Update on the context and situation of children

Burundi remains one of the poorest countries in the world. It is ranked 185 of 189 countries in the 2020 Human Development Index (same as in 2019). Gross domestic product per capita was $274 in 2018 ($30 below the level recorded in 2015). The economy was showing signs of recovery since 2015 before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and its growth rate is expected to slow to 1% in 2020 (WB, 2020).

Burundi’s high fertility rate, 4.6 children per woman, contributes to an exceptionally large youth population bulge. Almost half (48%) of the total population of 12.04 million are under 18 and 23% are adolescents (ISTEEBU 2018).

Declining external aid continues to be a concern; before 2015, it accounted for 50% of the State budget. The financing of the fiscal deficit has led to a rapid increase in public debt. The Government has made significant efforts to protect social sector budget but they remain largely insufficient to meet children's needs, including access to basic social services.

The May 2020 general election, the first since the crisis-fraught 2015 elections, was generally peaceful. The election was won by Evariste Ndayishimiye, the CNDD-FDD ruling party candidate. In his inaugural address, he highlighted six new priorities, notably a drive for a youth agenda, social cohesion and peace. His recognition of the COVID-19 pandemic as a national priority was followed by a massive three-month testing campaign and an emphasis on hygiene and handwashing with soap. No lockdown measures were enforced while the borders were closed from end-March to early November.

As of end of December, there were 833 officially confirmed cases of COVID-19 and only two official deaths. The health system faced multiple other crises, compounded by natural disasters such as floods and drought. There were two outbreaks of measles and worrying ulcer wounds in three provinces. As of mid-November 2020, 3,993,302 malaria cases had been reported (half the number of cases in 2019), along with 1,575 suspected cases of measles and 125 cholera cases. COVID-19 seems to be an aggravating factor on top of other burdens facing an already fragile health system.

In 2020, approximately 84% of children were fully immunized. Although the latest yearbook from the Ministry of Health (MoH) recorded 99% institutional delivery in 2019, the latest data from the routine system (DHIS2) indicate a slightly lower performance in 2020, at 90% (compared to 95% in 2019 within the same period) of pregnant women attending antenatal care visits and delivering in appropriate health facilities with skilled staff for maternal and newborn health care.

About two thirds of Burundian children continue to live in poverty, and about 80% among them are deprived in at least three dimensions of well-being. Family disintegration and neglect are some of the consequences of the high poverty rate and has led to more children and families living in the streets of Bujumbura. Many children are victims of rejection, abandonment, sexual abuse, neglect, early pregnancies or are in conflict with the law. Numerous children do not have a birth certificate, even though it is needed to access free health care (available for children under five), as well as free access to fundamental education (grades 1-9). Fewer than 1 in 10 Burundian children have access to early childhood development (ECD) and preschool education. The latest evidence shows a declining trend for the prevalence of stunting, falling from 57% in 2016 (DHS 2016-2017) to 54.2% in 2019 according to the Joint Approach for Nutrition and Food Security Assessment (ENSNSAB, 2019) and to 52.2% as per the preliminary results of the SMART survey 2020. A multisectoral approach to nutrition programming that also focuses on parenting practices and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services contributed to accelerate progress.

The percentage of children completing basic education decreased from 62% in 2017/2018 to 53.5% in 2018/2019, due mainly to an uneven provision of quality education across the country.
Burundi’s adolescents – nearly one quarter of the population – are key to the country’s economic and social development. This group is growing faster than all other age groups and is projected to reach 3.4 million in 2030 (ISTEEBU 2017). Just one in five girls and one in four boys finish secondary education and one in five women aged 15-24 is illiterate. Some 30% of adolescents are out of school, 95% of them girls. Eight per cent of girls aged 15-19 years have started having children. Because the economy is heavily dependent on agriculture (9 of 10 people live in rural areas), most people and youth who work are in informal jobs [Adolescent Investment Case Study – 2019 – UNICEF]. This young cohort represents an opportunity for the country’s development if there is sufficient investment in their health and education.

The country faced multiple emergencies in 2020 in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic. A violent and longer than usual rainy season led to landslides and severe flooding from January to April. Entire villages were swept away, resulting in displacement of over 50,000 people in Bujumbura and north-eastern regions. The Burundi Humanitarian Response Plan identified 1.74 million people in need of humanitarian assistance of whom more than 1 million are children. Some 490,000 people including 284,000 children lack critical WASH services, including access to safe water; and 340,000 people need nutritional assistance, including 286,000 children under 5 at risk of severe acute malnutrition and moderate malnutrition.

Burundi is particularly vulnerable to climate change and is affected by natural disasters that cause significant human and material damage throughout the year displacing 114,000 people. While the number of displaced persons had declined since 2018, in 2020, the number increased due to recurring high winds and rainfall. Increased temperatures and dry spells predicted for 2021 (La Nina effect) are expected to negatively impact harvests and generate additional population movement, putting children at risk of protection violations, school dropout and undernutrition.

The repatriation of refugees from neighbouring countries accelerated in 2020, following an agreement between Burundi and Tanzania and an estimated 114,460 people came back to Burundi in 2020.

### Major contributions and drivers of results

In 2020, UNICEF Burundi continued to deliver results in sectoral programme areas while promoting integration for acceleration of results; innovation, mainly for the adolescent skills agenda; and generation of data and evidence for COVID-19-related programming and advocacy. The importance of health system strengthening, including for emergencies/epidemics, became apparent, as did the need for greater resilience of communities with social protection packages. The pandemic opened a window for building back better, especially in the area of skills and innovations, where UNICEF and partners showcased the readiness of adolescent girls and boys to welcome innovation including new technologies.

#### 1.1. COVID-19:

On the surface, Burundi was less affected by COVID-19 than neighbouring countries, with fewer cases and only two deaths reported, while schools continued to operate. UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other partners such as the World Health Organization (WHO) to utilize existing coordination platforms for Ebola virus disease (EVD) for the COVID-19 response.

**Health response:** UNICEF, Gavi and MoH were proactive in procuring commodities for testing the population for COVID-19, with minimal disruption in the delivery of key basic services. UNICEF procured personal protective equipment, diagnostic and laboratory equipment in a timely manner. Including the continuity of essential services in the COVID-19 contingency plan, the result of UNICEF advocacy, helped maintain outreach and national catch-up campaigns such as Maternal and Child Health Weeks (MCHWs).

**Risk communication and community engagement:** UNICEF coordinated the development and broadcasting of messages through social media and radio programmes, including targeted messaging...
for key stakeholders and at-risk groups based on community risk perceptions (including children, parents/caregivers, pregnant women, health providers, etc.). Some 9,036,103 at-risk people received lifesaving messages about services and key family practices. Communities had access to feedback mechanisms that helped shape the national response to COVID-19.

Working with a private sector partner of the Embassy of the Netherlands, AUXFIN, UNICEF supported the development of a module for COVID-19 prevention to be included in a “healthcoach” app that is accessible to 200,000 households representing approximately 1 million people. U-Report surveys made it possible to measure communities’ levels of knowledge and reorient the messages as necessary. The UNICEF partnership with Interfaith of Burundi was a fundamental strategy to engage all religious leaders in the promotion of good behavioural practices and foster community feedback. A socio-anthropological study funded by USAID provided better understanding of community practices affecting the spread of epidemics.

**Hygiene promotion:** UNICEF Burundi developed the *Blue Soap Initiative* to make soap affordable to the most vulnerable families and thus promote handwashing. The office contracted with Burundi’s biggest private soap manufacturer, Savonor, to produce 10 million bars of soap per month, subsidized by UNICEF, the World Bank, USAID and OCHA, to be sold at a reduced price of 150 Burundian francs ($0.08), half the market price, from June to September 2020. Savonor agreed to reduce its profit margin on each box of subsidized soap and to use its existing distribution chain. Real-time data collection showed an increase in both awareness of availability (from 54% to 93%) and purchases of blue soap (from 78% to 92%) from June to July among the ‘U-Reporters’. A factor in the success of the initiative was the President’s mention of the blue soap in his inaugural speech. With funding from the World Bank, UNICEF worked with traditional media (television, radio, print) to ensure that messages about COVID-19 were accessible to all, in addition to interpersonal measures like door-to-door visits and focus groups to promote handwashing with soap.

**Data collection and analysis:** UNICEF was able to develop quality analysis and address emerging information gaps including an analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on children undertaken with the University of Burundi and an analysis of economic and social impacts conducted jointly with the World Bank, the African Development Bank and UNDP. These were key contributions to the national health and sectoral response plans and the COVID-19 socioeconomic response plan developed jointly by the United Nations and development partners.

**WASH:** The pandemic required a significant shift in focus to infection prevention and control (IPC). Jointly with the MoH, UNICEF supported the provision of appropriate basic water and sanitation services in 20 health-care facilities.

**Education:** As sector lead for education, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education and other key partners to develop a sector contingency plan for the response; and to mobilize resources from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which allows the Ministry to put in place different distance learning platforms.

1.2. **Access to essential services:**
   - Some 1.7 million children were reached with high-impact health and nutrition interventions: 92% benefited from early initiation to breastfeeding and 83% from exclusive breastfeeding; 99% of children 6-59 months received vitamin A supplementation; and about 84% of children were fully immunized. About 90% of severe acute malnutrition cases, 54,599 new admissions, were treated in designated health services, and 90% of diarrhea cases received both oral rehydration salts and zinc treatment from October 2019 to September 2020. Some 93% of pregnant women received skilled assistance during delivery.
   - With funding from JICA, UNICEF and MoH have established a maternal and child health (MCH) programme in four provinces, using Rapid SMS technology to follow up with pregnant women and mothers of newborns at community level.
   - With funding from the World Bank and the Government, UNICEF provided school supplies for 1,050,000 children (535,500 girls) and equipped 5,069 classrooms with teaching materials for the start
of the 2020 school year.
· Some 2,160 children benefited from quality preschool education thanks to UNICEF support in building, rehabilitating and equipping 12 preschool classrooms and training 72 preschool teachers on early stimulation and 450 others on preschool management and the use of play in ECD.
· UNICEF provided child protection services to 166,638 children (81,751 girls; 84,887 boys), mostly victims of natural disasters and returnees. Of these, 129,965 (57,139 girls; 72,826 boys) benefited from psychosocial support through child-friendly spaces or one-on-one counselling for children in distress through the UNICEF funded child helpline.
· With ECHO funding, UNICEF used an innovative approach of having an NGO implement birth registration activity through a reimbursement system. This significantly increased the capacity and efficiency of the civil registration team in Ruyigi province, which borders Tanzania and has a large number of repatriated people, leading to the registration of 115,000 children.
· In partnership with Foi En Action and Concern Worldwide and with funding from the German Government and OCHA, UNICEF provided cash transfers to support households affected by floods, reaching over 3,900 households and an estimated 11,164 children.
· With UNICEF internal set aside funds a national system on prevention and reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse was put in place ensuring that every woman and child who reported SEA accesses and receives immediate, quality SEA survivor-centred assistance (case management: medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and reintegration support) in line with a survivor-centred approach.

1.3. Community-based approaches for improved resilience
In Burundi, UNICEF works across sectors through informal structures grounded in a culture of community solidarity. For example:
· To improve children’s nutrition status, community programmes reached 498,674 children, of whom at least 85% sought treatment within 24 hours for major diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia. The Light Mother programme reached 66,000 children aged 6-59 months in three provinces and 278,897 children 6-23 months received micronutrient supplementation. Two million children were screened for malnutrition at community level, thanks to the training of 5,074 Light Mothers and community health workers (CHWs).
· UNICEF efforts to reinforce community-based structures to support orphans and vulnerable children benefited 199,036 children (115,258 girls; 83,778 boys). Community-based savings and loan groups (“Nawe Nuze” solidarity groups) have consistently played a leading role in these efforts. In 2020, UNICEF supported the creation of an additional 1,065 solidarity groups, for a total of 5,222 active groups. These groups supported vulnerable children to enroll in school and receive food, clothing and other services. The solidarity groups facilitated access to good parenting training for 93,670 parents (62,865 mothers; 30,824 fathers). UNICEF strengthened their income-generating capacities through Project Lumiere, partly funded by UNICEF Germany, which uses a social enterprise model to provide off-grid rural households with a solar lamp and improved cooking stoves benefitting 5,820 new households. UNICEF partner NGOs, among them Solidarité de la Jeunesse Chrétienne pour la Paix et l’Enfance, United for Children Burundi Bw’uno Musi and FVS/AMADE supported the implementation of solidarity groups.
· Since 2019, 83,639 out-of-school adolescents (44,074 girls) in 10 provinces have benefited from greater employability prospects thanks to new skills and competencies and access to social and financial assets. In collaboration with six NGOs partners among them PEAB, Association des Guides du Burundi, Umunyinya, Fondation Stamm, War Child Holland– UNICEF supported the establishment of 2,600 youth-led solidarity groups that are recognized as a valuable network and supportive space for adolescent empowerment and participation. Some groups became village community banking initiatives. In 2020, 1,098 solidarity groups provided loans to their members and accumulated financial capital equivalent to $174,801 allowing 30,673 adolescents (16,164 girls) to benefit from livelihood enhancement initiatives. One adolescent out of four who received funding (8,158 adolescents including 5,302 girls) set up a functioning business and was able to gradually access more credit to expand their businesses.
UNICEF strengthened its partnership with the Population Media Center to leverage the widespread use of community radios. Some 8,079,879 people, including 2,019,970 adolescents (1,030,184 girls; 989,785 boys), were reached with messages on maternal, infant and child nutrition. These beneficiaries were engaged through radio programmes, the Agashi soap opera and 336 radio spots broadcast by community radios.

With UNICEF support, more than 1,700,000 parents and caregivers of children under 5 benefited from interventions to improve their knowledge of optimal nutrition and health practices. To enhance community behaviour change, 3,900 community workers were trained, deployed and equipped with tools to reach at least 2,024,851 people in five provinces. This contributed to a consistently high rate of breastfeeding in Burundi where 83% of under-5 children benefited from exclusive breastfeeding.

With its partners, UNICEF has strengthened the knowledge and capacities of communal authorities to support scaling-up of the Community-Led Total Sanitation approach in 305 communities. Some 166,014 people in 36,224 households, including 28,344 students (14,805 girls) were reached with messages on hygiene practices. As result, 100% of these communities in three communes are Open Defecation Free.

1.4.  Building back better: innovation and skills for adolescents

As of October 2020, more than 75,000 mostly out-of-school adolescent boys and girls were enrolled in a skills development programme, including UPSHIFT, organized in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and NGOs in 10 provinces. Working closely with a range of regional private and public partners, a series of new skills initiatives and technology-based platforms were introduced and some already successfully tested including a partnership with Cartedo. A similar design-thinking process called CREATEABLE is currently being adapted and piloted in 10 schools thanks to support from UNICEF Australia, Finch Tech (an Australian-based company) and a partnership with the Ministry of Education. To ensure sustainability of these initiatives, UNICEF continues to tap into the network of nearly 3,000 solidarity groups across the country that help promote a culture of saving and self-help while contributing to community development, strengthening social cohesion and peace and helping young people find local innovative solutions to local problems. Such support is critical in the Burundian context of high poverty and low employment opportunities.

The first physical innovation lab to host UPSHIFT was inaugurated in Mayengo, Rumonge province. In partnership with the NGO Bibliothèques sans Frontières (BSF), the centre was equipped with an ultra-portable digital library called an ‘ideascube’ allowing over 5,400 adolescents (2,764 girls and 2,636 boys) to access information.

Adolescents in Burundi had the opportunity to participate actively and shine in different global challenges, including continuous learning such as the COVID-19 challenges, Reimagine the Future and Better Together Africa.

Traditional barriers limiting adolescent girls’ participation were addressed during the design of the interventions including organizing activities at the hills level to facilitate girls’ participation without them having to travel far from their communities. To date, UNICEF has reached 10% of the set target for the skills-building programme but with each trained adolescent interacting with their peers, these adolescents will multiply the effects of the programme.

1.5.  Integrated programming

The World Bank-funded Social protection programme of the Government of Burundi and with technical assistance from UNICEF, Merankabandi, reached approximately 5% of children (~300,000) in Burundi. This national cash transfer programme provided a unique opportunity to integrate UNICEF know-how and expertise on cash-plus social protection, communication for development, health, nutrition, ECD and gender. In 2020, all 56,090 households (compared with 13,000 in 2019) benefited from the successful delivery of complementary interventions, providing them with key information on essential family care practices. Through real-time data collection evidence is already available on the positive impacts of the interventions on beneficiaries’ capacities to provide for their children (nutrition, health, education), on family cohesion and joint decision-making, self-confidence and ability to plan for the future.

UNICEF is implementing an ECD model involving different sectors. For example, ECD is
included in the health system via the 1,000 days agenda through nutrition rehabilitation centres at community level. The programme is still in its infancy but already 9 of 47 districts (19%) are implementing an integrated ECD intervention as part of their nutrition response package, and an estimated 30% of under-5 children are receiving early stimulation and responsive care from their parents/caregivers.

- With funding from the European Union, UNICEF is working with four NGOs, local authorities, child protection committees and solidarity groups in Ruyigi to design and document a model for a referral pathway to facilitate access to essential services, notably birth registration, protection services, education catch-up classes and skills-building to children and adolescents from repatriated and host communities. The NGO partners are Terre des Hommes, Fondation Stamm, JRS and BSF.

1.6. **Policy and advocacy**

- UNICEF assisted the Ministry of Communication in the design of a communication strategy to support implementation of the National Development Plan, with greater engagement of the communities, and 75 C4D focal points from all ministries and institutions in Burundi were trained on its application.
- UNICEF capitalized on its partnership with the Ministry of Finance and the University Centre for Economic and Social Development to develop sectoral budget briefs for financial year 2020/2021, complemented by dialogues on the citizen’s budget and on budget transparency. The allocation for health increased by 30% (representing 14% of the budget) and the one for social protection by 17% (representing 12% of the budget).
- UNICEF and partners supported a multisectoral plan for nutrition that was endorsed by the Government in 2020 and disseminated by the SUN platform in Burundi at a high-level meeting with development partners in December 2020.
- UNICEF was successful in advocating for the adoption of the National Child Protection Policy in 2020 and continued advocating for the promulgation of the Child Protection Code, which is expected to be adopted and disseminated in 2021.
UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

· In 2020, UNICEF worked closely with the United Nations family and other partners in generating and disseminating evidence and analysis and in implementing joint programmes. Strategic partnerships were leveraged leading to intensified commitments and increased visibility on public finance, child poverty and social protection. UNICEF was a key contributor to solid and widely accepted evidence, ensuring the needs of children are addressed in strategies, programmes and budgets, as well as COVID-19 response plans.

· Support from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund was key to the roll-out of the skills-building programme. Collaboration with United Nations agencies (UNFPA and UNDP) contributed to the scale-up of UPSHIFT. Funding from UNDP facilitated the set-up of the first physical innovation lab in Mayengo.

· UNICEF, UNDP and UNCDF successfully supported the Government in mobilizing resources from the SDG Fund, providing an unprecedented opportunity to develop strategies for investments in the SDGs, work on the enabling environment by building national capacity on public finance, generate evidence on key investments and explore engagement with the private sector.

· UNICEF initiated a strategic collaboration with the Government to conduct rigorous evaluations throughout the year, with two major evaluations to be finalized in early 2021, one on the Community Led Total Sanitation Approach and a second on major educational reform with the Ministry of education, which will contribute to the new education sector strategy.

· For the first time in 2020, Burundi prepared a voluntary national review on its progress towards the SDGs. UNDP was the lead agency and UNICEF with the support from its regional partner CLEAR, promoted the integration of evaluative evidence in the review which is a critical factor to track progress towards SDGs. UNICEF support also led to the addition of a chapter on child rights.

· Funding from the European Union and Swiss Development Cooperation was essential for the continued implementation of joint programming with WFP and FAO for improved food security and nutrition of children and their families in three provinces (Ngozi, Cankuzo, Ruyigi). Funding from the Government of France helped UNICEF and UN-Women launch an engagement with the private sector on production of nutritious food for children.

· For both EVD and COVID-19 preparedness and response, UNICEF continued to be seen by select donors as the lead agency to achieve joint results in partnership with IOM, WHO and WFP, and funding from UK Government and USAID. UNICEF continued to collaborate with UNHCR which is leading the Voluntary Repatriation Operation for Burundian refugees in Tanzania and Rwanda in identifying and providing support to unaccompanied children as well as referring unregistered children to birth registration services.

· While there is limited potential for working with the private sector, the blue soap initiative is a successful example of private sector engagement in Burundi. The collaboration with the Embassy of the Netherlands led to engagement with AUXFIN and an NGO called Spark that considers technical assistance to small soap producers to help them improve the quality of their products for better marketability.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

1.1. Learning from private sector engagement: The magnitude and nature of the partnership with Savonor was a first for UNICEF in Burundi and hence offers many lessons: • Combining strengths to achieve common goals: The overall experience with Savonor was marked by professionalism and efficiency. Its capacity to produce at scale was instrumental to the successful attainment of the project’s objectives. Savonor contributed its technological and organization capacities, as well as access to its markets, while UNICEF provided financial assets, facilitated stakeholder dialogues and did the advocacy work. This dynamic suggests that partnerships between humanitarian/development organizations and private enterprises could play an important role in achieving a set of common
objectives. Despite having different interests and objectives, by pooling complementary capacities and resources, the collaboration had the desired outcome. Hence UNICEF is exploring other models of private-public partnerships to provide services at scale.

1.2. Continued access to basic services during a pandemic – testing adaptive capacities:
· The Maternal and Child Health Weeks in Burundi (MCHW) are usually held twice yearly to help the most vulnerable children catch up on services. In 2020, they took place in July after much consultation and discussion with MoH and other partners. A major lesson from the innovative approach used for the MCHWs is that it was possible to conduct a door-to-door strategy, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 10,238 community health workers (CHWs) The campaign reached nearly 100% of its target (children 6-59 months), a major improvement from the previous approach. As the country is contemplating an exit strategy vis-à-vis campaigns that are costly, using CHWs in addition to the routine system could be a viable alternative.

1.3. The multisectoral nutrition package needs to be reinforced with more nutrition-sensitive interventions (WASH, ECD, social protection) and extended to over 80% of districts (from 19% currently) to accelerate the trend in stunting reduction. Therefore, it is critical to effectively implement the newly validated national strategy, backed with high level political commitment, including mobilization of resources. Involvement of all implementing partners, especially private, is also critical. At the sectoral reviews with MoH and key implementing partners (November 2020), all parties were pleased with the excellent collaboration and good performance of the programme. All planned direct cash transfers were within the requisite three-month time frame, which is a proof of better ownership of the programme by all partners, including the Government.

1.4. The relevance of innovation and digital technology to fragile contexts – not only a possibility but a necessity –
· The movement restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic pushed UNICEF to implement an innovative approach to continue engaging with adolescents and delivering the skills-building programme. The use of U-Report was brought to another level. Moving beyond a participation tool, the contents of the skills programme were simplified and delivered through the U-Report platform. The participation of Burundian adolescents in online youth challenges organized at global level demonstrated their interest and eagerness to access new opportunities for learning. It however showed that access to devices and the need for additional facilitation are barriers limiting adolescents’ equitable access to such opportunities. To address these issues, UNICEF acquired 1,200 tablets and is working on designing a blended learning skills programme that will be delivered through online and face-to-face methodology by making tablets available to groups of adolescents in solidarity groups. UNICEF is working with different partners, such as the Embassy of the Netherlands, to make digital learning platforms such as Atingi available to adolescents in Burundi. Adolescent entrepreneurs will access Yoma, a digital marketplace that will enable them to showcase products and gain access to regional markets.
· In partnership with Cartedo and 14 community-level youth organizations, UNICEF Burundi joined the COVID-19 Youth Challenge which aims to give a voice to adolescents; explore ideas to solve real challenges; and empower people and communities to become pandemic-resilient. A total of 1,722 adolescents (50% girls) joined the challenge. Burundian adolescents recorded the highest completion rate with 670 solutions designed and submitted on the platform. The top five solutions designed by adolescents were announced by the Minister of Youth during the International Day of Youth and UNICEF provided seed grants for their implementation while NGO partners ensured coaching. Solutions designed by adolescents included development of an online platform to ensure learning continuation and the creation of a rainwater filter. This was also an opportunity to showcase that, unlike the popular myth in Burundi, girls are not only interested in technology but can work with it effectively as three of the winners were girls.
· Increasing the use of beneficiary-focused information for decision-making has been a priority in 2020. To increase the office’s accountability to affected populations (AAP), the country office has
deployed a new Integrated Monitoring System to ensure that the voices of beneficiaries are at the center of monitoring and decision-making processes. The integrated system, which is in its pilot phase, ensures the availability of real-time data collected directly from communities and beneficiaries thanks to the integration of monitoring platforms such as U-Report and ONA. In 2020, 1,164 interviews with Merankabandi’s beneficiaries were conducted and data visualized real-time in ONA; 18 U-Reports have been launched and 18,820 respondents have participated. The system will enter its scaling-up phase in 2021.