those with special needs and those from ethnic minorities, such as Roma, and also children, who are left behind as a result of migration.

The lingering impacts of the economic crisis complicate poverty reduction. GDP growth in the region is estimated to have fallen to 3% in 2012, from 5.5% in 2011. Growth deceleration affected all economies: the Western Balkan countries, with their strong economic and banking linkages with high-income Europe, suffered the most; despite high oil prices, growth in Russia declined to an estimated 3.5% in 2012 (4.3% in 2011); Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Romania grew by less than 1% in 2012, while Turkey grew by 2.9% in 2012 after two years of unsustainably high growth (8.6% in 2011).

CEE/CIS countries continue to have ineffective and inefficient social protection systems that fail to provide minimum protection to children, and social assistance spending amounts to a meagre 1.6 per cent of GDP. Even though children are more likely to be poor, they are less likely than adults to receive any kind of social assistance. New services for family and child support still cover mostly urban areas, leaving many rural areas unreached, but also rapidly expanding urban spaces hosting children in shanty towns and children of migrant workers. Limited budgets for social protection translate into lack of skilled social workers and case managers to reach and help the most vulnerable families.

Estimated prevalence of stunting among children under five in CEE/CIS has dropped from 37.3% to 17.3%, and wasting from 9.3% to 4.1% from 1990 to 2011, but the prevalence of overweight has almost doubled from 7.1% to 13.6%. Surveys have shown significant disparities in stunting among ethnic groups specifically among Roma communities. Turkey was affected by the armed conflict in Syria, as a result of the open border policy maintained by the Government and significant refugee arrivals in 2012: as of the end of December 2012, there were 280,000 Syrian refugees who had arrived into Turkey since April 2011, of which, 148,441 were housed in government-run refugee camps and approximately 70,000 Syrians estimated to be living in urban areas.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012. Concluding Observations continued to reveal concerns related the lack of key legislation for realizing child rights, absence of services, outdated approaches and practices in addressing the rights and needs of the most vulnerable including children with disabilities. Concerns of the Committee point to failures to respond to the rights of minority groups who are overrepresented among the poorest cohorts of society and excluded from many services and from mainstream society, as well as additional concerns regarding cross-border trafficking, sexual- and labour exploitation of children. All countries reported greater equity focus in addressing gaps in legislation, national

---

4 “Public social expenditure remains relatively low and financial transfers attached to decentralization are absent or insufficient, and this limits the provision of critical social services to disadvantaged children and their families”, CRC Concluding Observations for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey, 2012.
5 As of 5 February 2013, over 341,000 Syrian refugees have arrived into Turkey since April 2011.
plans of actions, in line with the CRC and its Optional Protocols, CEDAW and the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities. Fifteen countries in the region have ratified the UN CRPD, including Bulgaria and the Russian Federation in 2012. Yet, the CRC observed ‘equity gaps in the provision of alternative family- and community-based options, such as foster care’; ‘social assistance schemes, for example for children with disability remain weak’; and ‘no country has established independent monitoring mechanism on children’s rights’.

The Right not be the deprived of a family environment
Around 1.3 million children in CEE/CIS are in formal care, making them among the most vulnerable group of children in the region. Around 600,000 of them remain placed in large scale residential care typical during the Soviet time. Children under three years of age and children with disabilities remain over-represented in residential care. In many countries, adoption legislation is not in conformity with CRC and best interests of the child are not the primary consideration for placement of children without parental care. The most vulnerable groups face barriers in accessing the social protection for which they are legally entitled. However, in 2012, 11 out of 21 countries in the CEE/CIS region reported positive progress on reducing the numbers and rates of children being placed in large scale residential care. In Georgia the process of closing down the last large scale residential care facility is almost complete.

Justice for Children
Children in the region face extraordinary obstacles in accessing justice, in particular in relation to violence. Legislation and systems are most often absent or weak to enforce a ban, and respond to ill-treatment, corporal punishment and improper use of force against children by officials at police, pre-trial detention and care institutions. Some groups of children are more affected than others, including girls, the poor, minorities and children with disabilities. Justice systems are generally not adapted to children’s rights and lack specialized courts or officials with specialized training. However reforms of the juvenile justice systems continue in most countries of the region. Legal and procedural frameworks are being brought in the line with international standards, capacity building of professionals institutionalized and alternatives to deprivation of liberty further developed.

The Right to Quality Education on the basis of equal opportunity: early learning and school readiness
While many countries in the region have primary school enrolment rates above 90%, about 1.1 million children remained out of school in the CEE/CIS region in 2012 and another 1.4 million adolescents of lower secondary school age are out of school. In most countries the numbers of out of school children is decreasing and some countries have managed to increase enrolment among the most marginalized groups of children. For example, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, primary school attendance rate for Roma children increased from 61.1% in 2006 to 85.6% in 2011 (MICS 2006; MICS 2011) and in Serbia, primary school enrolment of Roma children increased from 66% in 2005 (MICS 3) to 91% in 2010 (MICS 4). In five countries, primary school enrolment rates have decreased in the past six years.

---

5 CRC Concluding observations for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey.
6 TransMONEE database 2012
8 Analysis on data from TransMONEE database 2012 for Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine, and administrative Ministry data for Croatia and Turkey.
decade (UIS, 2012). About one third of out of school children are those with disabilities. Roma children and children from the poorest communities also make up a large proportion of the out of school children. For example, in Bulgaria 23.2% of Roma children do not attend school compared to 5.6% among ethnic Bulgarians. Among those attending, Roma girls are more likely than boys to drop out. Gender parity remains a concern in some countries at the lower secondary level, despite the fact that most countries have achieved or are on track to achieve MDG 3 – gender parity in primary school.

Access to preschool education in the CEE/CIS region, although having improved marginally, remains low. Preschool education reaches only 30% of children in Central Asia and 69% in Central and Eastern Europe. Average figures mask the wide range in access e.g. 17% in Bosnia and Herzegovina as compared to 99% in Belarus or 9% in Tajikistan as compared to 48% in Kazakhstan. Equity continues to be a major concern affecting those from the lowest wealth quintiles, children living in rural areas, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities, such as the Roma.

The crisis in education quality in CEE/CIS contributes to the exclusion of the most marginalized, as evidenced by low levels of learning outcomes for children and adolescents. The OECD’s PISA 2009 showed that about half of the 15 year olds fail to master basic skills in reading, mathematics and science. In Kyrgyzstan, the percentage rises to more than 80% in all three subjects (OECD, 2010; UNICEF, 2012). Cuts in education spending, outdated financing mechanism and slow decentralization processes continue to undercut the quality of education.

The Right to the highest standards of health and nutrition
Overall the CEE/CIS is a region of comparatively low Under 5 Mortality, achieving a 56% reduction between 1990 and 2012. This progress was uneven, leaving several countries and population groups lagging behind. Most of Central Asia and Caucasus countries continue making slow progress in reducing the U5MR. Striking inequities persist in countries with low U5MR where children of some ethnic groups (primarily Roma) as well as in rural and remote communities are at substantively higher risks of dying before their fifth birthday. While there was a substantive reduction in mortality of children under 5 from diarrhoea and pneumonia in all countries in the region, these conditions still require attention. Neonatal causes (e.g. prematurity, asphyxia and infections) remain responsible for about 60% of U5MR in all CEE/CIS countries. Similar patterns are seen in maternal mortality. Quality of maternal and newborn care is a major concern.

Fifteen countries achieved or surpassed the regional target of 95% DTP3 containing vaccine coverage, but lower performing ones cause the accumulation of susceptible populations. Ukraine is the highest risk country for disease outbreaks like polio, measles and diphtheria with a 50% immunization coverage persisting over the last three years. Even in countries of high national average, a more detailed analysis of MICS and administrative data reveals in-country inequalities.

The Right to be born and remain HIV-free
The CEE/CIS Region is far from achieving the two HIV/AIDS related targets of MDG 6. While in many countries worldwide the rate of new HIV infections has stabilized or decreased, in CEE/CIS the HIV epidemic continues to expand. Women now account for almost half of newly reported HIV infections. The absolute annual number of HIV positive pregnant women tripled between 2001 and 2011. Mortality from AIDS related causes increased more than 10-fold between 2001 and 2010 and is unacceptably high because only an estimated 25% of the population in need of ARV treatment is able to access it. Despite being preventable and curable, tuberculosis, is a leading cause of death among people living with HIV and represents an ever growing public health threat. HIV infection is inextricably linked to social exclusion and discrimination and can be seen as a “marker” of a range of other social inequities and marginalization in society. Effective HIV prevention, treatment, care, support and protection services are least likely to reach precisely those key populations who are at highest risk and most vulnerable to HIV. With an overall HIV prevalence of 0.9% among the adult population, CEE/CIS has become the second Region most affected by HIV in the world after Africa, but with resources and investments in responding to the epidemic not coming even close to what is invested in Africa.

---

11 UNAIDS, 2012 Regional Fact Sheet for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
12 UNAIDS, 2011 World AIDS Day Report
Environmental Sustainability and Disaster Risk Reduction

Environmental risks are having an increasing impact on the achievement of MDGs, especially those related to health, education and protection of children in the region. The CEE/CIS region has seen in the past few years a growing incidence of natural disasters like floods, landslides and extreme weather conditions. In early 2012, several countries in South Eastern Europe, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro and Romania experienced sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall, which resulted in governments declaring state of emergency in the most affected areas. In May 2012, an earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale erupted in the Rasht valley in Tajikistan causing significant damage to infrastructure. In the region, children typically represent more than fifty per cent of those affected by disasters.

Most countries in the CEE/CIS region have disaster management systems in place, but their focus tends to be more on rescue and relief interventions rather than mitigation and prevention aspects of disaster risk management. Thanks to the well-established civil protection structures, most countries have basic ability to respond and manage emergency situations, and are able to effectively deal with small, localized events which are frequent in the region. Building on their existing disaster management systems, a few have initiated the process of strengthening their legislation and institutional frameworks to systematically address disaster risks through establishing national platform on disaster risk reduction and integrating disaster risk reduction strategies into their national development planning processes. In the area of education, UNICEF has successfully supported governments in the region to integrate disaster risk reduction into education development policies and plans through, for example, inclusion of DRR into education curriculum, establishment of school-based DRR protocols and establishment of coordination structures, within the framework of national HFA implementation.

Partnerships for Development

Government engagement beyond borders is becoming an increasingly important emerging role for countries in CEE/CIS experiencing economic growth. In 2010, Turkey ranked 10th in the list of donor countries by net disbursement. Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania have become donor countries. The Russian Federation, with an ODA averaging $500m per year, has started supporting other countries, for example Afghanistan with scholarship to more than 2,000 students, and providing funding and food aid. The Government of Kazakhstan is preparing to establish “KazAID” to increase its support to other countries.

The trends described above offer opportunities for leveraging resources from several host governments, and further occasions exist for raising funds from the private sector, individuals and corporations and from regional partners such as the EU and the Council of Europe – to support the unfinished agenda for children in-country as well as at the regional and global levels. UNICEF in the region strives to play a strategic role of supporting governments to increase the availability and use of appropriate data in decision-making, policy development and monitoring to overcome bottlenecks for the most vulnerable children, and evaluation of policy models in terms of results for children on the grounds, so as to develop a body of knowledge and lessons learned. By systematizing, evaluating, documenting and disseminating “good practices” that are in line with international standards and the best interest of children, and facilitating horizontal mutual learning among countries of experience, UNICEF engages countries to move the agenda for children regionally and globally. As countries develop their ODA

---

strategies and priorities, UNICEF is well positioned to influence the design and implementation of ODA towards programmes for children and to support south-south/horizontal cooperation through triangular cooperation arrangements.

3. Analysis of programme strategies and results in the region

3.1. Overview of programme strategies

In 2012, the Region rationalized and re-energised its strategic engagement in the Region by adopting a 10-priority Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA). By establishing a framework for action and knowledge that the Region will pursue over the coming years, the RKLA focuses on the most disadvantaged children excluded from average progress, and reinforces collaboration among Country Offices and establishes a stronger ‘compact’ with the Regional Office. The RKLA reflects a rights-based approach to development, is tailored to the regional context, links well with corporate priorities - including the new MTSP - and was implemented throughout 2012 by systematically applying the MoRES approach to each of the 10 priorities, so as to sharpen results formulation, monitoring and documentation.

The RKLAs’ strategic intent is to inform and guide UNICEF engagement in CEE/CIS, zeroing in on 10 Key Results Areas which share the following features: (a) they address key violations of child rights in terms of magnitude and/or severity; (b) they explicitly contribute to closing the equity gaps; (c) they can be documented and evaluated; and (d) they are being achieved in a significant number of countries. The 10 Results Areas are: (1) A child’s right to a family environment; (2) Justice for children: enabling justice systems to respect and protect child rights; (3) A child’s right to education: early learning and school readiness; (4) A child’s right to education: Including all children out of school in quality learning; (5) A child’s right to be born HIV free; (6) A child’s right to health: infant and U5 mortality; (7) Young child wellbeing; (8) A child’s right to social protection; (9) Disaster Risk Reduction; (10) Adolescents: second decade, second chance.

The objectives of the RKLA are: (a) To bring greater focus in UNICEF engagement around a limited number of priorities for children that are relevant in a number of countries of the region. (b) To accelerate progress in key result areas through evaluations of systems reform processes and their impact on the reduction of equity gaps and child rights violations, documenting good practices in supporting system changes, and UNICEF specific contribution therein; (c) To actively share innovations, lessons learned and all the knowledge generated, across countries, thus facilitating south-south better referred to as horizontal cooperation in the region.

From the above it is apparent that the RKLA places a high value on the generation and sharing of knowledge. A special effort was made in 2012 to ensure that the M&E function, regionally and at country level, was optimized with a refocus on equity and on using the MoRES approach. In 2012 the M&E function supported the RKLA through the design of multi-country evaluation, and by strengthening national child rights M&E systems. Five multi-country evaluations were designed for five of the result areas and funding secured: Child’s Right to Family Environment; Justice for Children: enabling justice system to respect and protect child rights; Children’s right to early learning and school readiness; Children’s right to education: including all children out of school in quality learning; and Children’s right to health: reducing infant and under 5 mortality. These evaluations are the first attempt in UNICEF to assess achievements following the MoRES determinant analysis framework across a number of countries.

The choice of multi-country evaluations was based on a substantial body of work, which underpinned the selection of the 10 RKLA priorities. For example, in support of the regional priority on Education for all children, the Regional Office undertook a Regional Analysis and four country assessments of the situation of Out of School Children. In addition, the analysis of PISA 2009 study results provided insights on the situation of equity in learning outcomes in the Region. Similarly, the Regional Office supported a multi-country research on service providers’ capacity to identify, report and responding to violence against children, which fed national and regional
discussions on how to strengthen policy responses in this field. The RO also concluded the Roma Good Start Initiative (RGSI), a Jointly Managed EU–UNICEF initiative.

As a key aspect of the RKLA is to identify emerging areas of child rights violations that show potential for results and innovation across a number of countries, Reference Groups, chaired by a Representative and supported by the relevant Regional Advisor, were formed around these areas and Concept Notes were developed. Central to the work of the Reference Group has been to find the nexus between capacity development, particularly through support to horizontal (South-South) cooperation, effective advocacy, strategic partnerships and knowledge management.

This was exemplified by the Regional Office’s facilitating regional horizontal cooperation in the first priority result area ‘A child’s right to a family environment’, which culminated in the November Ministerial Conference in Bulgaria on "Ending the Placement of Children Under Three in Institutions: Support nurturing families for all young children". The Conference secured strong political commitment towards accelerating work in child care reform, with the clear target of ending placement of children under three in institutions. Under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Conference brought together 250 delegates from 24 countries to share their knowledge, and brought about not only political support but also enhanced national capacities and connected together governments that are promoting similar child care reforms in the region. More than 150 media outlets reported on the issue in over 22 countries. UNICEF latest research was acknowledged at the Conference where UNICEF demonstrated its important convening power in the Region.

Progress in supporting horizontal (South-South) capacity development in other RKLA result areas were also demonstrated in 2012. The Regional Office, in cooperation with the EU, undertook multi-country knowledge sharing and capacity building in the regional priority area of Juvenile Justice, whereby National Training Institutes (such as Police Academies, Schools of Magistrates) from eight countries worked together with UNICEF technical support to improve their national training material on Juvenile Justice. The continuum of capacity development, effective advocacy and knowledge management was also seen in the area of preventing violence against children in detention. Research teams composed of Ombudsman Offices and NGOs from eight countries, with the support of the Regional Office, studied the nature and impact of torture and ill-treatment of children, and gathered together in Kyrgyzstan in September 2012 to compare experience and reflect on needed reforms in their countries. Likewise, UNICEF facilitated increased capacity of civil society organizations in five countries to support HIV testing and counseling among adolescents at highest risk.

In the RKLA result area ‘A Child Rights to Education - Inclusive Education’, the Regional Office convened and facilitated sharing of practices to build knowledge in four countries regarding monitoring systems for Out of School Children (OOSC) and developing programmatic and policy responses to address policy and implementation bottlenecks. Additionally, the RO identified centers of excellence to support five countries to advance their work on Education in Emergencies, as well as facilitating a Regional Forum for sharing knowledge, international expertise and good practices on inclusive education for OOSC and children with disabilities, teacher quality and learning outcomes. Likewise, the RO, jointly with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), brought together government counterparts, civil society partners, UNICEF staff and experts in Early Childhood Education (ECE) from 18 countries to share their knowledge on improving the quality of ECE.

A notable success in 2012 has been UNICEF work in support of ‘A Promised Renewed’ (APR) Initiative, which was seized upon as an opportunity for advocacy, strategic partnerships and capacity development. The Regional Office raised awareness about the APR in regional fora, particularly at the APEC meeting and the MDG4 Forum organized in Saint Petersburg by the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation. As a result of advocacy at country and regional level, almost all countries in CEE/CIS signed the pledge, while UNICEF Country Offices still continue their efforts in the remaining two countries who have not signed yet. In addition, dialogue with WHO and other H4 partners on scaling up political support to the Secretary General’s Every Woman, Every Child and APR resulted in an agreement to develop a joint framework for actions for 2013 and beyond. There is
renewed political support to achieving MDGs, developing regional priorities and setting even more ambitious targets beyond 2015, while a review of progress in reducing the U5MR was initiated, as part of the work of that RKLA’s Reference Group.

UNICEF partnered with Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe (DPPI), in support of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) at national and community level and organized a Knowledge Management exchange to facilitate cooperation among government officials and experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova to share knowledge, exchange experience and discuss practices in DRR with a focus on children. In order to improve coordination and use of data on humanitarian action and DRR within the region, the Regional Office Emergency Team also facilitated the establishment of the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for Caucasus and Central Asia with the overall objective of ensuring the availability of adequate levels of emergency preparedness, as well as the means to respond effectively and in a coordinated manner to humanitarian crises and promote and strengthen disaster risk reduction, in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Entrenched mindsets and social norms remain a major bottleneck to overcoming equity gaps in CEE/CIS. 2012 saw major efforts to develop Communication for Development (C4D) as a key strategy to bring about social change in the region, and to work with counterparts in the application of C4D techniques in key areas. In the RKLA ‘A child right to health’ for example, where there are high levels of anti-vaccine sentiments, the RO together with HQ Division of Communication, for the first time globally undertook an assessment of anti-vaccine activities in the Internet, called Social Media Trend in the Anti-vaccine Movement in Eastern Europe. C4D support was also provided for the introduction of new vaccines in three countries, Armenia, Moldova and Georgia. In order to further enhance C4D support for partners UNICEF in-house capacity was strengthened in the Region during the year.

Also regarding the persistence of adverse social norms it is important to note that gender inequality remains one of the key determinants of exclusion in CEE/CIS. In 2012 the Region, within the framework of the UNICEF corporate Strategic Priority Action Plan, continued to support the organizational transformation for gender equality in CEE/CIS. The spring RMT reflected on ways to move forward within limited means and resources, namely through the development of adapted capacity development support to Country Offices on gender mainstreaming, complemented by the dissemination of core package for gender reviews to Country Offices; systematic gender review of Situation Analyses undertaken in the context of MTR process in six countries; as well as a systematic and review of the Terms of Reference for the RKLA multi-country evaluations.

Critical to the realization of results for children in the Region is maintaining and strengthening alliances with strategic partners, notably with the larger and better resourced actors such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, other key sub-regional entities, selected bilaterals and National Committees, as well as with Civil Society Organisations.

UNICEF contribution to the EU Consultation preparatory to the European Commission Communication on Social Protection secured an appropriate alignment with international standards and with UNICEF priorities for an enhanced social protection system for children in CEE/CIS. In addition, the Regional Office took an active part in the activities of the European Expert Group on the use of Structural Funds for the transition from institutional to community-based care for children. UNICEF also actively participated in accession discussions in countries that are in the EU Neighbourhood policy by bringing data and analysis of the state of child rights implementation in the broader context of the rule of law, human rights, social protection and inclusion, which contributed to a good coverage of priority child rights issues in EU reports and programming instruments.

In support of Disaster Preparedness the Regional Office furthered its alliance with ECHO to advance the DRR agenda with focus on Central Asia and South Caucasus. The results can be seen in the number of countries implementing specific DRR activities increasing from one in 2007 to ten in 2012. The region increasingly
recognizes the growing impact environmental risks are having on the achievement of the MDGs, especially those related to health, education and protection of children in the region and the longer-term regional priorities.

With the Council of Europe, the visit of the Regional Director to Strasbourg in July 2012 re-affirmed the strong collaboration between the two organisations. The Regional Office continued to promote the rights of Roma children through its support to the Council of Europe and strengthened partnership with OHCHR Regional Office for Europe. Using the findings of the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion Overview Report, the RO engaged extensively with the EU, civil society and development partners in support of Early Childhood Education for Roma children. The RO continued to work closely with the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) on Early Childhood Education. In addition, in partnership with the Government of Turkey, the Council of Europe and the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, UNICEF contributed to organizing a European conference “Stepping up progress in combating violence against children” in Ankara in November 2012.

Last year was also marked by the active dialogue with the Russian Federation on the development of a new form of UNICEF engagement. Following the conclusion of the last Country Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of the Russian Federation on 31 December 2011, a few remaining projects were completed by end 2012 and, as requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Moscow Office gradually downsized with all staff contracts ending as of 31 December, 2012. The liaison function with the Russian Government was transferred to the UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS where a Focal Point was appointed to continue the dialogue with the Russian Federation, under the guidance of the Regional Director. The on-going dialogue identified several areas to be further explored for developing a new partnership between the Russian Federation and UNICEF, with initial particular focus on Maternal and Child Health and the health-related MDGs.

3.2 Overview of each MTSP Focus Area

As detailed in Section 2 above, massive changes are taking place in CEE/CIS. Nineteen of the 21 countries where UNICEF has an Office are now middle-income, 11 of them are Upper MICs. However, GNI per capita masks the fact that there are still far too many children who are being left behind – their marginalization hidden underneath the glow of national and regional statistics. They are the hardest to reach and the most vulnerable: children with disabilities, children of migrant workers, children of minorities, rural children and still, in many cases, girls.

In order to remain relevant and respond to this fast changing environment in 2012 UNICEF in CEE/CIS has redoubled its efforts to shift to a very strategic mode of engagement aimed at moving forward an agenda for children though partnership with countries - governments, civil society, the private sector and citizens - domestically including at the subnational level, as well as regionally and beyond. The RMT identified 10 key priorities results that will be pursued over the coming years to generate this shift in focus. This framework will enable UNICEF in CEE/CIS to more effectively support the agenda of universal realization of children rights in the region and provide long-lasting solutions for the currently unacceptably high number of marginalized children in institutions, children out of school, those living in unsafe and hazard-prone communities, and adolescents excluded and without hope.

The following table shows that the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA) focusses squarely on deprivation and exclusion, where equity gaps are largest and shortcomings in child rights realization most acute.
The above priorities were identified by each CO, based on their country programme areas where UNICEF had a clear added-value in bringing concrete results for children. In Child Protection for example, traditionally a key area of work for CEE/CIS, the first RKLA aims to end the legacy of placing children in state-run institutions through reforming public administrations and place the family at the center of social protection, in particular for children with disabilities, children from minority groups and children from other vulnerable groups. The second RKLA aims at ensuring that juvenile justice is not neglected when countries reform their justice systems.

Although much more needs to be done, results are indeed emerging – many of them rooted in public sector reforms. To document this experience, several Country Offices in the Region are working on conducting multi-country evaluations, in the RKLA results areas highlighted with a purple colour in the above table. The multi-country evaluations will assess where equity gaps have been reduced, where UNICEF has made a significant contribution, and where there are emerging results to build on and bottlenecks to overcome. In each case, the multi-country evaluations will look at the environment that surrounds children—the policies, services and programmes—the demand for improved child well-being, and the quality of the services being provided, always through a human rights lens. This will provide some evidence of what it takes for policies to translate into results for children. This knowledge, including on gaps and opportunities, is what we expect to contribute to our counterparts and partners. The multi-country evaluations will also contribute to CEE/CIS’ new approach in the Region, which aims to foster networks and partnerships to achieve results, and fosters the active engagement of governments and partners regionally beyond their national borders through mutual learning amongst countries, peer learning and support, and cross-border cooperation.

**CHILD PROTECTION**

**A Child’s Right to a Family Environment**

The high rates of separation of children from families in the Region are, to a large extent, due to the legacy of systems inherited from the socialist regimes. The total number of children who grow up in formal care is estimated at 1.3 million, out of which 650,000 live in residential care. Of these children, some 200,000 have disabilities, and 30,000 are under the age of three.14 In CEE/CIS protection systems are often capturing children from families who are socially or economically vulnerable, in the absence of strong social protection systems. For

---

14 TransMONEE database 2012
example, children with disability, children with chronic diseases or behavioural problems, ethnic minorities, children whose families suddenly, or over a period of time, became socially or economically vulnerable (single mothers, parents with mental illness etc.), children of parents who are abusing alcohol, are dependent on drugs or are in prison are overrepresented in child care systems of UNICEF works in child care reform to ensure the child’s right to a family environment is supporting strengthening of social protection services through the reform of the child care system.

A multi-faceted approach is needed, one which engages different public services, such as health and social protection. Inclusive education has also been proven to be indispensable for children with disabilities, producing results in both preventing and addressing the problems that lead to family separation. This is important because practice has shown that accelerating outflows from institutions does not necessarily stop inflows. Nor is legal reform sufficient, but must be followed by serious efforts to align services, procedures and skills with new standards and to upgrade professionals’ accountably towards their clients.

Tangible results for children, visible at impact MoRES Level 4, are maturing in several countries and will be documented through a multi-country evaluation in 2013. Based on information provided by COs in preparation for multi-country evaluations in RKLA 1, a reduction in the number of children deprived of parental care growing up in residential care institutions is noted in the following countries:

Azerbaijan, where the overall number of children growing up in residential care institutions reduced by 53% (from 21,000 to less than 10,000 between 2006 and 2012); Belarus, where the overall number decreased by almost 49% (from 11,660 in 2005 to 5,906 in 2012). More children are also being placed into family-based care, with the percentage having increased by 18% from 2005 to 2012; Bulgaria, where there the overall rate of separation of children from families is three times lower today as compared to in 1996 (in 1996, 1.5% of all Bulgarian children were placed in institutions, while at the end of 2012 it is 0.5%); Croatia, where the overall number of children growing up in institutions decreased by 51% between 2006 and 2011. In addition, the number of children under three years placed in social welfare institutions decreased by 36% from 2006 to 2011 and the number of children with disabilities placed in social welfare institutions decreased by 32% in the same period; Georgia, where the overall number of children growing up in institutions decreased by 89% (from 4,100 to 448 by mid-2012) and the overall rate of separation of children from their families reduced by 66%. In addition, this country can also report a 43% reduction of the number of children 0-3 in the state institutional care only since November 2012; In Moldova, where the overall number of children growing up in institutions decreased by 54% between 2007 and mid-2012; In Montenegro, where the overall number decreased by 29% between 2008 and 2012 while the number of children in kinship and non-kinship foster care increased by 38% between 2008 and 2012. In addition, in this country, as a result of concerted efforts to fight discrimination against children with disabilities, the number of children with disabilities attending day care centres for children with disabilities in their local communities as an alternative to institutionalization has increased four times between 2009 and September 2012 (from 30 to 120 children); In Romania between the year 2000 and end-2010, the overall number of children growing up in residential care institutions decreased by 60%, while the overall separation rates decreased by 24%. There is also a positive trend to rather place children separated by their families in family-like alternative services; In Turkey, where since 2005, 8,099 institutionalized children have been returned to their family as part of the ‘Back to family’ campaign which entails targeted benefits and support services to families of children deprived of parental care / at risk of separation. In addition, the annual number of children placed in foster care has doubled since 2005; In Serbia, where the overall number of all children and youth in residential care has decreased by 40% from 2005 (3,106) to 2011 (1,854). In the same period, the number of children and youth in foster care has increased by 83.5% (2005 – 3,006, 2011 – 5,515). In addition, the total number of children and youth with disabilities in residential care has decreased by 30% from 2005 (1,840) to 2011 (1,280). In the same period, the number of children and youth with disabilities in foster care has increased by 114% from 2005 (276) to 2011 (590). There has also been an important drop of children below 3 years in institutions, with a

---

Data is provided from relevant ministries in each respective country. Note that there is often a discrepancy with TransMONEE data, but the overall trend remains more or less the same regardless of the data source.
reduction of 54% since 2008; In Ukraine, where there has been a reduction by 26% in the abandonment/relinquishment of children at birth (from 2.52 per 1,000 children in 2007 to 1.86 per 1,000 in 2010);

As to outcome results MoRES Level 3, a number of gains can also be noted in the following areas and are thought to have contributed to some of the impact results above:

The enabling policy and legal environment for children was improved and aligned with international standards, for example in Ukraine, where there are two new strategies regulating the provision of social services to prevent institutionalization of socially vulnerable children and to deinstitutionalize the remaining 100,000 children. In Azerbaijan, the new Law on Social Services and its implementation strategy will help operationalizing further the child care reform. Likewise in Belarus, the Law on Social Services was revised to stipulate the provision of respite services for families rearing disabled children and social contracting. In Belarus also, amendments to national legislation also introduces foster care services for children under three and stipulates for community based support services for families. This will contribute to ending the placement of children under the age of three in institutions in this country. After many years of advocacy, Kazakhstan finally ratified the Hague convention on Inter-Country Adoption. Moldova is developing a new comprehensive strategy for Protection of families and children that will set new targets for child care reform. Croatia adopted a new Social Welfare Act that reintroduces Centres for Social Work to implement social policy at local level, simplifying procedures for administering social welfare benefits and introducing databases of potential foster and adoptive parents.

Improvements could also be noted in the governance of the systems supporting inter-sectorial work and coordination of reform efforts. For example in Ukraine the “Inter-Ministerial Commission for the Protection of Orphanhood” was re-established to serve as a basis for strategic policy making for children and families. While the ultimate goal of reform work in the region is to improve the rights of children to a family environment, this cannot be achieved without reforming some of the existing social protection services, diversifying the supply of new services and improving the quality and access to services for the most vulnerable groups. During the course of 2012, Serbia developed a model for de-institutionalization and, in parallel, designed standards for small group homes and inclusive foster care services. Also in Serbia, to support the implementation of the Social Welfare Law, by-laws were developed which earmarks funds transfers for community social services to the least developed communities. In Ukraine, the renewed political will for reform resulted in 12,000 new social workers being appointed to enhance social services for families and children. In Kazakhstan a model was developed in three regions to enhance gatekeeping systems to prevent new entries of children under 3 into the residential care and help move the child care system towards a child-oriented and multi-disciplinary system that works first and foremost to support families. In Bulgaria, foster care is reported to becoming well established and recognized as an alternative service for children without parental care. In Georgia, the transformation of the child care system continued at a rapid pace and there are no large-scale institutions left in the country. In Romania, progress was also made in strengthening the capacity of local authorities to identify and respond to vulnerabilities of children and families through the planning and provision of services to prevent family separation caused by abuse and neglect. Sustainability of results for children depends very much on budgetary reforms and predictable funding to sustain new services and support reforms.

While these results are being achieved, the experience in Romania shows how they can be fragile, even in an Upper MIC environment. Despite evidence on the impact of the economic crisis on vulnerable children and many joint advocacy efforts to protect budgets for children, it was not possible to leverage EU structural funds for scaling up preventive models of services something which leaves many vulnerable children, families and communities without much needed social protection services.

CHILD PROTECTION
Justice for Children: enabling justice systems to respect and protect child rights

The Juvenile Justice system’s reform in CEE/CIS is set in the wider context of Justice for Children, which also underlines the importance of ensuring that justice system reforms take into account children's access to justice.
In the Region, juvenile justice policies continue to mainly reflect punitive and discriminatory mind-sets. Deprivation of liberty is still the norm, periods of pre-trial detention often very long, and available alternatives to deprivation of liberty poorly used. Few laws, courts and professionals are fully specialized and able to provide a tailored response to each individual child. Violence in police and detention facilities, sometimes amounting to torture, is reported in many countries. Very little is done in terms of prevention and reintegration of children in conflict with the law. As a result of insufficient social work, released children go back to the exact same situation that brought them in conflict with the law. These circumstances combined together severely jeopardize children’s opportunity to fully re reintegrate in their communities. In addition, conflict with the law is often the result of exclusion, and the repressive responses by the justice system are regularly used where the actual solution would be of a social nature. Children of minority and lower income groups are more likely to be arrested, over-represented in juvenile justice systems, and even more so in detention. Their contact with the justice system often pushes them deeper into poverty and exclusion instead of supporting their (re)integration.

Nineteen of the 21 UNICEF offices in 2012 continued to bring juvenile justice systems in line with international standards through technical assistance to legislative and policy reforms, capacity building integrated within regular national training curricula, support to improved data collection and management, campaigns against the stigmatization of children in conflict with the law and the expansion of alternatives to deprivation of liberty.

In this context, UNICEF technical assistance for the establishment of specialized juvenile justice systems focusing on promoting a constructive, tailored response for each child, in which deprivation of liberty is a last resort and reintegration the ultimate aim, is already yielding results at impact MoRES Level 4 in many countries:

Increasing numbers of children benefited from alternatives to judicial proceedings and detention and from child-sensitive procedures. In Albania, with UNICEF support, probation services expanded to an additional 4 districts, now covering two thirds of the total. In 2012 a 10.5% increase in cases referred to alternatives to detention was recorded compared to 2011, thus expanding probation to 40% of the total juvenile caseload. In Azerbaijan, the diversion center received 17% more children than in 2011. In Turkey, 80 child courts are now operational, covering 51% of the children in conflict with the law going through courts. Probation orders for children are on a sharp increase and the number of children benefiting from individualized tailored support in detention has increased from 3% of children in prison in 2010 to 25%. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNICEF, in cooperation with the EU, has provided technical assistance to develop a juvenile justice law in line with international standards, as well as standard training tools that were integrated into the regular national training curricula. As a result of these legal amendments, capacity building efforts and new alternative, the duration of average pre-trial detention decreased from 50% of accused children spending more than 90 days in pre-trial detention in 2007 to 18% in 2011. Similarly, while 30% of child cases lasted over 6 months from complaint to indictment in 2008, this figure dropped to 10% three years later. Finally, none of the children who received mentoring support committed a new offence so far, a very positive result indicating a successful model for replication and expansion. In Montenegro, a comprehensive approach to juvenile justice system reform, including the introduction of mediation and other diversion schemes. 110 children were diverted from court proceedings through the use of victim-offender mediation in 2012 (from a baseline of 0 in 2010).

In spite of this general increase in numbers however, social support for children in conflict with the law remains weak in most countries and the interface between social work and justice will be reinforced in the coming years. In many countries, UNICEF also continued to promote the inclusion of child justice in overall justice sector reforms and rule of law agenda, including in its interaction with the EU. Important factors of success include a participatory, inclusive approach to the reforms including inter-sectoral involvement and public debates as well as the integration of juvenile justice work in broader justice sector reforms and rule of law agendas – a practice that UNICEF seeks to further promote in the Region. The Regional Office and nine countries carried out a first exploratory study on children’s access to justice in the region as a base for future work and advocacy with rule of law actors.
EDUCATION
A Child’s Right to Education: Early Learning and School Readiness

The key expected result in this RKLA is an increasing access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) services for the most marginalized children and improving the quality of ECE services. In 2012, the RO launched a regional initiative to advance children’s right to Early Learning and School Readiness services. Nineteen countries joined the initiative and have committed to working together to advance the common regional agenda in ECE.

Some results at impact and outcome MoRES Level 3 & 4 have begun to emerge:

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has the lowest preschool enrolment rate in Europe, preschool enrolment increased from 6 to 13% between 2006 and 2011 but remains extremely low (1.5% for Roma), therefore municipalities were supported to increase access for vulnerable families. IEC services in 13 communities (with outreach activities) will be mainstreamed as part of health services and include a strong focus on early identification of developmental delays; UNICEF also leveraged resources within the Federal strategy, for example, which foresees investments form Entity, Cantonal and Municipal levels. UNICEF supported a framework law on obligatory ECE which was adopted in 7 Cantons (only 3 missing). In Kosovo, the UNICEF supported assessment of ECD services in Kosovo Joined Hands-Better Future has been presented to the highest level of Kosovo decision makers. Consequently the Kosovo Assembly endorsed recommendations related to children’s rights to education, specifically related to ECD. In northern Kosovo community based ECD centres on the most marginalized children were established in rural areas which were previously not covered with early education programs. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the ECD law was identified as a key bottleneck for equal and inclusive access to ECD services. Technical expertise and advocacy by UNICEF led to the introduction of revisions in the law and by-laws: inclusion of diversified service provision, reference to the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) for work with children, new licensing, professional development, inspection, and record keeping based on ELDS. The evidence from UNICEF supported studies (Fair Play, and RECI) identified the current ECD funding formula as another bottleneck, as it is linked to existing kindergartens (KG) and other formal education infrastructure. UNICEF’s advocacy with municipalities has resulted in opening and maintaining the operation of ECD centres in Roma and rural communities as cost-effective models for service delivery to the most marginalized children. UNICEF advocacy with Government also influenced the plan for the opening new KGs in 2013 which will result in 24% increase in the number of KGs. In Kyrgyzstan, the 2012 Education Development Strategy has clear benchmarks for early education. UNICEF consolidated its lead as co-coordinating agency for the Global Partnership on Education (GPE), which will again be dedicated solely to ECD. Locations have been identified for new community-based kindergartens (CBK) and a phased timeline has been developed with work envisioned to start on more than 15 CBKs this year, serving at least 1,300 four- to six-year-old children. In Tajikistan, as a result of concerted advocacy efforts by UNICEF, the National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) 2020 and Medium Term Action Plan 2012-2014 outlines clear strategies to promote ECE, with a focus on increasing access, improving quality and building an enabling regulatory framework. UNICEF contributed directly to expanded access by supporting the establishment of 30 low-cost ECE models, with quality settings in four priority districts.

The Global Partnership on Education, International Step by Step Association, Open Society Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation were the key partners in the above achievements.

Common constraints and bottlenecks observed this year include: an overall lack of access to early learning services; Lack of awareness among parents about the importance of early learning and lack of communication mechanisms for spreading messages about its importance; gaps in political commitment and technical capacity in this area; lack of data and regulatory frameworks on early learning services: Information on participation in, and quality of, ECE services is limited because of weak monitoring and data management systems; Funding formulas

16 (SCR 1244)
for early learning services do not benefit those most in need: and children that would benefit most from pre-primary school remain those that have the least access to these services.

EDUCATION

A child’s right to education: Including all children out of school in quality learning

In 2012, within the RKLA ‘A child’s right to education: Including all children out of school in quality learning’, the Regional Office launched a Regional Education Initiative to include all Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in quality learning. The initiative focuses on two priorities: increasing the inclusiveness of education systems and closing equity gaps in learning by improving the quality of education systems. Sixteen country Offices joined the initiative, each undertaking national-level efforts aimed at removing key system-level bottlenecks causing exclusion in education. COs supported enhancing the quality of teaching and learning processes and making schools more child-friendly for the most marginalized children; improving data on OOSC, the management and coordination of related information; reducing discrimination; making schools more accessible for the most marginalized children and strengthening financing mechanisms to better support inclusion. These regional and country-level initiatives provide sharper focus on access to, and quality of, education for children with disabilities, over half of CEE/CIS Offices engaged in advancing inclusive education policies for children with disabilities.

In this key result area results at impact MoRES Level 4 include the following:

In Romania, a drive for social inclusion and equity was launched to reintegrate 400,000 children, mostly Roma children, who do not regularly attend school. Evaluation of the model implemented in 230 communities showed that the mobilization of schools, social workers, authorities and parents achieved significant results – with up to 60% of at-risk children remaining in school. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a longitudinal study showed in 2012 that the quality of teaching and the level of learning outcomes have improved since 2009. As a result of UNICEF’s technical expertise and capacity development efforts, 60% of all early grade teachers are trained on improved teaching methods for mathematics, in line with international good practices, and 40% on reading. The assessment shows that in schools that have been trained, student outcomes increased from 38% to 58% per cent between 2009 and 2012. In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), with UNICEF support, formally implemented in 2012 new quality standards for primary education. UNICEF also supported the MoNE to sensitize 70,000 school principals and teachers on the importance of child-friendly standards and increased their capacity to foster inclusive measures. In addition, the MoNE drafted a ground-breaking inclusive education proposal targeting Roma children and it introduced a new child friendly curriculum, benefiting 1,600,000 first graders. Barriers preventing the inclusion of children with disabilities were reduced in several countries. In Armenia, the Law on Education was amended to better reflect principles of inclusive education and ensure access of children with disabilities to regular schools. As mentioned above, in Montenegro, as a result of the ‘It’s About Ability’ campaign, the percentage of those who find it unacceptable that a child with disability goes to the same class with their child has fallen from 64% in 2010 to 39% in 2012, according to a KAP survey conducted in December 2012. The survey also reveals that 25% of the population have positively changed their behavior towards children with disabilities as a result of the campaign.

Outcome results at MoRES level 3 include:

In Kosovo, Municipal Action Plans supported by UNICEF for integrating Roma Ashkali Egyptian (RAE) in education in priority districts became fully operational with budgets allocated. As part of that work, a monitoring framework for out-of-school children was launched and an Action Plan for preventing drop-outs drafted. Efforts to improve the quality of education have led to improved standards, teaching methods and learning outcomes. In

17 (SCR 1244)
The draft ‘Child Friendly School’ standards were also finalized. In Azerbaijan, 300 schools are now certified as child-friendly, and over 1,000 more reached the first stage of certification. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 17% of secondary schools incorporated life-skills training in their curriculum, to improve youth employability.

The key partners supporting this RKLA at country level are the GPE, particularly in Moldova, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the World Bank, in the GPE countries and in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Serbia. UNESCO UIS was a close partner at regional level and in the countries that undertook studies of OOSC in 2011 and 2012 – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Romania and Turkey. UNICEF also collaborates with USAID, notably in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Peace Education) and now more frequently with the EC around the issue of Roma inclusion (in South-Eastern Europe). UNICEF collaborated with the EU in four countries on the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) studies – Serbia, Romania, Czech Republic and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. UNICEF Tajikistan collaborated with the Global Fund on a Life Skills Education Programme.

A number of COs reported **decentralization** as a major constraint to the implementation of policies - particularly inclusive education policies – adopted at national level. Social norms, discriminatory beliefs and refusal on the part of government to acknowledge evidence on education exclusion constitute major challenges to the acceptance of inclusive education by families and local political leaders. Capacity gaps in government, particularly in Central Asia, are also frequently mentioned as a major constraint, along with the instability of governments that continuously change. Inadequate budget allocations and declining education spending reduce the sustainability and scope of government programmes. The lack of data and information on marginalized groups of children is also a common barrier to implementation of government policies.

**HIV/AIDS AND CHILDREN**

**A Child’s Right to be Born HIV free**

Under this RKLA a number of Offices are working towards realizing the rights of all children to be born and remain HIV free, established a common framework to work in closer synergy toward achieving results. International experts confirm that PMTCT is the only area of HIV intervention in the Region where countries have achieved meaningful progress. Therefore, UNICEF in CEE/CIS in 2012 continued to focus its efforts to support regional progress toward the goal of **elimination of vertical HIV transmission**, specifically by strengthening national PMTCT programmes in Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

**Level 4 MoRES results** on HIV include reductions in HIV transmission from mothers to children. All countries in CIS are reporting systematic testing for HIV in ante-natal care settings and several countries, including Belarus and Kazakhstan, have reported significant decreases in HIV transmission to infants. Additional assessments/evaluations to document impact level results are planned for 2013 and 2014.

**Outcome results at MoRES level 3** include the integration of PMTCT interventions into MCH services as the main strategy for implementing nation-wide programmes. Several countries have adopted “universal opt-out HIV testing” and access to ARVs has been ensured through AIDS Centers. The main challenge to achieving true elimination of MTCT is to ensure the coverage of the remaining pockets of socially excluded populations. UNICEF has been working to design models of service provision that can reach drug-dependent pregnant women who are amongst the most stigmatized and excluded population groups. Working with other UN organisations and civil society partners (OSF, CHAI), UNICEF supported governments in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan to build service providers’ capacity at national and provincial level to introduce gender responsive comprehensive services which address specific needs of **pregnant women using drugs and their children**. The Regional Office collaborated with global experts to develop e-learning materials to train primary and referral level health care workers. As a result, for the first time comprehensive services models address the needs of female IDUs’ by integrating addiction, family planning, pregnancy, parenting and outreach services and will be evaluated in 2013.

---

18 (SCR 1244)
Increasing the numbers of young people who know their HIV status is a key prerequisite for reducing HIV transmission among young people in all countries of the Region. UNICEF supported partners on *HIV prevention, care and treatment for most at risk and socially excluded adolescents*. With support from the European Union (DG DEVCO) the capacity of over 200 CSO and government service providers in 5 countries were strengthened: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on effective approaches to increase access of most-at-risk adolescents (MARA) to confidential and anonymous HIV testing and counseling, as well as other health/social services. The Regional Office developed a web-portal featuring field-level experience from the seven countries which have developed policies and programmes on HIV prevention, care and support for MARA and other vulnerable adolescents. The on-line web portal provides access to personal stories of MARA, UNICEF and partner programming case studies and links to over 50 research reports, journal articles, guidance and tools to support effective programming approaches. The portal promotes inter-country exchange of experience in addressing the needs of younger cohorts of at-risk populations.

*Infections acquired in paediatric care settings* as a result of poor infection control have been the predominant mode of HIV transmission among children in Central Asia, with over 5,000 children diagnosed in the last six years. ‘Outbreaks’ of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) infection in children undergoing invasive medical procedures have also been reported but poorly documented. Improving infection control in health settings is a priority for governments. UNICEF, working with CDC, WB and EU/GIZ, is developing a comprehensive package for the prevention of HIV and blood-borne infections in pediatric health facilities. The package includes an interactive computer-based training platform for health workers, tools for ensuring uninterrupted supply of injecting commodities; communication materials on risks and prevention of blood-borne infections. The package will be piloted in paediatric hospitals and maternities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and evaluated in 2013. Cooperation with CDC also led to improved exchanges among health professionals on strengthening Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) of HIV in Central Asia. EID will contribute to survival of HIV-exposed infants, and is expected to help with obtaining accurate data on HIV transmission from mother to child in populations covered by PMTCT.

The Regional Office also partnered with the European Pediatric Network on Treatment of AIDS (PENTA) to bring the state-of-the-art training and build horizontal cooperation among networks of care providers in four Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan to upgrade their skills on managing HIV infections in children. UNICEF continued collaboration with the Eastern European and Central Asian Union of PLHA (ECUO) to empower Adolescents Living with HIV (ALHIV) to advocate for their rights and lead community actions. ECUO engaged national PLWH associations from 14 CEE/CIS countries, and the cooperation with UNICEF resulted in the strengthening of adolescent constituencies, mapping of services available to ALHIV and the establishment of the first on-line social network of ALHIV in the Region.

Lack of political will, widespread stigma and lack of data on the prevalence of drug use and drug dependency among pregnant women in CEE/CIS remain as key obstacles to scaling-up integrated effective service provision for the most excluded women and children, as this persistent stigma continues to push them to delay presentation at ANC services, thus increasing the level of care required when they do visit the center and decreasing their chances of delivering a healthy, HIV-negative baby. Furthermore, lack of access to ARVs of HIV-infected women and the associated high mortality rates from HIV-related causes, such as TB and HCV, are resulting in more and more children growing up without their mothers. Advocacy by UNICEF and partners to maintain focus on the most socially disadvantaged populations will be critical if further progress is to be made.

In terms of sharing knowledge and lessons across countries in 2012 the on-line web portal “Experiences from the Field,” documents UNICEF and partner programming in seven CEE/CIS countries and provides a wealth of information on good practices and lessons learnt over four years of programming for HIV prevention among most at risk adolescents. It represents an innovative approach to knowledge management for use in CEE/CIS and
bottlenecks analysis. A number of countries continued the implementation of innovative approaches and operational research to generate evidence and lessons learnt.

**Armenia**

Two RKLAs were developed in 2012 to further strengthen progress towards Child Survival and Development in the region. Regarding *Infant and Under 5 Mortality Reduction*, CEE/CIS Offices focused on preparing to document results achieved at impact MoRES level 4, through a multi-country evaluation which would also contribute to partners to translate system-level results into maternal and child health outcomes. The second RKLAs are looking at inter-sectoral approaches contributing to overall Young Child Wellbeing for children 0 to 3 which encompasses survival, health, development and protection. This leadership area contributes to regional advocacy and policy guidance for an equity-focused community nursing and home visiting approach - through capacity development, modeling of innovative approaches and operational research to generate evidence for scaling up.

Within these two RKLAs and to address the identified bottlenecks, UNICEF provided support to partners in the following areas: strategic planning and budgeting for the continuum of MCH services, strengthening of management for equity and quality health services, family and community care, and public health strengthening with particular focus on health communication and promotion, nutrition, WASH, and immunization.

All countries in the region except two joined the A Promise Renewed Initiative and initiated national dialogue for scaling-up progress towards reduction of preventable child deaths according to the 2035 target. Several Country Offices were supported by the Regional Office in national strategic planning for further reducing child mortality and improving child development. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan initiated the development of new strategic plans in the area of MCH. Analysis of inequities in Maternal and Child Health in Kazakhstan resulted in adjustments to the country programme and policy recommendations to the government. Tajikistan provided support to the MCH component of the national health strategy and initiated a bottlenecks analysis. A number of countries continued their efforts in achieving results in addressing critical bottlenecks in line with MoRES Level 3, particularly in the areas of improving quality of MCH services by implementing new standards and protocols (Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and implementing supportive supervision programmes (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan) which led to well-documented improvements in the quality of care.

In the area of Immunization, the focus in 2012 has been on closing the equity gap between countries, geographical areas and populations, strengthening the quality of, and access to, services, and improving demand and public trust through communication and advocacy. World Immunization Week, which has been observed in the region since 2005, has been used as a platform to increase public awareness and political commitment in all countries. MORES Level 3 results have also been achieved in sixteen countries which have reached financial sustainability, that is, all routine immunization spending is financed by the government. The remaining countries aim to continuously increase their contributions, although there are challenges in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Access to new vaccines has increased. Four countries are introducing pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines...
through GAVI, and six expressed interest to take part in the middle-income country new vaccine procurement initiative of Supply Division. Most countries have achieved middle-income status, thus only three GAVI-eligible countries are left in the region, although there are still needs in countries which GAVI considered as graduated.

In the area of Nutrition the regional partnership with the Flour Fortification Initiative and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and with the support of UNICEF Turkey CO resulted in 10 country Action Plans to strengthen institutional capacities in Ministries of Health and Agriculture in the area quality monitoring as well to build technical capacity of flour milling industry in quality control and quality assurance. Eight countries in the region are in the process of implementing cost-effective interventions to address anemia and Iron Deficiency Anemia and two countries (Moldova and Kosovo19) have adopted in 2012 the legislation on mandatory flour fortification with iron and folic acid, a major L3 result. On-going advocacy to adopt comprehensive national nutrition policies has resulted in four countries developing national nutrition strategies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkmenistan). Kyrgyzstan is the first country in the region to join the SUN Initiative (Scaling Up Nutrition) where the government and concerned ministries and agencies are pursuing a dedicated policy to improve the nutrition of the population, which already demonstrated encouraging results. A nutrition survey showed a 13.4% reduction in iron deficiency and a 12.1% reduction in iron deficiency anemia, a significant L4 result.

As several countries in the region achieved mature L3 results which translated into L4 results within the RKLA framework, preparatory work for a Multi-Country Evaluation of Progress in Reducing Infant and Under Five Mortality has been initiated in 2012. This evaluation will contribute to identifying best practices and lessons learned in addressing critical bottlenecks and inequities in access to the continuum of care for maternal and child health. The findings and recommendations will be used to further advocate key stakeholders for additional support and leverage funding for achieving further reductions of avoidable infant and child deaths in the region and globally as per the APR targets.

Work on strengthening UNICEF contribution to family and community empowerment was one of the major breakthroughs in support of Young Child Wellbeing in 2012. Findings from several assessments have established that opportunities to make a change for young children, particularly the most vulnerable ones, can be found in the countries’ community nursing and home visiting services, which in most cases are underutilized, inefficient, often of poor quality and lacking equity focus. As an initial step in building a regional strategic vision, a Regional Conference on Community Nursing and Home Visiting was organized by UNICEF which brought together international experts and 17 country delegations which developed a regional strategy to promote a blended model of home visiting: universal home visiting to all families with young children together with enhanced services for families and young children with additional vulnerabilities. The Regional Office and the Country Offices’ Reference Group on Young Child Wellbeing started developing a shared approach for advocacy, outlining policies, guidelines and capacity development to promote the transfer of lessons-learned and innovations.

Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkmenistan lead the way by carrying out innovative assessments of community nursing and home-visiting systems as well as of MCH center-based and out-reach consultative services, which already resulted in identifying and addressing critical bottlenecks, and in some instances in L3 MoRES system level changes. More than half of the country offices were engaged in activities to strengthen ECD and parenting capacities. Four countries (Belarus, Croatia, Turkey and Turkmenistan) established inter- and intra-sectorial national councils and working groups on young child wellbeing, while in seven countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan) child development and protection concerns during the early years are being integrated into health sector responsibilities. Kyrgyzstan provided child development information to families in combination with Gulazyk, reaching 70% of children between 6-24 months. Croatia established an Early Childhood Counseling Center with a 24-hour parenting helpline that is reaching parents across Croatia. Eight countries (Albania, Azerbaijan, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey, and Turkmenistan) are working on various components of helping children with developmental difficulties live their lives with dignity and with the necessary

---

19 (SCR 1244)
opportunities to develop. Turkey is also modeling its approach of developmental pediatrics in the region and has conducted tours of its program for country delegations, as well as advising several governments in the region on the introduction of developmental pediatrics.

The Regional Office is currently developing new partnerships to support the two RKLAs of Health and Young Child Wellbeing. Agreement was reached with WHO Euro to develop a regional partnership in support to the UNSG Strategy Every Woman Every Child, the A Promise Renewed and the new Regional Health 2020 Strategy: A Central Asia collaborative platform on Every Woman Every Child and APR is also being developed, jointly with WHO, UNFPA, WB, USAID and several other donors. The RO is also exploring possibilities to support horizontal cooperation in the region, looking particularly into enhancing partnership and leveraging support with emerging regional donors, such as the Russian Federation and Turkey.

POLICY ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

A Child’s Right to Social Protection

The 2012 Regional Social and Economic Policy Network reinforced the ‘compact’ between the Regional Office and Country Offices to achieve results under the RKLA ‘A Child’s Right to Social Protection’. Common bottlenecks identified in the region that impact the realization of children’s right are: (i) Governments can control the distributive effects of crises and who bears the brunt; however, across the region the recent global crisis has accelerated moves from basic universal benefits to narrow targeting of social programmes, which poses risks of excluding the most vulnerable children; (ii) pensions continue to absorb the largest part of social protection spending, limiting availability of funds for programmes benefitting children directly; UNICEF needs to monitor the impact of this spending on children; (iii) cost reduction to generate saving in programmes for children should be reviewed across sectors to ensure that efficiency gains are invested in the most vulnerable; (iv) while many countries have institutionalized child poverty monitoring within national systems, a number of countries are still in the process and require systematic support from UNICEF in the short term. To this end, partnerships were reenergized with the WB (Human Resource Development for Eastern Europe and Central Asia) and the IMF.

The creation of the RKLA Reference Group for Children's Right to Social Protection was an important step towards supporting knowledge sharing and documenting UNICEF’s value added for overcoming systems failure in guaranteeing this right to all children. Based on a Concept Note drafted by the Regional Office, nine CO members of the RG (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) are now regularly sharing their own experience and identifying successful strategies and lessons. They committed to work together to articulate multi-sectoral and integrated approaches for social protection, adopt a common framework for monitoring and tracking progress in achieving the results to which UNICEF contributes, take stock at country level of available information and data on the changes in the bottlenecks and possibly also on the impact of social protection on children, agree on a common set of available indicators and sources of data that will be monitored over time across the region, generate knowledge products to document progress made and to share successful strategies on a regular basis, within the region and beyond. They also provide guidance to other Country Offices not part of the Reference Group.

Results at Outcome MoRES Level 3 were recorded in 2012 in countries with longer experience in supporting reforms of social protection systems. In Albania, UNICEF modeled a system of social protection to offer tailor-made solutions for each specific child case, with potential benefits across a wide range of social sector issues, and subsequent advocacy lead to the adoption of a roadmap for reforming of the national social care system, aimed at introducing “case management” function of social workers and engaging NGOs. In Armenia, a model of inclusive services for most disadvantaged enabled significant progress in Social Protection and Child Protection. UNICEF engaged strategically in Ukraine to foster complex inter-sectoral changes, including through Public Financial Management reforms, to achieve better alignment of services redirecting resources to more efficient community-
based services, drawing lessons from past mistakes of fragmented small-scale or unsustainable donor-supported initiatives. In Serbia, UNICEF successfully provided evidence-based advocacy, leading to a new law on Social Welfare; supported the development of more child-focused indicators of social protection to strengthen national monitoring system for the delivery of social benefits; and introduced one of the most innovative and promising practices to leverage resources for the most vulnerable children through partnership with the private sector in the support to Roma Health Mediators, contributing to achieving significant progress in health-related indicators for Roma children, according to MICS4 reports.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina around 3.3% of GDP is spent on Social Protection, more than twice the average for Eastern and Central Europe. However, 27% of the budget allocations is “captured” by the richest 20% of the population and only 5% of the poorest quintile receive some kind of cash assistance. The major identified bottlenecks are: a highly fragmented configuration, disparities in availability, accessibility and budgetary allocations; poor targeting of social assistance and status-based cash benefits allocation; lack of competencies and resources of the centers for social work. Based on solid evidence, UNICEF has supported legal reforms design of Social Protection laws in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to harmonize benefits for all children and coordination and referral at local level which resulted in the establishment of 26 official Social Protection and Inclusion Municipal Commissions (18% of total municipalities) with the mandate to identify and address the needs of most vulnerable children; as well as the adoption and implementation of Municipal Action Plan on Social Protection in 34 municipalities (supporting children with disabilities, for example); and the leveraging resources with an increased budgets for Social Protection in 17 municipalities.

A notable innovation in 2012 was UNICEF supported mapping of social services in Albania resulting in the identification of 108 geo-tagged locations covering a total population of about 15,000. This has helped the government to build a profile of Roma communities - including persons receiving social assistance, out-of-school children, distance to and participation in pre-schools - so as to identify the scope of interventions needed and the corresponding accountability, making the process of social inclusion more manageable for local governments. As the information is publicly available (on a Ministry website supported by UNICEF), anyone can see and demand action (or accountability) from the relevant authorities. In Kosovo, UNICEF's real-time monitoring has shown that repatriated children, mostly belonging to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) population, face a high risk of poverty, high levels of statelessness, suffer from mental health problems and lack social support networks. The education, health and social protection system are failing to provide access to basic education, to benefits and to psycho-social support. The Country Office continues to support monitoring how these children are doing back in Kosovo; support education reform to address the specific causes of drop-out and barriers to participation in pre-school, primary and lower secondary education of RAE, including repatriated children; support to planning and budgeting of additional measures to address specific needs of repatriated children.

UNICEF continued to contribute to the work of the Council of Europe on issues related to Roma Education, and strengthened the partnership with OHCHR Regional Office for Europe to promote the rights of Roma children. A Roma Colloquium, hosted by the Italian Government and co-organized by OHCHR and UNICEF, brought together representatives of EU Member States and non-EU countries, several Roma activists, Roma NGOs, all on equal standing to discuss without inhibitions fundamental questions and audacious, taboo subjects, such as the limits of de-segregation, the benefits of affirmative actions and targeted approaches under specific circumstances, the situation of urban ghettos, the necessity of critical distance from certain aspects of traditional Roma culture, and the challenges of balancing Roma "elite representatives" with bottom-up active citizenship for each individual. In 2012, UNICEF offices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro continued to step up their efforts to monitor and address the disparities faced by Roma children, with support from the Regional Office.

**Leveraging resources** for children is most relevant in MICs, but also to protect social expenditures from fiscal consolidation. Turkmenistan’s large reserves of natural gas and fiscal revenues, and progress towards bringing the legal frameworks in line with international standards and building national capacity, in particular in the areas of

---

20 (SCR 1244)
mother and child primary health care, access to quality of education, and ECD, makes it a good candidate for achieving results for children with equity at scale in the near term. Thus, UNICEF developed a financial plan for scaling up ECD investment, in support of advocacy for greater budget allocations to programme priorities demonstrated internationally to have the highest return for children and promote equity. In Albania, UNICEF leveraged EU funding for children of migrant families left behind, a group identified as particularly vulnerable, to ensure their access to Social Protection cash benefits and support services. In Tajikistan, UNICEF supported partners to analyze potential impacts on children and women of worsening economic conditions and budget cuts under an IMF adjustment programme, and advised on protecting social spending of greatest relevance for poor families and marginalized children in the event of economic shocks.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The region increasingly recognizes the growing impact the environmental risks are having on the achievement of the MDGs, especially those related to health, education and protection of children in the region and the longer-term regional priorities. The RKLA Disaster Risk Reduction therefore provides a unique opportunity to put in place systems which will allow relevant country offices, in collaboration with Regional Office, to develop specific indicators and milestones against which progress in reducing disaster risks to children could be tracked.

In support of this RKLA the Regional Office furthered its alliance with ECHO to advance the DRR agenda with focus on Central Asia and South Caucasus integrating DRR into the education sector. In an external evaluation (covering the countries in Central Asia and South Caucasus), the programme was found highly relevant as it addressed priority areas under Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, which is a global blueprint for reducing disaster risks. With a strong focus on education, the programme reached school children, teachers and other school staff at local level and policy makers within the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Emergency/Emergency Department Situations at national level. In September 2012, additional support was secured from USAID/OFDA to broaden on-going DRR efforts in South Eastern Europe in implementing DRR at national and community level. This resulted in the number of countries implementing DRR activities growing from one in 2007 to ten in 2012.

Given the number of disasters caused by natural hazards and the impact on children, several Offices in the region have successfully supported governments with mainstreaming DRR in the education sector. For example, several countries in Central Asia and South Caucasus support governments’ Education Thematic groups to coordinate the component activities within the DRR National Platform. In addition, DRR concerns were incorporated into the education curriculum, promoting school disaster management and school safety. Building upon the methodology for nationwide benchmarking of school safety that was designed under guidance of the RO and conducted in Kyrgyzstan in 2011, UNICEF supported national authorities and enabled the Government of Kyrgyzstan to present their experience at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in October 2012.

4. Management and Operations

4.1 Overview of achievements during 2012 against 2012-13 ROMP and 2012 Annual Work Plan

Using the ROMP 2012-2013 as a basis for progress assessment, the key results achieved against the 2012 RO workplan are categorised in the following pages by Programme, Development Effectiveness and Management.

In 2012, the main focus of the RO under PCR Programmes was the roll-out of the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA), and the incorporation of the MoRES methodology in the RKLA as the main component for the analysis of the determinants of child rights deprivations. The RO intensively supported the use of MoRES to identify the most severe and common system bottlenecks to the advancement of children’s rights in across sectors. The profile of barriers and bottlenecks is being developed for the ‘right to education: including all children out of school in quality learning’, with particular attention to Roma children and Children with
Disabilities (RKLA 4); for the ‘right to be born HIV free’ (RKLA 5); for ‘child rights to health: infant and U5 mortality’ (RKLA 6); and for ‘child rights to social protection’ for the reduction of exclusion, poverty and disparities (RKLA 8). Such analyses have already enabled greater consolidation and focus of approaches in a number of areas. It is anticipated that further documentation and analysis of country level approaches will continue to reveal innovations and effective strategies, including collaboration with local and regional partners.

Under the **PCR Development Effectiveness**, the RO facilitated access to top-quality technical assistance, throughout the year, serving as catalyst for advancing country programmes. In 2012, there have been several actions taken by the RO to help Offices to strengthen their programme cooperation, particularly through in-country technical support to priority Country Offices focused on the MoRES roll out, with special attention placed on the 13 Offices which are preparing Mid-Term Review in 2012 and 2013. A wide range of support was provided to these offices, both off-site and on-site with focus on strengthening the documentation of progress, key results, lessons learned and analysis, including the quality of planning for research (especially SITANs). With the support of the RMT, the RO developed a robust agenda for multi-country evaluations to be undertaken in 2013.

Some further examples to the RO support to the COs include RO support to develop government counterparts’ capacity to improve the quality of Early Childhood Education services through a High Level Technical Consultation, and by supporting the coordination of the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) initiative to increase knowledge generation and advocacy efforts toward improving access to early learning for Roma children; also in the Inclusive Education RKLA, technical assistance was provided to advance country-level work on including all out of school children in quality learning; the Position Paper on the Right to Education for Children with Disabilities provided technical guidance to COs on how to approach improvement of education for children with disabilities; likewise, in the Disaster Risk Reduction RKLA the RO provided in-country and remote support for Determinant Analysis and convened a regional consultation to discuss emergency risks analysis and scenario building for emergency risk countries, as well as on-site preparedness planning for country teams.

Strengthened consensus and commitment from governments, UN agencies and multilateral organisations on key regional programme strategies and result are accelerating progress at country programme level throughout the region, through the invigoration of regional partnerships by the RO. For example, in regional fora such as APEC and the MDG4 Forum the RO helped to obtain the signature of almost all countries to APR (RKLA 6); the Ministerial Conference in Bulgaria secured strong political commitment from 24 countries towards accelerating work in child care reform and ending the placement of children under three in institutions (RKLA 1); political momentum among 19 countries is expanding access to early learning services around the regional ECE initiatives (RKLA 3); a new alliance with OHCHR is promoting the rights of Roma children out of school, complementing and reinforcing the existing partnership with the Council of Europe (RKLA 8); the Inter Agency Standing Committee for the Caucuses and Central Asia is assuring adequate progress, in 2013. A wide range of support was provided to these offices, both off-site and on-site with focus on strengthening the documentation of progress, key results, lessons learned and analysis, including the quality of planning for research (especially SITANs). With the support of the RMT, the RO developed a robust agenda for multi-country evaluations to be undertaken in 2013.

Horizontal cooperation, including knowledge sharing and exchange of know-how and technology, is gathering momentum and influencing the adoption by partners of proven approaches to tackle equity gaps and rights violations. Multi-country consultations with regional partners are helping to advance, for example, the adoption of specialised juvenile justice systems and overall justice sector reforms (RKLA 2); the implementation of effective child development approaches that reduce exclusion and drive improvements in service quality (RKLA 4); and links with centers of excellence are feeding technical exchange on paediatric AIDS in CIS (RKLA 5).

Innovation derived from research and analysis generated through the RO facilitated the application of new technologies and better informed policy advocacy positions by country programmes, including early learning initiatives that are providing new insights and evidence on the barriers that impede young children’s access to early learning (RKLA 3); seminal studies and analyses of Out Of School Children in four CEE/CIS countries are now driving OOSCA initiatives at country level (RKLA 4); new conceptual frameworks on effective service
provision models for excluded populations at risk of HIV are informing MARA programming and contributing to global learning (RKLA 5); and new research and analysis are helping addressing underlying and structural causes and barriers to the realization of children’s and women’s rights to social protection (RKLA 8).

The RO continuously looks for emerging opportunities for more strategic collaboration with governments and inter-governmental organisations at regional level. In 2012, potential modalities of collaboration with Croatia, the Russia Federation, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Romania and Bulgaria were reviewed. Each country has fast changing programme environments, relatively high GNI per capita and increasing geo-strategic importance. The RO is considering new, effective and value-adding strategies to address major elements of the ‘unfinished’ Child Rights Agenda in the six countries, with particular focus on excluded children and the social determinants and bottlenecks to close equity gaps, but to also leverage the political and financial influence of these countries for the benefit of children across the region and beyond.

In 2012, the RO engaged in a process of reflection with the RMT and country offices on the use by CEE/CIS COs of UNICEF’s modest allocation of core resources. On this basis, the RO established a medium-term ‘optimisation plan’, which aims to progressively re-organise the allocation of core resources to fund specific roles and function that are needed to sustain an active and relevant engagement for UNICEF at country level. Over the past year, the realignment of the use of the ‘envelope’ of core resources has focused mainly on the 13 COs undertaking MTRs and is being managed through the Regional PBR.

The availability of adequate data on child wellbeing is a major concern in CEE/CIS because, in many cases, data are not disaggregated sufficiently to allow proper equity gap analysis. To counter these situations, the RO continued to support MICS in eight countries in 2012. The results, which include information -- disaggregated by sex and in some countries by ethnicity -- on HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviour and other socio-economic aspects of life (not traditionally collected by MICS), are informing policy advocacy on inequities and social exclusion, including among Roma children. In addition, the RO continued to enhance TransMonEE database, by including new sex-disaggregated data in the area of child protection, juvenile justice and social protection and by validating and standardizing the database with the TransMonEE network of national statisticians, thus forging closer ties with other data sources, such as EuroStat. In terms of new cooperation on data, the RO is also working with DG Justice to strengthen availability of data on juvenile justice in EU member states.

UNICEF in CEE/CIS places a high value on the generation and sharing of knowledge and it constitutes the main vehicle through which the RO will strengthen strategic the effectiveness of evidence-based advocacy, partnerships and alliances, external relations, social and resource mobilization. Strategies include the thorough documentation of good practices in supporting system changes and the active sharing of innovations, lessons learned and all the knowledge generated, across countries in order to establish the basis for facilitating horizontal cooperation. To this end, a special effort was made in 2012 to ensure that the M&E function, regionally and at country level, was strengthened and that multi-country evaluations were ready for implementation in 2013. Funding has been secured for five multi-country evaluations, which are the first attempt in UNICEF to assess achievements using the MoRES determinant analysis framework across a number of countries. The successful generation and sharing of knowledge will contribute to the acceleration of results for children, by enabling UNICEF partners to identify better strategies and solutions to sustain and scale up services for excluded children.

The RO made a concerted effort to systematize knowledge management, in particular the commissioning and dissemination of publications. Publications such as the situation of children in state-run orphanages were designed with a specific advocacy event objective. The RO also developed a concrete schedule for the prioritization of publications in 2013, designed to support evidence-based advocacy around the RKLA. This was also supported by moves to upgrade and focus on web-based knowledge management platforms. A new RO Russian language website was launched.
Under Communication and Advocacy, the RO extended monitoring further into Russian language media. KAP surveys were undertaken in three countries, as part of the introduction of new vaccines. A regional survey was undertaken of anti-vaccine activities online. Programmatic support was provided for C4D, both at a regional and country level. All countries are now undertaking C4D activities. The RO supported youth voice activities in seven countries through the one-minute junior project and the Young People’s Media network and social media in all 22 countries. Advocacy and partnerships were well supported, in particular the high level conferences on the ending of placements of children under three in institutions and the regional HAC launch.

Under the PCR Management, the RO management coordinated governance, oversight, quality assurance, technical assistance, advocacy and strategic engagement, and used a number of regional and regional office committees to this effect. The RO initiated a process of reviewing the terms of reference and composition of all regional and regional office committees with the view of streamlining the number of committees and ensuring more effective functioning of the statutory committees. This review is underway and will be completed before the finalization of the 2014-17 RO Management Plan.

The principal regional governance mechanism, the Regional Management Team, met twice during 2012, in May and in November, with the focus on prioritizing the work of the organization in the region through the regional knowledge and leadership agenda (RKLA). An improved follow-up mechanism to keep track of progress made in implementing the RMT decisions was introduced in 2012. The preparation of the RMTs continues to be a collaborative inclusive process. In between meetings, the RMT and the Regional Staff Association, have been regularly informed of key global discussions, including through feedback by the Regional Director from the discussions in the Global management Team (GMT). Following agreement in the RMT, ten Reference Groups, each chaired by a Country Representative, were established to take forward the work on the regional knowledge and leadership agenda (RKLA). This has created an important momentum of shared ownership in a common regional agenda and regional priorities.

At the Regional Office level, the Regional Office Management Team (ROMT) met only a few times in 2012 given the focus and emphasis of the ROMT on operations as evidenced by its composition. For discussions and decisions related to more substantive and programmatic issues, a weekly meeting of Section Chiefs was instituted. The Regional Office Team Work Weeks which were instituted in December 2011, were successfully continued throughout the year. In 2012 the Regional Office had a total of seven TWWs (January, February, April, June, August, September and December) coinciding with key moments in the year. The teamwork weeks have enabled the development of a more coherent and commonly shared understanding of the priorities among all RO staff. The TWWs – together with the introduction of the RKLA – have led to greatly improved coherence within the RO leading the way away from sectorial “silos” to a more coherent and strategic regional positioning and guidance.

The RO has in 2012 continued to promote flexible arrangements among offices to manage risk and gain efficiencies. These include within-country processing centers in Georgia (Tbilisi processes for Sukhumi), Kosovo21 (Pristina for Zvecan), Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek for Osh), and Kazakhstan (Astana on behalf of the RO the zone office in Almaty); as well as multi-country processing centers: there has been some discussion about scaling up a sub-regional processing facility in Central Asia, most likely in Uzbekistan, to handle an agreed basket of transactions on behalf of other offices. In addition CEE/CIS make intense use of mentoring and Peer Reviews: with the RO coordinating this programme and facilitating of inter-office peer reviews.

Some specific examples of cost-savings coordinated across the region by the RO include the following:

- **Video-Conferencing:** All offices, including zone offices in Almaty, Osh and Sukhumi, are equipped and now use VC as a matter of routine.
- **Skype** is now used by all Operations Managers and increasingly other staff in COs and within the RO.
- **Piloting the procurement of on-line airline tickets** in the RO necessitated the issuance of credit cards to be assigned to each unit. UNICEF’s Geneva banker issued ten cards in late 2012 and, beginning 2013 after the

21 (SCR 1244)
SOPs have been finalised and staff trained, the RO will incorporate on-line procurement as an option to using the travel agency. This pilot will test the assumption that on-line ticket procurement will lead to significant cost savings without a corresponding increase in risk exposure.

- **Rental reduction** by moving from commercial premises to government-provided renovated premises in Sofia, and a 10% reduction in rental in Skopje and 9.4% in Kiev following reassessments of the local real estate market and renegotiations with premises owners.
- **Frequent flyer award points** collected to an office account in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will result in $1,000 per annum from tickets procured with points.
- **Procurement of restricted air tickets** instead of full-fare tickets, saving $37,000 in the process;
- **Bank charge renegotiation** resulted in a waiver of fees in Moldova and savings of at least $5,000 per annum, and a 60% reduction in fees in Romania;
- **A hybrid vehicle** in Montenegro reduced fuel outlays by 40% (projecting a positive ‘green’ UNICEF image)
- **Negotiating longer-term ISP agreements** to obtain a 25% cost reduction in Turkey, savings $13,000;
- **Using UNDP’s tendering** to obtain advantageous vehicle pricing, thus saving $20,000 in Turkmenistan.

The extent to which governments and other partners avail themselves to Procurement Services remains limited in CEE/CIS. The region carries only a 3% share of global supplies received. In a region comprised of 19 MICs (of which two are EU member states) and only two LICs, reliance on Procurement Services needs to be compared with national procurement processes and mechanisms that to one degree or another may meet international procurement standards. Procurement Services that are contracted primarily concern vaccines/biologicals and pharmaceuticals. Of these, ARV medication and related products are prominent. This is crucial in countries where, according to Supply Division estimates, only 20% of children below 15 have access to ARV therapy.

Using the results of the 2011 Global Staff Survey as a framework for action, during 2012 Human Resources supported the RO and COs to focus on improving specific staff issues: work/life balance, career/professional development, knowledge sharing and internal communication, and office efficiency. By the end of 2012, the staff survey results have been discussed with staff in all offices, including though the JCC and each office has developed related action plans to address locally prioritised issues. Examples of actions included the organisation of workshops on ‘Managing Performance for Results’; a stronger emphasis on staff development during performance appraisal; the identification of options for flexible working; ‘no meetings days; sharing of knowledge and experience; and the active encouragement of staff to discuss their concerns with trusted colleagues, member of the staff association or a Peer Support Volunteer (PSV). UN Cares (i.e. initiatives on HIV/AIDS in the workplace) was also supported by the RO and both COs and the RO can now avail of trainers and regular briefings. PSVs continue to assist staff in each country office across the region and the Global Staff Well-Being Unit and its Staff Counsellors also offer guidance and support.

A survey conducted by the RO among Country Offices indicated significant and growing experience of inter-office exchange of programme staff. Over 20 cases of temporary exchange of staff were recorded, ranging from the short-term deployment of staff to exchange advice, know-how or technology (for example, the deployment of the Communication for Development Specialist from Azerbaijan to Georgia), to extended missions that incorporate the generation of specific programme analyses (e.g. the deployment of the Economic and Social Policy Officers from Turkmenistan to Kyrgyzstan). This type of cooperation and exchange beyond borders is systematically encourages as an instrument for further career development and sharing limited resources and expertise across the region.

### 4.2. Oversight function and oversight-related accountabilities

In accordance with the UNICEF Risk Management Policy (CF/EXD/2009-006), and in preparation of the 2014-17 ROMP, in 2012 the Regional Office reviewed the nature and significance of risks impacting on the achievement of the objectives of the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda as well as the fulfillment of its core accountabilities. Issues across five risk categories (namely Organisational Strategy and Neutrality, Result-Based Management and Reporting, Funding and External Stakeholder Relations, Natural Disaster and Epidemics,
Governance and Accountability) were identified. During the self-assessment process, the effectiveness of internal controls to address each risk was identified within a risk management framework that clarified risk management practices by the RO in each area.

The RMT is the main mechanism by which feedback was provided by Representatives to the Regional Director and the Deputy Regional Director on the oversight and advisory support provided by the Regional Office. The “Representatives only” sessions are held at each RMT among Representatives, RD and DRD only to facilitate frank feedback and dialogue. In 2012, feedback from Country Offices included the suggestion to develop a common regional office position on key advocacy and programme issues, in order to ensure consistency and coherence of advice from the RO. Improving documentation and follow-up to recommendations from RO field visits were also recommended. These were addressed in the RO staff meetings as well as in meetings of the RO Management Team (which includes all Section Chiefs).

The Regional Office has in 2012 introduced a new tool to monitor Country Office programme and operations performance -- the Monthly Monitor. This report, which is shared with COs and among RO staff, evaluates nine performance areas, namely: (i) Core Resources Management (Allocation & Utilisation), (ii). Donor Reporting; (iii). Grants Expiring, (iv). DCTs; (v) Audit Observations; (vi) Premises; (vii) Regional Contingency Fund; (viii) Travel (for the RO, only); and, (ix) Outstanding Budgetary Obligations (for the RO, only). The introduction of The Monthly Monitor mid-2012 significantly improved the RO’s ability to track trends on agreed indicators in a consolidated format. Once the VISION Regional Dashboard is released, the RO envisages this source of information will complement The Monthly Monitor.

Regarding weaknesses in operations management which have been identified in COs, a prominent one facing several Country Offices is the unpredictability of OR funding, coupled with minimum RR ceilings and limited Institutional Budget allocations. In 2012, the region began the process of realignment of core resources to core roles to ensure that the region’s core mission would be maintained even in the event of OR funds fluctuation.

VISION has placed an important additional workload and stress on the small Offices that typify the Region, and have raised the risk exposure to Offices as a whole. UNICEF has now embarked on a global transaction efficiency and effectiveness exercise that it is hoped will lower the risk exposure and foster greater efficiencies, however VISION remains overly complex, for example one striking weakness is the inability to see the continuum of transactions once a step in the process has been taken (e.g. travel). The continuation of SME functions for at least another year will be critical to address these issues.

OIAI audits identified some high priority issues during 2012. One relates to interpretations of differing accounting standards between the EU and UNICEF on cutoff dates after which expenditures cannot be made. Although this is an issue that in large part must be resolved at the global level, it does have applicability for all CEE/CIS offices receiving EU funding. Other OIAI observations focused on HACT assurance activities and, in particular, the restrictions to reviewing government financial records. Similar to the EU issue above, the observation has relevance beyond the country from which the audit observation was derived, and it should be discussed with other UN agencies which do not apply HACT in their offices.

The 2012 Country Office Annual Reports has undergone another year of adjustment with the adoption of the Results Assessment Module (RAM) tool, which followed the introduction of significant modifications in the Annual Report guidelines, first with the ARs becoming public, then with the introduction of the web-based portal, the Equity Tracker and also the Programme Strategies self-assessment. In order to assess the quality of Annual Report over time it would be advisable to reflect on all these new tools and standards to analyse globally how the Annual Reports now provide the information that the organisation needs. In the case of CEE/CIS, it was noted that the Programme Strategy section offers the best opportunity to ‘tell the story’ about UNICEF contribution to results for children, but COs are not required to complete section, unless they have undertaken an MTR. This section of the Annual Report could be further developed and tailor-made to different country environments, as programme strategies are similar across offices but they may be carried out differently in different development context, depending on the role that UNICEF is called to play.
5. Evaluations, Research, Studies, Surveys and Publications Completed in 2012

Please refer to Annex III for a list all studies, surveys and evaluations which were completed by the Regional Office in 2012, as well as other publications issued during the year.

Assessment of the Evaluation Function in the Region

**Multi-country evaluations.** As part of the RKLA, the RMT launched five multi-country evaluations to assess the extent to which: (a) observed reduction of child rights violations and reduction equity gaps in a certain number of countries are due to changes in the systems (assessment to be based on the MoRES determinant analysis framework); and (b) UNICEF, through its core roles, contributed to these changes. The evidence generated by these evaluations will inform UNICEF engagement in these key result areas. These multi-country evaluations are the first attempt in UNICEF to assess achievements following the MoRES determinant analysis framework across a number of countries, and led through a HQs/RO/COs ‘compact’.

Funding has been secured for each of these evaluations, due to take place in 2013. All the evaluations are supported by a Reference Group, led by a UNICEF Representative and with participation of all relevant COs and Regional Advisors. In HQ, Evaluation Office and Programme Division are consulted at each key step of the evaluation process. The evaluations will be managed as per the regional evaluation management process (see below for further details) and will cover the following areas: (i) Child’s Right to Family Environment (ii) Justice for Children: enabling justice system to respect and protect child rights (c) Children’s right to early learning and school readiness (d) Children’s right to education: including all children out of school in quality learning (e) Children’s right to health: reducing IMR and U5MR. Synergies with corporate evaluation activities as per the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be sought whenever relevant.

**Strengthening the M&E function.** At corporate level, expectations related to the M&E function have evolved considerably with the refocus on equity and the MoRES approach. In CEE/CIS there are high expectations related to the M&E function to support the RKLA (multi-country evaluation, impact evaluations of Pilots, joint evaluations) and the strengthening of national child rights M&E systems. On the basis of existing resources and challenges to be met, the RO has drafted a plan (under discussion) including four main components to be taken together for the M&E function to be meaningfully strengthened and enabled to fulfill its expected core role in the transformed UNICEF engagement in CEE/CIS. These components include partnerships with a network of high-level of technical expertise (national M&E capacities strengthening, evaluation methodology, statistics and survey methodologies); opportunistic use of upcoming vacancies to systematically re-profile the M&E posts; talent mapping of existing capacities, skills and technical knowledge in COs; additional M&E support at RO level.

In this context, the RO organized a consultation with the M&E colleagues during the course of the Regional M&E network meeting to frame the evolving M&E profiles. The RO is also reviewing the M&E function in terms of job profiles, reporting lines, levels and sources of funding. This reflection process already led to the creation of a new generic Job profile at the NOC level with responsibilities for child right M&E. The last PBR agreed to the creation of posts with this profile in Romania and Bulgaria.

**Quality assurance** of evaluation is supported by a Regional M&E Facility whose utilization is mandatory since 2010. As at the end of 2010 the level of utilization was rather low, the RO throughout 2011 monitored closely the implementation of annual IMEPs to ensure to the extent possible a timely use of the Regional Facility, which led to an increased utilization of the facility (from 20% in 2010 to 100% for draft TORs and from 41% of draft evaluation reports reviewed in 2011 to 58% in 2012). The RO was able for the first time in 2012 to undertake a comparative analysis of draft and final report for 2011, which showed that the review of draft evaluation reports

---

22 As per January 2012 EO list of evaluations
led systematically to an improved quality of the final evaluation report rated by Global Evaluation Report and Oversight System (GEROS), and that those which were not reviewed ended up with the worst ratings. This confirms the value-added of embedded in all evaluation processes an independent review of evaluation reports at the regional level before their finalization.

On the other end, a comparative analysis of TOR quality between 2011 and 2012 shows no substantial improvement despite provision of detailed TOR templates to COs and inclusion of an extensive session on TORs during the last 2 M&E network meeting. Further analysis to understand and to address remaining challenges will be a priority in 2013. It seems clear that, while the Regional M&E Facility is a valid tool to improve the quality of evaluations, more is required to bring overall quality of evaluation to the right level. Indeed, overall the proportion of satisfactory report final evaluation reports as per GEROS improved from 20% in 2010 to 40% in 2011. The efforts made to engage in more complex evaluations combined with current low levels of national evaluation capacities and limited evaluations budgets available largely explain continuous challenges to improving the overall quality of evaluations substantially.

The feedback provided by the facility on the draft TOR enabled the RO to identify a number of issues affecting the quality of evaluations overall and is progressively tackling them with concerned COs. The RO has also taken advantage of the RMTs and the Deputy Representatives meetings to engage openly with COs on the issues of evaluation quality and worked regularly with M&E colleagues at the country level to tackle some of the bottlenecks identified. Based on the encouraging preliminary results obtained in 2011 the RO will continue the same approach over the medium term to sustain of the quality of final evaluation reports.

Contributing to the quality of any evaluation is the expertise recruited to undertake the assignment. In order to improve access to evaluators and relevant consulting firms the RO redesigned and enlarged considerably both databases through an external expression of interest. Both databases are available on the RO intranet at: http://intranet.unicef.org/geneva/ceecishome.nsf/bebddba2e89ddf6b685256fa500598afe/84e82c8d76409320e12574120048c44b?OpenDocument.

The main objective of RO support is to ensure that the quality of evaluations is such that their main stakeholders and expected users can be confident to act upon the recommendations provided. The RO organized a session during the M&E meeting to support COs to develop their action plan following evaluation recommendations. At of 2011, the number of countries that prepared a Management Response and its corresponding action plan had improved compared to 2010.

IMEPs. The RO has actively supported the preparation of all IMEPs, providing guidance and comments on all draft IMEPs, encouraging countries to prioritize their evaluations, studies and research. As many as 95% of the IMEPs are uploaded on the internal evaluation database. The large number of studies and research planned in IMEPs was discussed during the spring RMT, DepReps and M&E meetings to encourage a better prioritization for the 2013 IMEPs. At the request of the RMT the RO developed a template for TOR of studies and research undertaken in the region. In addition, the RO conducted regular monitoring of the evaluation section of the IMEP
implementation. However, a quick comparison between the evaluations planned in the 2012 IMEPs and those actually completed within the year continue to reveal some gaps, which are mainly explained by the following:

- Underestimation of the time required to complete an evaluation;
- Part of the evaluations planned in the last quarter will be completed in 2013;
- Weakness in planning leading to the postponed or cancelled evaluations;
- Confusion between evaluations and studies identified at the time of the TOR review.

**Management Response of Evaluations.** As per corporate evaluation Management Dashboard indications, CEE/CIS had 100% Management Response for the 2011 evaluations uploaded within the first quarter of 2012. The RO will monitor closely upload of 2012 evaluations as well as timely update of actions planned.

**Capacity Development.** To strengthen internal capacities the RO is interacting very regularly with CO M&E staff to provide on-the-job learning support, technical notes on specific evaluation issues. In 2012 the regional M&E meeting included specific capacity development sessions. COs are regularly encouraged to take advantage of corporate e-learning developments and to participate to regional level relevant CD initiatives.

The RO, as member of the International Programme Evaluation Network (IPEN) board, supported the regional IPEN conference in Astana (Sept). It facilitated several sessions and made presentations on use of evaluation and equity focus evaluations. The Russian translation of the Evaluation Office Manual on that topic has been highly appreciated by participants as evaluation literature in Russian remains very limited. The RO is also supporting the IPEN board reflection process around strengthening of national evaluation capacities. The RO co-facilitated with the Evaluation office a one-day Capacity Development workshop on equity-focus evaluations ahead of the Biennial European Evaluation Society Conference.

In 2012 the RO adopted a transparent evaluation management process that is now operational for all evaluations managed by the RO. Aligned with the Evaluation Policy, this process ensures that managers of UNICEF programmes under evaluation do not have decision making-responsibility for evaluation TOR, selection of consultants or the acceptance of the evaluation reports. The process requires reviews of the TOR and draft reports by the regional M&E facility, uploading of evaluation reports, as well as the timely preparation of a Management Response. Following a session on evaluation during the spring RMT, the RMT requested the RO to prepare a similar process adapted to COs. This was released during the summer, discussed during the Autumn DepRep and M&E network meeting and is being gradually adopted by COs according to their evaluation schedules.

**Knowledge management in M&E – lessons learning.** To improve sharing of evaluation findings and recommendations across countries, the RO has developed a 2-pager evaluation brief and recommended COs with “confident to act” GEROS ratings to prepared similar 2 pagers to be shared widely, in addition to being uploaded on the Internet.

**6. Report on UN Reform and Inter-Agency Collaboration**

As part of efforts for improved coherence of the UN system in the region, UNICEF continued to engage through the RDT mechanism and, at country level, through the Delivering as One pilot (DaO) in Albania, the DaO Expanded Funding Window - which has been introduced in Montenegro and Kyrgyzstan, as well as initiatives to introduce some DaO mechanisms in Moldova. Several COs also continued to engage in UN joint programmes. All UNICEF offices in the region are active members of the UNCTs and a number of UNICEF Representatives have served as Resident Coordinators a.i. frequently and some for extended periods.

The DaO pilot in Albania is now in its second programming cycle and has completed the first year of implementation of the 2012-16 programme framework, which also provided the basis for the development of the UNICEF CPD for the same period. In light of the small share of the UN’s total financial contribution, about 3% of Albania’s ODA, it proved helpful to have joint UN annual work plans. However, the high number of
participating UN agencies, 20 in all with only eight having a resident status in Albania, resulted in considerably increased workload for the UN, and contributed to fragmentation of results and advocacy messages. Managing about 40 Joint UN AWPs signed in 2012 was also extremely challenging. A UN Country Team Retreat organized in late 2012 agreed on how to address some of these management challenges, including the development of UN positions on key national development issues. However, the challenges related to engagement of non-resident agencies are expected to continue. In addition to management issues, these also present governance challenges, especially for the few UN agencies present on the ground.

Montenegro benefits from DaO funding window and the UNICEF’s 2012-16 CPD is framed by the DaO UN Programme, in which UNICEF takes the lead in a number of key relevant areas in social protection. The UN in Montenegro contributes to the country’s bid to join the EU. UNICEF has used this opportunity to promote child protection and social protection, social inclusion and justice for children as part of this agenda. The office participates in a major EU funded joint project on social inclusion under the umbrella of DaO, reinforcing a strategic cooperation amongst UNDP, UNICEF and the Government of Montenegro in a crucial area where UNICEF has established its added-value. In 2012, the UN’s Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office also allocated $65,000 from the DaO Expanded Window for MICS.

In Moldova, the new UN-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework was finalized in 2012 together with the joint Moldova UN Action Plan, with a strengthened equity focus. These framed the new UNICEF 2013-17 CPD and are expected to further improve UN Coherence.

Unlike other regions, CEE/CIS does not have one regional emergency coordination mechanism where agencies can convene to share information and jointly analyze the humanitarian situations, possible risks and level of emergency preparedness within the region. In order to improve coordination and use of data on humanitarian action and DRR within the region, the RO Emergency Team has been involved in the establishment of the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for Caucasus and Central Asia with the overall objective of ensuring the availability of adequate levels of emergency response preparedness, as well as the means to respond effectively and in a coordinated manner to humanitarian crises and the promote and strengthen disaster reduction, preparedness and response in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The RO Emergency Team continued to contribute to the Central Asia Regional Risk Assessment (CARRA) to advance DRR in the region. Overall, the CARRA process has helped to bring the UN, IFIs, INGOs and other multilaterals around one table to discuss complex issues, including initiating a number of assessments resulting in concrete recommendations at national level. The RO jointly facilitated an inter-agency contingency planning exercise for the United Nations Development Team in Kosovo and the Kosovo authorities and RO jointly facilitated an inter-agency emergency simulation exercise in Kyrgyzstan.

More than seven years after its launch, HACT has not resulted in a harmonized approach with a single exception (Moldova). UNICEF offices continue to implement HACT methodology (assessment and assurance activities along with simplified procedures for DCT), but the harmonization is not possible with other agencies opting not to implement the approach. Two countries, Turkmenistan and Ukraine, obtained waivers from the RDT due to the impossibility of implementing the approach in those countries. It is no longer a question of rolling-out HACT, but of how to restart a stalled initiative. Despite this challenge of a common approach for transfers to partners, the RO does monitor DCT activities from COs, principally through its chief reporting tool, The Monthly Monitor, published by the RO.

During 2012, the Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia, known as the Regional Directors’ Team (RDT), met formally twice, both times back to back with the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). The RDT workplan was followed to large degree, but it is worthwhile to note that some activities which were part of the common work plan were undertaken unilaterally by some agencies, requiring some discussions in the RDT. The

23 (SCR 1244)
interaction within the RDT has improved and the new chairperson of the Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia has been facilitating and contributing to a constructive and positive spirit of cooperation.

The RDT and RCM created in October 2012 a Joint Working Group on the post-2015 agenda, to lead the production of an inter-agency publication on the post-2015 agenda for the region and a consultation expected to take place in 2013. UNICEF has contributed very actively to the Working Group to ensure that the need to address the existing pervasive forms of social exclusion and marginalisation through investment in more inclusive societies respecting human rights are adequately reflected.

HQ has consistently been responsive to any queries and questions related to UN Coherence and regional inter-agency coordination. Answers to some of the new and important challenges which have emerged, such as the demand for development of unified UNCT communication strategies, are eagerly awaited. The RMT in November 2012 provided an opportunity to learn about the impact of the new QCPR resolution and what it will mean for inter-agency cooperation at country level.