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Theory of Change Paper, UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged

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I. Theory of Change overview

A. Introduction: theories of change and the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021

1. This paper complements the Strategic Plan by elaborating the broad Theory of Change that underpins it. This overarching Theory of Change summarizes how concrete actions that UNICEF takes at the country, regional and global levels contribute to the impacts and outcomes across each of the five goal areas of the plan, as well as the cross-cutting priorities of gender equality and humanitarian action. The paper also elaborates the more specific outcome-level theories of change that help to explain how UNICEF will contribute to the outcomes in the Strategic Plan and the assumptions and risks framing the organization's work in obtaining results.

2. The impact statement of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, is '***Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged***'. This envisaged impact will be contributed to through five Goal Areas:

(a) Every child survives and thrives;

(b) Every child learns;

(c) Every child is protected from violence and exploitation;

(d) Every child lives in a safe and clean environment;

(e) Every child has an equitable chance in life.

3. These areas continue to represent the greatest challenges to the world's children. It is only by making significant progress in all five areas, and the cross-cutting priorities of gender equality and humanitarian assistance, that the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged, will be realized. The Strategic Plan promotes synergies across goal areas to address early childhood development (ECD), adolescent development, and issues affecting children with disabilities. The goal areas are interlinked, reflecting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Progress under each goal area requires, and contributes to, progress under the others. For example, results in basic sanitation contribute to improvements in child survival and learning outcomes, while also promoting a clean environment in which children can live and play. Progress in basic sanitation can also promote gender equality.

4. Summarizing a global Theory of Change for a highly decentralized organization such as UNICEF continues to be challenging because so many of the expected results and related implementation strategies are nationally led and specific to a particular context. Furthermore, the change processes that are needed to realize the rights of all children, especially the most disadvantaged, are often non-linear and challenging to plan or predict with sufficient detail for the short to medium term. Therefore, the Theory of Change for the work of UNICEF globally needs to strike a balance: it must be rigorous and specific enough to provide strategic direction for the organization as a whole, while being flexible enough to allow sufficient scope for planning and decision-making based on the local context through country programmes of cooperation.

B. Overview of the Theory of Change

5. The purpose of all UNICEF work is to support realization of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. The foundation for this work, and for the theories of change, is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They are also strongly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, which provide a framework of action until 2030 and are the

basis for the UNICEF Strategic Plan and its Results Framework. The Strategic Plan and Results Framework, in turn, define the contribution of UNICEF to the 2030 Agenda.

6. The theories of change are based on the UNICEF commitment to work with partners to respect, protect and promote human rights standards and principles, and fundamental freedoms for all children, without distinction of any kind whatsoever. Work under each goal area is linked to relevant articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. While UNICEF works to promote the rights of all children in its programming, advocacy and operations, it does so by starting with the most deprived, because a focus on equity accelerates progress towards achieving the rights of all children.

7. To capture the contribution of UNICEF to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, the organization has framed its work through 25 outputs contributing to 5 outcomes (goal areas). The UNICEF contribution to Agenda 2030 is measured through output indicators, baselines and targets. UNICEF formulated its outputs and the corresponding indicators based on several considerations: (a) whether results in its theories of change could be attributable to UNICEF (outputs) or whether UNICEF would be one of many partners contributing to a particular result (outcomes), (b) whether UNICEF could hold itself accountable for delivery of the related targets (yes, in the case of outputs), and (c) whether a result would be an accurate representation of the deliverables of UNICEF programmes at field level.

8. The consequence of this approach is that the results framework represents an accurate delineation of results for which UNICEF will be accountable for delivering (outputs) and those to which it will be accountable for contributing (outcomes). It also allows the output-level results and indicators to capture the full range of support that UNICEF provides in various country contexts, including efforts in the provision of services, including in humanitarian situations, capacity support for systems-strengthening, policy processes and normative work, including child rights monitoring and advocacy, and various types of support related to positive changes in social norms.

9. This approach to developing a Theory of Change and articulating the UNICEF contribution through output formulation is strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming. It is also based on lessons learned from the previous Strategic Plan, where it was not always easy to track the various types of contributions that UNICEF made at output level or to manage related accountabilities. It also responds to a recommendation of the Evaluability Assessment of the previous Strategic Plan to strengthen its design and application as a framework rather than as a prescriptive log frame that would apply a global and corporate results logic to nationally owned country programmes.

10. The UNICEF overarching Theory of Change also seeks to explain the link between change strategies and the delivery of outputs that contribute to higher-level results, including the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to capture the approaches that UNICEF is using to ensure that its programmes are effective in terms of both delivering results directly and leveraging the capacities and comparative advantages of others, the Strategic Plan Theory of Change identifies eight change strategies the organization uses across all five goal areas:

(a) Programming at-scale results for children;

(b) Gender-responsive programming;

(c) Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public;

(d) Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children;

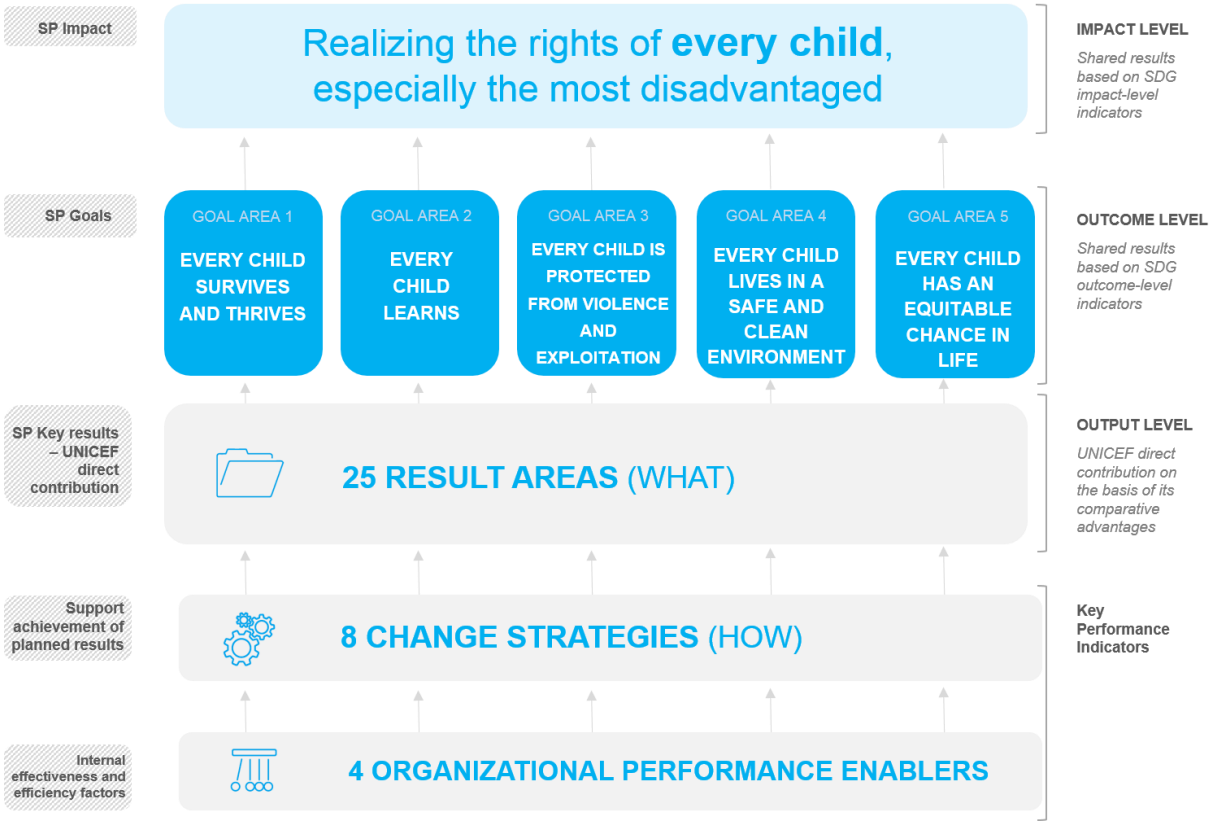
(e) Harnessing the power of business and markets for children;

(f) United Nations working together;

(g) Fostering innovation for children;

(h) Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.

Figure I
Results Framework Architecture



11. The theory of change model reflects all contributions of the organization for delivery of results, including staff members' efforts and financial resources. Supporting delivery on results and change strategies are four organizational performance enablers of greater efficiency, professionalism and ethics in the leadership, management and administration of the organization. These enablers comprise four interconnected elements:

(a) Governance (modern, transparent and accountable governance for the organization);

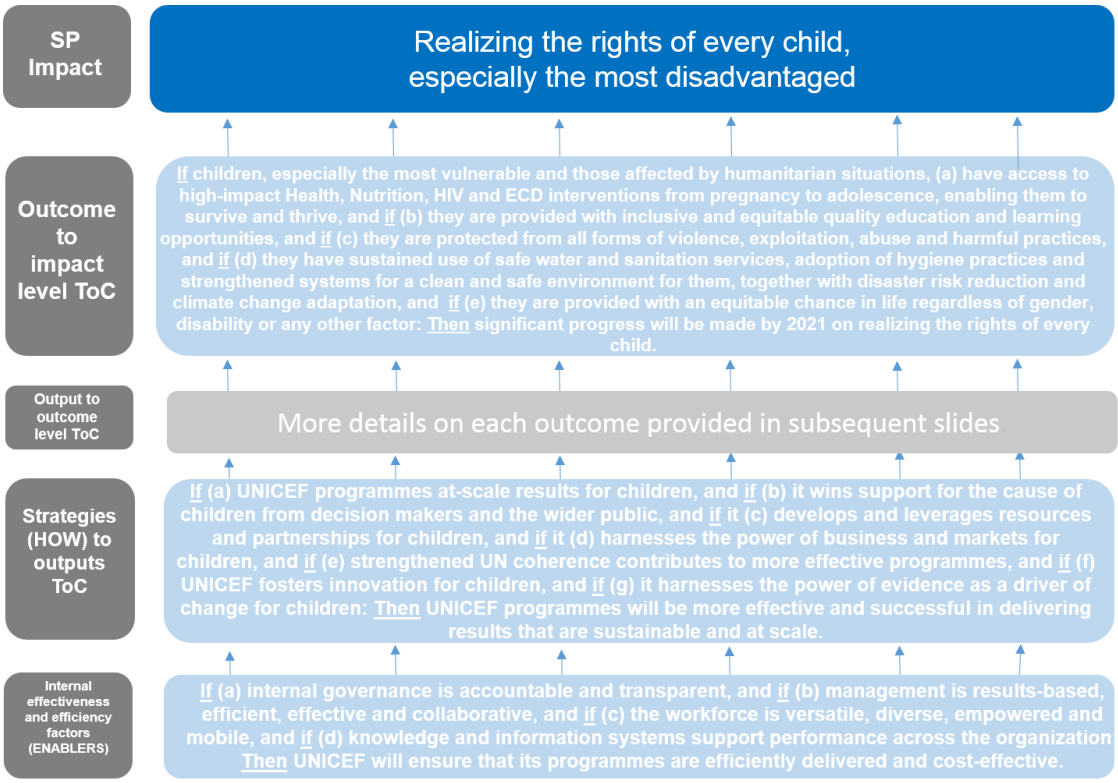
(b) Management (results-oriented, efficient, effective and collaborative);

(c) People (versatile staff, staff as agents of change);

(d) Knowledge and information systems (efficient, safe and secure, connecting results and people).

12. The model also avoids making humanitarian assistance a stand-alone area; instead, humanitarian response is integrated as a cross-cutting priority in the theories of change of each outcome level, and in the broader change strategies and the four categories of enablers. This is seen as strengthening humanitarian-development integration in all of UNICEF work and providing programming direction to UNICEF programmes. UNICEF performance in humanitarian response can nonetheless be tracked in the Strategic Plan Results Framework through specific indicators, tagged as humanitarian, under each outcome area. In developing the Theory of Change, UNICEF identified all associated assumptions and related risks. It also identified measures being taken to manage risks to achieving results under the Strategic Plan, ensuring that strategies and enablers respond more systematically to these risks.

Figure II
Strategic Plan Theory of Change



C. Goal Areas (outcomes)

13. To contribute to impact-level change, the Strategic Plan identifies five Goal Areas[1] that orient the organization's work for 2017–2021:

(a) **Goal Area (outcome) 1**: Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive.

(b) **Goal Area (outcome) 2**: Girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian situations, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.

(c) **Goal Area (outcome) 3**: Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.

(d) **Goal Area (outcome) 4**: Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices and strengthened systems for a clean and safe environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian situations.

(e) **Goal Area (outcome) 5**: Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life.

[1] Presented as outcomes in the Results Framework.

14. These outcomes represent major changes and progress in realizing the rights of children. However, the full achievement of these outcomes will not be solely attributable to UNICEF but rather will result from the combined and collaborative contributions of UNICEF and partners including those in government, the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector. UNICEF has already worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to identify results where there is "collaborative advantage". The work of the organizations will reflect this collaboration over the coming years. In subsequent chapters, this paper outlines the theories of change for each of these outcome areas.

D. Links to the Sustainable Development Goals and Convention on the Rights of the Child

15. UNICEF work under Goal Area 1 supports the achievement of the following Sustainable Development Goals: 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture); 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages); 4 (Promote lifelong learning); and 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) in both humanitarian and development contexts. The work supports articles 6 (right to life, survival and development) and 24 (right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The right to the highest attainable standard of health is also central to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNICEF, leveraging its comparative advantages in relation to those of other United Nations entities, will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal targets on neonatal and under-five mortality, on stunting, wasting and other forms of malnutrition, and on HIV and AIDS, while promoting ECD and adolescent health and nutrition.

16. Education (Goal Area 2) is a right enshrined in articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as other conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is also a driver of equity (including gender equity), poverty reduction, empowerment, peaceful and inclusive societies and economic growth. Education – especially of girls – is a particularly transformative force, in both humanitarian and development contexts. Evidence shows that educating girls and women has the power to transform gender relations in society and the economy. Girls with primary and secondary education are up to six times less likely to marry as children than girls with three years of schooling. Thus, educating girls can contribute to reducing the rate of early marriage. In addition, a mother's educational attainment is a strong contributing factor in reducing child mortality and increasing her child's school attendance. Education also has a significant impact in promoting and sustaining peace, and mounting evidence points to the strong role of equitable quality education in building peaceful, inclusive societies.[2] Education and learning therefore support (and are supported by) the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all). The importance of leaving no child behind, particularly for the most marginalized girls and boys and children in humanitarian situations has been emphasized. Further linkages exist with most Goals, including 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries), 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable

[2] See for example, C. Omoeva, C. & E. Buckner, (April 2015), "Does horizontal education inequality lead to violent conflict? A global analysis", Washington, D.C.: FHI360 Global Data Center; and Omoeva, C.; Hatch, R. & Moussa, W. (2016), "The Effects of Armed Conflict on Educational Attainment and Inequality", Washington, D.C.: FHI360 Global Data Center.

development) and 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all).

17. Through Goal Area 3, UNICEF will work to ensure that every girl and boy is protected from violence, exploitation and harmful practices, in both humanitarian and development contexts, regardless of wealth, location, age, disability, gender, ethnicity, language or minority status. Outcome 3 supports the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals and targets, in particular: 16 (ending violence against children, and abuse, exploitation, trafficking and torture of children, and promoting their access to justice); 8 (ending all forms of child labour) and 5 (ending all harmful practices/violence against girls and women), but also 4 (quality education) and 3 (good health and well-being). The commitment of UNICEF to achieving equitable and improved prevention of and response to violence, exploitation and harmful practices is central to realizing the rights of every child, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, including rights to life, survival and development, and protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices, and the impacts of conflict, as well as the right to access to justice. These rights are also central to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

18. Goal Area 4 prioritizes a clean, safe and secure environment for children, a right enshrined in article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This outcome contributes to several Sustainable Development Goals: 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all); 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable); 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts); and 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). For example, the provision of equitable and sustainable water and sanitation has a significant impact on reducing the burden of disease and stunting, increasing school attendance for children, especially girls, and getting people out of the vicious cycle of reduced productivity and loss of incomes.

19. Goal Area 5 aims to address the key dimensions of inequity that prevent children from realizing their rights. It supports the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, in particular: 1, 5 and 10. It supports implementation of articles 2, 4, 23, 26, 27 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

E. Outputs

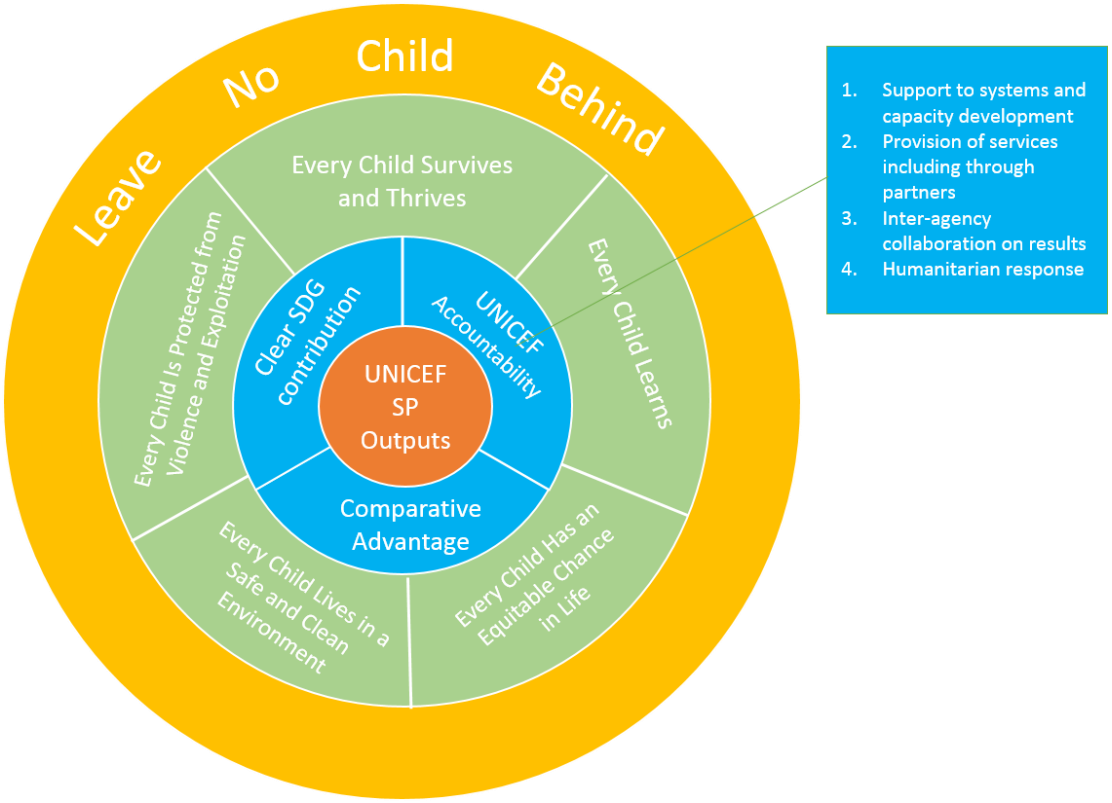
20. For each of the five Goal Areas (outcomes), UNICEF has identified a number of outputs that require the organization's leadership and contribution to outcome-level change and by extension to the related Sustainable Development Goals targets. In developing the outputs, UNICEF sought to formulate results for which it has the mandate and comparative advantage.

21. The output-level results and indicators capture the full range of support that UNICEF provides in various country contexts (including in humanitarian situations), such as direct service provision, systems-strengthening, policy processes and normative work, advocacy, and various types of support related to positive changes in social norms. The main focus is on the change in the capacities of countries for at-scale and results for children. This approach to output formulation is based on a lesson learned from the Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, where it was not always easy to track the various types of contributions that UNICEF made. The approach also responds to a recommendation of the Evaluability Assessment of the Strategic Plan on strengthening the design and application of the plan as a framework that guides the development and implementation of nationally owned country programmes, rather than a strict logframe.

22. Output formulation was also guided by the definition provided in the Results-Based Management Handbook of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), which specifies

that outputs are ‘changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions’, or ‘the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities’ within a development intervention within the control of the organization. They are achieved ‘with the resources provided and within the time period specified’ and ‘are the level of result in which the clear comparative advantages of individual agencies emerge and accountability is clearest. Outputs are linked to those accountable for them, giving the results chain a much stronger internal logic’.[3]

Figure III
Output definition ‘lens’ in Theory of Change design



23. The outputs were identified (see figure III) by using a programming lens that focused in the first instance on child rights and equity, then the specific goal areas/outcomes to which UNICEF would contribute with partners (including the broader United Nations development system) and finally by focusing on results for which UNICEF could be held accountable, had a recognized comparative advantage, and represented a clear contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals targets.

24. The related theory of change, strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming, from output to outcome level is summarized on the following table:

Table 1: Theory of Change relationships of outcomes to outputs

Goal Area (Outcome) Statement	Output to outcome level
Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in	***If*** countries accelerate the scale-up of an essential package of maternal and newborn

[3] https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf.

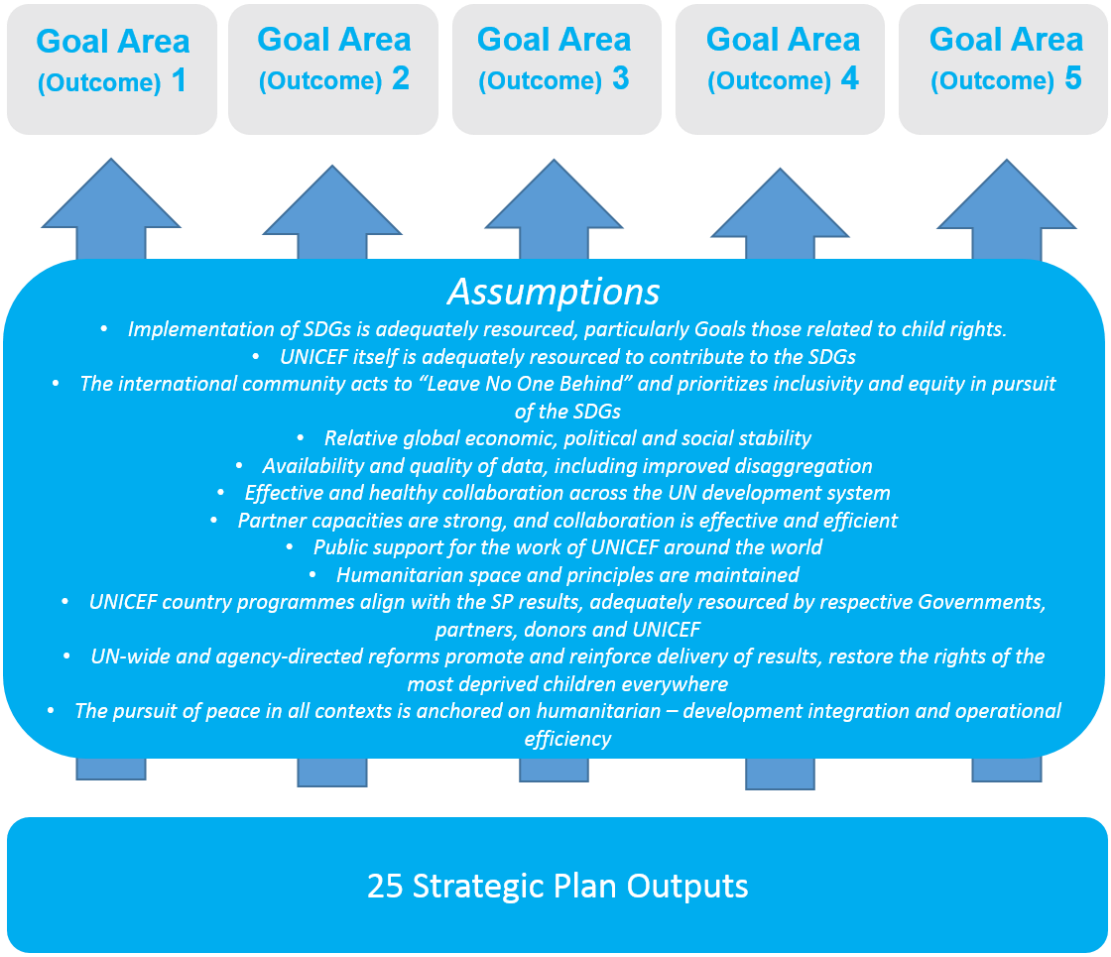
Goal Area (Outcome) Statement	Output to outcome level
humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive.	care services including prenatal and postnatal/home visit support, and ***if*** they have sustained immunization programmes at national and district level, including introduction of new vaccines, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of preventive, promotive and curative services for pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and other child health conditions, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of programmes for the prevention of stunting and other forms of malnutrition, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of services for the treatment of severe wasting and other forms of severe acute malnutrition, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of services for the treatment and care of children living with HIV, and ***if*** they implement comprehensive HIV-prevention interventions at scale, and ***if*** they institutionalize the delivery of quality early childhood development services as part of the health platform, and ***if*** they develop programmes to deliver gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition: ***Then*** girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have the chance to survive and thrive in their communities.
Girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian situations, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.	***If*** countries have strengthened education systems for gender-equitable access to quality education from early childhood to adolescence, including children with disabilities and minorities, and ***if*** they have strengthened their education systems for gender-equitable learning outcomes, including early learning, and ***if*** they have institutionalized skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability: ***Then*** every child, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, can learn.
Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.	***If*** countries have strengthened child protection systems for prevention and response services to address violence against children, and ***if*** they have strengthened prevention and protection services to address harmful practices (FGM/C and child marriage), and ***if*** they have improved systems to protect children that come in contact with the law and to treat them in accordance with international standards: ***Then*** girls and boys will be better protected from violence and exploitation.
Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices and strengthened	***If*** countries implement programmes to increase equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water services in communities, and ***if***

Goal Area (Outcome) Statement	Output to outcome level
systems for a clean and safe environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian situations.	they have implemented programmes to increase equitable access to sanitation and hygiene and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations, and ***if*** they adopt policies, strategies and programmes that address risks related to disasters, conflict and public health emergencies, and ***if*** they initiate action towards ensuring that urban settings are child responsive, and ***if*** they have child-focused plans and monitoring systems for environmental sustainability: ***Then*** children will be able to grow and develop in a more safe and secure environment.
Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life.	***If*** countries have national plans to reduce multidimensional child poverty, and ***if*** they strengthen national social protection systems to address the needs of most disadvantaged children, and ***if*** they institutionalize measures to involve adolescents in decisions affecting their lives and communities, and ***if*** they have scaled-up programmes to overcome gender-discriminatory roles, expectations and practices, and ***if*** they implement inclusive programmes and services to promote participation of children with disabilities in society: ***Then*** more vulnerable children will have a fair chance in life.

F. Risks and assumptions

25. Assumptions related to each outcome are presented in the outcome-by-outcome sections in this paper. However, an analysis of the common assumptions across most outcome areas and in the development of the overarching Theory of Change provides the following set of critical assumptions in relation to the Strategic Plan. These assumptions represent the implicit beliefs or understandings contained in the theories of change that explain the expectation of change that underlies the links between levels of results (e.g., outcomes to outputs).

Figure IV
Output to Goal Area (Outcome) Link



26. There are some risks specific to the various results levels of the overarching Theory of Change, to certain outcomes in the Strategic Plan, and to certain operating contexts. However, the following risks were identified as being among the most significant horizontally (across all outcome areas) and vertically (having potential for negative impact on assumptions at multiple levels in the Theory of Change). These risks, shown in Table 2, are the main threats to the assumptions holding true in the context of the Theory of Change.

Table 2: Risks and mitigation measures in the Theory of Change

Risk	UNICEF measure
Insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda	It is important that national Governments, civil society, and the United Nations -system entities, including UNICEF, have sufficient funds to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals targets. Sources of resources need to include national budgets and development assistance from the public and private sectors, with a likely increase in portion from the private sector. To obtain the maximum results from funding, UNICEF will make efficient use of funds,

Risk	UNICEF measure
	obtaining "value for money" via cost-effective programmes and decision-making on internal processes and expenditures. In addition to improving its internal efficiency and effectiveness, UNICEF will advocate for and engage in resource mobilization on behalf of national governments and the United Nations system.
Decrease in humanitarian space, unpredictable and additional humanitarian emergencies	UNICEF has the experience and capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies quickly and effectively, particularly given its field-level experience and partnerships on the ground in many countries. UNICEF takes an integrated approach to humanitarian work, which encompasses humanitarian response, risk prevention and sustainable development/building resilience. As part of this, supports governments, civil society, and other partners in disaster preparedness and response, developing their capacity to plan for and respond to humanitarian situations. This includes training and technical assistance, and building the resilience of communities and families to deal with shocks. These measures are undertaken collaboratively with other United Nations agencies in support of national priorities and systems and communities (for example, by supporting governments to develop social protection systems that extend social assistance also to people in disaster response or humanitarian situations). These measures are integrated into existing or developing social protection systems and poverty-reduction programmes. However, in some humanitarian situations, obtaining access to those in need might be unachievable, particularly where parties to conflict are immune to international pressure.
Inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies	UNICEF works systematically to develop the capacities of partners, including civil society, to implement and monitor prevention and response in emergencies, including sudden and complex emergencies. This capacity is often limited. UNICEF will continue to invest in stronger systems and approaches to gather, analyse and use evidence. Complementing this effort, the organization also sees a mobile, versatile workforce, enabled by agile deployment arrangements, as an important means of strengthening implementation capacity where it is most needed, including in sudden-onset emergencies.

Risk	UNICEF measure
A varying focus on results for children among United Nations partners working together	As noted in the Strategic Plan, UNICEF will work with others in the United Nations development system in aligning efforts behind the Sustainable Development Goals and will use the concepts of collaborative advantage and comparative advantage to determine the best approach. With efforts linked to those implementing the Goals, UNICEF will work to leverage the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process at country level to ensure better integration of the needs and rights of girls and boys into the United Nations development system's country-level plans and strategies.
Adequacy of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together	The new UNDAF is an opportunity to better manage the complementary programming processes and systems across United Nations agencies, and as noted above, UNICEF will be fully engaged. UNICEF will also continue to fully embrace and work in "Delivering as one" contexts and through the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in cases where the Government has asked the United Nations Country Team to adopt that approach. It is anticipated that the SOPs-linked growing flexibility in business operations will increase inter-operability among key United Nations partners.
Challenges in implementing multisectoral approaches	Implementation of the interlinked and integrative Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda will require a strong and agile cross-sectoral and multisectoral approach of the United Nations system. Progress on many of UNICEF results is interlinked, reflecting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda. A number of UNICEF implementation strategies will be central to managing this risks and challenges in harnessing this approach and exploiting the synergies created by multisectoral work. The Strategic Plan and Theory of Change promote synergies across multiple Goal Areas to address issues such as ECD, adolescent development, and issues affecting children with disabilities, and they include cross-cutting approaches in gender and humanitarian work.
Continued broad political and public support for child rights and equity	UNICEF's change strategies are particularly important in ensuring that there is broad public and political support for child rights and equity. For example, UNICEF will use its many partnerships to leverage wider change nationally and globally through advocacy, communications and campaigns. UNICEF will also build public support around the world to

Risk	UNICEF measure
	volunteer, advocate and mobilize resources for the cause of children, and works with partners to achieve an even greater impact. Advocacy will continue to be a significant element of UNICEF's work under all of its outcomes and it will continue working with others to build alliances and movements for change and progress, in order to ensure that no child is left behind. For example, UNICEF will run a child survival and thrive campaign that will involve country offices and national committees to engage with policy-makers at national and international level to advocate for universal health coverage for all children under 5 and pregnant women, to help raise funds for Health and Nutrition programmes and to empower people as well as businesses, foundations and other organizations to engage with communities and governments to ensure that every pregnant woman, mother and young child has access to adequate health care and nutrition. UNICEF will also work to harness the power of evidence as a driver of change for children. Evaluations, research and data will be key elements of sound programming, advocacy and leveraging partnerships for children and ensuring broad public and political support.
Capacities of national partners to operationalize strategies and responses with UNICEF and sustain progress	UNICEF implementation strategies will be a key part of managing this risk to the Strategic Plan's vision and results. Specifically, the strategy of winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public, and harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children will emerge as two key pillars of the UNICEF approach to managing this risk. UNICEF focuses on the development of national capacity in a number of areas: planning, decision-making, budgeting, gathering and utilizing data and humanitarian prevention and response actions.

27. In addition, the eight Change Strategies (HOWs) and the four Enablers in the Theory of Change represent a strategic response to the major risks that characterize UNICEF-supported programmes around the world. UNICEF measures to manage assumptions and their related risks are outlined in greater detail in subsequent sections.

G. Implementation strategies (HOWs)

28. With human rights standards and principles at the core of its activities, UNICEF delivers change by combining rights-based, gender-responsive, and high-quality programmes at scale, harnessing innovation and collecting evidence, in partnership with governments, United Nations partners, civil society, the private sector, communities and children. It uses these to leverage wider change nationally and globally through advocacy, communications and campaigning. UNICEF also builds public support around the world for volunteering,

advocacy and mobilizing resources for the cause of children, and works with partners to achieve an ever-greater impact. The Strategic Plan Theory of Change identifies eight change strategies that the organization uses across its work in all five outcome areas:

(a) Programming at-scale results for children;

(b) Gender-responsive programming;

(c) Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public;

(d) Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children;

(e) Harnessing the power of business and markets for children;

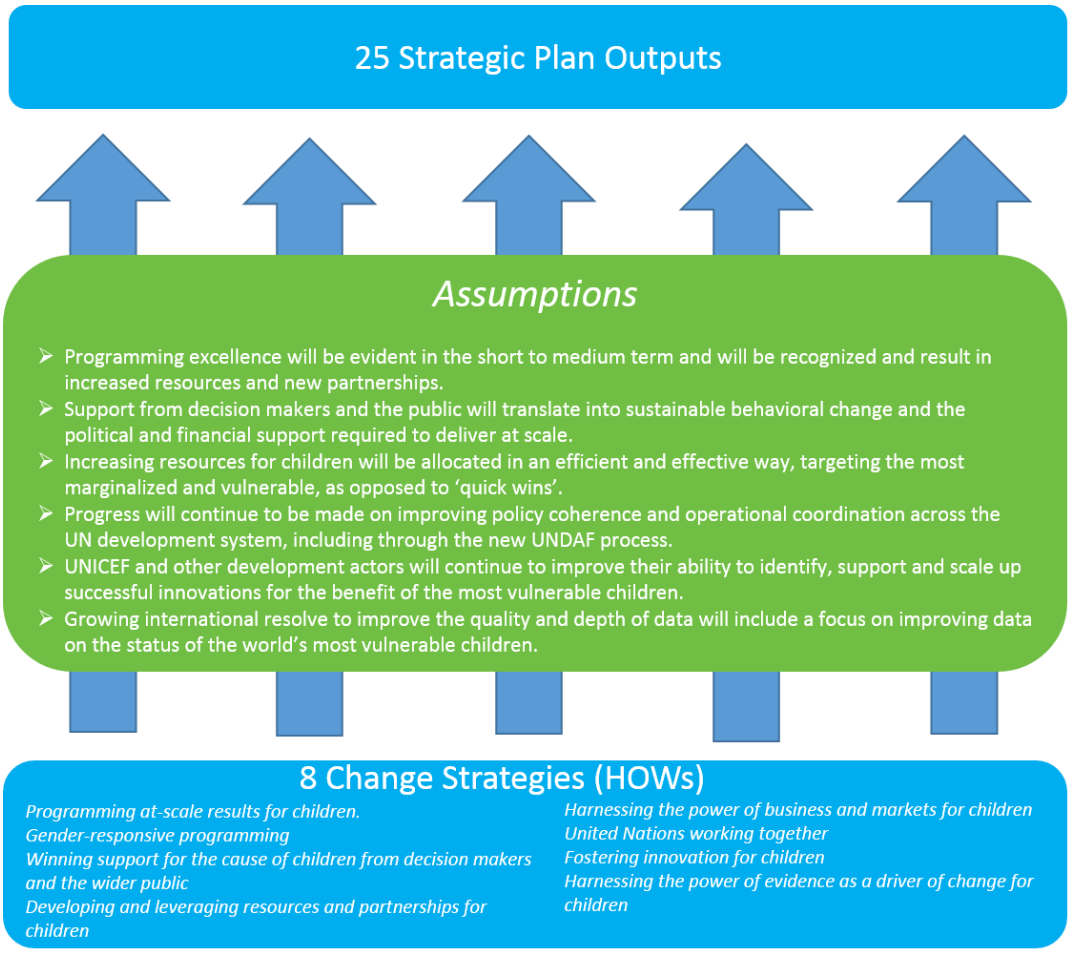
(f) United Nations working together;

(g) Fostering innovation for children;

(h) Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.

29. These strategies indicate the link between organizational effectiveness and efficiency and the delivery of outputs that contribute to higher level results, including the Sustainable Development Goals. They help to ensure that UNICEF-supported programmes are effective in both delivering gender-responsive results directly and in leveraging the capacities and comparative advantages of others, and that critical risks are managed in a systematic way. The strategies are also consistent with and reinforce the principles that provide the normative foundation for the UNDAF and integrated programming in all country contexts, with "Leave no one behind" as the overarching and unifying principle, underpinned by human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, sustainability and resilience, and accountability.

Figure V
Change Strategies (HOWS) to Output Link



30. There are assumptions inherent in linking the implementation strategies with improved programmatic performance in delivering outputs that contribute to outcome-level change:

(a) Programming at-scale results will be evident in the short to medium-term and will be recognized and result in increased resources and new partnerships;

(b) UNICEF will strengthen its capacity for gender analysis and gender-responsive programming;

(c) Support from decision makers and the public will translate into behavioural change and the political and financial support required to deliver at scale;

(d) Resources for children will be allocated in an efficient and effective way, targeting the most marginalized and vulnerable as opposed to 'quick wins';

(e) Progress will continue to be made on improving policy coherence and operational coordination across the United Nations development system, including through the new UNDAF process;

(f) UNICEF and other development actors will continue to improve their ability to identify, support and scale up successful innovations for the benefit of the most vulnerable children;

(g) Growing resolve to improve the quality and depth of data will include a focus on improving data disaggregation.

31. The Theory of Change statement that captures how the change strategies contribute to higher-level results is the following: ***If*** (a) UNICEF programmes at-scale results for children, and ***if*** (b) that programming is gender-responsive, and ***if*** (c) it wins support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public, and ***if*** (d) UNICEF develops and leverages resources and partnerships for children, and ***if*** (e) it harnesses the power of business and markets for children, and ***if*** (f) strengthened United Nations coherence contributes to more effective programmes, and ***if*** (g) UNICEF can foster innovation for children, and ***if*** (h) it can harness the power of evidence as a driver of change for children, ***Then:*** UNICEF programmes will be more effective and successful in delivering results that are sustainable and at scale.

H. Organizational performance enablers

32. The Theory of Change also captures four organizational performance enablers that refer most directly to efficiency, professionalism and ethics in the leadership, management and administration of the organization. These enablers support the delivery of results and change strategies and comprise four interconnected elements:

(a) Governance (modern, transparent and accountable governance for the organization);

(b) Management (results-oriented, efficient, effective and collaborative);

(c) People (versatile staff, staff as agents of change);

(d) Knowledge and information systems (efficient, safe and secure systems connecting results and people).

33. The theory of Change statement that captures how the change strategies contribute to higher level results is the following: ***If*** (a) internal governance is accountable and transparent, and ***if*** (b) management is results-based, efficient, effective and collaborative, and ***if*** (c) the workforce is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile, and ***if*** (d) knowledge and information systems support performance across the organization, ***Then:*** UNICEF will ensure that its programmes are efficiently delivered and cost-effective.

II. Goal Area 1 theory of change

A. Summary

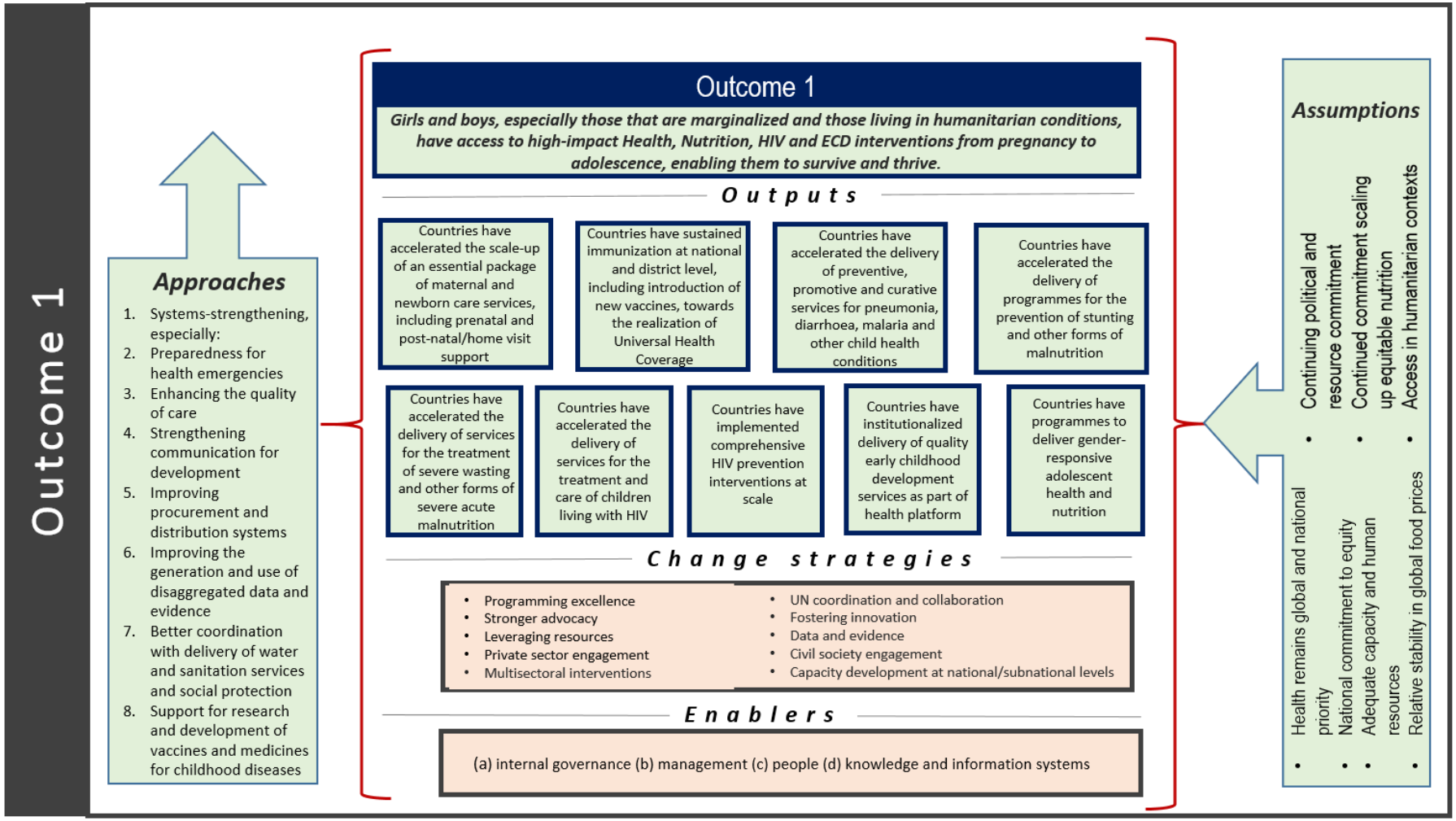
34. Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive.

Theory of Change Statement: ***If*** countries accelerate the scale-up of an essential package of maternal and newborn care services, including prenatal and post-natal/home-visit support, and ***if*** they have sustained immunization programmes at national and district levels, including introduction of new vaccines, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of preventive, promotive and curative services for pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and other child health conditions, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of programmes for the prevention of stunting and other forms of malnutrition, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of services for the treatment of severe wasting and other forms of severe acute malnutrition, and ***if*** they accelerate the delivery of services for the treatment and care of children living with HIV, and ***if*** they implement comprehensive HIV-prevention interventions at scale, and ***if*** they institutionalize the delivery of quality early childhood development services as part of the health platform, and ***if*** they develop programmes to deliver gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition: ***Then*** girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have the chance to survive and thrive in their communities.

35. UNICEF's contribution and approach across this goal area reaches beyond survival in young children to attaining the growth and developmental potential and well-being of all children and adolescents. UNICEF will continue to focus on the most vulnerable children in both development and humanitarian settings. Throughout these critical years up to the age of 18, children remain free from illness and death from preventable causes such as HIV and they enjoy good nutrition and good cognitive development. Their health and well-being is enhanced by clean water and sanitation in their homes and communities, and enabled by the care, protection and education they receive from their families and in their communities.

36. In nearly all countries, there are numerous lost opportunities to address survival and development within the existing systems and resources, where services are often delivered in silos or do not sufficiently address the causal factors that determine health, growth and development outcomes throughout childhood and adolescence. The lifecycle view promoted by UNICEF in this goal area envisages the delivery of a range of integrated services through strengthened health platforms and a multisectoral approach to health, bringing caregivers and families closer to the health systems they rely on, and improving system linkages at household, community and facilities levels. As part of this approach, health platforms for the frontline delivery of antenatal care, delivery, post-natal care, immunization and HIV prevention, and community health workers, schools and childcare centres, provide the opportunity for an integrated delivery of services that are child-oriented and holistic and offer better value for money. These are health systems centred in people. They allow for systems and policies to cohere and converge around the whole child and the family, and they serve towards the realization of the rights of children and adolescents to life and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (articles 6 and 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNICEF continues to generate and consolidate evidence in support of an integrated approach, towards the adoption of better policies, more targeted programmes and more effective service delivery and reach, to the health and well-being all children and adolescents.

Figure VI
Outcome 1



B. Context

Leaving no child behind

37. Despite commendable progress on child survival, deep inequities persist within and across countries in helping children not only survive but also thrive. In 2016, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia accounted for more than 80 per cent of global under-five mortality. Compared to children in the highest income group within many countries, the poorest children are nearly twice as likely to die before the age of 5, twice as likely to be stunted, and five times more likely to be out of school. More than 40 per cent of children under 5 are at risk of not reaching their physical, cognitive, psychological and/or social and emotional potential due to poverty or poor health and nutrition.

38. Infectious diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria remain the leading causes of death among children under 5, with neonatal mortality accounting for a growing proportion of deaths among this age group. Malnutrition is an underlying cause of approximately half of under-five deaths, resulting in about 3 million preventable child deaths each year. Among those who survive, severe acute malnutrition (SAM) contributes to perpetuate stunted growth and other forms of malnutrition, affecting children's prospects of surviving and thriving in all areas of their lives.

39. Of all people living with HIV, children under 5 face the highest risk of AIDS-related death. Children living with HIV are at increased risk of neurological and neuropsychological problems. AIDS also remains a leading cause of death among adolescents. New HIV infections among adolescents are projected to rise from 250,000 in 2015 to nearly 400,000 annually by 2030 if progress in reaching adolescents with comprehensive HIV knowledge and prevention services stalls.

40. Improving infants' and young children's diet is critical to reduce stunting, which affects an estimated 155 million children. Breast milk provides all the energy and nutrients an infant needs in the first six months of life, and it continues to be an important component of children's diet until at least 2 years of age. It is therefore critical to protect, promote and support breastfeeding practices, particularly among the most vulnerable populations.

41. Regarding the amount and quality of diet, half of young children aged 6-23 months are not being fed the minimum number of times a day and less than one third are fed at least four food groups during this critical period of growth and development. In all regions, children from the poorest households suffer the worst rates of dietary diversity in all regions, but even in the richest households, far too many young children are not being fed a minimally diverse diet.

42. Vitamin A supplementation among under-fives reduces mortality. Delivered in Child Health Days and other campaign-style events, vitamin A supplementation is more equitable than most other child survival interventions, but coverage is nevertheless higher among the rich than the poor. Iodine deficiency is a major cause of preventable cognitive impairment and can be effectively controlled through salt iodization. Previous analyses indicated that that iodized salt use was directly related to wealth, but more recent analyses led by UNICEF found no predictable patterns of disparity in relation to relative wealth.

43. On the other hand, anaemia prevalence shows clear inverse associations with wealth, and is generally higher in women than in men. Iron-deficiency anemia is leading cause of disability because it stunts physical and mental growth. It is a particular concern for adolescent girls, as their nutritional status affects not only their health during pregnancy but also their ability to learn and function fully in society.

44. Children with SAM face an increased risk of dying and require urgent treatment to save their lives. Scaling up the early detection and treatment of children with SAM is therefore critical. While the number of countries providing services for children with SAM and the

number of children admitted for treatment has steadily increased in the last six years, the scale-up of SAM management remains insufficient, currently reaching less than 1 in 5 of the estimated 17 million children who suffer from SAM. About three-quarters of the world's children with severe wasting live in lower-middle-income countries. Indeed, the burden of SAM is higher among children in non-emergency contexts; however, these children are less likely than children in emergency contexts to access treatment. Limited resources for the care of children with SAM remain a critical bottleneck to scaling up programmes.

45. Good progress has been made on reducing pneumonia – the largest single killer of children under age 5 – including due to scale-up of pneumococcal vaccine. Scale-up of this life-saving vaccine, along with Rotavirus vaccine– which protects against the most virulent strains of diarrhoea – in low-income countries has been supported by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Many children in middle-income countries do not have access to the vaccine, and given its impact, UNICEF will work with governments and industry to increase access. Similarly, including due to climate change and urbanization, cases of mosquito-transmitted disease are increasing. Extra effort will be made to help countries increase coverage of Yellow Fever and Meningitis vaccines to reduce and prevent epidemics.

46. Gender inequality is one of the three most fundamental inequalities humanity faces (along with poverty- and geography-based inequality). While progress was made on a number of fronts for women and girls under the Millennium Development Goals – including in health, nutrition and HIV – women and girls continue to struggle under significant levels of disadvantage and burden in relation to men and boys in all parts of the world. In poor communities and societies, these disadvantages tend to be multifold. Roughly 300,000 women per year still die from preventable causes related to childbirth and pregnancy; some 99 per cent of these deaths occur in developing countries. Adolescent girls' risk is higher than that of women, with complications relating to childbirth being the leading cause of death among girls 15–19 years of age.[4] Furthermore, gender inequalities, high physiologic needs, and lack of empowerment are important drivers of poor nutrition among women and their offspring. For example, anaemia prevalence is generally higher in women than in men, and anaemia shows clear inverse associations with wealth. Iron supplementation (often coupled with folic acid) effectively reduces anaemia among pregnant and non-pregnant women and adolescents. Among pregnant women, it is also linked to reductions in low birthweight and subsequent reductions in child stunting and anaemia.

47. Gender and other social and economic inequalities heighten the vulnerability of adolescent girls to HIV and AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region most impacted by HIV, girls account for three out of every four new infections among adolescents aged 15–19.[5] In 2015, 450,000 new infections occurred among adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 years, which translates into approximately 8,600 new infections per week, the vast majority of them in southern Africa. The persistent patterns that characterize the epidemic in adolescent girls and boys – slow progress in the reduction in new infections, rising mortality, predominance of new infections in adolescent girls and vulnerability of key adolescent populations – underscore the need to reach the hard-to-reach and to address gender equality issues in HIV prevention, treatment and support.

Humanitarian response, risk and sustainable development

48. A key determinant of children's well-being today is whether they live in fragile, conflict-affected, or disaster-prone contexts: such children are twice as likely to die before the age of 5, to be out of school, or to lack access to safe water. Disasters and conflict exacerbate the most common causes of childhood illness and death, including diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria, malnutrition and neonatal causes due to disruption of health systems and essential services. Young children living through crises and fragility are exposed to high

[4] WHO, "Maternal Mortality", November 2016. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/.
[5] UNESCO (2007), "Education for all –Strong foundations: early childhood, care and education".

levels of toxic stress that have a significant negative impact on their brain development and functioning. As populations are displaced away from shelter and services, their exposure to health and nutrition risks increases. Conflict and displacement exacerbate the risk of HIV transmission due to increased vulnerability to sexual violence, interrupted access to prevention and health care and protection systems as well as engagement in negative coping mechanisms such as transactional sex. Families lose access to social safety networks, and the needs of the youngest children become even greater as their vulnerability increases.[6]

49. According to the World Bank, 35 countries and territories faced the twofold challenge of fragile situations and a reversal in progress in maternal, newborn and child health. New epidemics, such as Zika, affect newborns, the most vulnerable of population groups. The discovery of previously undetected wild poliovirus cases in Nigeria in August 2016 is a potent reminder of the need for continued vigilance in the fight against the spread of infectious diseases. Mass migration across national borders underscores the need for global health agencies, including UNICEF, to invest in innovative approaches for routine surveillance and reinforce the resilience of national health systems.

50. In humanitarian situations, key life-saving and preventative interventions must be scaled up to reduce excess morbidity and mortality and protect gains in nutrition status, prevention of HIV and treatment of women and children with HIV. At the same time, to ensure more resilient communities it is necessary to increase attention to strengthening flexible delivery systems and services to anticipate and prepare for the risks of disaster, conflict, climate change and other shocks.

C. Lessons learned 2014–2017

51. A number of the lessons highlighted in the Strategic Plan document have particular bearing on UNICEF work under Goal Area 1. Of particular importance is the lesson learned by UNICEF and its partners that investing in the health and survival of the most deprived children is not only right in principle, but also cost-effective and providing greater impact. Indeed, the 2017 UNICEF report *Narrowing the gaps: the power of investing in the poorest children*, demonstrates that investing in the health and survival of the most deprived children and communities provides more value for money than other investments. It saves almost twice as many lives for every $1 million spent as do equivalent investments in less-deprived groups. Such investment is also entirely consistent with the 2030 Agenda and the call to 'leave no one behind' and reach the 'furthest behind first'. It is also a cornerstone of UNICEF programming under Goal Area 1. As elsewhere across UNICEF work, there continue to be lessons related to the need to scale up equity-focused programming and advocacy, including through better targeting of interventions to focus on these most disadvantaged children and the strengthening of national systems.

52. An important lesson learned has been the need to address the social determinants of child survival, growth and development, which are the same across ECD, health, HIV and nutrition. Numerous opportunities are lost and resources wasted by not addressing children's survival and development at the same time.

53. There is clear evidence of the effectiveness of high-impact, low-cost interventions for maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition. Such interventions have been instrumental in the decline in under-five mortality rates since 1990 of more than 50 per cent in all regions. However, in many countries significant gaps remain in service coverage, quality and resilience of health systems and communities, including the capacity to introduce new technologies and widen market access to them. A systems approach is therefore critical to address the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, ensure sustainability of results achieved, build resilience and realize the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals targets. To address this, UNICEF, with national and United Nations partners, has developed

[6] Ibid.

its approach to health systems-strengthening, including paying attention to community engagement, strengthening national child-health policy and financing, and multisectoral engagement.

54. Important lessons were also learned from the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa for UNICEF and for the broader United Nations development system. Promoting healthy behaviours and risk-reduction requires approaches tailored to the norms and dynamics of each community, recognizing the possibility of enormous cultural and behavioural variations, even in small countries. It is difficult to launch such approaches in response to an emergency if there has not been prior investment in a cadre of trained health workers, social mobilization and communication for development (C4D) work. The supply function is also critical in health emergencies, to ensure the availability of rapid diagnostic tests and of vaccines specific to each virus. A related lesson is that sustainable response must be based on national resources and capacity, supported and strengthened by international resources.

55. An important nutrition lesson emerging from implementation of the current Strategic plan, 2014-2017, is that nutrition services aimed at prevention, when delivered at scale for the children who need them most, can bring about significant declines in stunting. Improved knowledge about the form, timing and delivery of nutrition interventions has contributed to scaling up nutrition interventions to unprecedented coverage levels, resulting in unprecedented progress. For example, the number of stunted children declined from 198 million in 2000 to 155 million in 2016. Three main drivers of stunting are poor maternal nutrition and care, poor child feeding and care practices, and poor access to nutritious and safe foods for children and women. A second nutrition lesson is that sustainable and effective SAM interventions should be community-based and integrated within existing routine services for children.

56. Key to the success of global efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV has been a combination of improving knowledge and attitudes about HIV, massive roll-out of services, delivered as “one pill once a day” within primary facilities, and decentralized services delivered at the point of health care. One lesson is that simpler antiretroviral therapy (ART) regimens, advances in reliable point-of-care HIV-testing approaches that do not need sophisticated laboratories, and provision of ART to pregnant women living with HIV (including close linkages with nutrition programmes) have proven very effective.

57. The importance of simpler HIV testing technologies and ART regimens delivered at the lowest levels of care is a lesson that has yet to be fully introduced in child health services supporting children living with HIV. To maintain the progress to date, it will be crucial to address the needs of people for continuous protection, care and treatment during emergencies. Vulnerability to the virus is heightened because of greater exposure to sexual violence and transactional sex to meet basic needs as well as interruption of health care services. Health and protection systems need to be built to anticipate those risks and needs, and must be prepared to deliver in exceptional circumstances.

58. The challenge of addressing HIV prevention and treatment in the second decade of life has been highlighted, but the experiences of 2014 and 2015 demonstrate that even more effort is required. Epidemiological evidence shows that new HIV infections continue to occur, mainly in adolescent populations, especially among adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa and marginalized populations outside Africa, and that HIV-related deaths continue to rise among adolescents. This points to the importance of tailoring prevention responses to the adolescent population through dialogue and engagement with adolescents themselves. The ‘All In’ initiative has mobilized commitment and action to address HIV among adolescents. Continued advocacy to address gender-related issues and avoid stigmatization of key populations is needed, as is scale-up of new technologies (e.g., injectables, home tests, etc.).

59. The UNICEF approach to gender mainstreaming, encapsulated in the UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP), provides a results-oriented and practical approach to addressing stubborn gender barriers and bottlenecks that hinder the achievement of gender-equitable outcomes.

The GAP approach has been validated by noticeable progress on both gender programming and institutional mainstreaming, even within the short timeframe of the last three years. The attention brought to specific gender inequities through the GAP targeted priorities has been successful in achieving results, especially around key interlinked issues for adolescent girls.

60. Mobilizing resources for health systems-strengthening and making programming responsive to country needs (high-burden versus middle-income countries) requires flexible and long-term investments. With resources for child health tied up in large, global vertical programmes, this presents a distinct challenge, particularly at a time when resource partners increasingly want to see immediate, short-term results.

D. Goal Area 1 theory of change

Overview

61. The aim of outcome 1 is to realize the rights of all children and adolescents to equitable survival, growth and development, including in humanitarian situations. Taking a life-course approach, the ambition of this outcome reaches beyond ending preventable deaths of young children to attaining the growth and developmental potential and well-being of all children and adolescents. Given the commonality in the social determinants of health, growth and development, integrated strategies that address the common and related causal factors are required. In nearly all countries there are numerous lost opportunities to address survival and development within the existing systems and resources.

62. Based on the Theory of Change and strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming, nine outputs for the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan were identified by UNICEF as its contributions to the outcome "Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive." Those outputs are intended to address inequities in child and adolescent outcomes and are as follows:

(a) Countries have accelerated the scale-up of an essential package of maternal and newborn care services including prenatal and post-natal/home-visit support;

(b) Countries have sustained immunization programmes at national and district level, including introduction of new vaccines, towards the realization of Universal Health Coverage;

(c) Countries have accelerated the delivery of preventive, promotive and curative services for pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and other child health conditions;

(d) Countries have accelerated the delivery of programmes for the prevention of stunting and other forms of malnutrition;

(e) Countries have accelerated the delivery of services for the treatment of severe wasting and other forms of severe acute malnutrition;

(f) Countries have accelerated the delivery of services for the treatment and care of children living with HIV;

(g) Countries have implemented comprehensive HIV prevention interventions at scale;

(h) Countries have institutionalized the delivery of quality early childhood development services as part of the health platform;

(i) Countries have developed programmes to deliver gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition.

63. UNICEF has renewed its focus on health system-strengthening, and in that context, will work with partners to ensure that girls and boys receive the essential package of routine services for child survival, growth and development and to expand options for community-based service delivery as part of primary health care programmes. For example, UNICEF actions to ensure that girls and boys receive services for the treatment of severe wasting and other forms of severe acute malnutrition is focused on the integration of SAM management into the essential package of routine services for children. This is expanding options for community-based service delivery in the context of Health System Strengthening. UNICEF will support decentralized programme management for children with SAM through bottleneck analysis to help identify, target and monitor key barriers to expansion of quality services.

64. UNICEF will work to link prevention and treatment services, and actively advocate and support better integration of regular health, nutrition and HIV-related services with key sectors such food security, ECD, health, social protection and WASH. The focus on health systems-strengthening prioritizes generating demand for disaggregated data (and its collection, analysis and use) and improved procurement, supply and distribution. It contributes to social protection systems that support the demand for health services and healthy behaviours, while bolstering efforts towards universal health coverage. It also supports engagement with the private sector and improving the quality of health care.

65. In humanitarian situations, as needed, UNICEF will support the delivery of scaled-up interventions through population- and community-based activities that will save lives. UNICEF will continue to support people's equitable access to essential health services with sustained coverage of high-impact preventative and curative interventions, including, where possible, life-saving treatment for children, adolescents and pregnant women living with HIV.

66. UNICEF focus on health system-strengthening also incorporates integrative approaches to humanitarian and development programming in the health sector. This is accomplished through emphasizing governance and financing, prioritizing community-level services and improving data and information systems, as well as through supporting improved domestic procurement and supply systems. Strong functioning in each of these areas is as critical to establishing healthy societies as it is to humanitarian responses in the health sector, and to effective responses to public health emergencies.

67. At the same time, emergency settings often require the flexibility and adaptability that characterize a well-functioning health system during a non-emergency period. They provide excellent opportunities to decentralize decision-making and budgeting according to local needs, to strengthen community engagement and participation, to improve local data-gathering and its use in planning, and to decentralize and establish adaptability in procurement and supply systems. After the emergency, all these activities will have contributed to a stronger and more resilient system.

68. The effectiveness of UNICEF interventions under Outcome 1 become evident in the extent to which the approaches and outputs are cost-effective and have maximum impact on the lives of vulnerable and marginalized children, so that every child survives and thrives. The effectiveness will be reinforced by the deployment of organizational programming strategies (the HOWs), described in the paragraphs below.

69. **Programming at-scale results for children**. UNICEF continues to exhibit the highest standards of results management across its work on health, nutrition, ECD and HIV/AIDS. In response to the call to leave no child behind, UNICEF programming will renew and heighten focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized children, improving sourcing, disaggregation and management of data on those left behind. Using this data, the organization will advocate and monitor their access to services, and assess the broader development impact of the work of UNICEF and its partners. It will also continue to foster cross-sectoral and multisectoral programming and support policy, capacity development and systems-

strengthening at the national and subnational levels to improve the delivery of essential services to the most disadvantaged children. For example, priority interventions to eliminate the paediatric HIV treatment gap focus on integrative approaches, including using community platforms as part of the integrated management of childhood illnesses and other child platforms (in both outpatient and inpatient services) and nutrition clinics. In these efforts, UNICEF will harness the power of C4D to encourage active community demand for quality services. Uptake of essential family practices will be promoted, as will community engagement and mobilization to improve the accountability of policymakers and service-providers and working with communities and service-providers to address social, behavioural and cultural determinants and norms to minimize the gap between supply and demand and to promote overall empowerment. This, combined with greater participation leads to predictable and sustained positive change and contributes to survive, thrive and transform outcomes. Key examples of such an approach include: engaging with communities, health workers, and religious and traditional leaders and using community-based processes, media, digital platforms and outreach to create demand for, and build trust and acceptance of, vaccines against polio and other diseases (measles, yellow fever, cholera, etc.); promoting antenatal care, assisted delivery and early exclusive breastfeeding; educating people about the danger signs of pneumonia and diarrhoea and the need to seek immediate care; and supporting and empowering communities to improve care and feeding practices, strengthen community systems, and better integrate nutrition interventions with those from other sectors.

70. **Winning support from decision makers and the broad public for universal health care that leaves no one behind, and for the well-being of children, adolescents and their families**. Advocacy will continue to be a significant element of UNICEF work under outcome 1 and UNICEF will continue working with others to build alliances and movements for change and progress, to ensure that no child is left behind and those furthest behind are prioritized, survive and thrive. UNICEF will run a child survival and thrive campaign that will involve country offices and National Committees to: engage with policymakers at national and international level to advocate for universal health coverage for all children under 5 and pregnant women, help raise funds for Health and Nutrition programmes, and empower people as well as businesses, foundations and other organizations to engage with communities and governments to ensure that every pregnant woman, mother and young child has access to adequate health care and nutrition. Previous advocacy in this goal area achieved the improved integration of micronutrient powders into infant and young child feeding programmes; more child-responsive food systems to be part of the priority nutrition agenda, and the push for the improvement of relevant policies/legislation. Advocacy also made the case for the prioritization of water and sanitation accessibility in health facilities to prevent maternal and newborn deaths as well as for contributing to quality of care for children with SAM, and for investments into ECD. Moreover, UNICEF will run a global campaign on early childhood development involving country offices and National Committees. This will help to inform parents/caregivers about the importance of healthy brain development in the earliest years of life, inspire behaviour change, mobilize governments to improve ECD in their countries through increased investment, policies, and scaled-up interventions, and encourage private sector to adopt parent-friendly policies inside and outside the workplace.

71. **Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for the health and well-being of children and adolescents**. UNICEF will influence international and domestic financing and budgeting for child and adolescent health. For example, this work will include the following advocacy: for inclusion of the procurement of vaccines and essential drugs and commodities, severe and acute malnutrition as part of national systems and routine services for children, with government funding; production and mobilization of ECD financing tools (e.g., investment tracker/costing tools); and equity-focused programmes to influence country investments in maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health through domestic international funding channels, such as Gavi or the Global Fund. UNICEF will continue to leverage the

power of private sector partners to support the delivery of its key results in health and nutrition.

72. **United Nations working together.** In alignment with the 2016 QCPR, UNICEF will work with other United Nations entities to strengthen system coherence with a view to achieving better results for children and adolescents and more integrated approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda. Key examples include: UNICEF role as chair of the H6 health partnership and its role in developing an operational framework to help countries implement the Secretary-General's Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health; UNICEF work with UNAIDS and co-sponsors on a "super-fast track" approach to HIV prevention and treatment of children, adolescents and young women; and UNICEF collaboration in support of measures to achieve global nutrition targets, as outlined in the Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition. UNICEF has made several practical proposals on collaboration to the broader United Nations family, including: the adoption of an online, real-time information system across agencies; more disaggregated data to reveal vulnerabilities affecting the most marginalized children; and more flexible funding and greater coherence across development and humanitarian efforts.

73. **Fostering innovation for children's and adolescents health.** This change strategy will also involve identifying the most promising innovations for application in different contexts while supporting partners to adopt, adapt and scale up the most successful approaches. For example, UNICEF work with markets to further the development and availability of products that can transform outcomes, including diagnostic tools, vaccines and health technologies. UNICEF U-Report, a free social messaging tool with more than 3 million active users in more than 30 countries, continues to be used to share critical information on HIV prevention with youth, and in 2016 it was activated in the Latin America and Caribbean region to share Zika virus-prevention information, much the same way it was used in the Ebola crisis in West Africa.

74. **Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.** Evaluations, research and data are key elements of sound programming, advocacy and leveraging partnerships for children. There will be a continued strong focus on research, policy analysis and evaluation of what works for children and adolescents in the health sector. For example, guidance and knowledge-generation on the effectiveness of integrated infant and young child feeding-MNP (powder) programmes in development and emergency contexts; filling research gaps and providing programme guidance on implementation of universal salt iodization; leading knowledge-generation on the effectiveness of adolescent nutrition programmes, including multisectoral linkages; promoting the testing of new models for improving adolescent mental health services; and supporting data and evidence-generation to demonstrate the effectiveness of ECD packages.

75. UNICEF will also work to strengthen systems, methodologies and both internal and external capacities to gather and manage disaggregated data (by sex, disability, age, location, etc.) to ensure that the organization and its partners can respond to the Agenda 2030 call to leave no child behind by accurately and progressively identifying the girls and boys that are most vulnerable and marginalized.

Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

76. In addition to the cross-cutting risks that are applicable to all of its outcomes and results areas, other specific assumptions and risks have been identified in relation to this outcome.

Table 3: Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
Health and nutrition remain a global and national priority. It is	Advocacy at global and national levels that health, nutrition, HIV and ECD remain

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
assumed that programme countries remain determined to address and achieve SDG targets related to Outcome 1 results areas. The related risk is that without this commitment UNICEF will struggle to leverage partnerships, operating in a more challenging programming environment.	priorities, and will leverage its strategies within outcome 1 areas to that end.
It is assumed that the convergence and multisectoral integration across sectors is efficient and effective. The risk is that if this proves incorrect, it could have negative consequences for effectiveness of interventions and for investment.	Strategic use of data and systems for tracking the efficacy of approaches and identifying challenges and bottlenecks.
Increased domestic and international investments to complete the 'unfinished business', including expanded investment in child health, nutrition and development.	UNICEF will emphasize and continue to demonstrate the importance of attention to equity in global discussions, among donor and programme countries.
It is assumed that humanitarian access to support the provision of water and sanitation for vulnerable populations can be achieved. There is the risk that access is being denied.	UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities quickly as they arise. Especially where parties to conflict are immune to international pressure, access might remain unachievable.
It is assumed that programme countries are prioritizing results for children and equity principles.	UNICEF and its alliances for children will continue to generate evidence that investments in children – including the most vulnerable – are providing the greatest returns.
There is a risk regarding eligibility criteria for many countries to access health resources coming from Global Programme Partnerships.	In the relevant and affected countries, UNICEF will work with partners and national systems to build mitigating measures into its programming in the sector and continue working to strengthen national systems and the efficient use of national resources.
It is assumed there will be a sustained, and growing, commitment at all levels to health systems-strengthening. The related risk is that the key focus and approach of UNICEF interventions across outcome 1 results areas will be in question.	UNICEF will both advocate and work to demonstrate the effectiveness of health system- strengthening, and systems strengthening more broadly, as the most effective means for sustained impact.
It is assumed that systems-strengthening will be made more sustainable by the adequate integration of risk analysis and management into plans and strategies. If it is not, there is a risk that gains	UNICEF will also work with the management of national health systems at all levels, but especially at the local level, to be informed by analysis of risks related to the need to integrate

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
could be jeopardized by shocks, emergencies, etc.	disaster, conflict, climate change and other shocks.
It is assumed that coordination and collaboration between UNICEF and UN partners will only increase in terms of delivering results for children.	UNICEF will continue to work through the new UNDAF process and other inter-agency processes and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency or working closely together.

E. Key partnerships

77. UNICEF will continue its long-standing practice of building capacity, leveraging resources and influencing policies and programmes through partnerships with national and local governments, sister United Nations agencies, civil society, academic institutions, foundations/funds and the private sector to achieve the outputs for outcome 1. These include:

(a) UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage – later marriage, reduces the threat to adolescent girls' health, for example, problems related to adolescent pregnancy;

(b) 'Every Woman Every Child' movement – to improve the health of women, children and adolescents everywhere;

(c) Global Health Partnership H6 (UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women, World Health Organization and World Bank Group) – focus on the country level and aim to leverage the strengths and capacities of each of the six member organizations to support high-burden countries to improve the survival, health and well-being of every woman, newborn, child and adolescent;

(d) WHO-led Accelerated Action for Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) (e) Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;

(e) Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance – saves children's lives and protects peoples' health by increasing access to immunization in poor countries, including vaccines to protect young girls against cervical cancer (HPV vaccine);

(f) The Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) is led by UNICEF as Cluster Lead Agency and consists of 42 partners at global level. UNICEF and the GNC membership have designated the GNC-Coordination Team (GNC-CT) to manage the GNC with guidance from a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). In countries where the Nutrition Cluster has been activated, UNICEF has specific accountabilities in its coordination role beyond those outlined in the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, such as ensuring that coordination mechanisms are established and supported, serving as a first point of contact for government and acting as a provider of last resort;

(g) Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement that aims to end stunting and malnutrition in all its forms. UNICEF will work towards the achievements of this results area through its global network of sub-national, national, regional and global offices and will continue to provide leadership and support to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and other global, regional and national action frameworks;

(h) WFP, on nutrition, as well as the other United Nations agencies that have a mandate in nutrition (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], WHO);

(i) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Alive and Thrive, ACF (Action contre la Faim), Nutrition International, Save the Children and 1,000 days, to advocate for nutrition and scale-up services to reduce stunting, wasting and other forms of malnutrition;

(j) Early Childhood Development Action Network, the first-ever global partnership for ECD. Through this network, joint actions implemented by partners to scale up multisectoral services, catalyse sustainable finance and advocate for increased commitment to young children, will help to give every child the best start to life;

(k) All In to End Adolescent AIDS (partnership of UNICEF, UNAIDS, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Global Fund, WHO, UNFPA, MTV Staying Alive Foundation, and Partnering and Communicating Together to Act against AIDS, to drive better results for adolescents by encouraging strategic changes in policies and engaging young people in the effort;

(l) Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free Super-Fast Track Framework (PEPFAR, UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation) for ending AIDS among children, adolescents and young women by 2020.

III. Goal Area 2 theory of change

A. Summary

78. Outcome: Girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian situations, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.

Theory of Change Statement: ***If*** countries have strengthened education systems for gender-equitable access to quality education from early childhood to adolescence, including children with disabilities and minorities; and ***if*** they have strengthened their education systems for gender-equitable learning outcomes, including early learning; and ***if*** they have institutionalized skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability: ***Then*** every child, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, can learn.

79. UNICEF works in three fundamental ways in order to give effect to this theory of change:

(a) Through strengthening of education systems at all levels – assisting governments to achieve greater access, including for the most vulnerable children, to ensure the education system is safer, resilient to crisis, more gender responsive and inclusive,[7] and to deliver better learning and skills outcomes. System-strengthening includes enhancing the many components of national systems at all levels – from the central to the community level – to work coherently in providing long-term benefits for children. It encompasses the promotion of communities', parents' and children's engagement in understanding entitlements and gaps and contributing to planning, supporting, monitoring and holding relevant authorities accountable for the provision of educational services and learning opportunities. The Strategic Plan indicators count the number of countries that make significant progress in strengthening key elements of education systems with UNICEF support;

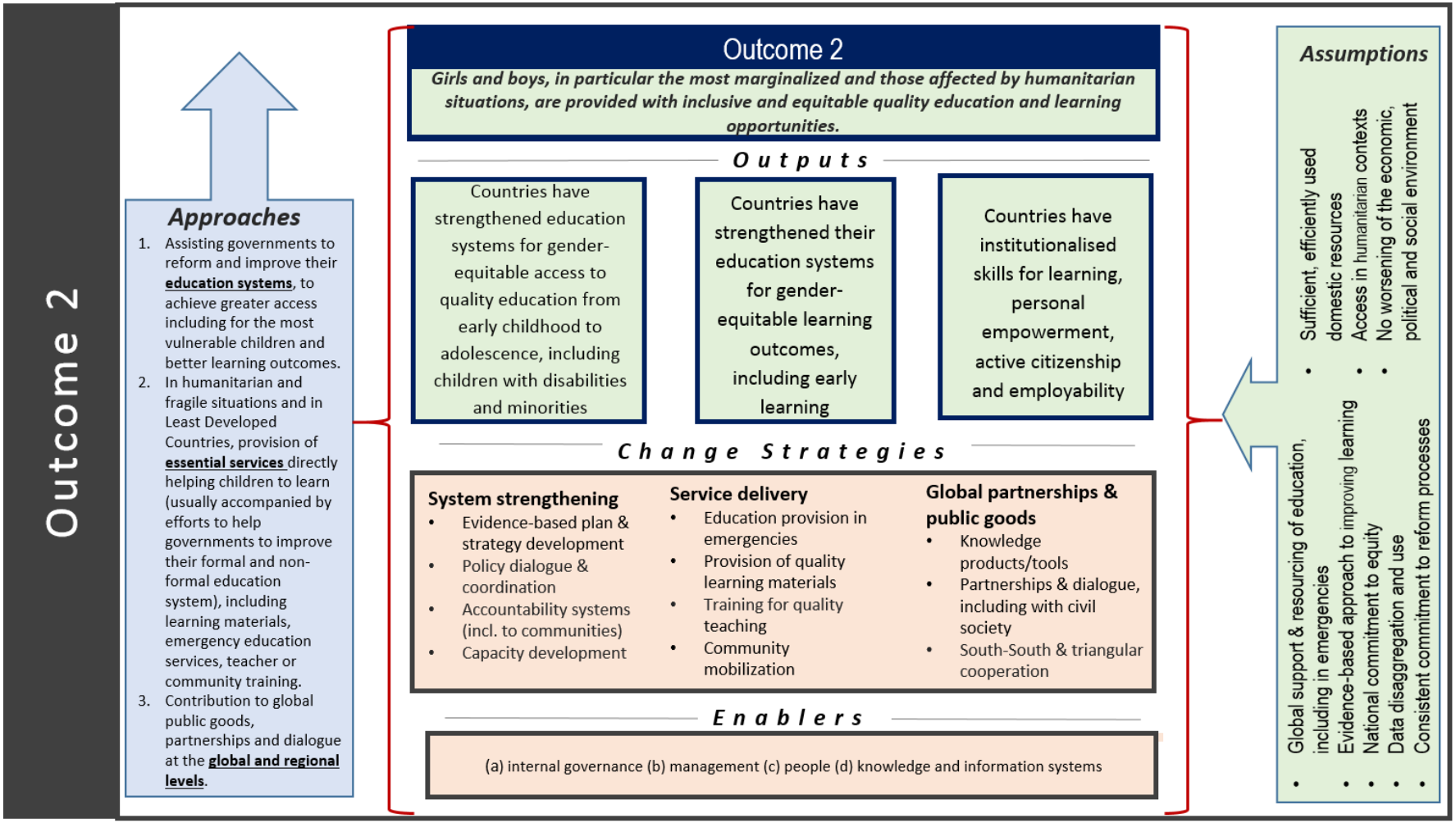
(b) Through direct service delivery, including the provision of emergency education services that help fulfil the right to education and provide safe spaces for children and adolescents (including water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services), essential learning materials, teacher training and direct support to communities to help children and adolescents access education and learn. Supplies and cash, also in the form of financing large-scale training programmes, logistics, or NGO operations for formal or non-formal education and early learning are provided, mainly in least developed countries, fragile countries, and

[7] Including a focus on ensuring responsiveness of the education/training system to disability and gender.

humanitarian situations. Even where UNICEF provides large- scale supply or financial systems, UNICEF usually also helps governments to improve their formal and non-formal education and training system;

(c) Through contribution to global and regional public goods such as analytical reports, evidence, disaggregated data that identifies disadvantaged children, evaluations, methodological guidance and tools, the promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation/sharing, co-chairing and contributing to international education initiatives, involvement in strategic partnerships and support to dialogue and advocacy for inclusive education and effective learning.

Figure VII
Outcome 2



B. Context

Leaving no child behind

80. In rich and poor countries around the globe, education has long served as a great leveler of opportunity because it helps people realize their potential and contribute to their communities and the world. Education is associated with increased incomes, reduced poverty, women's empowerment and improved health. Quality education has the power to end intergenerational cycles of inequity, improving the lives of children and the societies in which they live. For generations, quality and equitable education has provided children with a pathway out of deprivation. What has been true for the prospects of individual girls and boys has also held true for the future of nations. Education increases knowledge, sparks innovation, builds skills that drive nations' growth and prosperity, and fosters inclusive societies. Simply put, education is key to reaching those that continue to be left behind by global development.

81. But for education to play this role, it must begin with strong early learning and development foundations and continue with quality learning opportunities that provide all girls and boys, especially the most disadvantaged, with a fair chance to thrive. Particular attention must be paid to those at greatest risk of being left behind.

82. And yet, millions of girls and boys around the world are still being denied their right to education. Globally, more than half of preschool-aged children, 61 million primary-school-aged children and 60 million adolescents of lower-secondary-school age lack access to learning and skills development opportunities. Among older children and youth, 23 percent of those 15–24 years old in 75 UNICEF programme countries (with data available) are not in education, employment and training. The number of children out of school has stagnated in the past few years, partly due to limited progress in reaching the poorest and other vulnerable groups,[8] including displaced children, children with disabilities, and children from rural or remote areas and minority groups.

83. Gender analysis shows that gender often compounds existing disadvantage, with poor girls living in rural areas usually having the least access to education, and adolescent girls being more likely to be illiterate than adolescent boys. Overall there are more primary-school-aged girls than boys (32 million vs. 29 million) that are out of school and in countries where the gender parity index is the worst, it is more often girls that are disadvantaged. Discrimination based on ethnic origin or disability and prevailing social and cultural norms (often gender-based) can further exclude children from quality services. Lack of involvement of parents and communities in school management also contributes to low access to education. Armed conflict, natural disasters and the impacts of climate change often deprive children of the chance to go to school and learn. Attacks on schools during armed conflict are alarmingly frequent and carry grave risks for children. Another factor, school violence and bullying has a negative impact on children's education. The basic quality of school facilities is an important factor in learning and retention, yet minimum standards are not always met in rural and conflict-affected areas, including lack of WASH facilities, which can create health risks[9] and impede adolescent girls' ability to manage their menstruation. At primary school age, children living in fragile, disaster-prone and conflict-affected contexts account for more than half of out-of-school children. In low income countries, the poorest children are 5 times more likely to be out of school and 8 times more likely to be missing out on pre-primary education compared to children in the highest income group.

[8] One other reason for the stagnation is demographic growth. Numbers of children are increasing fast in many of the poorest countries, and increasing enrolment to meet the increasing demand for education may not be sufficient to lead to a decline in out-of-school numbers.

[9] Including diarrhoeal disease, acute respiratory infections and stunting which, if not addressed, can impede school attendance and learning.

84. Charting a path towards universal access to early learning, and primary and secondary schooling, begins with identifying the children in need of learning and education, including adolescents left behind and their needs. When public resources are not allocated on the basis of evidence pointing to the greatest need, education systems can entrench inequities rather than dismantle them – for example, in low income countries, almost half of public education spending is allocated to the 10 per cent most-educated of children.

85. By itself, however, access to education is not enough to guarantee that a child learns. Globally, an estimated 250 million primary-school-aged children are not learning the basics of reading and mathematics, (for 130 million of them, this is despite reaching grade 4). There are also large learning gaps within and between countries. Weak education-system capacity to coherently incentivize and support better learning (including weak capacity and accountability at local levels) and protracted crises[10] are common underlying causes among those countries that have been unable to meet children's learning needs.

86. Finally, while education can play a key role in social cohesion and rights promotion and in helping children thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, there is often a mismatch between skills developed by children and adolescents and what is needed in their future life. For example, it is estimated that, today, some 40 percent of employers are finding it difficult to recruit people with the skills they need.[11] Skills development is a critical area for improved learning outcomes, citizenship and empowerment, including violence prevention and gender equality. Providing children with skills to cope and manage risks and challenges in their lives empowers girls and boys, including adolescents, to exercise their rights and agency, build more gender-equitable relationships; postpone marriage and childbearing; and seek help for violence when it occurs. In this context, there is a need to strengthen education systems that develop skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, from early childhood onwards.

Humanitarian response, risk and sustainable development

87. A key determinant of children's well-being today is whether they live in fragile, conflict-affected, or disaster-prone contexts: such children are twice as likely to die before the age of 5, to be out of school, or to lack access to safe water. Increasingly complex emergencies and protracted crises are impeding the right to education. In conflict situations, education is often under fire either directly or indirectly, as conflict damages schools and endangers the lives of teachers and students. These emergencies do not just temporarily interrupt children's lives and education, they also close doors on education for the length of a childhood, or even a lifetime. An estimated 75 million children aged 3 to 18 in 35 countries are in desperate need of educational support, according to a recent report. Of these children, 17 million are refugee, internally displaced or part of another population of concern.

88. Though an armed conflict, epidemic or natural disaster can devastate the life of any child, the poorest and most disadvantaged children are the most vulnerable. Conflicts have a disproportionate impact on girls' access to education due to safety concerns of parents and, at adolescence, conflicting domestic obligations,[12] while adolescent boys face increased risks of recruitment by armed groups and pressure to economically support their families. Addressing the learning needs of children during emergencies is an essential investment – as is investment in resilient education systems that can help minimize the impact of future crises. Attending schools can also be life-saving for children, helping to protect them from exploitation and other increased vulnerabilities in humanitarian situations. During crises, traumas may seriously affect a child's capacity to learn, and therefore linkages with child protection is important in emergencies. Strengthening education/training systems in fragile contexts and supporting schools and learning institutions to be responsive to all forms of

[10] Including lack of a safe school environment in crises and beyond.
[11] Noting that in developing countries, 89 per cent of new work is in the informal sector.
[12] A UNICEF study found that adolescent girls spend 50 per cent more time on chores than boys do.

violence against girls, boys and adolescents, working alongside other social sectors helps build the resilience of systems, institutions, communities and children.

C. Lessons Learned, 2014–2017

89. While the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, builds on its predecessor, there are some changes. Outcome 2 includes a result area on skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, thereby broadening the notion of "learning" to reflect the need to enable children to develop the wide range of transferable skills they may need in the future. There is also an increased prioritization of learning, starting with foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy. There is a stronger emphasis on education outcomes in addition to access, participation and completion of education, especially for the most disadvantaged children. Perhaps the most important lesson that UNICEF has learned in this area is that, starting with the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and practical.

90. As in other areas of UNICEF work, there is a clear need to scale up equity-focused programming and advocacy, and to target interventions to focus on the most disadvantaged children, including adolescent children, children with disabilities, and minorities. Increased investment in equity measurement through disaggregated data will also be of critical importance moving forward.

91. For education to fulfil its role as a catalyst for equity, it must begin with early childhood interventions that help mitigate the disadvantages faced by children born into poor and non-literate environments. Investment in quality early childhood care and education produces a double benefit: it is both fair and efficient in achieving learning goals for children. However, the specific Sustainable Development Goals target of one year of universal pre-primary education will require an increase in investment and support by UNICEF and its partners. The Strategic Plan also places an increased focus on adolescents – including through the identification of the specific situation and needs of marginalized adolescents and through support to embedding appropriate strategies in the education system (e.g., promoting quality lower and upper-secondary education, development of second-chance education opportunities, skills training/apprenticeship, etc.). In line with Goal 4, the focus will be on improving the transition of marginalized children and adolescents through the education system, and expanding their opportunities to learn. This is particularly relevant for marginalized adolescent girls who, very often, have never attended school or who dropped out at an early stage because of domestic work, the expectation to be married or be sexually active, the likelihood of pregnancy, and/or the experience of sexual and other violence.

92. The Strategic Plan will also place an increased emphasis on strengthening national education systems so that all system components – from the central level to the community level – are coherently aligned towards the achievement of better results. This reflects the potential of system-strengthening to leverage resources and ensure value for money in a context in which UNICEF resources represent only a fraction of resources at country level. One example of this system-strengthening is using child-friendly school standards to inform basic minimum standards adopted by governments for all schools, rather than supporting the physical construction of a limited number of schools. System- strengthening is also a much-needed tool to ensure sustainability and resilience. In gender, for example, gender-responsive sector planning can help ensure that resources are used to promote gender equality in and through education. The Strategic Plan will also integrate lessons learned from the first years of implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan. One area of system-strengthening that will grow increasingly important is community engagement and social- behaviour change (a key cross-cutting strategy to achieve all sectoral goals). This acknowledges that education is not merely an issue of supplying a quality service. With the Sustainable Development Goals focused on people-centered, sustainable development, education

processes must engage children and their caregivers and communities more substantively and systematically in decisions and processes that affect their lives.[13]

93. UNICEF programming experience in recent years also points to the importance of integrated approaches that address the underlying causes of service gaps. The 2016 QCPR further emphasizes the use of such integrated approaches. In this regard, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its partnerships with governments, civil society, and within the United Nations development system, to accelerating progress in this area. At global and country levels, UNICEF will work with development partners active in education to coherently support the development and implementation of policies and plans of national Governments.

94. As in other areas of its work, UNICEF will also continue to build upon its strengths and comparative advantages: strong and diverse country programmes, active network of National Committees for UNICEF, playing a critical fundraising role in responding to the needs of children in humanitarian situations, a keen focus on achieving at-scale results for children, growing partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and effective advocacy for the rights and needs of all children.

95. UNICEF recognizes the importance of good nutrition in supporting children's learning. In humanitarian/food-insecure settings, WFP supports school feeding programmes. In other vulnerable and low- income settings, UNICEF will work with governments, civil society, communities and other partners to improve nutrition, determining the most affordable approaches.

D. Theory of Change

Overview

96. Decades of experience of working in education, including lessons learned during implementation of the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, has taught the organization and its partners that equitable access to education, improved quality of teaching and learning outcomes, and increased access to skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, are key to providing all children with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities. This is the key rationale used to identify the outcome and outputs on education in the Strategic Plan.

97. UNICEF will emphasize strengthening education systems to ensure that education opportunities includes early learning/pre-primary and including secondary education and alternative learning and skills programmes throughout the life cycle. Moreover, these opportunities will be equitably provided and translate into learning outcomes and skills development, including for the most marginalized adolescent girl. Strengthening systems will include deepening engagement with communities and children themselves in contributing to school-level planning and monitoring of implementation. UNICEF will also work to ensure access to education for crisis-affected children and adolescents, including through targeted service delivery, to ensure that these children are not left behind.

98. UNICEF, through its Theory of Change, has identified three main outputs for the 2018-21 Strategic Plan as its direct contributions to the outcome of "Every child, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, is provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities". These outputs are based on UNICEF analysis of the challenges and are strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming, particularly through the lens of equity and inclusivity, and the lessons UNICEF continues to learn about the kind of interventions that can deliver change. These outputs are as follows:

[13] For more details regarding the importance of these issues, see, e.g., the World Bank 2015 World Development Report, *Mind, Society and Behaviour*.

(a) Countries have strengthened education systems for gender-equitable access to quality education from early childhood to adolescence, including children with disabilities and minorities;

(b) Countries have strengthened their education systems for gender-equitable learning outcomes, including early learning;

(c) Countries have institutionalized skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability.

99. Across each output, UNICEF works in three fundamental ways to deliver results at scale that are sustainable and resilient:

(a) Strengthening education systems at all levels (from the central level to the community level), assisting governments to reform and improve their education systems, to achieve greater access, including for the most vulnerable children, to ensure the education system is more safe and inclusive (and in particular disability- and gender-responsive), and to deliver better learning and skills outcomes. System-strengthening includes enhancing key components of national systems such as data, planning, budgets, implementation, quality assurance and monitoring, and supporting the analysis of supply- and demand-side barriers to education. It encompasses the promotion of the engagement of communities, parents and children in contributing to planning, supporting, monitoring, and holding relevant authorities accountable for 'the provision of educational services and learning opportunities. Improved national education systems at all levels – from the central to the community level – provide long-term benefits for children, and the indicators count the number of countries that make significant progress with UNICEF support';

(b) Direct service delivery, including the provision of emergency education services, quality learning materials, training for quality teaching and direct support to community mobilization to help children access education and learn. Supplies and cash, also in the form of financing large-scale training programmes, logistics, or NGO operations for formal or non-formal education and early learning opportunities are provided, mainly in least developed countries, fragile countries, and humanitarian situations. Even where UNICEF provides large-scale supply or financial systems, UNICEF usually also helps governments to improve their formal and non-formal education and training system;

(c) Contribution to global and regional public goods such as analytical reports, evaluations, methodological guidance and tools, the promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation/sharing, co-chairing and contributing to international education initiatives, involvement in strategic partnerships and support to dialogue and advocacy for inclusive education and effective learning.

100. Key dimensions of UNICEF work to support access, learning and skills development[14] are informed by existing global evidence of what works to ensure that every child learns. Evidence needs to be contextualized, however, as what works in one context does not always work (or work in the same way) in another. UNICEF supports the development of contextualized evidence through support to data systems and the education sector as well as system analysis, including on political economy and gender analysis. Areas of emphasis include the following:

(a) Regarding education access specifically, UNICEF will focus on addressing the main dimensions of education inequality (such as poverty, emergency/conflict, disability, gender and ethnicity), through support to: (i) improved gender equity in education access, including addressing demand issues and promoting gender-responsive environments and attention to school-related gender-based violence within education policies and plans; (ii) the provision of inclusive education for children with disabilities, advocating for improved

[14] Skills development is a critical area for violence prevention.

infrastructure and assistive technology, training and community awareness; (iii) the development, budgeting and implementation of education sector plans/strategies, addressing equity issues;[15] and (iv) emergency preparedness/resilience. Support to equity in these ways is possible only if contextualized data is available and analyzed, enabling the identification of the most marginalized and disadvantaged children and a better understanding of the barriers they face. In this regard, UNICEF also supports (v) the strengthening of EMIS providing disaggregated data[16] and their transparent use, including to provide information to beneficiaries. UNICEF engages in direct service delivery (provision of education access) in humanitarian situations, least developed countries and fragile contexts, thereby responding to the most pressing needs while also helping governments make long-term improvements to their education systems.

(b) To improve learning, UNICEF and partners will support preschool education, language of instruction, teachers/teaching and school leadership, accountability (including community-led monitoring), and the provision of materials. The aim is to build strong and coherent education systems, which incentivize and support learning (rather than just enrolment) as a critical factor.[17] A number of health and nutrition interventions contribute to better learning – such as school feeding, micronutrient supplementation and food fortification, and the prevention and control of anaemia and malaria. This points to the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation. Drawing on recent evidence, and the need to prioritize the most marginalized, UNICEF priorities include (i) gender-responsive teaching and learning,[18] (ii) increased quality early learning/pre-primary education opportunities, (iii) strengthened learning assessment systems, (iv) mother tongue/multilingual education, (v) quality teaching, including, but not only, early grade literacy and numeracy, and (vi) community participation. It will also deliver a variety of direct services, including essential materials and training in humanitarian situations, least developed countries and fragile contexts.

(c) As for the development of skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, UNICEF recognizes that skills are developed from early childhood to adolescence and will focus on the need to ensure coherent systems for skills through formal and non-formal programmes, working closely with partners. This aim is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals on education, which is more comprehensive than the corresponding Millennium Development Goal. UNICEF will build on its previous work on life skills and strengthen further its focus on the needs of the most marginalized children and adolescents, too often left behind by the education system.

(d) There will be an emphasis on (a) the mainstreaming of skills development within the national education/training system (including strengthening of community engagement to support the coordination/delivery of formal and informal skills development programmes),[19] and (b) ensuring responsiveness of the education/training system to the demands of the labour market. Girls and boys are often tracked towards studying subjects based on gendered perceptions of their abilities or gender-biased labour markets. UNICEF

[15] Identifying and targeting the most marginalized/disadvantaged groups in the country context – e.g., ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities including indigenous groups; children on the move and children affected by violence, conflict and crisis (incl. refugees and internally displaced); children with disabilities, children from poorest households; disadvantaged girls/boys; children in rural/hard to reach/remote areas; orphans; children affected by HIV/AIDS; working children; children who live or work on the streets; low- demand populations (e.g., pastoralists), and other disadvantaged children.

[16] Including where relevant embedding of additional, e.g. real-time, information within national data systems.

[17] Prichett, Creating Education Systems Coherent for Learning Outcomes: Making the Transition from Schooling to Learning, Dec. 2015.

[18] This includes consideration of the need to reduce gender-based disparities in learning and development of skills, including STEM -related skills.

[19] For example, through parent-teacher associations, student councils, youth groups, Scout movements, etc.

will support the creation of opportunities for girls to develop skills for employment especially those in which girls are underrepresented and those that lead to better-paying jobs. Direct service delivery of skills will also be undertaken in the countries most in need – those with humanitarian situations, least developed countries and fragile contexts.

101. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF in collaboration with the other United Nations system agencies and the aid community, will negotiate with parties to a conflict to allow access to children and arrange for schools to become safe places. UNICEF and Save the Children co-lead the education cluster in emergencies, to coordinate education activities of the aid community. Through its almost global field presence, UNICEF staff are on the ground in humanitarian situations, and ensure that urgent needed education supplies are reaching the facilities and are put to good use. The safe spaces offered by UNICEF-supported schools or kindergartens significantly help children to deal with the trauma of the crisis.

102. The effectiveness of UNICEF interventions, the extent to which it is able to ensure that its approaches and outputs are cost effective and have maximum impact on the lives of vulnerable and marginalized children, is reinforced by the deployment of organizational programming strategies (the HOWs).

103. UNICEF has identified several such overarching strategies that are deployed to ensure the effective achievement of Strategic Plan outcomes as a whole, including its work in outcome 2. These include programming at-scale results for children, winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public, developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children, harnessing the power of business and markets for children, the United Nations working together, fostering innovations in programming and advocacy processes and practices, and harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.

104. These strategies are important in different ways and are expressed differently in each outcome area. Change strategies under outcome 2 can be organized under the headers of system strengthening, service delivery, and global and regional-level work. They include:

(a) Under national system-strengthening: support to the development and implementation of evidence-based, budgeted national education sector plans or strategies that are gender- and disability-responsive and risk- informed. This may be supported by evidence-development, policy dialogue and coordination (particularly as part of local education groups or similar structures gathering donors, international governmental organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector under the leadership of the Government at national levels). System-strengthening also includes support to the evaluation (hence building the evidence base) and the identification and scale-up of innovations that can help efficiently address the needs of the most marginalized children. The development of capacity at central and decentralized levels (including broader reforms impacting on the education sector), and the strengthening of systems to ensure greater accountability and community/parental/student involvement is also included under system-strengthening. Coherent accountabilities relationships and incentives, in particular, are crucial to successful reform implementation;

(b) Under service delivery: support is provided in various forms, mostly in emergency settings (in which case support to education in emergencies may cover a wide array of efforts, including, for example, the setting up of safe spaces or temporary structures, the provision of learning materials, provision of psychosocial support, training/financial support to teachers, etc.) but also in some low-income and fragile contexts. Direct service-delivery includes direct UNICEF support to communities, parents and children to promote their engagement in education planning, and influence parenting and social norms through multiple communication channels and platforms, including addressing gender equity, stigma and discrimination. It also covers services delivered for the specific purpose of testing promising innovations for evaluation and potential scale-up;

(c) Under work at the global and regional levels: UNICEF contributes to global and regional knowledge, coordination and cooperation. This includes the development of

knowledge products and tools such as global reports, education sector-analysis guidelines, and specific analysis or programming tools. It also involves contribution to global partnerships (often through chairing or co-chairing), global dialogue (e.g., by contributing to shape Sustainable Development Goals indicators) and coordination (in particular working together with other United Nations agencies). Finally, this involves support to South-South and triangular cooperation;

(d) UNICEF continues to support data improvement and evidence-building for effective and equitable programming. In Goal Area 2, support to the production of disaggregated data includes strengthening of inclusive Education Management Information Systems, of learning assessment systems (in particular at the early grades), production and implementation of new household survey modules (foundational skills; parental participation; child functioning; and school environment for children with disabilities, in partnership with the Washington Group). Also, aligned with the corporate results-based management agenda, UNICEF continues to strengthen its work in building and brokering evidence, and in evaluating the impact of its diversified education programmes, from early childhood education to secondary education.

Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

105. In addition to the cross-cutting risks that are applicable to all of its outcomes and results areas, other specific assumptions and risks have been identified in relation to this outcome.

Table 3: Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

Assumption/risk	UNICEF mitigation measures
It is assumed that the global community continues to prioritize the strengthening of education systems, as part of their ODA to programme countries, and that support to education in humanitarian situations is increased. There is a risk that weakened global financing for education may delay or impede education reforms by programme countries and that donors no longer readily finance the cost of learning or schooling in crisis situations.	It is a major strategy of UNICEF to play a critical role in global partnerships for education (such as the GPE, especially for developing countries, and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund, for humanitarian situations). UNICEF will continue to support these partnerships and strengthen global advocacy for education, including through the UNICEF communication channels and networks, and by contributing evidence, needs assessment and success stories that strengthen the case for continued global investments in education. UNICEF will also even more strongly demonstrate its own value for money, to maintain the confidence of potential donors that the requested resources for UNICEF will help achieve the UNICEF planned education results and make the expected contribution to the SDG targets.
It is safe to assume that programme countries remain determined to equitably expand access and quality of education. Most countries consider improvement in education a national priority. There is the risk, however, that the focus is on educational access and quality for the broad majority, with insufficient attention to inclusion and equity. Pressures to rapidly expand	UNICEF can count on the interest of the ministries of education to expand and improve their education systems. A key role will be to draw attention to those "left behind" and most marginalized groups, and to review systems not only for achieving better averages, but to become more inclusive and equitable. References to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, conditionality attached to resources directly

Assumption/risk	UNICEF mitigation measures
education systems without a strong equity focus could exacerbate inequities in both access and learning. Also, early learning is not yet given the importance it deserves.	provided by donors or partnerships to countries, and the strengthening of alliances supportive of education for marginalized children will be important. UNICEF will continue to demonstrate and propagate the evidence on the best returns of investments that early learning and school-readiness programmes provide – especially when targeting the most vulnerable groups.
There is a risk that programmes will continue to assume that education inputs alone (e.g., lowering class sizes) will deliver improved learning.	To address this risk, UNICEF will continue to monitor the impact on learning of any intervention; will build and share knowledge through evaluation, engagement in global public goods (e.g., Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)) South-South learning and knowledge management on promising efforts and innovations.
Administrative data systems should be able to track access and learning outcomes, and point to education system failures. There is a real risk in many countries that EMIS do not sufficiently disaggregate, preventing the development of measures to reach and support those not enrolled or dropping out. Data may not be available, especially on learning, or may not be sufficiently systematically or transparently used, with limited accountability for results. Contextual data, e.g., those related to disability or WASH, may also be insufficient.	Strengthening education data systems is a regular component of UNICEF assistance. This will include support for more disaggregation of data – including information on children with disabilities, strengthened national learning assessment systems, and a more systematic and transparent use of data (including social accountability) to improve education access and learning for all.
It is implied that programme countries will be able to manage their education reform process. There is a risk that a reform agenda is not consistently pursued. Lack of coherence in an education system change can hamper the successful achievement of reforms.	In countries with donor-assisted sector-wide approaches, reform processes are more likely to be effectively steered and managed. UNICEF will, in all programme countries, support education ministries (and often local governments) in their strategic and annual work planning. UNICEF will be "at the side" of education officials to support evidence-based planning, set and monitor milestones and help countries engage in coherent system change that incentivizes and supports access, learning and skills.
It is assumed that countries aim to use their own budgets effectively and efficiently. There is, however, a significant risk that education remains under-resourced, and that available resources are used inefficiently for lack	UNICEF will continue advocating for increased and better used domestic funding for children and their education. This will include support to the development and use (including related capacity-building) of contextualized, country-specific evidence of what promotes equitable access, learning

Assumption/risk	UNICEF mitigation measures
of sufficient, context-relevant evidence.	and skills development. UNICEF will increasingly consider methodologies for "public financing for children" (PF4C) – measures that focus resources on their best returns for access and quality of education for all children.
Public support should exist in programme countries for inclusive and equitable education. There is the risk that this is not the case – for example for the inclusion and special measures for children of ethnic minorities, or the inclusion of children with disabilities. There is also a risk of increasing attacks on schools and/or on the principles of gender equality and human rights.	UNICEF will, as needed, help to initiate and maintain a public discourse on contentious education-policy issues – including through civil society channels or direct media presence. It will promote behaviour-change strategies, evidence-building/training in programme countries as well as within the organization.
It is assumed that principled humanitarian access to support the education and learning of children can be achieved and sustained through advocacy with humanitarian partners and strong engagement across integrated United Nations agendas. There is the risk that access is being denied.	UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities as they arise. In its work under outcome 3, UNICEF will be strengthening its support in situations of armed conflict to strengthening systems to protect children from violations of international humanitarian law. However, especially where parties to conflict are immune to international pressure, access might remain unachievable.

E. Key partnerships

106. Strategic partnerships are seen as a key means of operationalizing the organization's How strategies, managing risks and assumptions in the Theory of Change, and building coalitions around the UNICEF vision for change. UNICEF is a key driver in creating, maintaining and supporting global partnerships for education, many of which are crucial for the achievement of the outcome and the related Sustainable Development Goals targets. UNICEF helps to increase the global understanding of education as a public good and mobilize resource flows between donor countries and private initiatives on one side, and recipient countries and development agencies on the other. UNICEF is a member of the Board of GPE, and manages GPE funding in most fragile and conflict-affected GPE country partners. UNICEF is a champion for supporting education in fragile contexts and is hosting the ECW fund as its Funds Custodian and Administrator. ECW will be one the major conduits for channeling education resources to agencies working in humanitarian situations. UNICEF is also co-chairing and contributing to the global Education Cluster and the International Network for Education in Emergencies as well as co-leading the Humanitarian Education Accelerator with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify and support cutting-edge education innovations to go to scale in emergencies.

Theory of Change Statement: ***If*** countries have strengthened child protection systems for prevention and response services to address violence against children, and ***if*** they have strengthened prevention and protection services to address harmful practices (FGM/C and child marriage), and ***if*** they have improved systems to protect children that come in contact with the law and to treat them in accordance with international standards: ***Then*** girls and boys will be better protected from violence and exploitation.

107. The UNICEF Executive Director was a Commissioner of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, which was set up to reinvigorate the case for investing in education and identify innovative financing mechanisms. It brought together the best research and policy analysis to identify the most effective and accountable ways of mobilizing and deploying resources for education. UNICEF contributes to and hosts the UN Girls' Education Initiative, and works closely with the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, the Global Education Monitoring Report, and others to support the further development/refinement of indicators to measure Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the collection and analysis of comparative data and knowledge on education outcomes and national systems around the world. UNESCO, its International Institute for Educational Planning, GPE, the Department for International Development and UNICEF also team up to design global public goods, such as education-sector analysis and planning guidelines and tools. Taken together and through its role in the SDG4-Education 2030 as one of eight co-convening agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UN-Women and ILO), UNICEF significantly contributes to setting the global education agenda and resource flows – including the shaping of the Sustainable Development Goals themselves, which now include early learning and school-readiness targets.

108. UNICEF is also involved in partnerships to advance cross-sectoral areas. In particular, it leads a global network of more than 80 partners to advocate for equitable access to WASH in Schools as part of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 agenda and in support of Goal 4 targets.

109. At the country level, UNICEF continues working through Local Education groups (gathering donors, international governmental organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector under the leadership of the relevant Government) and similar structures (including country-level education clusters, the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict, and other sector-coordination mechanisms for education in emergencies) to support the development and implementation of evidence-based, financially sustainable and politically feasible education sector plans.

IV. Goal Area 3 theory of change

A. Summary

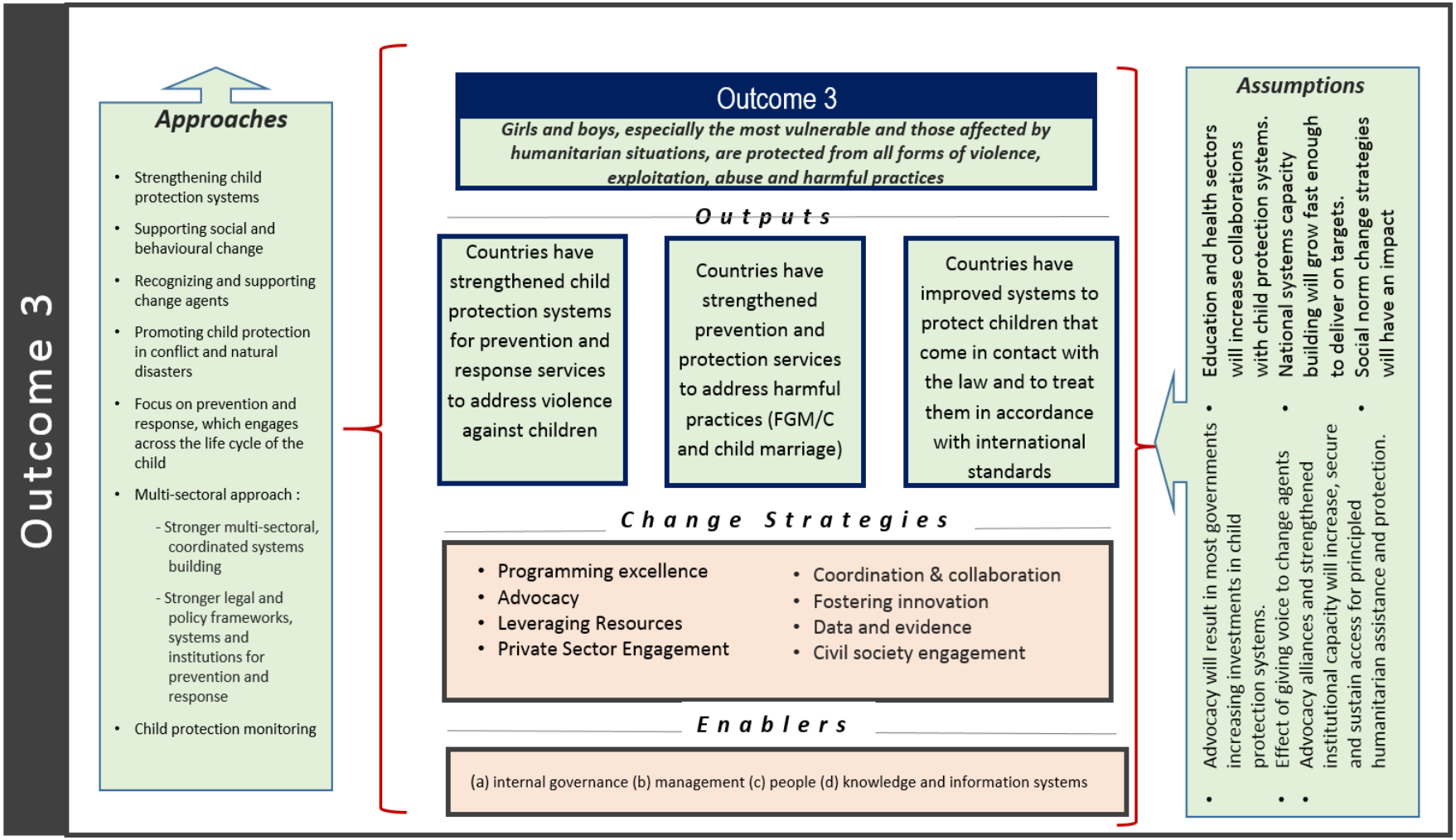
110. Outcome statement: Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.

111. UNICEF will contribute to this outcome through an approach that addresses the protection needs of girls and boys while investing in strengthening child protection systems and community dialogue for behaviour change. Across each of the outputs, the life-course perspective, cross-sectoral/multisectoral work (legal, police, health, social service strengthening and education sectors), age- and gender-sensitive approaches and use of technologies and information management systems will help accelerate equitable progress.

UNICEF will focus on advocating for and helping to align policies and budgets with protective outcomes for children and empowering children, families and communities to strengthen protective environments underpinned by the State and its workforce, including social workers, teachers, health workers, police and the judiciary. UNICEF will take support the following measures: increase the capacities of children and families to protect themselves and to prevent violence, exploitation and harmful practices and behaviours that affect children; strengthen children's ability to identify key protection risks and to report violations; and raise awareness and build capacities of child-protection practitioners to shift social norms and help break the silence around practices that harm children and to transform deeply rooted sociocultural beliefs and practices, including to reduce sexual exploitation of girls and reduce institutionalization of children.

112. UNICEF will invest in linking humanitarian response with development programming and in achieving results more effectively in humanitarian and long-term resilience building for achieving more sustainable results in fragile contexts where child protection prevention and response services must also address mental health, lack of access to services for children on the move, and increased risk of gender-based violence. UNICEF will also focus on protection results for children specific to situations of armed conflict, where exposure and vulnerabilities to armed violence and grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law are heightened, requiring both prevention and response. This includes for girls and boys recruited and used by armed forces and groups, those exposed to landmines and other explosive weapons, and those who are abducted, separated from their caregivers, have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation, and those in situations where protection strategies must be strengthened to safeguard access to life-saving and protective services in line with international humanitarian law and principles. The UNICEF approach to child protection in humanitarian situations will include support to direct delivery with a range of implementing partners where there is an imperative to act in a humanitarian situation, where capacities and resources are low, and/or the national authorities are unwilling or unable to uphold their responsibilities to affected populations. UNICEF will support governments to improve data (including administrative data) on the prevalence and impact of violence on children, identifying vulnerable groups, risk factors and protective assets and mechanisms. In post-humanitarian situations, UNICEF will monitor the situation of children who face ongoing post-shock vulnerabilities, in particular the increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation that girls face.

Figure VIII
Outcome 3.



B. Context

Leaving no child behind

113. Violence against children, (including various forms of gender-based violence), from birth through adolescence, occurs everywhere and takes many forms, in many settings, and is exacerbated in emergencies. Global estimates point to hundreds of millions of children experiencing some form of violence, exploitation, or harmful practice and much of the violence having a gender dimension. Six in ten children worldwide experience regular physical punishment by caregivers. School-related violence affects an estimated 246 million children every year, with slightly more than one in three aged 13–15 years reporting bullying on a daily basis. In addition, hundreds of thousands of refugee and migrant children are at grave risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including trafficking and smuggling.

114. A gender analysis demonstrates that much of this violence has clear gendered distinctions, often driven by unequal power and gender norms in communities and schools: In 2012, almost one in five homicide victims worldwide were children, 70 per cent of whom were adolescent boys. While both girls and boys experience sexual violence, girls are particularly vulnerable: one in ten girls under the age of 20 worldwide have experienced forced intercourse or other sexual acts; the number of child sexual abuse materials online URLs (websites) more than doubled between 2014 and 2015, the majority of them involve girls; nearly one third of adolescent girls have experienced emotional, physical and/or sexual violence by their husbands or partners at some point in their lives.

115. Around one in seven adolescent girls aged 15–19 are married or cohabiting as if married; at least 200 million girls and women alive today in 30 countries with national prevalence data have undergone female FGM/C. FGM/C and child marriage are both human rights violations. FGM/C has no health or other benefits and often leads to long-term medical complications, including severe pain, prolonged bleeding, infection, infertility and even death. Girls who are married as children are more likely to be out of school, have limited career/vocational opportunities, suffer domestic violence, contract HIV/AIDS and die due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Child marriage also hurts economies and leads to intergenerational cycles of poverty. The interdependence of child marriage and FGM/C with education, social norms, and other social determinants is another powerful reason to focus on this particular issue.

116. Around 11 per cent of all children – 168 million girls and boys – are engaged in child labour, with half of them working in hazardous conditions. Of the 17.2 million children aged 5–17 engaged in domestic work, 67 per cent are girls[20]; the hidden nature of this work increases girls' risks and sometimes takes the form of servitude or slavery. Child abandonment is considered a form of violence against children. At least 2.7 million children live in residential care; long-term residence in such facilities has a long-term negative impact on children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, particularly in the case of very young children. A high rate of placement of children in formal care can be an indicator of how inadequate or ineffective systems and social services are perpetuating social exclusion, vulnerability and inequity rather than helping to protect children from neglect, abuse and violence. It can also be an indicator of the inability of the social protection system to address the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of families, which are too often leading to unnecessary family separation.[21] Children with disabilities are disproportionately affected by placement in institutions, and are particularly vulnerable to violence and neglect in such

[20] ILO, "Marking progress against child labour - Global estimates and trends 2000-2012", 2013.

[21] UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, "A child's right to live in a nurturing family environment: A Regional Agenda and Theory of Change for Europe and Central Asia", October 2016.

facilities. The frequent institutionalization of children with disabilities, denying them the right to grow up in a nurturing family environment, can further impact their ability to grow to their full potential and can increase their vulnerability. Children and adolescents with disabilities are three to four times more likely to experience violence and neglect than children without disabilities[22], leaving girls with disabilities disproportionately vulnerable to all forms of violence, abuse and institutionalization. In some countries, 68 percent of girls with intellectual disabilities will be sexually abused before they turn 18.[23] With limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and access to modern forms of contraception, and often deprived of the right to make decisions about their bodies or sexual and reproductive health, girls and women with disabilities are at an increased risk of forced sterilization, abortion and sexually transmitted infections.[24]

117. An estimated 1.1 million children are being detained through justice systems worldwide at any one time. Access to justice is a priority because it is a right as well as a means to enforce other rights by designing and applying child-friendly criminal, civil and administrative proceedings. It entails the ability to obtain equitable, timely and effective remedies for rights violations, including grave child rights violations, as well as those related to the right to education, health and social protection. Current estimates suggest that the births of approximately 230 million children under age 5 have not been registered. Wherein universal birth registration is instrumental in ensuring equity over a broad scope of services and interventions for children,[25] migrant children and children living in remote and hard-to-reach areas are most likely to be missed by civil registration and vital statistics systems and deprived the right to an identity, increasing their risk of statelessness. Almost 50 million children have left their country of birth or have been forcibly displaced, and 1 in 70 currently live outside their country of origin.[26] While migration can benefit children and their families as well as host and sending communities, for many children, unsafe migration as well as being left behind brings exposure to violence and exploitation, with devastating consequences.

118. The underlying causes include lack of State commitment and political leadership for child protection, lack of supply-side capacities, knowledge, motivation and support of those in contact with the child, weak delivery systems, social norms and socio-cultural factors, lack of demand-side knowledge, skills and mechanisms that exist to promote children's engagement/participation in decisions that affect them, and protracted humanitarian situations. It is often the case that state social service sectors remain constrained by insufficient technical capacity, high staff turnover and low financing. Cross-sectoral coordination and management that are critical for effective and efficient case management and referrals are still weak in many countries. Sustained advocacy and adaptation of successful and costed models will be necessary for governments to recognize the importance of multisector collaboration and the overcoming of challenges linked to complex implementation. For example, good quality child protection data, disaggregated well enough to detect inequities, identifying the most vulnerable groups of children acting to help them, and maintaining a case file on each child are examples of capacity gaps that need strengthening. These issues will be directly addressed by a UNICEF outputs under Outcome

[22] UNFPA.

[23] Australian Law Reform Commission, *Family Violence — A National Legal Response*, 2016.

[24] UNICEF, 2006.

[25] Knowing the age of children is critical to protecting them from child labour and from arrest and treatment as adults in the justice system; from conscription in armed forces and armed groups; forcible conscription in armed forces; child marriage; and trafficking and sexual exploitation. It helps with the acquisition of national identity cards and passports. Knowing the family links supports family tracing and reunification (e.g., in cases of trafficking, formal care, separation during migration). Birth registration within civil registration and vital statistics systems is central to ensuring that children are counted and have access to basic services such as health, social services and education.

[26] UNICEF, "Uprooted – The Growing Crisis For Refugee and Migrant Children", New York, 2016.

3, complemented by the deployment of the organization's strategies (HOWs) and sector-specific approaches.

Humanitarian response, risk, and sustainable development

119. Protecting girls and boys in humanitarian situations is not only a critical life-saving measure, but also a sound investment in reducing the negative – often life-long – impact on their well-being and development, particularly during childhood, the most intense learning and growing time in life, which can be derailed by exposure to violence and other causes of toxic stress. In emergencies, additional child protection interventions are necessary to address heightened vulnerabilities due to the protection risks that humanitarian situations exacerbate, and new protection risks that emerge, in particular for children displaced, children who are unaccompanied, separated or orphaned, children and women who are at risk of/or directly affected by gender-based violence, and those that are living in areas affected by armed conflict. All the protection vulnerabilities that are compounded or emerge in times of crises are aggravated by underlying vulnerabilities driven by gender, age, disability and other socioeconomic divisions. For example, children with disabilities face heightened vulnerability during emergencies but they are often 'invisible', their rights and needs frequently overlooked. The psychosocial impacts of humanitarian situations on children are also a critical threat to children's well-being and development, and the maintenance of peace and security. As humanitarian situations often bring a surge in protection concerns and threats to children, response systems – themselves affected by the same crisis – are often ill equipped or overwhelmed to respond.

120. Today, nearly 250 million children live in countries affected by conflict, and it continues to be estimated that tens of thousands of children – boys and girls under the age of 18 – continue to be recruited and used by armed forces and armed groups worldwide. Children and their families in conflict-affected areas face exposure to death and injury, including as a result of the widespread use of explosive weapons in populated areas that characterizes many of today's conflicts. For every child killed in warfare, three are injured and acquire a permanent form of disability.[27] Humanitarian protection agencies are increasingly faced with situations where parties to conflict act in blatant violation of international humanitarian law – including widespread grave violations against children – in an environment of impunity where accountability of parties to conflict is negligible. In increasingly complex crises, the availability of and access of affected populations to existing basic life-saving and protective services are under threat, as is humanitarian access for the provision of principled assistance and protection. Existing national and subnational systems for the protection of children's rights are often undermined and de-capacitated in conflict – sometimes purposefully – and the international humanitarian system's cross-cutting attention to protection becomes all the more important.

121. One of the benchmarks of the UNICEF Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action is to strengthen key child protection mechanisms in emergency-affected areas. There is an ever-growing need for UNICEF to provide both immediate life-saving protection services in response to humanitarian needs, as well as longer-term development approaches to strengthen the overall protective environment for children, and to build the resilience of children and their families to future crisis. Resilience in children can only be built when children's homes, schools and communities are safe spaces, when they are cared for, and their capacity to deal with adversity is developed. The resilience of individuals, families and communities are supported through a range of protection measure that address multiple hazards such as population mobility, harmful social norms, gender-based violence, and trauma associated with conflict.

[27]WHO, cited at http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/pwdfs.pdf.

C. Lessons Learned 2014–2017

122. Lessons pertinent to UNICEF work on child protection were identified through the midterm review of the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan in 2016 and provided much of the learning that supported the development of the Theory of Change for the new Strategic Plan. For example, experience across all regions, combined with the findings from recent global evaluations on violence against children and child protection in emergencies, confirm the importance of a combined approach that addresses the specific protection needs of children and working with caregivers and families (for example supporting parents and caregivers by helping them to obtain parenting skills) while making investments in strengthening national child protection systems. This includes service-delivery mechanisms, workforce capacity, and coordination and referral mechanisms at the national and community levels, underpinned by strengthened laws, policies and guidelines. A trained social service workforce that is in contact with families and communities is vital as are effective referral pathways between the child protection system (including the social service and justice systems) and the social protection, education and health systems. Such an integrated approach has proven essential to achieving results, as illustrated by the experience of birth registration within the broader framework of civil registration and vital statistics.

123. The 2015 evaluation "Protecting children from violence: A comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programmes" highlighted that the global objectives of the UNICEF programme on violence against children were found to be coherent and aligned within country contexts, and that the strongest area of growth and progress was in the realm of advocacy and partnership-building. On the other hand, it was found that further work is required for greater multisectoral linkages and the measurement of progress. The evaluation also highlighted that despite the increased institutional capacity for developing and implementing interventions, including system strengthening, to prevent and respond to violence against children, results have been limited in terms of coverage and scale. In addition, it highlighted that child protection systems need to be more sensitive to addressing this violence, particularly for children with disabilities, and that UNICEF needs to deepen its work on helping states to create effective interventions to address harmful social norms and practices. The recommendations, based on these findings, were that UNICEF accelerate the roll-out of the systems strengthening approach to preventing and responding to violence against children, including by addressing gaps in social welfare services. The recommendation also highlighted a renewed focus on preventing violence and integrating actions more firmly into the systems approach, including through fostering supportive social norms, addressing harmful social norms, strengthening structural change for equality and equity and reducing drivers at the personal level that may lead to violence against children. The approaches to strengthening child protection systems will also informed by the findings and recommendations of the 2017 evaluation "Strengthening Child Protection Systems: A Comprehensive Evaluation of UNICEF's Strategies and Programme Performance".

124. UNICEF has also learned from helping States leverage the power of data and evidence to inform and strengthen communications campaigns and advocacy at the national and international levels, as well as advocacy to enhance compliance with international standards and recognition of the principle of State accountability for the protection of children during humanitarian situations, including situations of armed conflict. The UNICEF publication *Hidden in Plain Sight*, the first-ever compilation of global data on violence against children, helped to support advocacy for the inclusion of a global target on violence against children in the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. The0 #ENDviolence against children initiative drew on evidence and human-interest stories to reach new audiences and to bolster action in more than 70 countries. Lessons learned from the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan implementation also highlight the importance of intensifying community mobilization. UNICEF has improved knowledge of the potential role, ability and impact of the social media, real-time monitoring, and the use of social and behaviour-change strategies for community mobilization to change social norms.

D. Theory of change

Overview

125. UNICEF has identified three outputs, strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming, for the Strategic Plan as its contributions to the outcome: "Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices." These outputs are the following:

(a) Countries have strengthened child protection systems for prevention and response services to address violence against children;

(b) Countries have strengthened prevention and protection services to address harmful practices (FGM/C and child marriage);

(c) Countries have improved systems to protect children that come in contact with the law and to treat them in accordance with international standards.

126. The decision to focus on these three outputs follows from the lessons learned during the review of the current Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, notably the understanding that if the State is to have a hand in reducing physical, sexual and emotional violence against children, then it needs to build social service systems capacities, and, in turn, for sustainability, the workings of these services need to be underpinned by a stronger support from the justice and enforcement systems. Our situation analysis indicates that physical and sexual violence, FGM/C, and child marriage, are the most common rights violations that Member States have agreed UNICEF should focus on, including in collaboration with WHO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN-Women and other partners. Other programme areas, such as reducing sexual exploitation, are becoming important areas of work where UNICEF engagement is essential, and the organization will continue working with partners during the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, period to further develop its programme logic and data collection capacity in this area.

127. Responding to the 2030 Agenda and the call to 'leave no one behind' and reach the farthest behind first, UNICEF will help states close equity gaps related to child rights, which affect predominantly the hardest to reach and the most vulnerable, including: young children, children with disabilities, children of minorities, children living in poverty, children of migrant workers, children in residential institutions, children on the move, rural children, children in impoverished urban areas, and children living in complex, high threat humanitarian environments. Thus, UNICEF will focus on the right to protection and specific needs of girls and boys through the strengthening of the protective environment and investment in national systems, and promoting at-scale implementation of social and behaviour- change communication across individual (including men and boys), family, community, and institutional levels. It is important to note that emphasis is on preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and harmful practices rather than on particular categories of children. This will be done through interventions that support positive parenting, raise awareness and empower children, families and communities to break the silence.

128. A key strategy in UNICEF's theory of change for this outcome involves winning support from decision makers and the wider public to protect every child from violence and exploitation. UNICEF will run a campaign to end violence against children that will involve country offices and National Committees. The campaign will enhance awareness on violence (e.g., sexual violence), raise public demands for changing practices as well as increase public support for policies and legal reforms. It will also support governments to take respective action to protect children against violence with effective policy and legal reforms matched with adequate resources. In order to leave no child behind, UNICEF will also run a campaign involving country offices and National Committees with a specific focus on protecting children uprooted, supporting governments to prioritize, adopt and implement policies consistent with UNICEF's six-point Agenda for Action. Focus will thus particularly be put

on supporting governments to strengthen and expand their social-service infrastructure and ensure the social-service workforce collaborates with practitioners from all other sectors that play a key role in child protection. Taking a life-course perspective, cross-sectoral/multisectoral (particularly justice, health, social service, and education sectors) and gender-sensitive approach and use of technologies and information management systems will be part of UNICEF's broader strategies (HOWs) to ensure the achievement of outputs and the contribution to the outcome.

129. The approach of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan of implementing four interlinked, targeted priorities for gender equality is proving essential to strengthening prevention and response services for violence against children and the elimination of harmful practices, such as FGM/C and child marriage. As an example, girls with secondary school education are six times less likely to marry as other children; educating girls reduces the rate of early marriage; girls who marry later in life are less likely to have a first pregnancy during adolescence, have reduced incidence of sexually transmitted infections and are less likely to be victims of intimate-partner violence.

1. Countries have strengthened child protection systems for prevention and response services to address violence against children

130. Violence against children, (including various forms of gender-based violence), from birth through adolescence, occurs everywhere and takes many forms (physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect or deprivation) in many settings (home, school, community, care, justice systems and over the internet), and is exacerbated in emergency situations.

131. UNICEF will deliver on this output by supporting States to strengthen and expand their social service workforce infrastructure, and will work with communities and families to increase their capacity to protect children and thus reduce violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation. Expanding the social welfare workforce will not only help reach more children who have experienced violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, but also prevent future re-victimization. This will involve helping States expand the number of para-social-workers at the local level to identify and help children at risk, in the early stages of, or experiencing prolonged violence or exploitation. These local-level social workers need support from more qualified social workers who are based in urban areas. UNICEF will work with other sector partners to increase their numbers, including through support for the development of training and licensing capacities as well as the budgeting of such posts by the State. UNICEF will work with partners to provide tools such as management information solutions for case management, and the linking of these systems to social protection cash-transfer management-information systems.

132. In terms of at-scale implementation of social- and behaviour-change- communication, UNICEF will support mothers, fathers and other caregivers to build more nurturing parent/child relationships and take on improved positive parenting and gender equitable attitudes, skills and practices. UNICEF work is based on growing evidence suggesting that parent support and training programmes show promise for improving parent/child relationships, increasing positive parenting, and preventing violent discipline and other forms of child maltreatment and neglect.[28] Parent support programmes include: home visits for new mothers, community-based programmes for mothers and fathers, comprehensive support

[28] Much of this evidence comes from high income countries, but the evidence based from low and middle-income settings is growing. See Knerr W, Gardner F, Cluver L: "Parenting and the prevention of child maltreatment in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review of interventions and a discussion of prevention of the risks of future violent behaviour among boys". In. Pretoria: Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Medical Research Council, and the Oak Foundation; and Knerr W, Gardner F, Cluver Ll, "Improving positive parenting skills and reducing harsh and abusive parenting in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review", (2011) Prev Sci 2013, 14(4):352-363.

services for mothers, fathers and other caregivers, and multilevel strategies that include C4D strategies such as behaviour-change communication programmes.

133. Increasing the capacity of all concerned stakeholders to outreach most vulnerable families, ensuring the development and provision of support plans, and reinforcing the capacity of local authorities to identify and respond to violence against children also contribute to addressing family separation. UNICEF will use a combination of approaches, including: the development of family support packages (social services in balance with social transfers, promoting actively an integrated approach) aiming at preventing family breakdown and supporting most-vulnerable children to live in a caring and protecting family environment; addressing social norms / behaviour change in order to contribute to the development of an enabling environment with social norms conducive to prevent family breakdown and the separation of children from their family when this is not in their best interest; and supporting municipalities to implement local protocols for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect. This refers to community mechanisms that enable dialogue to take place between practitioners coming from different sectors around specific cases of violence, abuse and neglect of children. Sectors involved are all those who have a mandated role to identify, refer or respond to violence and include social services, education, health, police, justice professionals or representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in direct community-service provision. The aim of the cross-sectoral cooperation is usually to put a support plan for the child in place, but can also be about custody and care issues or measures that are/need to be taken to address domestic violence. It aims as well at better defining the accountabilities of professionals working with children in the identification (including outreach work), referral and responses to cases of violence against children.[29]

134. Child protection systems can significantly reduce and mitigate the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, and can help build resilience in vulnerable communities. This holds true before, during, and after humanitarian situations, including natural disasters. Child protection programming to strengthen child protection systems at local, community and national levels is integral to emergency-preparedness planning and disaster risk reduction. Strategies and practices to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks help to mitigate the impacts of emergencies on children, in alternative care reform, justice for children, psychosocial support, prevention and response to child labour and violence against children, including sexual and gender-based violence, as well as addressing grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, and through the promotion of social norms and practices that protect children, including transitional justice and peacebuilding efforts. In addition to system-strengthening efforts, UNICEF will support community-based protection approaches, including for psychosocial support, and through the provision of safe spaces, and referral systems, and by building the protection capacities of communities. Further, in accordance with UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF will continue to play an active role in developing inter-agency international standards, tools and mechanisms as well as promoting adherence of all parties to human rights and international humanitarian law in humanitarian settings. These strengthen responses in family tracing and in the provision of psychosocial support in natural disasters, as well as for the prevention of recruitment and the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. UNICEF strategic actions to better protect children from the impact of armed conflict and natural disasters (as per the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action) are grounded in international humanitarian and human rights law as well as UNICEF emergency experience. In 2018–2021, efforts will be invested in linking humanitarian response with development programming and in achieving results more effectively in fragile contexts where there are particular vulnerabilities such as lack of support for psychosocial and mental health,

[29] UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, "A child's right to live in a nurturing family environment: A Regional Agenda and Theory of Change for Europe and Central Asia", October 2016.

lack of access to services for children on the move, and increased risk of gender- based violence.[30]

135. In order to support increased reach of children affected by armed conflict, including grave violations, with preventive and response services, UNICEF will strengthen monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children and women, and advocate with all parties to conflict for enhanced compliance with international humanitarian and human rights standards; support a community-based approach to mental health and psychosocial support for children affected by armed conflict to strengthen preexisting resources and mechanisms in the communities, and proactively engage children, caregivers and their families in their psychosocial well-being; develop capacity, programming and accountability metrics as per UNICEF gender-based violence in emergencies programme response resources; scale up critical life-saving, age-appropriate support services to survivors of gender-based violence (e.g., health care, psychosocial and legal/justice services and material support); address barriers to access and support adolescent girls' and women's economic empowerment through livelihoods opportunities; mitigate gender-based violence related risks by implementing programming per the 2015 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender-based Violence Guidelines across all UNICEF sectors; develop global advocacy and services to prevent family separation and support family tracing, reunification and reintegration for unaccompanied and separated children; prevent child recruitment and support the release and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups; strengthen information management systems to support the monitoring of child rights violations and to link these with timely and appropriate responses, including case management; provide specialized emergency child protection support in response to L2/L3 emergencies; develop risk-education programmes that seek to reduce the risk of death and injury from weapons by raising awareness and promoting behaviour change; advocate for policy and legislative change for the protection of children affected by armed conflict; to prevent the use of indiscriminate weapons (landmines, cluster munitions, use of explosive weapons in populated area) and to provide related victim assistance; establish sector coordination; and strengthen preparedness/risk-informed programming.

2. Countries have strengthened prevention and protection services to address harmful practices (FGM/C and child marriage)

136. In addressing harmful practices, namely child marriage and FGM/C, evidence suggests that when the underlying causes – the drivers of harmful practices, including poverty, lack of educational and economic opportunities, social expectations of behaviour, discrimination against girls and women and restrictive gender roles, beliefs about protection of girls, and low awareness of and access to alternatives – are eliminated, the practice will decline and, ultimately, end.[31] In many contexts, these harmful practices are social norms. Adolescent girls, families and communities may see the practices not only as legitimate but also appropriate, and even necessary to protect girls. In addition, adolescent boys and men, adolescent girls, families and communities may believe that men are entitled, and even expected, to marry young girls. Their beliefs and practice are sustained by the fact that they see others around them also engaging in child marriage.

137. In order to address the underlying gender norms and barriers girls face that make them particularly vulnerable to harmful practices, namely child marriage and FGM/C, support to increase reach with UNICEF-supported multisectoral, at-scale programmes will be provided through key prevention and care interventions. These include: supporting at-scale implementation of integrated inter-personal and media-based behaviour and social change platforms at institutional, community and public levels; empowering girls with information, skills, support networks; empowering and mobilizing parents and members of the society

[30] UNFPA and UNICEF, "UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage – Progress Report (to the Governments of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the European Union)", June 2017.

(promoting gender equality and the rights of the girl child); strengthening capacity of Governments, civil society, and other partners to take to scale the evidence-based cross-sectoral strategies; increasing national capacity to provide multisectoral (health, education, justice and social protection) preventive and response/care services, including services that aim to increase the agency of girls; supporting the education section in ensuring safe and inclusive education; supporting cash and incentive schemes; conducting communications campaigns; and providing technical assistance and advocacy on legislative and policy shifts addressing FGM/C practices or minimum age at marriage, with a special emphasis on the implementation of existing legislation and the commitment of financial resources from Governments of programme countries.

138. The Theory of Change also recognizes the critical importance of engaging with families and the broader communities (including religious and community leaders) as gatekeepers and decision makers. A central aim of the will be to work directly with local communities (primarily, though not exclusively, with NGO partners). While adolescent girls remain at the heart of UNICEF programming, there is considerable evidence to suggest that a failure to engage with families and communities, and in particular decision makers and opinion-shapers at the local level, will undermine the impact of the interventions. For example, in the effort to achieve abandonment of FGM/C, community and intergenerational dialogue among religious leaders, council of elders, women and girls, and men and boys provide opportunities to challenge gender relations in communities where men and women rarely interact. In the medium term of 5–10 years, it is expected that a critical mass of adolescent girls, adolescent boys and men, families and communities have changed aspirations, social expectations and behaviours related to child marriage; and in the longer term of 10–15 years, that aspirations for, and the value of, adolescent girls have shifted at the national-population level and are upheld by corresponding new social norms and behaviours.

139. For child marriage, emerging evidence indicates that girls' empowerment – increasing their agency and their access to information, services, resources and opportunities – is likely to have the biggest impact on child marriage rates. In this regard, high-quality education, particularly secondary school, is an especially effective lever for empowering girls, preventing child marriage, and mitigating the consequences for girls who are already married. On eliminating FGM/C, one of the key assumptions (among others) is that giving greater voice, visibility and resonance to those who have committed to the new norm of keeping girls intact will stimulate discussion and strengthen movement to end the practice. This can be accomplished by encouraging manifestations of commitment, including public declarations to end harmful practices by communities, religious leaders and groups, and other personalities. UNICEF will continue to harness the collaborative advantage of working with sister agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women at the field level on this output.

3. Countries have improved systems to protect children that come in contact with the law and to treat them in accordance with international standards

140. Justice systems play a key role in addressing child rights violations including addressing violence and exploitation of girls and boys, and preventing its re-occurrence. Children encounter the justice system as victims, witnesses, because they are in conflict with the law or as parties to a justice process, such as in custody arrangements. Juvenile offending is inadequately addressed including through the widespread application of pre- and post-trial detention rather than investment in diversion and alternative sanctions that support reintegration and rehabilitation. While detention should be used as a last resort and for the shortest period of time, children suspected or accused of having committed an offence are often detained. Accessing justice can help poor families to restore entitlements such as social benefits that have been denied, help minority children or children with disabilities and their families to challenge decisions excluding them from mainstream schools, and help families and children to challenge a decision to withdraw parental rights and place the child in residential care, which are all ways to mitigate poverty and exclusion. Girls and boys may

also come into contact with justice systems in relation to their perceived or actual association with armed parties to conflict.

141. The Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment on the right of the child to be heard (General Comment 12, 2009) emphasizes that article 12 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to all relevant judicial proceedings affecting the child, without limitation, including, for example, separation of parents, custody, care and adoption, children in conflict with the law, child victims of physical or psychological violence, sexual abuse or other crimes, health care, social security, unaccompanied children, asylum-seeking and refugee children, and victims of armed conflict and other emergencies. Protection of children from violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation, often involve custody and care decisions where courts play a key role and children's participation is paramount. Children's participation in criminal proceedings is central to bringing perpetrators to justice but their re-victimization during the procedures must be avoided.

142. To contribute to the realization of the rights of all children, victims, witnesses and perpetrators seeking to access justice, and/or participating in criminal, civil and administrative justice processes, and to ensure that children participating in these processes are treated in accordance with international standards, and building on the principle of State accountability, UNICEF will support the strengthening of the capacity of justice and administrative bodies as well as of the civil registration systems. UNICEF will also advocate for policy and legislative changes in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law and standards, and support capacity development of national human rights institutions to facilitate access to child-friendly remedies. Access to justice is the ability to seek and obtain fair, timely and effective remedy for violations of rights as put forth in the international, regional and national legal frameworks. It therefore goes well beyond juvenile justice. If justice systems and other accountability mechanisms are accessible to all, justice systems could be a tool to overcome deprivation and restore rights that were denied.

Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

143. In addition to the cross-cutting risks that are applicable to all of its outcomes and results areas, other specific assumptions and risks have been identified in relation to this outcome.

Table 4: Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
Political commitment, including provision of funding, towards building a multisectoral framework, and willingness of various agencies and sectors to work intersectorally. Structural barriers or siloed mindset that hamper meaningful/sustainable multisectoral work.	Provide innovative and practical packaging of key interventions for countries to implement, with explicit articulations of roles/responsibilities of each sector. UNICEF will also step up efforts to advocate for political commitment, including for required budget allocations, an intersectoral mindset and advocacy towards enhanced protection for children.
Openness of service providers and professionals to new norms, willingness of parents, caregivers families, societies to acquire more knowledge and information on positive parenting and to better protect their children from all forms of violence. Risk: C4D/social change interventions not sustainable due to small scale or unsystematic approaches.	Technical assistance and advocacy on including national C4D framework/action plan in a national development plan.

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
Giving greater voice, visibility and resonance to those who have committed to the new norm of keeping girls intact/preventing girls from early/forced marriage will stimulate discussion and strengthen movement to end the practices. Risk: Strong resistance from influential groups/leaders (e.g., religious groups/leaders) that can undermine efforts.	Use of evidence-based multi-platform approaches (dialogue, social mobilization, media-based strategies) to engage these groups in social norms change.
Political will to address FGM/C and child marriage. Risk: Limited change in legislation, policy and financial investments.	Supporting countries where there is momentum in addressing FGM/C and child marriage. In addition, partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs) who enhance government accountability and build public will for changes in policy/legislation through communication and advocacy campaigns.
Effective programme and policy implementation of the FGM/C and Child Marriage national programmes. Risk: Inadequate capacity of government partners, civil society and other implementing partners.	Dedicated resources towards capacity development either through resource allocation or provision of technical support United Nations headquarters/regional office, between countries or from external technical partners.
Quality assurance mechanisms (such as certification of justice and social service professions) combined with capacity-building will lead to adapted criminal, civil and administrative procedures and proceedings that protect child rights Risk: Administrative data systems are weak in many countries. Reviews of court files and other methodologies for tracking progress can be difficult to implement	UNICEF efforts in the area of enhancing access to justice must focus on strengthening disaggregated administrative data and identifying alternative ways for tracking progress (e.g., review of court case files, questionnaire feedback from justice and other relevant practitioners, opinion surveys on use of remedies by vulnerable groups).
There is an assumption that data availability, particularly administrative data, will be strengthened in the coming years to capture child protection outcomes. However, there is serious risk that data may not be available, or may not be sufficiently systematically or transparently used, with limited accountability for results. Data around disability will likely be insufficient.	Strengthening data systems is a regular component of UNICEF assistance. This will include support for more disaggregation of data, including information on children with disabilities, as well as support for strengthened incidence monitoring, prevalence monitoring, and programme monitoring.
It has been assumed that UNICEF will at least maintain the average funding level of the last years in	It is of utmost importance that UNICEF more strongly demonstrate its own value for money, to maintain the confidence of potential donors

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
child protection. There is risk that weakened global financing for child protection will be compounded if the sector fails to deliver on the measurable results.	that the requested resources for UNICEF will help achieve the UNICEF planned child protection results and make the expected contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals targets.
Resources/capacities both as an agency and on the ground to sustain efforts; access to operate in humanitarian settings. Risk: Human resources are sometimes limited, coordination is poor, and no access in certain situations, particularly in humanitarian settings.	Diversify partners, build resilience to cope with humanitarian situations, leadership in coordination/advocacy.
Political will to more effectively prevent, respond to and strengthen accountability for grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict. Risk: Politicization of mechanisms designed to enhance compliance of parties to conflict with international humanitarian and human rights law.	UNICEF will continue to advocate through the children and armed conflict agenda and relevant stakeholders for enhanced engagement with all parties to conflict to prevent and end grave violations against children, and for the development of multisectoral and multiyear programmes and advocacy to enhance the protection of children in situations of armed conflict.
It is assumed that UNICEF will successfully implement a learning agenda in relation to other programme areas under child protection, such as reducing sexual exploitation.	UNICEF will continue working with partners during the Strategic Plan period to further develop its programme logic and data-collection capacity in this area.

E. Key partnerships

144. Strategic partnerships with United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, national Governments, civil society, the private sector, faith-based communities and academia will continue to play a central role in advancing equitable results for children in Goal Area 3 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, and more broadly, within the context of the 2030 Agenda. More specifically, contribution of partners is critical to the delivery of the outputs and the related contributions to outcome-level change. UNICEF will pursue existing, new and innovative partnerships and networks to develop common positions and programming approaches, scaling up the use of our expertise, leveraging resources, and leveraging the programming of partners for better child protection delivery. Moreover, it will pursue global, regional and national partnerships, as they are the cornerstone of UNICEF programmatic engagement, advocacy and leveraging of funds, and are instrumental in translating commitments into concrete action on the ground.

145. UNICEF has a proven track record of developing global standards and public goods, such as programme guidance and programming tools, including in the areas of violence against children, sexual exploitation and abuse, birth registration, gender-based violence in emergencies, mine/explosive remnants of war risk-reduction education and victim assistance, the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups, monitoring and reporting of grave child rights violations, and unaccompanied and separated children– in all areas partnerships played a key role.

146. As an example of a successful global partnership enabling amplification of results and ramping up the collective development of global standards and public goods, the coordinated work with the WHO and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children have been catalytic in moving the violence against children agenda forward. Building on the development of INSPIRE, a package of seven violence-ending strategies published in 2016 by the WHO in partnership with nine entities including UNICEF, UNODC, and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (Global Partnership), UNICEF continues to work with the Global Partnership, WHO and other international partners to synergize (INSPIRE) work on the ground, which will enable improved links between the health, education, social service and justice sectors and strengthen harmonized approaches within UNICEF and with partners. A common set of evidence-based strategies and common results framework among partners not only help improve tracking and monitoring of results, but enhances the vertical (country, regional and global) as well as horizontal (across agencies and partners) coherence. Such coordinated and multisectoral action contributes to the effective attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16.

147. As another example of global partnership, UNICEF and UNFPA collaborative work on accelerating action to child marriage (contributing to Sustainable Development Goal target 5.3) has galvanized the efforts of governments, civil society and development partners around the world which, together, have reached more than 1 million girls with life skills and school attendance support, and 1.6 million individuals have been engaged in dialogue to support adolescent girls. The global programme strategy sets the standards and provides guidance to programming countries to accelerate efforts through harmonized and evidence based approached. UNICEF has also been implementing the Joint Programme on FGM/C in partnership with UNFPA to support government and other partners in 17 targeted countries. Since launching Phase II of the UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Programme on FGM/C in 2013, globally, 18,431,220 individuals have been involved in public declarations of abandonment of the practice. UNICEF partnership with UNFPA as well as academic institutions on the work around addressing FGM/C is an example of successful partnership that provides synergy and harmonized approach to building and sharing a repository of knowledge, data and analysis on child protection issues. The work with UNFPA and academic institutions is critical in developing a global monitoring and evaluation framework for social norm-change resulting from C4D efforts, specifically for FGM/C. Such learning may serve as a reference for other areas of work, most notably child marriage and violence against children.

148. In a year marked by a global migrant and refugee crisis, UNICEF multi-agency partnerships on migration, including with UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF National Committees in affected countries have already proven to galvanize the efforts of governments, civil society and development partners around the world. The global programme strategy will contribute to build a concerted effort in achieving measurable results through harmonized approaches.

149. Evidence shows that regional actions are being translated into national strategies and policy reform, which, in turn, is transforming into improved reach and quality of birth registration services. Setting standards and securing commitments through these regional intergovernmental structures are essential in moving the agenda forward in specific regions. In an effort to increase the level of birth registration within civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems, UNICEF is engaged in key regional initiatives and partnerships, such as the Accelerated Improvement of CRVS programme in Africa and the Regional Action Plan for the Improvement of CRVS in East Asia and the Pacific. In relation to our engagement around the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF, together with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, entered into a partnership with the Peace and Security Department of the African Union in 2013 to better protect children affected by armed conflict. The partnership includes strengthening the child protection capacity as well as monitoring and reporting capacity of the African Union Mission in Somalia through a Child Protection Adviser embedded within the African Union Mission.

150. Nationally, UNICEF will continue its long-standing practice of building capacity through partnerships with national and local governments, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector, including in humanitarian contexts. The UNICEF collaborative relationship with the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, for example, is essential in strengthening the national capacity on social service workforce, which is vital to improving the quality of service delivery and case management.[32] At the global level, UNICEF continues to work in partnership with the Better Care Network to develop a tracking tool to measure the implementation of the alternative care guidelines, due to be tested in 2017.

151. UNIC global, regional, and national partnerships are critical to strengthen efforts around advocacy and policy dialogue, and mobilizing multiple commitments. For example, through the partnership with We PROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online, UNICEF supports countries to advance legal reform to criminalize all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation in accordance with international human rights standards and adopt national policies and plans to address sexual violence against children.[33] Partnerships with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, Coordinating Action on Small Arms and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action are all critical for influencing policy making. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF will work with various partners including national counterparts, international/national organizations, civil society, academic and research institutions at global and national levels, to ensure timely and effective child protection prevention and response interventions. All will be implemented through the relevant inter-agency processes, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster approach, Areas of Responsibilities and integrated missions, where appropriate. UNICEF is the designated lead agency for the global Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and for the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, co-chair of the global Paris Principles Steering Group on Children and Associated with Armed Forces/Groups, a lead actor in the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings, co-chair of the International Organization's Group of the Call to Action in the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility, co-chair of the International Organizations Group of the Call to Action in the Mental Health and Psychosocial Reference Group, co-chair of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Children and Armed Conflict Technical Reference Group, and the United Nations Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group. Real-Time Accountability Partnership between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, UNFPA, the International Rescue Committee and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance aims to enhance the ability to collectively address gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts and promotes system-wide accountability and supports better responses to gender-based violence in emergencies at the country level.

152. On access to justice, UNICEF recognizes that there is great scope for broadening its partnerships to harness the work of others in justice sector reform, multisectoral work, and legal empowerment and involvement of civil society. On advancing work around social-norms change, strategic partnerships with global media and communication expert agencies as well as academic institutions will be capitalized upon. Finally, participation of children and partnering with children will remain an important part of the UNICEF partnership agenda. Participation and partnerships provides children with an opportunity to take action within their own communities, promote dialogue, support key issues among peer groups, and participate in monitoring activities to hold governments accountable for commitments.

[32] For example, the Government of Georgia, with UNICEF support, developed a child assessment referral instrument that will be used to identify potential cases of child rights violations and refer them to the respective social workers and which will be piloted.

[33] Seventy countries have also pledged global commitment to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation online through the WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online.

UNICEF-supported mechanisms such as U-Report, EduTrac, digital/community mapping and others are gaining traction in many countries and will be continued to be implemented.

V. Goal Area 4 theory of change

A. Summary

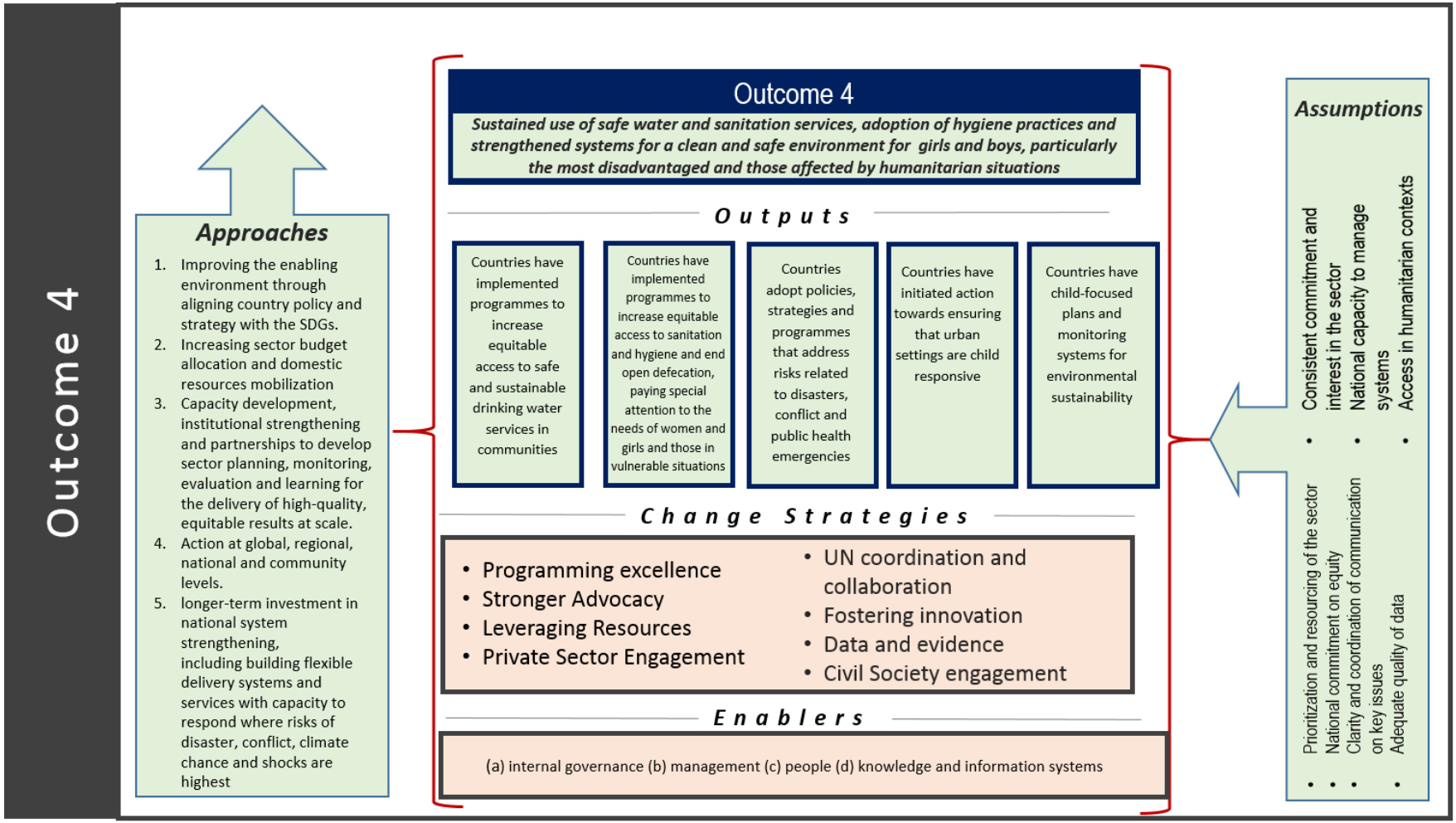
153. Outcome statement: Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices and strengthened systems for a clean and safe environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian situations.

Theory of Change Statement: ***If*** countries implement programmes to increase equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water services in communities, and ***if*** they have implemented programmes to increase equitable access to sanitation and hygiene and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations, and ***if*** they adopt policies, strategies and programmes that address risks related to disasters, conflict and public health emergencies, and ***if*** they initiate action towards ensuring that urban settings are child-responsive, and ***if*** they have child-focused plans and monitoring systems for environmental sustainability: ***Then*** children will be able to grow and develop in a more safe and secure environment.

154. A clean safe and secure environment for children requires that (a) children have access to safe and sustainable drinking water, (b) children have access to sanitation and hygiene services, (c) policies and programmes exist that address disaster and conflict-related risks, (d) urban planning and governance is responsive to the needs and rights of children, and (e) child-focused plans and monitoring systems exist for a sustainable environment. Achievement of this outcome requires actions at global, regional, national and community levels. This involves improving the enabling environment through aligning country policy and strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals. It requires increasing sector budget-allocation and domestic-resources mobilization as well as capacity development, institutional strengthening and partnerships to develop sector planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning for the delivery of high-quality, equitable results at scale.

155. In Achieving results in increasing access to safe adequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene services, the UNICEF approach will include longer-term investment in national-system strengthening, including building flexible delivery systems and services with capacity to respond where risks of disaster, conflict, climate chance and shocks are highest. At the same time, in humanitarian situations, approaches will include UNICEF support to direct delivery with a range of implementing partners, where there is imperative to act in humanitarian situations, where capacities and resources are low, and/or the national authorities are unwilling or unable to uphold their responsibilities to affected populations.

Figure IX
Outcome 4



B. Context

Leaving no child behind

156. Millions of children around the world are affected by conflict and fragility, climate change, natural hazards, or unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and air pollution. A safe and clean environment for children is as important as ever. Access to safe water, improved sanitation and proper hygiene is vital to children's well-being. It contributes to good health and nutrition (outcome 1), quality learning (outcome 2), and dignity, especially for women and girls. Recent decades have seen significant advances in expanding access to improved water and sanitation. But the "unfinished business" remains sizeable: an estimated 2.4 billion people are being left behind and still lack access to improved sanitation and 663 million people still lack access to improved drinking water sources.

157. Significant rural-urban disparities are evident in both sanitation and drinking water coverage. Out of the 2.4 billion people without access to improved sanitation, 7 out of 10 live in rural areas. For drinking water, there are marked differences in both the level of service available to rural and urban residents as well as the absolute numbers of people without access to improved drinking water. Just 32 per cent of the rural population has access to piped water on premises compared to 79 per cent of the urban population; and 8 out of 10 people are without access to any type of improved drinking water live in rural areas. Intra-urban inequalities and intra-rural disparities in access also exist not only in developing countries but also among certain ethnic groups in developed nations, according to very limited data. The environment for children living in cities also has a major impact on their well-being. Today, more than half of the world's children live in cities and by mid-century it will be 70 per cent, with an increased pressure on their environment. It is imperative that city planning is responsive to the rights of children, and that children's voices and those of their communities are heard and are part of the urban development process.

158. Climate change has the potential to undermine many of the gains made in child survival and development – and poses even greater dangers ahead. In every crisis, children are the most vulnerable, and climate change is no exception. As escalating droughts and flooding degrade food production, children will bear the greatest burden of hunger and malnutrition. As temperatures increase, together with water scarcity and air pollution, children will feel the deadliest impact of water-borne diseases and dangerous respiratory conditions. As more extreme weather events expand the number of emergencies and humanitarian situations, children will pay the highest price. As the world experiences a steady rise in climate-driven migration, children's lives and futures will be the most disrupted. They will bear the brunt of climate change. Today, over half a billion children live in extremely high flood-occurrence zones; nearly 160 million live in high or extremely high drought-severity zones. While climate change will ultimately impact every child, these children are already in harm's way and face some of the most immediate risks.

159. Climate change impacts can also undermine development gains and livelihood options. Climate change will contribute to rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns which, in turn, are likely to exacerbate the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue. Over time, dwindling water supplies and resource scarcity can increase migratory pressures on vulnerable families, disrupting livelihoods and increasing the risk of family displacement. Shifting agro-ecological zones and rainfall patterns can exacerbate rural poverty and food insecurity. The dangers of this are more pronounced for children than for adults. Children are more vulnerable to vector-borne diseases than adults. They face greater dangers from undernutrition and diarrhoeal diseases. The physical dangers of extreme weather events – flooding, building collapse, and more – pose unique threats to young bodies and minds. If, as expected, climate change worsens each of these risks, it is children who will suffer most.

160. Climate change will not affect all children equally. Because of the risk associated with them, flood and drought zones often overlap with areas of high poverty and low access to essential services such as water and sanitation. This means that children and families who are already disadvantaged by poverty – those with the fewest resources for coping – are likely to face some of the most immediate dangers of climate change. This can create a vicious cycle: a child living in poverty or deprived of adequate water and sanitation before a crisis will be more affected by a flood, drought or storm, less likely to recover quickly and at even greater risk in a subsequent crisis. While climate change poses universal threats, tackling it is also an imperative for equity. Unaddressed, climate change will harm the poorest and most vulnerable children first, hardest and longest.

Humanitarian response, risk and sustainable development

161. A key determinant of children's well-being today is whether they live in fragile, conflict-affected, or disaster-prone contexts. Such children are twice as likely to lack access to safe water. Approximately 28 million children have been uprooted by violence and conflict, and 300 million children are estimated to be living in slums. Some 28 per cent of the world's children live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, a figure projected to increase to one third by 2030. Climate change and natural disasters also pose grave risks to children: more than half a billion children live in areas with an extremely high flood risk, and nearly 160 million children live in high, or extremely high, drought-severity zones. Every year, millions of children around the world are affected by conflict and fragility, and natural hazards such as floods or earthquakes, climate change and environmental hazards including air pollution. Many such risks are on the rise. The children in fragile, conflict-affected and disaster-prone contexts are more vulnerable: child poverty rates are higher, children are three times less likely to attend school, twice as likely to be without clean water and twice as likely to die before the age of 5. Children are also at a greater risk of abuse, exploitation and violence.

162. Conflict and fragility, and natural hazards, not only create an environment that is unsafe for children, but also disrupt life-saving services such as water and sanitation systems. Ensuring a clean and safe environment for girls and boys affected by humanitarian situations is not only an imperative, but a critical condition to achieving the other Sustainable Development Goals.

C. Lessons Learned 2014–2017

163. While the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 builds on its predecessor, it has evolved in several ways. Outcome 4 focuses on the impact of the context and environment on children's survival and development, but builds on lessons from the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan on strengthening enabling environments at subnational levels and improving evidence- generation for equitable WASH programming. Another key lesson applicable across UNICEF areas of work is that starting with the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and practical. This is a lesson that will be used to inform programming in outcome 4 as much as in other outcome areas. This will involve a concerted effort to further scale up equity-focused programming and advocacy, including through several ways: better targeting of interventions to focus on the most disadvantaged children and those most vulnerable and at risk; working for better linkages between humanitarian and development work; and strengthening national and local capacities and systems. The voices of children and their families are critical forces for strengthening accountability in governance. UNICEF will intensify support for initiatives that enable citizens, communities and civil society to share their feedback on actions taken by governments and partners, including civil society, towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. There is also increased recognition that this not only involves engagement with national Governments but also with local government, particularly in urban areas.

164. In light of the scale, frequency and complexity of humanitarian situations, risk-informed programming and systems- strengthening have become vital for prevention, response and early recovery. Emergency preparedness and enhancing the resilience of communities and service-delivery systems will be core to the work of UNICEF in all country contexts, including as a means of strengthening humanitarian-development integration.

165. Other key lessons learned that are directly related to outcome 4 include the following:

(a) Due to the success of WASH programming as such CATS (Community Approaches to Total Sanitation), demand for services is growing, but there are few suitable products on the market for which people are willing or able to pay. UNICEF, working with partners, will need to influence markets, microfinancing and other financial mechanisms for innovative solutions;

(b) Sustainability of WASH services is another factor that will determine success going forward. UNICEF needs to place an increased emphasis on putting the sustainability of systems at the center of WASH programming through sustainability check surveys, sustainability compacts with host Governments and deeper analysis of the enabling environment that makes services last;

(c) Delivering on the UNICEF mandate of reaching the most vulnerable children in all situations requires increased involvement in urban WASH in times of both stability and crisis. UNICEF should apply its organizational strengths to selected aspects of urban WASH programming that will have the greatest impact;

(d) Monitoring, documenting and reporting on the equity dimensions of WASH activities is challenging in most countries. UNICEF needs to support Governments to strengthen national and subnational level monitoring systems for data collection, analysis and reporting;

(e) Using a child-centred risk assessment serves as an advocacy tool for policymaking and support risk- informed development planning at global, regional and national levels;[34]

(f) Improving social cohesion through UNICEF programming requires a good understanding of the underlying social dynamics in conflict and post-conflict settings;

(g) It is acknowledged that UNICEF needs to take a more structured approach to ensure that all of its programmes are conflict-sensitive, and when appropriate, to design programmes that make an explicit contribution to peacebuilding and strengthening of social cohesion.

D. Theory of change

Overview

166. Based on the Theory of Change and strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming, five main outputs for the 2018–21 Strategic Plan have been identified as UNICEF contributions to the outcome 4: ‘Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices, resilient and strengthened systems for a clean and safe environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian situations’. These are the five outputs:

(a) Countries have implemented programmes to increase equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water services in communities;

[34] Excerpt from UNICEF, “Building back better: Lesson learned from the response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in terms of long-term development, disaster risk reduction and resilience building in Aceh, Indonesia”, July 2014.

(b) Countries have implemented programmes to increase equitable access to sanitation and hygiene and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations;

(c) Countries adopt policies, strategies and programmes that address risks related to disasters, conflict and public health emergencies;

(d) Countries have initiated action towards ensuring that urban settings are child-responsive;

(e) Countries have child-focused plans and monitoring systems for environmental sustainability.

167. Delivering on these outputs will significantly contribute to a safer and cleaner environment for children. Achieving each will involve improving the enabling environment (including knowledge management, capacity- building, institutional strengthening and partnerships) for the delivery of results at scale, including building flexible delivery systems and services with capacity to respond where risks of disaster, conflict, climate change, and shocks are highest. It will also involve the following: achieving behavioural change and improving demand for WASH services and outcomes and holding duty-bearers to account for delivery services that meet demand; delivering sustainable services to the poorest and most marginalized women and children; and monitoring to ensure high-quality, equitable results that deliver value for money and sustainable outcomes.

168. As marginalized local authorities and communities struggle with capacity gaps and financing of WASH services, UNICEF has substantially increased its engagement in helping governments to strengthen the enabling environment for sustained services while also directly supporting service delivery, especially where children are most vulnerable. UNICEF adds value based on its global knowledge and experience of service delivery management systems, including those managed by communities themselves, its efficient procurement systems, and its knowledge of practices and challenges related to sanitation and knowledge of the needs of local communities and their demand for affordable products and services. UNICEF is able to develop and run major communication campaigns for behavioural change, with the particular needs of women and girls always a key consideration.

169. UNICEF will continue to work with partners to strengthen national and subnational systems, paying particular attention to equity-monitoring, sustainability and gender considerations. Improved access to water and sanitation services is very much a question of finance. UNICEF will continue to directly invest in water and sanitation systems and community-level infrastructure, especially in least developed countries, giving particular consideration to the needs of women and girls.

170. It will also support sanitation and hygiene, especially focusing on access to toilets, reducing open defecation, and promoting critical hygiene practices. UNICEF will also support initiatives for WASH in schools and health centres, taking into account especially the specific needs of girls and children living with disabilities. Complementary efforts will focus on community platforms to address behavioural and social barriers to WASH. This capacity will provide an important base in humanitarian situations for scaling up coordinated communications and community engagement to support individual and community life-saving and protection actions as well as participation in and feedback on humanitarian response.

171. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF leads the WASH cluster, and coordinates activities of the relief community related to water and sanitation of the most vulnerable populations. Because of its field presence, UNICEF is able to anticipate the needs in crisis situations and respond rapidly. UNICEF also has major logistical capacity, which is a significant asset in the acquisition and distribution of water and sanitation supplies. Based on its long experience in water supply and sanitation in crisis situations, UNICEF is able to provide WASH systems and services in humanitarian situations that make use of local capacities and can be kept

operational throughout the crisis. UNICEF will provide life-saving access to safe water and will support sanitation and hygiene, with a special focus on access to toilets and promoting critical hygiene practices. In collaboration with sector partners, UNICEF will strengthen national and subnational capacity for emergency coordination, preparedness and response. This also includes providing drinking water, sanitation and hand-washing facilities to schools, ECD centres and health-care centres where governments and local communities are unable to do so, directly assisting children and their families.

172. UNICEF is a key partner of the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) initiative, which connects programme countries with development banks, multilaterals, donor countries, the private sector and other global water organizations. UNICEF has been instrumental in convening the SWA High-Level Meetings to bring together ministers responsible for finance and water and sanitation from programme countries, ministers of development cooperation from donor countries, and high-level representatives from development banks and leading sanitation and water agencies. Partners will continue to be encouraged to place provision of WASH for the most vulnerable higher on the political agenda, promote solutions, demonstrate political will, and increase the allocation and impact of resources. In programme countries, UNICEF will continue to demonstrate and provide evidence of the impact of improved WASH services on other health and development indicators of children. The UNICEF SWA has adopted the five building blocks that governments can put in place for the provision of adequate and sustainable WASH services: (a) sector policy and strategies, (b) institutional arrangements, (c) budget and financing, (d) planning, monitoring and review, and (e) capacity development.

173. A systems approach is also used to help urban/local government plans and budgets to be more child-responsive. The local level is, after all, where children live. Local governments, particularly in urban contexts, play a decisive role in the lives of children, from planning the physical environment to the delivery of key public services. It is therefore crucial to ensure that local plans and budgets reflect children's needs and priorities. In this area, UNICEF will continue its work on supporting adolescent and community participation in local decision-making, strengthening social accountability mechanisms, enhancing urban and local government capacity to develop child responsive plans and to deliver public services for children in an equitable manner. In addition, a focus on sufficient and equitable local finance is a pre-condition to ensure that the developed plans translate into local action and results for children, including the most vulnerable.

174. National and local plans and budgets must also be responsive to children (including adolescents) and address the risks that threaten their access to basic services so they are able to realize their rights. The increasing need for more sustainable services and the increasing frequency of emergencies make the need for risk-informed planning and management in programming greater than ever before to ensure an environment where children can be safe and secure. Through risk-informed programming, UNICEF and partners will support countries to make the policies and programmes related to WASH, climate change, disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding that are responsive to the needs of children, and will strengthen humanitarian-development integration by supporting systems to better prepare for, and respond to and recover from, shocks and stresses.

175. To support Governments and partners, including civil society, to achieve resilient development in the context of shocks and stresses, including natural hazards, climate, conflict and epidemics, while also meeting commitments to the Sendai Framework and Paris Climate Agreement, UNICEF is promoting two related approaches: risk-informed programming and the promotion of social cohesion and peacebuilding. While the two approaches are related and both require a robust and common context and risk assessment, strategies to address the underlying causes and risks may vary. Risk-informed programming is consistent with and also supports explicit work on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Specifically, UNICEF will continue to strengthen national and local risk assessment, include risk-reduction strategies in development plans as well as sector policies and programmes,

advocate for a child-sensitive disaster and emergency management and support the engagement and participation of adolescents and young people. UNICEF work on social cohesion and peacebuilding will be consistent with this but will further emphasize interventions that build social cohesion, strengthen national, community and individual capacities to address the causes of conflict constructively, and lay and support foundations for sustainable peace and development.

176. Across the outputs under outcome 4 and building on synergies with work related to other outcomes, UNICEF will advocate for prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable in climate change adaptation efforts, particularly children, who will bear the brunt of climate change far longer than adults, work to reduce inequities among children now to promote their future resilience to climate change and other disasters or crises, support alignment and coordinating work on climate change adaptation, preparedness and disaster risk reduction at national and subnational levels, work to protect children who are forced to move as a result of climate change, and promote investment in children as part of national climate plans on mitigation and adaptation.

177. In conflict-affected contexts, UNICEF undertakes a conflict analysis as part of the broader risk analysis for risk- informed programming. Such analysis is usually focused on informing UNICEF programming to ensure its work is conflict-sensitive (do no harm), and contributes to peacebuilding (do more good) or the strengthening of social cohesion wherever possible. The understanding of UNICEF on conflict analysis emphasizes the social dimensions of conflict, the particular impacts on children and young people (and their potential capacities and roles), and, ultimately, on equitable access to social services. Depending on the context and potential sensitivities regarding the term “conflict”, UNICEF field offices and programmes may use different terminologies to describe such analysis, e.g. social cohesion analysis, context analysis, peace and development analysis, or sustaining peace analysis.

Assumptions, risks and risk-management measures

178. In addition to the cross-cutting risks that are applicable to all of its outcomes and results areas, other specific assumptions and risks have been identified in relation to this outcome.

Table 5: Assumptions, risks and risk-management measures

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
It is assumed that there continues to be global interest in financing WASH services in programme countries. There is the risk of reduced funding for WASH, due to waning donor interest.	UNICEF will continue to promote global attention to WASH through the SWA initiative.
It is assumed that there to be global interest in enhancing locally owned and driven public and private financing mechanisms.	UNICEF will advocate enhancement of local finance for children, including through local tax revenues and private sector participation.
There is a risk that local development plans will not address drivers of multi-dimensional child poverty particularly in relation to land and housing informality.	UNICEF equity approach will assist in mainstreaming universal coverage at the local level.
It is assumed that donors will continue to finance WASH service delivery through UNICEF. The risk is Direct donor funding to	UNICEF will continue to demonstrate its value for money in effectively and efficiently delivering WASH service, in both least developed countries and humanitarian

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
programme countries may not be used in the areas where WASH needs are the greatest.	situations. UNICEF will aim to leverage, through in-country sector approaches and partnerships, donor-provided WASH funding for the areas of greatest need, including an end to open defecation.
It is assumed that programme countries are determined to address the WASH related Sustainable Development Goals targets. However, there is the risk that WASH – especially as it relates to women and children – is not sufficiently prioritized among a country's development agenda.	UNICEF will seek additional and contribute to existing global, international and domestic alliances and partnerships, to urge attention to WASH services especially for the most vulnerable groups. UNICEF will also share evidence on the multiple positive effects of access to water and sanitation on health, education and well-being.
It is assumed that the international WASH community, including donors, and the private sector and civil society, are consistent in their communications and support to WASH. There is a risk that different donors and partners may send conflicting signals.	UNICEF will support WASH sector approaches, where common strategies for the public and private partners are developed, funded and implemented.
There is the risk that available data is not sufficient to assess the magnitude of needed WASH interventions and to develop cohered and agreeable sector strategies.	In all countries where UNICEF supports WASH programmes, UNICEF will assist in the strengthening of data systems and WASH monitoring, including through the joint UNICEF-WHO joint monitoring programme. Increased investment in equity measurement through disaggregated data, e.g., on children with disabilities, will also be of critical importance moving forward.
It is assumed that examples and models are available where countries in similar situations have managed to improve WASH services.	UNICEF has a global network of WASH knowledge and expertise.
There is a risk – especially in least developed countries – that domestic resources remain insufficient to rapidly expand WASH services for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals targets.	External funding will be sought in such cases. In addition, and in concert with the rest of the aid community and other development partners, UNICEF will assist the government in improving planning and execution of domestic WASH budgets. This will aim to establish sustainable financing models, use resources more effectively and efficiently, and reduce leakage.
It is assumed that humanitarian access to support the provision of water and sanitation for vulnerable populations can be achieved. There is the risk that access is being denied.	UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities quickly as they arise. Especially where parties to conflict are immune to international pressure, access might remain unachievable.
It is assumed Governments have adequate capacity including	Appropriate and qualified human resources (including partnership with standby partners)

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
financial and human resources to deliver, manage and then to sustain WASH services. However, there is the risk that UNICEF and partners (Governments, donors) are unable to invest quality human and financial resources in the WASH programme.	are deployed to support countries in need. In countries with capacity challenges, UNICEF will promote sector approaches that bring together a common plan, financing and expertise. UNICEF also directly assists Governments in planning and follow-up.
It is assumed high-level political commitment exists – and expenditure is prioritized – to deliver and sustain WASH services to the unserved/underserved population. However, there is the risk that political and cultural barriers undermine UNICEF ability to bring about transformational change in delivering WASH services that benefit unserved/underserved populations and, more specifically, the poorest and excluded groups within these populations.	Strategic partnerships with key regional and global players in the WASH sector are maximized to support policy, budgeting, financing and advocacy efforts. UNICEF builds capacity of country-based partners on procurement, management, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation at the national, regional and district levels.
It is assumed enabling environments provides the necessary conditions for service providers (private and/or public) to deliver cost-effective WASH services, and safety-net (social protection) schemes exist to safeguard poorest community members. However, there is the risk that a focus on delivering first-time access undermines long-term sustainability.	High-quality evidence is generated and disseminated to scale up best practice, combined with practical, field-tested innovations to develop user-friendly technologies and approaches. Progress towards meeting the results (including impact on women and girls and vulnerable groups) is closely monitored, and follow-up action is taken promptly as soon as any potential problems are identified.
It is assumed that other United Nations partners coordinating and collaborating with UNICEF will deliver their contributions on areas of collaboration. The risk is that if other partners do not deliver then UNICEF collaborative work with those entities may not be as effective or sustainable as planned.	UNICEF will continue to work through the new UNDAF process and other inter-agency processes and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency or working closely together.

E. Key partnerships

179. Partnerships are essential to delivering results for children, especially in fragile, conflict-affected and disaster-prone contexts. UNICEF will continue and strengthen its partnerships with the broader United Nations system, the World Bank, national and local governments, and CSOs – particularly local organizations and those representing affected populations such as the Red Cross Movement and the Children in a Changing Climate Coalition. UNICEF will also promote common risk-analysis, including working with the Joint Research Unit of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Union, and support joined-up programming at the strategic and

technical/sectoral level based on comparative advantages of various partners, including at decentralized or subnational level.

180. The World Bank Group and UNICEF have just signed a Partnership Framework bringing together their respective mandates to promote shared prosperity and equity, recognizing the importance of reducing inequalities of opportunity from the early years of children's life and in countries with the highest incidence of extreme child deprivation. One of the key engagement areas is investments in fragility, and refugee and migrant children, for common analytics, advocacy and programming. These new commitments and the scaling-up of fragility-focused interventions create new opportunities to increase investments and deepen collaboration in these areas. Engagement priorities in the framework align with the strategic priorities of the overall United Nations World Bank Group Partnership Framework for Crises-Affected Situations. They address common country-level analytics and vulnerability assessments, identification of a basic package of services provided in fragile contexts, consolidate and expand resilient development approaches and resilience programming, and identify advocacy and partnership opportunities around events attended by senior management of both agencies.

181. UNICEF is one of the founding members and a key convener of SWA, which aims to coordinate and align support for countries' own strategies to reach universal access. With WHO, UNICEF implements the Joint Monitoring Programme, responsible for monitoring progress towards universal access for water supply and sanitation. This leadership role has enabled UNICEF to influence and shape sector thinking on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In relation to the urban context, particular focus will be on continued collaboration, specifically with UNDP and UN-Habitat, global local government associations such as United Cities and Local Governments as well as the Development Partners Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance.

182. The UNICEF WASH programme will expand its work with allies at all levels, focusing on developing partnership frameworks that address specific needs and can leverage resources for scaling up programmes (including SWA where appropriate). Existing and potential partners include local and national governments, United Nations agencies, bilateral donor agencies, specialist WASH organizations, NGOs, CSOs, funding foundations, research institutes and the private sector. The programme will continue to promote private entrepreneurship, especially at the intermediate and community levels, where there are opportunities for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of programmes. Work will be done with partners to promote the necessary institutional reforms (tax reforms, access to credit, improved communication systems, etc.) to facilitate entrepreneurship. Partners in this area will include latrine artisans/marketers, manufacturers of pumps and pipes, village pump mechanics, spare parts distributors, and media and communication companies. UNICEF will also expand its relationship with larger companies, moving beyond fund-raising to tap the marketing and technical resources of companies to achieve common goals such as the promotion of hand-washing with soap, household water treatment and low-cost borehole drilling. Companies both large and small are key UNICEF partners in the development of appropriate and accessible technologies for a range of programme areas, including water purification and extraction.

183. The WASH cluster has become the key partnership framework for coordination of humanitarian preparedness and response, and UNICEF will continue to use its position as global cluster lead (and country lead in most large emergencies) to reinforce the role of the cluster and further build capacity. At the country level, where UNICEF enjoys long-standing relationships and legitimacy with governments, the organization is uniquely positioned to link NGOs, community-based organizations and the private sector with governments and facilitate more effective joint initiatives. To this end, UNICEF will continue to work within a variety of national partnership frameworks, including sector coordination forums.

VI. Goal Area 5 theory of change

A. Summary

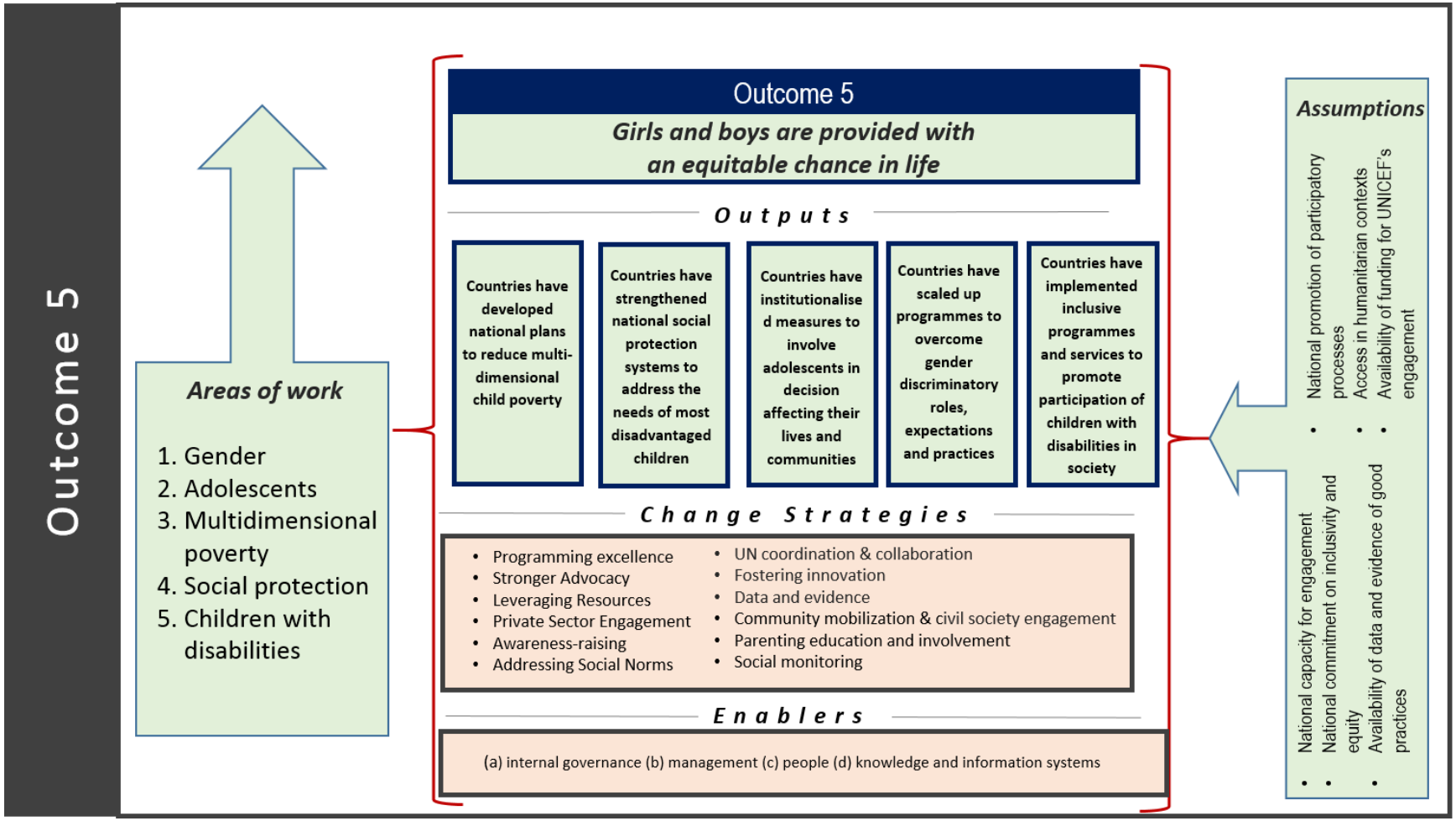
184. Outcome statement: Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life.

Theory of Change Statement: ***If*** countries have national plans to reduce multidimensional child poverty, and ***if*** they strengthen national social protection systems to address the needs of most disadvantaged children, and ***if*** they institutionalize measures to involve adolescents in decisions affecting their lives and communities, and ***if*** they have scaled-up programmes to overcome gender-discriminatory roles, expectations and practices, and ***if*** they implement inclusive programmes and services to promote participation of children with disabilities in society: ***Then*** more vulnerable children will have a fair chance in life.

185. In working to ensure that the most disadvantaged girls and boys receive social protection support, UNICEF supports strengthening social protection systems for better coverage and impact on children. This includes support to various social protection components, including government cash transfer programmes (both in development and humanitarian situations) and social welfare services. In working to ensure that girls and boys with disabilities are reached by accessible and inclusive programmes and services to participate fully in society UNICEF supports children with disabilities in accessing assistive devices, supports disability inclusive programmes and services in longer-term development programming and seeks to strengthen this in humanitarian response, and supports countries in implementing the UNICEF/Washington Group data module on child functioning.

186. For UNICEF, increasing the numbers of girls and boys supported by programmes to overcome gender discriminatory roles means supporting countries with at-scale programmes to address the issue, including building the capacity of the front-line workers that focus on gender inequality and supporting a strategic set of social and behaviour -change communication platforms and local partners that can engage and stimulate positive social change amongst key influencers. Increasing the number of adolescent girls and boys who influence behaviours, norms and decisions affecting their lives and communities means expanding and systematizing opportunities to strengthen their capacities and outlets for exchange and communication; facilitating their participation in civic engagement initiatives; and supporting countries to develop national policies and legislation that will provide an enabling environment for adolescent engagement and development. Strengthening engagement of adolescents in countries facing high risk related to disaster, conflict, climate change and other shocks lays an important base for accountability to at and affected people that involves children. UNICEF focus on multidimensional poverty (including monetary aspects of child poverty) is based on supporting countries with routine and official measuring and reporting on child poverty, and developing explicit, adequately funded policies and programmes on child poverty in their national plans, including paying attention to the agility of systems to respond to the impacts of disaster, conflict and other shock

Table X
Outcome 5



B. Context

Leaving no child behind

187. A fundamental principle of the human rights approach is that every child should have an equitable chance in life. Making sure that every child has this chance is also the best way to ensure that no child is left behind and that ongoing efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda reach those children that are farthest behind first. Much of the deprivation experienced by the most disadvantaged children is as a result of their being girls or young women, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, or children from certain ethnic or linguistic groups – or of belonging to more than one of these groups, further exacerbating disadvantage. Regardless of into which country or society or family a child is born, systems and environments at national and community levels should allow all children to have an education, be healthy and well nourished, grow up free from violence stigma and discrimination, and enjoy the benefit of available pubic services like anyone else. Equity does not mean that every child receives the same share of national or government resources – it means that those with greater needs may need extra help to be heard and supported so that the outcome for both becomes more fair and balanced. As children may get different support from their families, the systems should make up for the deficits and step in where the family is unable to do so. Ensuring equitable life chances also means providing support for parenting education, child care, and strengthening and systematizing community platforms and mechanisms to support engagement and inclusion.

188. While it is a desirable principle and outcome, equity is difficult to achieve. While 1 billion people have emerged from extreme poverty since 1990, children now account for over half of the 767 million people who remain trapped in its vicious cycle. Put another way, children are twice as likely as adults to be living on under $1.90 a day. Furthermore, poverty is different for children than for adults. Poverty in childhood, both multidimensional and monetary poverty, can lead to devastating deficits that cannot be overcome later. Because of this, children growing up in poverty often remain poor as adults, and child poverty is transmitted across generations. Countries can only break the intergenerational cycle of poverty if they prioritize attention to children, especially the youngest, living in poverty. Reform of health, education, labour, social protection and other systems is necessary so that each child has a fair and equal chance to succeed, to receive treatment, to learn and develop – regardless of his or her family or community background. If the ripple effects of living in an income-poor family are offset, and the different elements of multi-dimensional child poverty are mitigated, the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next can be avoided.

189. While poverty as a whole should decrease, UNICEF is concerned about the number of children who live in income-poor families and who are multidimensionally deprived, whether they receive social transfers, and whether health, education and social welfare services ensure equal chances to develop. At the heart of this change is making sure that national financing for the policies and programmes to address child poverty is prioritized, adequate, effective and efficient. Adolescents as a group also face many disadvantages. Adolescents have made fewer gains in well-being over the past 20 years than children 1–4 years old, and are almost twice as likely to be out of school as primary school- aged children. Adolescents have been overlooked in most policies and budget allocations and their views are often not listened to or considered. Disadvantage is also caused by willful or de facto discrimination – by sex, language, disability status or many other drivers of inequity. In many countries, inequities are further exacerbated by inadequate, inefficient and unfair distribution of public funds, resulting in a failure to reach the most disadvantaged.

190. Children with disabilities are one of the most excluded and invisible groups in society. It is estimated that there are at least 93 million children with disabilities in the world, but the actual numbers could be much higher. They are likely to be among the poorest members of

society. They are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard. Their disabilities place them at a higher risk of physical and sexual abuse, and often exclude them from receiving proper nutrition or humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

191. Despite progress made since the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995, a range of challenges to gender equality, and especially girls' empowerment, remain. These include girls' unequal access to basic health and education services; social norms and practices such as son preference and child marriage that limit and devalue girls and their contributions and set them on a path of lifetime deprivations; and girls' disproportionate burden of work and frequent experience of violence both in and outside the home. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is central to the UNICEF mandate and the organizational focus on equity. Important progress has been achieved in promoting gender equality worldwide, including reductions in maternal mortality, increased gender parity in primary schooling and a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage. Yet much remains to be done. Rates of mortality and morbidity among women and girls in the least developed countries are still high. In many countries, girls continue to be less valued than boys and have fewer opportunities to survive and thrive. Around one quarter of young women were married before the age of 18, and one fifth become mothers before that age.

Humanitarian response, risk, and sustainable development

192. In fragile, conflict-affected and disaster-prone contexts, the risk and impact of child poverty is even greater and the specific needs of women and girls are often overlooked, and violations against them – including sexual violence – are commonplace. Adolescent boys, meanwhile, are exposed to specific risks; for example, they are more likely to be recruited into armed groups, or to face detention. Adolescent girls and boys in humanitarian settings face specific risks that are often overlooked, including increased pressures forcing child marriage or child labor to help their families, lacking safe spaces in which to play or interact with others, and exposed to high levels of stress and violence even more where they are unable to go to school, all at a critical time of neurological development which predisposes them to depression and long-term mental health issues.

193. There is increasing global recognition of the importance of social protection in mitigating and responding to crises. Social protection interventions are intended to build resilience. When social protection systems are able to respond and expand quickly in response to a crisis, providing additional or new support to those who are vulnerable, they can ensure more sustainable, and often government-owned responses to humanitarian situations. The recent international consensus to make greater use of cash transfers as part of humanitarian response underscores the importance of social protection, the expansion of cash transfers, use of existing systems, and strengthening of social protection to support a more effective, rights-based and sustainable response to crises. The Grand Bargain also underscored the centrality of community participation and ensuring provisions engaging affected populations, including adolescents in planning, implementation, monitoring and response regarding humanitarian action.

C. Lessons learned 2014–2017

194. The most important lessons that UNICEF and its partners have learned and that have a direct bearing on the organization's work under outcome 5 are the following: starting with the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and practical; and outcome 5 speaks most directly of all to the call for development actors like UNICEF, in working to realize the 2030 Agenda, to develop programmes that explicitly address the issue of leaving no girl or boy behind and prioritizing the needs and rights of those that are currently farthest behind in terms of development progress and realization of rights.

195. Also very applicable to UNICEF work under outcome 5 is the finding outlined in the Strategic Plan that the voices of children and their families are critical forces for promoting positive social norms and practices, fostering citizenship and strengthening accountability in governance. UNICEF should intensify support for initiatives that enable citizens, communities and civil society to share their engagement in and feedback on actions taken by Governments and partners in policy formulation and service-provision more generally and particularly for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This will need to include innovative means of ensuring inclusion of those whose voices are often not adequately heard, such as girls, adolescents, the poorest children, and children with disabilities.

196. Reflecting the growing work of UNICEF on social protection and its expertise in generating evidence on social protection and children, the UNICEF Office of Evaluation released a global synthesis of more than 40 UNICEF-supported evaluations of cash transfers, "Cash Transfer as a Social Protection Intervention: Evidence from UNICEF evaluations 2010–2014", which was presented to the UNICEF Executive Board. The report highlighted proven impacts of cash transfer programmes on a wide set of sectoral outcomes – nutrition and food security, education, health, HIV risk and child protection, economic productivity, resilience and dignity – across a range of country settings and contexts. The report also recommended that UNICEF promote the use of cash transfers to enhance results across all Strategic Plan outcome areas and to strengthen programming and evaluation of cash transfers in combination with other social protection programmes and complementary services. This underscores the importance of work to strengthen social protection systems, and the need to expand work in more closely linking with social services.

197. National Governments rather than development partners are by far the most important funders of key services for children, even in the poorest countries. The extent to which their public financial management systems are equitable, efficient and effective directly impacts the access of the most vulnerable children to quality social services, and is a key factor in whether children experience multidimensional poverty. The need for close attention to the use of public resources for children is reflected in the commitments made at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in 2015, as well as the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.19 on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights (2016). UNICEF has successfully demonstrated capacities to generate evidence to support greater and improved investments in children, empowered citizens and children to take part in the decision-making processes on public spending, and contributed to more equitable fiscal policies through collaboration with key partners like the World Bank, UNDP and others. As a result, UNICEF has reserved a seat at the table in discussions with key financial actors, and is much better placed today to play an active role in ensuring public spending enables the realization of children's rights.

198. UNICEF has also continued to learn some valuable lessons in its work on gender equality, including through the implementation of its Gender Action Plan, 2014–2017, and these are outlined in detail in the current plan.

D. Theory of change

Overview

199. Based on its assessment of the challenges facing many of the most vulnerable children and learning lessons from the current Strategic Plan period, and strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming, the UNICEF Theory of Change is based on five outputs contributing to the outcome of 'Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life':

(a) Countries have developed national plans to reduce multidimensional child poverty;

(b) Countries have strengthened national social protection systems to address the needs of most disadvantaged children;

(c) Countries have institutionalized measures to involve adolescents in decision affecting their lives and communities;

(d) Countries have scaled up programmes to overcome gender discriminatory roles, expectations and practices;

(e) Countries have implemented inclusive programmes and services to promote participation of children with disabilities in society.

200. UNICEF experience in working towards equal opportunities for children has shown that for achieving greater equality and social protection, countries need to strengthen their policies, legislation and systems and actively focus on identifying the most vulnerable girls and boys to include them in the benefits of development. Under outcome 5, UNICEF contributions are primarily based on this approach.

201. Addressing child poverty is at the heart of the UNICEF approach towards a world where all girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life. UNICEF, together with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, has developed a model based on moving through five stages of work on child poverty. The first stage, for countries with no current focus on child poverty, is to build national support and develop a national pathway towards ending child poverty. A crucial second step is routine national measurement of multidimensional and monetary child poverty. This measurement forms the basis of the third step, child poverty analysis, national advocacy and policy engagement, and this engagement leads to explicit policy and programmes changes to reduce child poverty. The final step is support to the operationalization of an integrated national plan (either stand-alone or as part of national development plans) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on child poverty. UNICEF work on effective, efficient and equitable public finance for children is essential in making sure these national policies and plans to address child poverty are adequately funded and sustainable, meaningfully implemented and achieve results. To this end, UNICEF work on multidimensional poverty and public finance (including measurement of equity incidence in public spending) needs to be fully integrated.

202. Social protection systems are one of the key interventions to reduce child poverty and deprivation. The evidence clearly demonstrates the multiple positive impacts of social protection on the lives of children and their families. However, more children need to be reached by social protection systems in order to maximize this potential at scale. National cash transfer programmes exist in many countries, though their reach is often limited. Similarly, social welfare services vary hugely by region. In some countries, social welfare systems are usually well developed, though still overstretched. Across parts of Africa and Asia, ratios can be as low as one government social worker for tens of thousands of people, and data on social work or social outreach services is very limited. Critically, these programmes and services are often not coordinated to effectively address children's multiple needs. UNICEF work in social protection focuses on strengthening social protection systems and expanding their coverage, while at the same time enhancing their impacts for children. More specifically, UNICEF work supports the expansion of national cash transfer programmes, linking social protection programme participants to other services and information, and strengthening the core human and administrative systems required to coordinate and deliver holistic social protection for children and their families. The latter includes strengthening the capacity and role of social welfare workers in both providing direct social support to families and children, and in referring them to other programmes and services. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF advocates for and is increasingly involved in support to vulnerable children – including through cash assistance, with a vision to strengthen the national social protection system in the long run.

203. To promote gender equality, UNICEF will address discriminatory policies as well as the socialization processes that define gender roles and practices, and will support girls and boys to transform social narratives and promote social and behaviour change. Initiatives will include parenting education, community and adolescent engagement, and life skills, gender-

responsive training for frontline workers, capacity development of a wide range of interpersonal, media and digital-based C4D platforms and support for legal and policy change. Building on the Gender Action Plan, as well as system-wide efforts to promote gender equality (gender equality is one of the areas of collaborative advantage identified jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women), gender results are integrated into each of the five outcomes of the Strategic Plan. These results include quality maternal care; menstrual hygiene management; women's and girls' nutrition; equitable learning and skills for girls and boys; reducing child marriage; and transforming gender- discriminatory roles and practices. In addition to gender-equitable outcomes, there is a strong emphasis on addressing some of the barriers to the empowerment of adolescent girls. The Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 captures the full scope of actions.

204. UNICEF will also continue supporting countries to address the many barriers that impede results for children with disabilities, with the aim of providing inclusive services at scale. It will do so firstly by investing in training packages for staff and critical local stakeholders. By training the workforce (community health workers, education managers and teachers, community leaders, social workers and others) and strengthening local partnerships, it is expected that the quality, effectiveness and scale of inclusive programme and service delivery in development and humanitarian contexts will increase. To further accelerate disability inclusive programming and practices, in collaboration with critical partners, including civil society, at country level, UNICEF will invest in early identification of and interventions for children with disabilities; inclusive education; de-institutionalization and social protection. UNICEF will continue expanding innovation for universal design, accessibility and supporting governments on the provisioning of assistive technology, in a selected number of countries. Furthermore, UNICEF will continue to invest in the generation and use of data on children with disabilities. Also, to "walk the talk" and keep coherence between programmes and practices, UNICEF will continue working towards becoming a fully disability-inclusive organization, with enhanced policies and practices on the following: inclusive employment and work environment for persons with disabilities; support to staff with disabilities and with dependents with disabilities; accessibility of UNICEF premises; accessible ICT and assistive devices; and accessible and inclusive communications.

205. Adolescence is a crucial developmental period that profoundly influences the life trajectories of girls and boys in dramatically different ways. Too often the specific needs of adolescents are not prioritized, even though they have the potential to become powerful agents of positive change. Support for adolescent girls, in particular, has a multiplier effect for intergenerational outcomes. To promote the empowerment of adolescent girls and boys, UNICEF will support national policies, budgets and service-delivery systems as well as social, cultural and citizenship-related platforms and interventions that are responsive to their needs. Adolescent-focused results have been integrated across all five outcomes of the Strategic Plan: adolescent-responsive health, nutrition and WASH; increased efforts to ensure adolescents complete secondary school and build their skills for learning, personal empowerment, citizenship and employability; and protection of adolescents from violence and harmful practices. UNICEF will also work directly with adolescents, to increase their engagement and participation in affairs that concern them or their communities and impact their well-being. Such engagement requires access to appropriate information, skills and platforms that are tailored to their age. Adolescents and young people are frequently early adopters of new technologies and energized to contest entrenched social norms, discrimination and environmental concerns. With the right skills-building and support, they can act as powerful change agents. UNICEF will promote the strengthening and scaling up of communication for development platforms, skills-building and appropriate mechanisms for the systematic participation of adolescents in decisions and actions that impact their lives and those of their communities, and will support programmes that nurture them as informed social actors.

206. Across each of the five outputs under outcome 5 are six main cross-cutting approaches, which are a reflection of the of the change strategies (the HOWs) in the Strategic Plan and

represent their application under this outcome. They are described in the following paragraphs.

207. **Raising awareness**. Many issues under outcome 5 will be subject to awareness-raising by UNICEF during the Strategic Plan. For example, 65 countries are currently not even measuring or discussing child poverty. Also, although more than 170 countries having ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in most low-income countries, children with disabilities are invisible. Some countries have not considered disability as a child rights issue; society and government deal with their needs through charitable approaches, not through legal obligations. Likewise, many countries have not yet formally recognized that adolescents have specific rights and needs. Adolescents are assumed to be in schools and healthy and not in need of appropriate protection or services. UNICEF will also work to raise awareness of the positive human development and economic impacts of social protection, and raise awareness around the concept of multidimensional child poverty and the vision that all girls and boys, even if they live in income- poor families and/or have a disability, can grow up healthy, well fed, go to school and learn, and reach their full potential. Awareness-raising will also be fostered among adolescents themselves, equipping them with information for substantive exchange and advocacy.

208. **Improving data, research, knowledge**. Once the concept of multidimensional child poverty is generally understood, producing national child poverty measures is the first step. Without knowing how many and which children are living in multidimensional and monetary poverty, governments cannot assess whether they make progress in reducing poverty, or what the effects of particular policies and programmes on child poverty have been. UNICEF assists countries in setting up systems to measure child poverty – which technically is not difficult, but requires some particular statistical expertise and choosing from among various options. UNICEF supports analysis of coverage, implementation and impacts to ensure that social protection programmes work for children and families, and is a leader in generating social-protection evidence. Furthermore, UNICEF provides budget-related data and evidence for social services aimed at reducing multidimensional poverty (health, education, nutrition and others), as well as social protection systems and cash transfers. Through costing studies and investment cases, UNICEF supports the scaling up of social programmes in view of achieving integrated social protection systems.

209. Even where adolescent issues are recognized, adults often tend to consider adolescent behaviour as a problem. Perceptions may hold that young people should ‘do as the elders say’ in order to avoid problems; the questioning nature of adolescents is considered problematic instead of an opportunity for innovation and change for the better. Interpersonal violence, early marriage or childbearing, school dropout or risky behaviours are noticed but not analysed as consequences of unmet needs. UNICEF facilitates dialogue with governments and public discourse on social norms and attitudes towards adolescents and highlights the extent of gaps in adolescent health, learning, protection and participation. Advocacy and support to policy formulation may include analysis of long-term costs of inaction, particularly in relation to youth unemployment, non-communicable diseases, teenage pregnancy rates and poor nutrition, and help set priorities in national plans.

210. The lack of reliable data on children with disabilities is a common but critical problem that prevents designing appropriate services and inclusion measures. UNICEF supports governments in collecting and consolidating data on children with disabilities including through surveys like MICS, and administrative data like EMIS. Situation analyses prepared for new country programmes will consider marginalization, including disability, across all sectors. Social and cultural norms related to specific marginalized groups, including those with disability, will be studied, to provide the basis for combating stigma, discrimination and low expectations towards children from these groups.

211. Innovative research and high-quality data are the foundation for attaining gender results identified in the Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. A number of the plan’s proposed output indicators have identified sex-disaggregated coverage data. It is

important to ensure that data collection and monitoring systems are adequately revised and strengthened to ensure that such sex-disaggregated data is routinely collected to track the gender-responsiveness of every result. On the data side, while outcome and impact indicators aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals are often sex-disaggregated, in reality official national data systems are still lagging in sex-disaggregated data collection. It is equally important for documented evidence and research that demonstrates the win-win impact of gender-responsive programming on women and girls, and overall programmatic impact (across sectors). Only with explicit focus on generating girl-focused evidence, research and data, and using these data to inform key policy and programme decisions, can we effectively track progress towards our commitments to girls and gender equality. UNICEF, as part of the IAEG-SDG (Sustainable Development Goals indicators), is working towards making tangible improvements in gender statistics and how to use them to guide our actions.

212. Across all dimensions of exclusion, UNICEF will also be promoting a collaborative approach with partners to address gaps in disaggregated-data collection on the situation of children and women in fragile and humanitarian situations. This includes addressing data gaps in the overall outcomes for girls and boys, with various ages and abilities, in fragile and humanitarian situations. This requires coordinated efforts to strengthen a critical humanitarian-development data continuum, changing approaches to data collection at outcome level across different contexts, to feed into advocacy and programme direction. This will necessarily connect to data system-strengthening and working towards agreements with key stakeholders and partners on standards and guidance for applying the right mix of "good enough" methods to fill critical data gaps not covered by MICS and allowing credible aggregation/comparison.

213. **Addressing public perceptions and creating a sense of urgency**. Where programme countries have begun to produce child poverty data, the data must be made widely available and shared. Child poverty has been shown to resonate with both the public and decision makers as a priority issue, so far in about half of all UNICEF programme countries. UNICEF ability to communicate the results of child poverty measurements in terms that can be easily understood helps to initiate a public discourse that can further prioritize child poverty in the national political agendas, and raise awareness in specific and influential audience groups. UNICEF communication and reach help to instill a sense of urgency about the poverty and deprivations children face. It may address prevailing myths that social- protection programmes can be misused and breed dependency, and are simply a cost rather than an investment in current and future poverty reduction and growth. UNICEF thus will contribute by putting child poverty on the map and addresses misperceptions that inadvertently discriminate against the poor and excluded groups.

214. UNICEF recognized capacity in C4D is crucial to generate societal support for the inclusion of and equal opportunities for marginalized children, including those with disabilities. It is also crucial to fighting stigma, by capacitating multiple communication platforms and supporting existing lobbies of parents, experts, human rights advocates, civil society and children and adolescents themselves. UNICEF will study the cost and impact of exclusion, highlight equity gaps, create alliances and convene civil society and media to create public demand for government to accelerate progress.

215. **Achieving consensus and policy directions**. Where child poverty is publicly debated, UNICEF can suggest a menu of policy options, based on its global reach and experience. For example, strong political commitment to social protection is foundational to developing a nationally owned system. UNICEF can provide international evidence that cash transfers or other social protection measures can make a difference. By highlighting the social and economic benefits or modelling cost effective services, UNICEF helps to convince key financial decision makers to invest in vulnerable children, resulting in overall higher budget priority.

216. Among countries that have recognized the need to invest in adolescent well-being, some may already have adolescent-responsive policies or programmes, though not necessarily of the type that fosters broad engagement of young people in issues that concern them. UNICEF helps to review such policies across sectors and advocate for appropriate legislation and budget allocations that support adolescent health and wellbeing, protection, participation and learning and transition to employment. UNICEF contributes by bringing together those with opposing views, and shares experiences from countries that successfully managed to ensure better outcomes for adolescents. While advocating everywhere for the rights of girls and boys with disabilities, where government has resolved to take action on those rights and requests UNICEF support, UNICEF will help to maintain a public dialogue on inclusion. UNICEF is recognized for being able to facilitate discussions even among those holding different views, to achieve consensus.

217. Designing better policies and budgets: UNICEF offices help governments to weigh the options, provide technical analysis and facilitate exchange among specialists, partners and the public to identify the most acceptable policy measures. Relevant policy or programme changes to address aspects child poverty have already been adopted by 35 countries. While this signifies considerable progress, only few countries have so far, with UNICEF help, managed to either fully consider children in their national poverty action plan, or prepared a child-specific national action plan. Social protection systems need to adjust to changing circumstance and new priorities, and UNICEF continues to technically assist countries to develop and update child-sensitive national policies, refine design and implementation to cover the most vulnerable children and to evaluate implementation.

218. Even where governments are committed to improving outcomes for adolescents, dedicated investments may compete with other priorities. Mobilizing young people through civil society, and creating positive examples, may lead to greater prioritization of government budgets for the active engagement of young people. The opportunities for wider engagement are also enhanced by the rapid expansion of social media and digital environments, which allow more responsive networks to be built quickly and cheaply and with diminished needs for adult support.

219. While overall social spending has increased in many countries, its efficiency or effectiveness is often compromised by poor expenditure management, lack of results-based budgeting, low budget transparency and a lack of consideration for how the distribution of resources affects the disadvantaged populations. UNICEF is strengthening its own capacity for improving public finance management for children, which is likely to have effects not only on social protection budgets but also other social sectors, or inclusion measures.

220. **Monitoring implementation of policy measures and overcoming bottlenecks**. As part of global inter-agency task force on financing for development, UNICEF monitors child-related financing commitments. Country offices will also work with sector ministries to cost and budget planned policy measures. Where appropriate youth policies and programmes are in place, implementation may be slow, as traditional practices and perceptions often have to be overcome. UNICEF has long experience in C4D and maintains good networks with civil society, to test new ideas and give platforms to young people to learn from each other, voice their concerns, build positive relationships and become agents of change – including for overcoming discrimination, reducing violence and contributing to peace.

221. In helping to reform national health, education and social protection systems to become more inclusive, UNICEF will apply a twin-track strategy of mainstreaming and targeting interventions. Accessibility, information and communication, and the provision of assistive devices will combine to empower marginalized children including those with disabilities as decision makers over their own fate, both in development and humanitarian contexts. Often, capacity-building measures are necessary for policy implementation, especially among local service providers and municipalities. Systems will have to be developed to monitor the reach and assure the quality of policy measures, related to social protection and measures for adolescents and children including those with disabilities.

222. UNICEF is on the ground and working across development, fragile and humanitarian contexts, and is able to bridge the corresponding requirements on social protection systems. In particular, UNICEF can advise Governments on effective mechanisms in humanitarian contexts that can be integrated into national social protection systems, and to assist Governments in fragile situations to adjust or expand their social protection programmes to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of assistance to people affected by humanitarian situations. This requires Governments to make tangible commitments to move chronic humanitarian caseloads of affected populations into social protection programmes.

223. The cross-cutting strategies, a reflection of the change strategies in the Strategic Plan, will continue to increase UNICEF effectiveness as it works to promote the rights of all children in programming, advocacy and operations. It is these strategies under outcome 5 that will allow UNICEF to effectively deliver the related outputs and contribute to ensuring that no girl or boy is left behind and work with partners to reach the farthest behind first by starting with the most deprived, because a focus on equity accelerates progress towards achieving the rights of all children.

Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

224. In addition to the cross-cutting risks that are applicable to all of its outcomes and results areas, other specific assumptions and risks have been identified in relation to this outcome.

Table 6: Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
It is assumed that UNICEF maintains and increases funding levels for equity, gender equality and social protection measures. The related risk is that there will be inadequate resources for growth in this area of focus.	The UNICEF mandate and focus is unique, and perhaps not many agencies are as ready, experienced or determined to support Governments in making social protection work for children and families. With providing support to social protection in over 100 countries, UNICEF may be the organization with the greatest geographic and thematic breadth of experience in social protection, and UNICEF will aim to demonstrate this comparative advantage and share success stories.
It is assumed that programme countries remain determined to address and achieve Sustainable Development Goals targets related to equity, gender equality and social protection. The related risk is that without this commitment UNICEF will struggle for partnerships and operating in a challenging programming environment.	UNICEF will emphasize and continue to demonstrate the importance of attention to equity in global discussions, among donor and programme countries.
It is assumed that programme countries are prioritizing results for children and equity principles. There is the risk that they are prioritizing other issues.	UNICEF and its alliances for children will continue to generate evidence that investments in children – including the most vulnerable – are providing the greatest returns.
It is assumed that the international community consistently communicates in support of child	UNICEF will promote and participate sector and multi-donor approaches, including United Nations system-wide coherence, that gives due

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
related Sustainable Development Goals targets or policy measures. There is a risk that issues such as those affecting adolescents or children with disabilities do not receive general donor support.	attention – both in terms of financing and policy advocacy – to critical children's issues, also based on the equity principle, back by international conventions.
It is assumed that countries are interested in promoting participation of civil society, including the participation of adolescents. There is evidence that this has been the global trend, though there is the risk that some Governments may not be ready to promote adolescent participation except in promoting official ideology.	UNICEF will assess the likelihood of such limitations, and only invest once Governments are committed to real participation of adolescents – while continuing to advocate for the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
It is assumed that sufficient data are available or can be generated to indicate the magnitude of the social protection, gender and inclusion issues and develop policy options. There is a risk that some Governments may not be open to additional research.	UNICEF has a track record in helping countries to improve data systems and social protection monitoring and evaluation, including through large MICS, and commission and assure the quality of independent research. UNICEF also supports countries in their own research agenda and capacities. Increased investment in equity measurement through disaggregated data will also be of critical importance moving forward.
It is assumed that countries that resolve to address child-related targets, will have the capacity to manage their reform processes. There is a risk that some countries might be overstretched in managing the full agenda.	Because the organization emphasizes government leadership and ownership of its reforms, UNICEF is a sufficiently trusted and credible partner, whose expertise in supporting the management of policy processes is usually welcomed by host Governments.
It is assumed that programme countries will make resources available for improved child-sensitive social protection, reduction in multidimensional child poverty, gender equity, adolescent participation and the inclusion of children with disabilities; where resources are insufficient, it is assumed that countries will leverage part of the received official development assistance, grants or loans to use them for these purposes.	UNICEF is increasingly engaging in helping countries to improve the management of their public finances, to increase efficiency and effectiveness of their expenditures, and to improve their budget processes. UNICEF also works with ministries to prepare budget submissions that are realistic and show returns. UNICEF continues to work with international partners to leverage part of their resources for a focus on children.
It is assumed that at least some significant public support exists for the results and Sustainable Development Goals targets related to equity, poverty reduction and social protection. There is a risk that rising nationalism and populist movements will oppose aspects of the equity	UNICEF will continue to support civil society movements and media reporting that supports the principles and articles of international treaties. UNICEF has recognized experience in C4D, and credible media presence both globally and in programme countries. UNICEF will boldly defend the overall human rights-based approach, and the equal rights of the low-

Assumption/risk	UNICEF measures
agenda and social protection measures for certain minorities.	income, minority, and marginalized or vulnerable children.
It is assumed that humanitarian access can be achieved for all elements under this goal area. There is a risk that access is being denied.	UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities quickly as they arise. UNICEF support Governments to develop social protection systems that extend social assistance also to people in disaster response or humanitarian situations. Likewise, in all humanitarian situations UNICEF designs its response so as to allow a gradual integration into existing or developing social protection systems and poverty programmes.

E. Key partnerships

225. UNICEF work on advancing equity requires close internal collaboration across programme areas covered in the Strategic Plan as well as key external partnerships. This collaboration and partnerships will continue to be strengthened to address multidimensional poverty and improve the coverage and impact of social protection. A key strategy to reduce multidimensional child poverty is to promote the more equitable – as well as more efficient and effective – use of public resources. Collaboration is thus needed with programmes working on health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation and child protection to support improved planning and budgeting and system-strengthening Likewise, effective, child-sensitive social protection requires systems that ensure that marginalized children can fully access and benefit from social services. Stronger social protection systems can only be built if these links are made, an approach which is increasingly at the heart of UNICEF work.

226. The World Bank remains a key external partner for UNICEF work both on child poverty and social protection. This includes collaboration on measurement and analysis as well as joint work for implementation approaches, on both social protection and public finance. OECD is another key partner in ensuring UNICEF work on child poverty and well-being is on the gloabal agenda, by reaching and influencing high-income and upper-middle-income countries. UNICEF will further strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions and multilateral organizations (European Union, OECD and others) to tackle global public finance management challenges that impede greater investments in child poverty and promote inequity. Regionally, UNICEF partnership with development banks and regional political entities such as the European Union, the Caribbean Community and others will be important to ensure funding for anti-poverty initiatives remains high on the regional development agendas. At the country and subnational levels, UNICEF partnerships with decision makers and influencers at all levels of government and civil society will continue and be further strengthened to increase and improve public resources for children.

227. Social protection is an area in which many United Nations partners, bilateral and NGO partners, as well as the World Bank, are actively engaged. UNICEF often plays a leading role in coordination of partners at global, and particularly at country, level. UNICEF is a member of the social protection inter-agency coordination board on which all such partners are represented. UNICEF also engages in United Nations support efforts on the Social Protection Floor. On social protection in humanitarian and fragile contexts, UNICEF is working with the European Commission, World Bank, UNHCR, FAO, WFP, GIZ, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom and others to bring together key humanitarian and development actors in order to better link actions in preparedness and response to strengthening longer term systems, and vice versa.

228. Many voices are needed to promote greater attention to child poverty in the wake of its inclusion as a priority in the Sustainable Development Goals. With this in mind, UNICEF co-founded the End Child Poverty Coalition, bringing together many partners, including Save the Children, UNDP, the World Bank and others. United Nations organizations such as UNFPA, UN-Women, UNDP and the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, international financial institutions and other donors are key to delivering comprehensive programmes for and with adolescents. While each organization has its specific areas of expertise in relation to adolescents, having a coordinated approach to adolescent programming at country, regional and global levels is essential to strengthened advocacy efforts with Governments. NGOs, civil society, sports, youth groups, religious groups and parliamentarians are key influencers that contribute to raising the demand on adolescents' rights, creating an enabling environment for adolescent development and demonstrating creative and innovative approaches for outreach and scaling up. Youth also constitute a strategic partner to UNICEF in delivering results for children including adolescents. Not only have youth just graduated from adolescence and have an understanding of what it is to be an adolescent, youth are perceived as role models by adolescents and hence are key in influencing adolescents' attitudes and behaviours. Engagement with the private sector in the area of adolescents is strategic for both fundraising and other objectives. The private sector is increasingly interested in investing in adolescents to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed by the labour market as well as invest in them as being future consumers. On the other hand, UNICEF plays a key role as an advocate for the protection of adolescents' rights with the private sector, including with the food, beverages and tobacco industry.

229. UNICEF key partners on gender equality will continue to be its sister agencies, including UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, with whom it worked during the Strategic Planning process on identifying common indicators and building on gender equality as an area of collaborative advantage for the whole system. Moving forward, it is anticipated that in addition to harnessing collaborative advantage, as outlined in the common chapter of the Strategic Plan, UNICEF will continue to partner at country level in joint programmes and joint UNDAF results groups on gender with its sister agencies and will continue to take forward the relevant findings of the 2013 joint evaluation on joint gender programmes.