

Republic of Moldova

Country programme document 2013-2017

The draft country programme document for the Republic of Moldova (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.5) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2012 annual session (5-8 June 2012).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2012 second regular session of the Executive Board on 14 September 2012.

Basic data[†]

(2010 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	0.8
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	19 ^a
Underweight (% , moderate and severe, 2005) (urban/rural, poorest/richest)	3 2/4, 5/1 ^b
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, adjusted, 2008)	32 ^c
Primary school enrolment (% , net male/female, 2009)	91/90
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , 2008)	95
Use of improved drinking water sources (%)	96
Use of improved sanitation facilities (%)	85
Adult HIV prevalence (% , 2009)	0.4
Child labour (% , 5-14 years old, 2009)	16
Birth registration (% , under 5 years, 2000) (male/female, urban/rural, poorest/richest)	98 98/98, 98/98, 97/98
GNI per capita (US\$)	1810
One-year-olds immunized against DPT3 (%)	90
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	97

[†] More comprehensive country data on children and women can be found at www.childinfo.org/.

^a The country-reported estimate is 13 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the National Centre for Health Management, 2011.

^b Underweight estimates are based on the WHO Child Growth Standards adopted in 2006.

^c The country-reported estimate is 15 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, according to the National Centre for Health Management, 2011.

The estimate developed by the Maternal Mortality Estimation Interagency Group (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank, together with independent technical experts), adjusted for underreporting and misclassification of maternal deaths. For more information, see www.childinfo.org/maternal_mortality.html.

Summary of the situation of children and women

1. Twenty years after independence, the Republic of Moldova continues its political and economic transition. The country has consistently voiced ambitions of integrating into the European Union (EU), which are reflected in reforms under way in education, health, social protection, human rights and justice, as well as in public administration and decentralization. These reforms are expected to benefit children insofar as they aim to increase service quality, civil society involvement in oversight and service provision, transparency and citizens' participation, and public financial management.¹

2. After the 2009 economic crisis, the economy grew by 7.5 per cent in 2010 and poverty continues to fall, however over 40 per cent of rural households with three or more children remain poor. While remittances contributed to 23 per cent of the gross domestic product in 2010² and represent an important safety net, migration from the Republic of Moldova, including from the Transnistrian region, has a direct impact on children's lives. The 2011 United Nations Moldova Country Analysis notes that an estimated 40 per cent of the working-age population lives abroad, a situation that

¹ Government of the Republic of Moldova, "Report on implementation of the Government Activity Programme: European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, Welfare 2009-2013", September 2010.

² World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook, 2010.

deprives children of parental guidance and support, and affects children's emotional and psychological well-being. Crossing the border to find work or escape hardship remains a tempting and potentially risky solution for vulnerable adolescents.

3. Progress in the realization of child rights is in line with the 2009 Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as national Millennium Development Goal targets. Achievements in the area of the right to survival include a decline in the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) by 10 per cent between 2007 and 2011³ (based on national data). Mother-to-child transmission of HIV decreased to 3 per cent by 2010. The health system of the Republic of Moldova, including in the Transnistrian region, now provides integrated management of childhood illnesses⁴ and improved neonatal care. Youth-friendly health centres (including in Transnistrian region) serve over 50,000 adolescents and young people every year.

4. Inequities, however, prevent these gains from reaching all children. The 2011 UNICEF Situation Analysis identifies children particularly affected by disparity and risk, with the largest groups being children in rural areas (who are three times more likely to be poor than urban children) and in the Transnistrian region, as well as children with disabilities and Roma children.

5. In rural areas and the south, the U5MR is 33 to 50 per cent higher than the national average. Rural and poor children and pregnant women, including Roma, miss out on medical care due to long distances to health care providers, informal payments and costs of treatments not covered by health insurance,⁵ while 60 per cent of children in rural schools face water and sanitation-associated health risks.⁶ National HIV incidence, at 17.1 cases per 100,000 in 2010, is low; however, adolescents and young people living in large cities and the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova are two or three times more at risk.⁷ Prevention and care are hampered by stigma and discrimination against children affected by HIV and AIDS, and against marginalized adolescents (those with behaviours that put them at risk).

6. Children's right to education is a priority in Moldova, which allocates over 20 per cent of public budget to this sector. Primary school gross enrolment stabilized at 94 per cent after years of decline, and preschool enrolment has increased from 70 to 77 per cent. The quality of education is improving and efforts are being made to enrol children with disabilities and Roma children. Nevertheless urban-rural disparities persist, due to the lack of qualified teachers and quality infrastructure in villages.⁸ Structural reforms under way, while needed to make more efficient use of education resources given the population decline, may create risks for already marginalized students unless the reforms are carefully monitored, and the savings invested to improve quality.⁹ Child labour and the inability of poor

³ www.childinfo.org.

⁴ UNICEF Moldova "Evaluation of Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses Initiative in the Republic of Moldova for 2000-2010", 2011.

⁵ UNICEF, Maternal and Child Health Equity Analysis, 2010.

⁶ Government of Moldova and UNICEF, Study on the Quality of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Practices in the Schools of Moldova, 2010.

⁷ National Centre for Preventive Medicine, Informative Bulletin on the HIV Infection Situation in the Republic of Moldova, 2010.

⁸ National Bureau of Statistics, Statistical publication, "Education in Moldova", 2011. <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ro&id=2819&idc=350>, page 19.

⁹ UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Vulnerable, Excluded and Discriminated Children in Moldova,

families to cover associated education costs likewise inhibit attainment of the education Millennium Development Goal.¹⁰ Children with disabilities are frequently excluded or educated in auxiliary schools — practices still supported by the majority of parents¹¹ — and Roma children sometimes face discrimination from education professionals and other children.

7. Progress towards realizing children’s right to protection includes the updating of the adoption law in line with recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, a 22 per cent decline in the use of institutional care for children in 2005-2010 and increased use of family-based care alternatives.¹² Nevertheless, young children and children with disabilities are the last ones to benefit from deinstitutionalization. There is greater awareness around domestic violence, and the policy framework has improved. The number of children in detention has declined dramatically and alternatives are increasingly available. There are social workers in virtually every village.

8. Over 45 per cent of households with children from the poorest quintile receive no social payments; the problem is greatest for poor households with many children. Bottlenecks include complex administrative requirements, discrimination, low awareness and inherent limitations of targeting approaches.¹³ Child labour is a hidden but significant problem, particularly in rural areas: some 18 per cent of children 5-17 years of age are affected, two thirds of them boys.¹⁴ Qualitative evidence suggests that some children are sent abroad to work.^{15,16} There is growing evidence of both boys and girls being victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, but also greater societal recognition of the problem.¹⁷ Substance abuse by adolescents, especially boys, is an increasing concern. Corporal punishment is widely accepted.

9. Meeting national goals and international and EU norms and standards, will require increasing attention to social inclusion. In addition to systemic bottlenecks that prevent access to services by the most disadvantaged groups, social beliefs inhibit the willingness and capacity of marginalized families to demand services and the creation of a more inclusive social environment. Gender stereotypes continue to affect parenting roles, creating further challenges for effective caregiving, especially in situations in which both mothers and fathers are absent due to labour migration.

2011.

¹⁰ Republic of Moldova, Second Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010.

¹¹ UNICEF, National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices, 2010.

¹² National Bureau of Statistics, TransMONEE 2011 Statistical template.

¹³ UNICEF, “Impact of Cash Transfers on Poverty and Well-being of the Most Vulnerable Families in the Republic of Moldova in the Context of Transfer from Category-based to Means-tested Social Assistance”, 2011.

¹⁴ National Bureau of Statistics and International Labour Organization, “Working Children in the Republic of Moldova: The Results of the 2009 Children’s Activities Survey”, 2010.

¹⁵ UNDP, UNICEF and UNIFEM, Report on Monitoring the crisis impact on local communities in Moldova, March 2011.

¹⁶ UNICEF, “Impact of Cash Transfers on Poverty and Well-being of the Most Vulnerable Families in the Republic of Moldova in the Context of Transfer from Category-based to Means-tested Social Assistance”, 2011.

¹⁷ UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Vulnerable, Excluded and Discriminated Children in Moldova, 2011.

Knowledge barriers are also an issue, with poor caregiving practices limiting children's health and development outcomes.¹⁸

10. Currently insufficient disaggregation, analysis and use of data reduce the visibility of marginalized groups. At local level, lack of fiscal autonomy and unclear roles and responsibilities also hamper implementation.¹⁹ Central and local authorities lack sufficient capacity and resources for the design and implementation of services to allow appropriate coverage of those with greatest needs. The capacities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as service providers, policy and budget decision-makers, and human rights advocates require strengthening, as does the key oversight role of Parliament in child rights monitoring. Improvements are also needed in media coverage of children and their rights.²⁰

11. Though their opinions are rarely taken into account, the right to participation of children and adolescents is partly realized through the Child-Friendly Schools initiative and youth-friendly health services. There is growing awareness of and engagement in disaster risk management, a positive development, given the possibility of increased risk due to climate change.

12. The Committee on the Rights of the Child²¹ and several UNICEF-supported studies²² note insufficient coordination among the sectors with responsibility for children. While the National Council for Child Rights Protection (NCCRP) has improved inter-sectoral coordination and provides leadership at the policy level, the lack of linkages among the health, social protection, education, police and justice systems at the national and local levels creates a critical bottleneck in the effort to identify, refer and provide additional services and support to disadvantaged children and their families.

¹⁸ UNICEF, National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices, 2010.

¹⁹ United Nations, Moldova, Country Analysis, 2011.

²⁰ UNICEF, National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices, 2010.

²¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 50th session, Concluding Observations: Republic of Moldova, 2009.

²² UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in Moldova, 2008; UNICEF, National Evaluation on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Programme, 2009; UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Excluded Children in Moldova, 2011; UNICEF, Assessment of the Child Care System in Moldova, 2009; UNICEF, Maternal and Child Health Equity Analysis, 2010.

Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2007-2012

Key results achieved

13. The programme contributed to reducing the number of children in residential institutions by 43 per cent²³ — surpassing the 30 per cent target.²⁴ Family support services have been strengthened and preventive interventions and alternative care services expanded. Legal and policy frameworks and regulations were established, creating modern structures and enhancing existing ones to address the complex nature of child protection.²⁵ Reforms are expected to continue under the Government’s anticipated Child and Family Protection Strategy.

14. The programme also contributed to the decrease in the number of children in detention by 70 per cent, a figure surpassing the target of 50 per cent.²⁶ The legal and normative framework is increasingly in line with international and European (Council of Europe and European Union) standards. The justice system provides alternative mechanisms and services such as probation, mediation and diversion.²⁷

15. In health, the country programme result on the reduction of U5MR has been achieved. Health and social services are working together to identify, refer and provide treatment to disadvantaged young children and to provide information to their parents. Youth-friendly health services have been expanded and improved, including some outreach for most-at-risk adolescents.²⁸ The services are part of, and financed by, the health system. The 2011-2015 HIV/AIDS programme specifically covers most-at-risk populations, including adolescents.

16. The country programme mobilized substantial funding from the Global Partnership for Education and provided technical support for early childhood development, contributing to a 10 per cent increase in preschool enrolment from 2005 to 2010. Following adoption of the Child-Friendly Schools approach, the school curriculum was modernized, child-centred teaching methods were introduced, and quality standards were developed, with positive results.²⁹ Inclusive education is prominently featured in the national Education Strategy. Roma mediators, who facilitate better access of the Roma community to social services, are expected to be introduced in localities with a large Roma community.

17. UNICEF supported the Government’s response to emergency situations. This contributed to the following results: increased awareness of prevention of avian and H1N1 flus³⁰ and strengthened health system capacity in emergency communication; immunization of all children aged 13 to 18, stopping an outbreak of mumps; mitigating the impact of food and economic crises in 2009 on 17,000 disadvantaged

²³ UNICEF Moldova country office calculation based on TransMONEE 2011 statistical template.

²⁴ When expressed as a rate, the gain is 22 per cent.

²⁵ UNICEF, “Assessment of the Child Care System in Moldova”, 2009.

²⁶ Administrative statistics of the Ministry of Justice, November 2011.

²⁷ UNICEF, “Evaluation of Juvenile Justice Reform Project in Moldova”, preliminary results, 2011.

²⁸ National Center for Reproductive Health. Methodological Center of YHFS Network, 2010.

²⁹ UNICEF, Child-Friendly Schools Evaluation, preliminary results, 2011.

³⁰ UNICEF Evaluation “Avian influenza: perception of informational campaign by population and field specialists in Moldova”, 2009.

children; helping 2,234 disadvantaged child flood victims, including in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, to go back to school; and locally modelling psycho-social support for families affected by natural disasters, to be adopted nationwide.

Lessons learned

18. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluation recommended that continued attention be paid to governance reforms, human rights strengthening, and effective advocacy in social protection, education and health, while calling for more effective support for civil society involvement. Several studies also show that further monitoring of resource distribution can help protect existing gains for children and win new ones, and that careful balance among means-tested social protection, allowances and service subsidies is needed to ensure that children in extreme poverty are supported.^{31,32}

19. Studies confirm the need for greater emphasis on social change to translate social policies into effective and sustainable actions that make a real impact on children's lives.³³ Discriminatory attitudes towards women, the poor, persons with disabilities, and Roma influence the mind-set of policymakers, local authorities and professionals working with children, and slow the development and implementation of progressive policies to reach these groups. Social attitudes contribute in limiting information and access to services for Roma families, create barriers to inclusion of children with disabilities, promote the over-use of institutional care, curtail adolescents' access to appropriate services, and contribute to family violence and its acceptance in the community. A 2011 gender assessment of the current country programme noted that gender inequality and discrimination affect outcomes for boys and girls, and that further gender mainstreaming should be pursued through social change approaches in the new programme.³⁴

³¹ UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Vulnerable, Excluded and Discriminated Children in Moldova, 2011.

³² ECI & CBS-AXA, "Impact of cash transfers on poverty and well-being of the most vulnerable families in the Republic of Moldova", 2011.

³³ UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in Moldova, 2008; UNICEF, "Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Youth regarding HIV/AIDS in Moldova", 2008; UNICEF, Assessment of the Child Care System in Moldova, 2009; UNICEF, Maternal and Child Health Equity Analysis, 2010; UNICEF, National Survey in Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices, 2010; UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Disadvantaged Children in Moldova, 2011.

³⁴ UNICEF, Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in the UNICEF-Moldova Country Programme 2007-2012 and Recommendations for the Next Country Programme, 2011.

The country programme, 2013-2017

Summary budget table

Programme components	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	Regular resources	Other resources	Total
Social inclusion and protection of children	2 000	15 000	17 000
Governance and social change for child rights	1 000	4 500	5 500
Cross-sectoral	750	800	1 550
Total	3 750	20 300	24 050

Preparation process

20. This programme was developed in conjunction with the United Nations-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework 2013-2017, based on an evaluation of the current UNDAF³⁵ and Country Analysis,³⁶ followed by a Strategic Prioritization workshop with the Government in September 2011. Its preparation was informed by a Situation Analysis focusing on disadvantaged and excluded children and evaluations undertaken since the midterm review. A human rights-based analysis identified underlying determinants of the major issues affecting children, as part of a consultative process with the Government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Parliament. The programme design was validated with the NCCRP, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Social Issues, with the participation of line Ministries, Ministry of Finance, Ombudsman's Office for Child Rights, NGOs and United Nations entities.

21. The following formed the basis of this programme: the Concluding Observations of the Committees on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2006), on the Rights of the Child (2009), on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2011) and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2011), and the 2011 recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review, especially regarding violence, gender, non-discrimination and disadvantaged groups, and the need for greater attention to be paid to the implementation, with adequate financial support, of laws and normative documents.

Programme components, results and strategies

22. The country programme supports government and civil society to bring about greater social inclusion of children and their families who are at risk of exclusion due to geographic disparities, poverty, ethnicity, disability, gender, and lack of or

³⁵ Evaluation Report — United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Moldova, 2011. http://www.un.md/un_res_coord_sys/docs/UNDAF%20Evaluation%20Report%20-%20Moldova.pdf.

³⁶ United Nations Moldova, Country Analysis, 2011. http://www.un.md/un_res_coord_sys/docs/Country%20Analysis%20-%20UN%20Moldova_ENG.pdf.

poor parental care. It incorporates wider international, European targets and benchmarks, in line with national aspirations.

23. The key results of the programme by end-2017 are: (a) the Government addresses disparities in access to quality education, health, protection and justice services for disadvantaged children and families; and (b) governance structures and social attitudes are more child-sensitive and equity-oriented.

24. Capacity-building, partnership and evidence-based advocacy will support greater focus on disparity reduction, both between urban and rural areas and between the general population and specific disadvantaged groups, thus strengthening ongoing reforms as well as creating an enabling environment for increasing child participation. The programme will apply a gender lens to all programming, focusing more intently on the role of men in children's lives, empowering women, and addressing the barriers undermining girls' and boys' realization of their rights. Attention to disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness will also be mainstreamed.

Programme components

25. The two main programme components are (a) **social inclusion and protection of children**; and (b) **governance and social change for child rights**. Close interaction between these components is envisaged to document good practices, address local-level capacity gaps, support policy reforms and improved resource allocations, and counter negative social attitudes.

26. **Social inclusion and protection of children**. This programme component prioritizes access to quality services, protection mechanisms, and cash benefits for children from groups who are not fully covered by ongoing public sector reforms, including children living in rural areas and the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, or affected by poverty and migration. The violation of the rights of Roma children and children with disabilities will be addressed throughout this component. Special attention will be given to providing new opportunities for inclusion and a "second chance" to adolescents whose lives have been disrupted by violence, school dropout, conflict with the law, institutionalization, poverty, discrimination, migration, trafficking, HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. Key partners will be the Ministries of Education; Labour, Social Protection and Family; Health; Internal Affairs; and Justice, and local authorities.

27. The programme will contribute to (a) increased access to quality education, with greater increases among disadvantaged groups including children with disabilities; (b) improved care and development of young children, especially disadvantaged ones; (c) stopping the rising trend of HIV/AIDS incidence among those 15-19 years old; (d) increased access by children deprived of a family environment to family-based care; and (e) increased access to social benefits and quality social and justice services for disadvantaged children and their families.

28. Technical cooperation and international knowledge-sharing will support revision of normative and regulatory frameworks in health, education, child protection, social protection and justice, in line with international, EU and Council of Europe child rights treaties and standards. These approaches, together with capacity development and resource-leveraging, will be used to develop further the

national and local capacities to deliver quality services and improve outreach and coverage of disadvantaged children, and will incorporate the testing and expansion of successful implementation models. This will include support to the social sectors to plan and mitigate the risk of possible future natural disasters and economic downturns, especially at the local level. This component will strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration and strengthen timely identification and referral of disadvantaged children to a continuum of community-based services. Communication for development will address care practices and create a more protective environment for children in families and communities, particularly the most disadvantaged. Local research and knowledge generation will support policy advocacy.

29. Under the anticipated Child and Family Protection Strategy, the programme will build capacities for prevention and response so that children at risk or victims of abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation receive child-friendly support from caregivers, professionals, social services and the justice system. Sexual abuse and exploitation and child labour will be addressed by increasing awareness, reporting and referral. Gains in child care system reform will be extended to children with disabilities, and those below three years, by preventing separation through increased availability of support services and family-based alternative care. Coordinated work with police, justice, local authorities, social actors and NGOs will support appropriate responses and services for children in contact with the law, including victims and witnesses. Local modelling of innovative justice and social services will also support national policy development. The programme will promote integration of social services and cash assistance to help to address barriers to access so that disadvantaged families receive the support needed to raise their children within a family environment and the challenges created by the absence of parents and other adults due to migration are better addressed.

30. The programme will support education reform efforts to improve universal access to, quality and governance of education, guided by the *Strategic framework for education and training* of the European Union. The programme will particularly focus on inclusive education, combating discrimination, reaching and supporting Roma children, children with disabilities and out-of-school children. To reduce urban-rural disparities, the programme will support strengthening of monitoring systems at local and national levels so that information on quality, achievement, attendance and dropout of disadvantaged groups is available for better decision-making. Work on improving the quality of education through standards and capacity-building will continue. As part of the national commitment to child-friendly schools, the programme will seek to reduce violence and increase child and community participation in school governance. UNICEF will leverage support for improving water and sanitation facilities in rural areas, and promote hygiene, human rights, disaster management and environmental education.

31. In line with the EU Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care and EU National Roma Integration Framework, and as part of the focus of the national development strategy “Moldova 2020” on human capital development, the country programme will aim to improve nutrition, health, early stimulation practices at home, and school-readiness through increased access to, and utilization and quality of, inclusive early learning facilities, focusing on rural children, children in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, children with disabilities and Roma children. Health policies and systems aiming at improving coverage for

disadvantaged families will be reinforced. Peri- and post-natal care services will be supported to improve quality and outreach to disadvantaged families as well as ongoing support to parents to provide adequate care. The programme will support cross-sectoral commitments to early detection and intervention and community-based services for children with disabilities.

32. Given the high risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, as well as substance abuse and teenage pregnancies, the component will support increased attention to disadvantaged adolescents, urban and rural children, and the needs of boys and girls, which will be addressed through gender-sensitive strategies. In addition, the programme will work towards changing social norms involving discrimination against adolescents engaging in risky behaviours, and enhancing adolescents' knowledge, attitudes and practices. This work will be directly related to national HIV/AIDS, health, education, and youth policies and strategies. The programme will increasingly build the skills and capacities of adolescent girls and boys to protect their rights through initiatives that reach and empower them to participate actively in all matters affecting their lives.

33. **Governance and social change for child rights.** This component will help governance structures, services and social attitudes to become more child-sensitive and equity-oriented. It will do this by (a) supporting the efforts of central and local authorities to make planning, policy monitoring, costing and budgeting of key child-related laws and programmes more responsive to the needs of disadvantaged children; and (b) realizing clear progress against outstanding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child pertaining to (i) the collection of disaggregated, equity-informative data and its use for policy formulation and evaluation; (ii) the participation of civil society and the media in the protection and promotion of children's rights; (iii) the allocation of resources for the implementation of legislation and strategies that impact children; and (iv) the independent and effective monitoring of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The component will help governance structures and civil society to create a public dialogue and trigger social change leading to more inclusive social practices towards disadvantaged children and families, while further empowering these groups to claim their rights. Key counterparts will include the State Chancellery; the Ministries of Finance, Education, Health, and Labour, Social Protection and Family; Parliament; Child Rights Parliament Advocate; and local public authorities.

34. The programme will support giving increased attention to children in budgetary frameworks and local results-based budgeting, and help to improve efficiencies in public expenditures to allow for greater investment in disadvantaged children. It will clarify responsibilities among different levels of administration to identify unfunded mandates for social sectors regarding children and to improve appreciation of the opportunities and risks involved in decentralizing key services for children. As decentralization progresses, the programme will strengthen capacities of local authorities to plan, budget, and provide appropriate services with attention to equity concerns, demographic and social changes due to migration and disaster risk. The capacity of local government and NGOs will be enhanced to engage and empower communities, including children themselves, through effective public communication.

35. The programme will assist national and local partners to collect and disseminate disaggregated data in line with international and European standards, and use evidence more effectively for policy development, programming and budgeting, including for disadvantaged and at-risk populations. Part of this work will be done through continuation of a United Nations Joint Programme on Statistics.

36. The programme will continue to work with the media to increase their awareness of and capacity to report ethically on child rights, and to promote social change. Adolescent participation will be strengthened through support to national and local participation mechanisms for children and youth, including building bridges across regions. Institutions with responsibility for child rights legislation development, monitoring and oversight will be supported through this component, including the NCCRP, Parliament, the Child Rights' Advocate and the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, to monitor progress on the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the child rights chapter of the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Agreement. The capacity of NGOs to advocate, provide inputs to, monitor and report on policies and budgets will be strengthened to foster civil society participation in public debate. Through increased engagement with the corporate sector, the programme will work to initiate public-private partnerships and influence corporate social responsibility efforts to support appropriate services for and greater outreach to disadvantaged children and families.

37. The country programme will strengthen the knowledge, attitudes and practices of children themselves, as well as caregivers, professionals in contact with children, and communities, and will promote national debate on acceptable social norms regarding children. This two-pronged approach will contribute to empowering disadvantaged children — including adolescent boys and girls – and their families to claim their rights. This will be accomplished by increasing their knowledge of their rights and their skills in claiming them and by supporting a conducive environment at national and local levels. Social change approaches will help to provide an enabling environment by changing norms and mindsets and strengthening social dialogue around four broad issues: discrimination against Roma, children with disabilities, other disadvantaged children and adolescents; gender-based violence against children and women; separation of children from families; and child labour. Positive social change will be further fostered through communication for development, policy and legal changes and capacity-building of civil society and state systems.

38. **Cross-sectoral.** The component will support effective operations, country office management and administration, cross-sectoral and United Nations system activities, including monitoring and evaluation, as well as midterm reviews and programme documentation.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

39. The country programme supports key national priorities concerning education and justice outlined in “Moldova 2020” as well as the implementation of the child rights chapter of the draft EU-Republic of Moldova Association Agreement, and the national Human Rights Action Plan. The country programme contributes to sector

strategies in education, justice, and health as well as cross-cutting national strategies and programmes on inclusive education, HIV/AIDS, youth-friendly health services, micronutrient deficiencies, and the anticipated Education Code and Child and Family Protection Strategy.

40. The new country programme derives directly from the United Nations-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework 2013-2017 (UNPF), and will contribute explicitly to the achievement of outcomes under all three pillars: (a) democratic governance, justice, and equality and human rights; (b) human development and social inclusion; and (c) environment, climate change and disaster risk management.

Relationship to international priorities

41. The programme seeks to address many child rights-related recommendations made during the first Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Moldova in 2011, including tackling domestic violence against children; ensuring education access for children with disabilities; ending child labour; preventing trafficking and sexual exploitation of children; fully implementing the reform of the residential care system for children, and ensuring support for the Child Rights Advocate. These recommendations echo previous observations of the Committees on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on the Rights of the Child, who also emphasized the importance of improving data collection on disadvantaged groups as well as greater attention to discrimination, including discrimination against the Roma population.

Major partnerships

42. Direct partnerships with central and selected local public authorities will drive overall progress towards cooperation objectives. These will be further supported through strategic partnership with the NCCRP, which oversees progress towards international child rights commitments and related action plans of the Republic of Moldova. The NCCRP will make a significant contribution towards achieving the expected country programme goals through its convening and coordination of key Ministries and NGOs. The Child Rights Advocate will be another essential partner in child rights monitoring and advocacy.

43. The programme will collaborate with the EU delegation, focusing on implementation of the child rights chapter of the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Agreement, as well as common advocacy and resource-leveraging to support social inclusion goals, including in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. Common advocacy and programming opportunities will be pursued with the Council of Europe around justice, Roma inclusion and violence prevention. Continued collaboration with the World Bank in programme development, technical advice and analytical work will be relied on to bring about greater sensitivity towards children regarding support for the social protection reform and further attention to disadvantaged groups in education.

44. Collaboration will continue with key bilateral partners and with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Global Partnership for Education, the Moldova Social Investment Fund and local and international NGOs.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

45. The programme will monitor progress towards the realization of child rights and support the evaluation of key national policies and programmes related to children, such as inclusive education, de-institutionalization, the components of HIV/AIDS and justice related to children. It will widely share results with partners to improve new policy. UNICEF and the Government will evaluate key programme interventions such as communication for development, the child-friendly school initiative, early childhood development, child care reform, and youth-friendly health services.

46. Baselines will be calculated using the 2012 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and the 2014 Population Census results. Additional research will be undertaken as needed to provide more in-depth analysis on key issues such as those related to Roma children, dropout and absenteeism, substance abuse by adolescents, and sexual exploitation and abuse of children. The Situation Analysis, focusing on disadvantaged children, will be regularly updated. The coordinating partner will be the State Chancellery.
