Update on the context and situation of children

The population of the Philippines was projected to grow to 108 million in 2020, with the number of children (0–17) estimated at 41.3 million (38 per cent).

The country started the year on track to becoming an upper middle-income country but suffered a 9.5 percent decline in GDP, a result of prolonged lockdowns due to the pandemic. Overall poverty rates vary from 3.9 per cent in the National Capital Region (NCR) to 53.7 in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), the region with the highest poverty incidence. Poverty among children fell from 33.5 per cent in 2015 to 23.9 per cent (9.3 million) in 2018. However, stark disparities exist. Child poverty rates vary from 4.3 per cent in NCR to 68.2 in BARMM where little progress on child poverty has been observed.

While post-pandemic poverty rates are unknown, a joint UNICEF-UNDP study on the effects of COVID-19 showed that a reduction in income will push millions into poverty. The findings show that the pandemic has severely affected families in NCR.

Exacerbating the effects of the pandemic, the Philippines experienced several emergencies in 2020. The country faced volcanic eruptions affecting thousands of families and the economy, and six devastating typhoons – two were Category 4 – overwhelming the country’s emergency response and stretching its resources for both relief operations and the pandemic. Moreover, responding to public health emergencies challenged the overburdened healthcare system that also dealt with outbreaks of polio and measles. Thus, the health, nutrition and WASH sectors suffered an increased burden to deliver COVID-19 mitigation while providing and expanding routine services.

Worldwide, the Philippines remains among the 20 countries with the highest number of newborn deaths according to recent estimates. While the health status of children continues to improve amid a steady decline in infant deaths, newborn deaths have not been reduced. It is also among the 10 countries with the highest number of unimmunized children for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and measles in 2019. As a result, the decreasing vaccine coverage over the years caused outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases notably measles, rubella and polio. The country ended its 20-year polio-free streak after an outbreak in 2019. Approximately 2.4 million children under 5 were unvaccinated for measles in 2020 which may result in another outbreak.

The Philippines suffers from a triple burden of malnutrition, with obesity tripling among children and adolescents in the last 15 years. An estimated 3.3 million children under 5 are stunted, placing the Philippines among the 10 countries with the highest number of stunted children worldwide. With 28.8 per cent stunted in 2019, the Philippines is hard pressed to reach its target of 21.4 per cent by 2023. Stunting rates are expected to worsen as COVID-19 affects households nationwide.

While 94 per cent of households have access to an improved water source, two thirds drink water contaminated with E. coli, highlighting the need for additional investment in water safety. Approximately 5.5 million people do not have toilets, while 26 million use unimproved toilets. Despite progress, more than half of schools do not have safe drinking water, while only 56.8 per cent have gender-segregated toilets, and almost a quarter do not have group handwashing facilities.

In education, the quality of learning remains inadequate despite steady improvement in access over the last decade. The results of the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) assessment, conducted by UNICEF and published in 2020, found that only 10 per cent of Grade 5 pupils in the
Philippines meet the minimum standards in reading and only 17 per cent in mathematics. The study found low foundational skills in literacy and numeracy as the major factors; with students in low socio-economic status and in rural areas performing significantly lower.

COVID-19 has worsened education in the country. All schools in the Philippines closed for face-to-face classes in March and have not reopened since. The country remains one of the few in the region without immediate plans to reopen schools. With only distance learning available, 2.7 million fewer children enrolled in academic year 2020–2021 than in the previous year.

The interruption in protective services significantly inhibited the reporting of child abuse. While official numbers on child abuse dropped 57 per cent between March and June 2020, the major child helpline in the country registered a 167 per cent increase in reporting child abuse compared to 2019. In the same period, the Department of Justice Office of Cybercrime reported a 260 per cent increase in cyber-tips on online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC), confirming that the Philippines remains a top source of OSAEC materials.

The deterioration of human rights remains a concern. The Commission on Human Rights documented 73 children killed in the campaign against illegal drugs. Furthermore, critics of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 highlighted the implications of the new law on child protection measures.

Some legislative progress was made during the year. A significant milestone was the approval by the House of Representatives of the bill to increase the minimum age of statutory rape from 12 to 16 years old and is now awaiting approval from the Senate; and the first Magna Carta for Children was drafted with measures to reduce the fragmentation of child protection services by enhancing coordination and quality of support and strengthening the mandate of the Council for the Welfare of Children.

In BARMM, the pandemic has driven many families deeper into poverty and overwhelmed a weak health system. As a result, the region is experiencing delays in social services. This delay in addressing BARMM priorities and the continuing armed conflict will slow progress in achieving the urgent needs of children. In 2020, the United Nations Country Team verified 11 cases of Grave Child Right Violations involving 21 boys and 12 girls in BARMM.

UNICEF supported and conducted follow-up assessments of 730 of the 1,869 children disengaged from a non-state armed group, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), under the 2016-2017 UN-MILF Action Plan. None of the children have re-associated with any armed group.

**Major contributions and drivers of results**

2020 marked the second year of the 2019–2023 programme of cooperation between the Philippines and UNICEF and the United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development. Guided by the Philippine Development Plan 2017–2022, the strategic contribution of UNICEF is to support vulnerability reduction, the development of human capital and safe and secure communities, and the achievement of sustainable peace. When COVID-19 hit the Philippines, UNICEF quickly realigned resources and capacities to support the national response. The major contributions and drivers of results during the year are described here, grouped by goal areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan.
UNICEF worked closely with the Department of Health (DOH) and the BARMM Ministry of Health (MOH) at the national and subnational levels to ensure the continuity of essential health, nutrition and WASH services. Despite the lockdown severely limiting face-to-face communication, UNICEF continued to engage the public by promoting good hygiene practices through innovative ways to reach 34.2 million people with COVID-19 messages on traditional and digital media. Furthermore, half a million people sought information about the services through the joint risk communication and community engagement efforts of DOH, UNICEF and partners. Given the unprecedented crisis, this information structure is vital in the country’s response to the pandemic.

Infection prevention and control (IPC) is essential in a pandemic. When the healthcare system faced an overwhelming task, UNICEF supported the government and provided personal protective equipment to over 83,000 health and community workers; provided tents for isolation or triage to health and community facilities that served over 300,000 people; trained 15,000 health and sanitary staff on IPC measures; and provided hygiene materials and installed emergency WASH equipment in healthcare and quarantine facilities and communities in COVID-19 hotspots.

UNICEF’s early response and support, both globally and locally, has placed the organization in a key support role to the government for the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine together with WHO, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank. Furthermore, UNICEF’s experience in supply chain management and community mobilization will be an asset to ensure the successful roll-out. As part of the preparation, UNICEF supported the government in drafting the Vaccine Rollout Policy Framework and the COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment and Immunization Plan.

Despite constraints from the pandemic, UNICEF continued to strengthen the policy environment by supporting and advocating for the development and finalization of several policies. In health, nutrition and WASH, UNICEF provided technical expertise in developing policies to address maternal and child nutrition; micronutrient supplementation; and water, sanitation and hygiene in emergency. Moreover, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the government on guidelines for nutrition, adolescent mental health and psychosocial support.

To enhance local governance and management capacities, UNICEF mobilized 19 municipalities/cities in Samar, Northern Samar and Zamboanga del Norte to develop costed Local Nutrition Action Plans, and 15 municipalities to review and develop costed WASH plans for their annual investment plans. To strengthen the quality of service delivery, UNICEF and the government utilized online platforms to train 6,810 service providers and 3,053 mothers of children 0–5 on maternal and child nutrition and the use of the WASH Facility Improvement Tool. School road safety assessments were also completed in select cities using the global comparative tool Star Rating for Schools system.

UNICEF turned to online platforms and local radio stations to deliver nutrition information and train mothers/caregivers to screen their children for acute malnutrition, inform them about Vitamin A supplementation, and provide them with counseling on infant and young child feeding – benefitting 31,034 children in three UNICEF project sites. UNICEF’s technical assistance to PhilHealth on the prematurity benefit package enabled 854 premature and small babies to receive life-saving care with US$956,000 worth of services reimbursed to date. In October 2020, UNICEF turned over the newborn benefit registry system to PhilHealth for nationwide implementation.

After 20 years of being polio-free, the Philippines responded to a polio outbreak while preparing for a possible measles outbreak. UNICEF supported DOH and BARMM MOH in conducting information campaigns, procuring and delivering vaccines on time, and mobilizing communities during the massive immunization campaigns for measles, rubella and polio. Given the high number of refusals and vaccine hesitancy in some areas, UNICEF, WHO and DOH intensified social mobilization and communication
activities in areas with low immunization coverage. UNICEF supported DOH in the real-time reporting of the Measles-Rubella and Oral Poliomyelitis Vaccine Supplemental Immunization Activities (MR-OPV SIA) through the Open Data Kit mobile data collection for recording, reporting and validating areas for vaccination. UNICEF’s support contributed to covering 6.6 million children 0–59 months against polio, and 4 million children 9–59 months against measles-rubella.

To better understand the determinants and interventions needed to reduce stunting in the Philippines, UNICEF supported the government in conducting the study on stunting reduction and produced two articles, contributing to the development of the next Philippines Plan of Action on Nutrition 2023–2028. Moreover, UNICEF provided technical assistance to analyze the policy and programming landscape on overweight and obesity and the personal and external food environment factors influencing food choice and diets of children. Recommendations from the studies will help refine national policies and programmes addressing the triple burden of malnutrition.

**Every child learns**

With schools yet to reopen for face-to-face classes since shutting down in March, the pandemic has been seriously impacting the education system resulting in significantly lower enrollments for the current academic year. Given the challenging situation, UNICEF has dedicated significant efforts to advocate for reopening schools and reaching the most disadvantaged students, parents and teachers to support distance learning. UNICEF’s regular education programme in the Philippines has experienced some delays but key results were still achieved.

The uncertainty about the reopening of schools and the decision of the Department of Education (DepEd) to focus on distance learning made UNICEF reprioritize its education programme to include COVID-19 response. This move changed and delayed some deliverables for 2020, but it was also an opportunity to try new approaches to support DepEd. To this end, UNICEF supported the development of e-books for 3 million children in primary education, reached 200,000 adolescents in the non-formal Alternative Learning System (ALS) through the ICT4ALS online platform, and provided webinars on home-based early childhood education that provided practical tips for learning and development activities to more than 73,000 parents and caregivers of children 0–5. In parallel, UNICEF continued advocating for the start of the school year 2020–2021 and then for face-to-face classes.

Another important achievement is the strengthening of the education sector’s capacity for planning and policy development. The Philippines received a Global Partnership for Education grant to support the government in developing the education sector plan. The grant is managed by UNICEF, the grant agent selected by the Educ Forum convened by DepEd. With support from UNICEF, the Philippines has finalized its draft plan, with implementation expected in 2021. Moreover, the Philippines obtained new comparative data on students’ learning as part of the SEA-PLM 2019 regional assessment. This development is crucial as the government reviews its COVID-19 measures to include plans for the education sector and tackle the learning crisis.

In BARMM, UNICEF and UNESCO have been supporting the Ministry of Education with its education sector analysis as a first step in the BARMM education sector plan. In terms of policy development in BARMM, a revised Tahderiyyah curriculum was approved by the Ministry for use in the Madrassah, and the WASH in Schools policy was approved with technical support from UNICEF. These developments in the region ensure that children’s right to education is included in the development agenda in the transition to the official BARMM Government.

Finally, Education Cluster co-leads DepEd and UNICEF quickly responded to lead coordination efforts during emergency response to ensure access to learning during natural disasters and calamities. UNICEF directly supported more than 14,000 students with temporary learning spaces and learning kits for both learners and teachers.
These achievements for children in education demonstrate the strong partnership between UNICEF and the government in protecting and advancing continuity of learning for children even in the most difficult circumstances.

*Every child is protected from violence and exploitation*

In response to the pandemic, UNICEF re-purposed activities and increased investments to adjust service delivery and improve access to child protection services. The adjustments focused on adapting mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and using digital technology to support case management, including telemedicine. This combination of strategies enabled UNICEF to provide specialized child protection services to reach approximately 26,000 children, parents and caregivers. Moreover, online training on child protection and case management benefited approximately 1,500 social workers; while campaigns on digital platforms on different child protection areas such as online sexual abuse and exploitation, reached over 800,000 people, including children and adolescents.

Key challenges included the difficulties for government to swiftly re-purpose and re-adjust interventions to respond to the pandemic; the fragmentation of policies and legislation and their insufficient implementation at the local level; the complexity of managing devolved social services due to inadequate investments in the social service workforce; the inability of monitoring and evaluation to regularly generate data on prevalence, trends, services rendered and outcomes on children; and the insufficient capacity of coordinating bodies to effectively position child protection in the national and sub-national agenda. In addition to structural, systemic challenges, the prolonged containment measures imposed on children pose serious risks to their physical and psychological well-being and more specifically, to their right to be protected from all forms of violence and abuse.

These challenges encouraged UNICEF to intensify advocacy and leverage its good relations with decision-makers for stronger engagement in child protection. Moreover, UNICEF’s work in policy and legislative advocacy led to the formulation of new child protection policies for the Philippine National Police, Department of Information and Communications Technology, and DepEd. Dialogues with lawmakers were crucial in the approval of the bill to increase the minimum age of statutory rape from 12 to 16 and the drafting of the first Magna Carta for Children at the Lower House.

UNICEF continued to support the Council for the Welfare of Children and other government agencies to accelerate the agenda on violence against children (VAC) through multi-sectoral approaches. A preliminary analysis of the implementation of the Philippine Plan of Action to End VAC (2017–2021) showed that while some government agencies progressed in addressing VAC in some areas, the Plan lacks political traction and remains insufficiently coordinated, resourced and monitored. In 2021, UNICEF will scale up efforts to mobilize political will and engage planning and monitoring authorities to ensure that the Plan is firmly anchored in national development mechanisms.

Progress in social welfare was hampered due to staffing and funding constraints. Nevertheless, UNICEF was able to start the assessment of the case management system of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) which will inform the design of an integrated e-case management system and the costing of the social service workforce in select locations. Initial efforts were also made to integrate *Ma-Pa*, the evidence-based parenting programme, and *Kilos Unlad*, a case management strategy in the 4Ps – the national conditional cash transfer programme – to be accelerated in 2021. In BARMM, the analysis of child protection systems was postponed to 2021 at the request of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

UNICEF’s engagement in the humanitarian agenda remained significant. In BARMM, UNICEF reached approximately 18,000 children affected by the earthquake with MHPSS and continued to support the rehabilitation of 730 children disengaged from a non-state armed group while also
mobilizing young people and religious leaders to raise awareness of and demand child protection services.

The effective implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism Programme, through the Country Task Force, was ensured through the ‘One UN approach’ to the implementation of the mandate on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC), including by seeking broader UN-system participation and adopting joint priorities in the Country Task Force, and providing technical assistance to government agencies on CAAC programming.

UNICEF also revived dialogues with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to promote the state’s compliance to the protection of children in conflict-affected areas and gained their commitment to formulating a strategic plan to halt, prevent and respond to Grave Child Rights Violations in Situations of Armed Conflict. This is a positive development that will hopefully reduce the number of grave violations committed by the state and increase accountability and compliance with national and international child protection standards. Furthermore, UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance to the government’s Inter-Agency Committee on the Children in Situations of Armed Conflict handling protocol signed in September 2020. The protocol, developed with the Department of National Defense, AFP, Commission on Human Rights, DepEd, and Council for the Welfare of Children, contains measures to provide special protection to children against all forms of abuse, violence, discrimination and other conditions harmful to their development and install measures to prevent the recruitment, re-recruitment, use, displacement of, or grave child rights violations against these children.

*Every child has an equitable chance in life*

The projected increase in poverty due to the pandemic reinforces the importance of UNICEF and government collaboration to address all aspects of child poverty. As the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), DSWD, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and local government units realigned resources to prioritize the immediate responses to the health, social and economic impact of COVID-19, UNICEF also adjusted implementation timelines for its pre-pandemic social policy work.

The situation created opportunities to emphasize the need for building more resilient and responsive processes and programmes to address the rights of children. UNICEF re-programmed funding to support DILG and DOH to review local government planning policies and procedures to assess their relevance and effectiveness in preparing and responding to public health emergencies. UNICEF also adopted the implementation of projects on child-centred disaster risk reduction and child/adolescent participation in the context of health pandemics in partnership with CSOs such as Galing Pook Foundation and the Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation, Inc.

Guided by the UN Secretary-General Report and the UN Framework on Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, UNICEF and UNDP conducted the ‘Assessment of the Social and Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Households in the National Capital Region’ in close collaboration with NEDA, DepEd and DSWD and launched on 18 December 2020. The study found that the effect of COVID-19 on poor households in NCR may be far larger than anticipated and is likely to lead to significant learning inequality, poorer health outcomes and serious child protection and mental health issues. The study also highlighted the need for improved government capacity to collect data and monitor the rapidly evolving situation at the household level.

The assessment generated evidence and information for emergency response, early recovery and medium- to long-term social and economic policies and programmes of government and development partners. By providing timely and relevant evidence on child rights deprivations, UNICEF supported government decisions on short- and medium-term policies and programmes to address the social and
economic impacts of COVID-19.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

Partnerships are at the heart of everything UNICEF does in the Philippines. The results for children described here are only possible through the partnership with the Philippine Government, CSOs, UN agencies, resource partners and the private sector. In 2020, UNICEF continued to leverage shared value partnerships.

Leveraging the power of business and markets for children

UNICEF maximized its current business partnerships and expanded its network of private sector contacts to advocate for changes in business practices and mobilize resources for the COVID-19 response.

Specifically, UNICEF engaged 29 private sector companies to make their business practices sensitive and responsive to child rights. These included integrating child protection and safeguarding practices, working with telecoms to integrate UNICEF’s child online safety content into DepEd’s K-12 curriculum, and collaborating with social media companies on the immediate removal of child sexual abuse content from their platforms. As a result, two big tech companies removed a pedophile group account, effectively crippling the group’s circulation and sale of abusive content.

Private sector partners worked with UNICEF to reach more than 25 million children with lifesaving COVID-19 advisories for health, nutrition, education and child protection through SMS blasts, social media, and free TV and radio.

Leveraging resources and partnerships for children

While COVID-19 has changed resource mobilization dynamics, the situation was also an opportunity for UNICEF to strengthen existing partnerships and form new ones to support regular programme and emerging advocacy areas alongside the pandemic response. UNICEF Philippines is grateful to the Governments of Australia, Japan, Korea, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the US for their support.

The Office focused on donor visibility and recognition by engaging development partners in open communication, information sharing and regular meetings. UNICEF engaged the diplomatic corps in one-on-one meetings and high-end dialogues. These forums became a venue for discussions with development partners around UNICEF’s key advocacy and to strategize action for children. As a result, the country office forged new partnerships and saw an increase of over US$1 million in support compared to 2019.

United Nations working together

2020 was also a year of strengthened partnerships with the UN. Within the People Pillar of the United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development, UNICEF led the Food Security and Nutrition/Scaling Up Nutrition Network on advocacy, policy development and evidence generation with FAO, UNHCR, WFP and WHO. The network provided technical support to the Interagency Task Force on Zero Hunger and the Office of the Cabinet Secretary to formulate the National Food Policy to eradicate hunger and malnutrition through a whole-of-government approach.

Via the SDG Fund, UNICEF and FAO are implementing a joint program to support vulnerable
Lessons Learned and Innovations

The pandemic required UNICEF to modify strategies and accelerate cross-cutting programming. UNICEF’s experience and capacity in both development and humanitarian programming allowed it to effectively engage the Philippine Government on both emergency response and service continuity.

Shifting to online digital platforms: opportunities and challenges in public health emergencies

UNICEF supported the continuation of essential health, nutrition, education, WASH and child protection services by working with the government and communities. Given the restrictions on travelling to critical areas, the team quickly transformed implementation using online platforms to conduct training and information dissemination. UNICEF reached a significant number of people by making all services accessible online, including enlisting sign language interpreters, and developing ‘COVID-19 basics’ sessions for people with hearing impairment.

However, online platforms are constrained in areas where Internet coverage is poor. It has also been difficult to monitor the impact of these initiatives on the participants, but UNICEF continues to explore methods to assess the results.

Risk communication and community engagement shifted online, with COVID-19 content published on UNICEF Philippines’ Facebook page reaching 60 million users by the end of 2020. UNICEF took advantage of digital media, as usage increased exponentially during the pandemic, to position itself as a trustworthy source of critical COVID-19 information. By the end of 2020, 8,100 young boys and girls in Mindanao signed up as U-Reporters and joined conversations about their lives and futures amid the pandemic on U-Report – UNICEF’s proprietary messaging tool for young people.

While shifting to online channels allowed UNICEF to reach more audiences, it is unclear how this contributed to sustained community engagement and behaviour change. Limitations of social media channels with disaggregated audience data also resulted in gaps in reporting.

Furthermore, disseminating technical content for niche audiences on UNICEF Philippines’ digital platforms might have fragmented UNICEF messaging, resulting in inconsistent or low engagement and views for certain content. There is also a need to standardize the reporting of website and social media data for programme activity results. As digital platforms continue to rapidly evolve, growing UNICEF’s digital ecosystem and improving its capacity for online advocacy, evidence generation/dissemination and connecting with new emerging audiences are the main opportunities in 2021.

As public health emergencies in the country dominated 2020, UNICEF played a key role in supporting the government’s nationwide roll-out of the massive polio and measles immunization campaign at the same time the country is dealing with the pandemic.

Looking forward, UNICEF’s experience with supporting the supply/cold chain management for
immunization will be of significant benefit for the COVID-19 vaccine introduction in the Philippines. The Vaccine and Immunization Readiness and Assessment conducted by UNICEF with DOH showed critical gaps that require urgent attention in cold chain management to handle the COVID-19 vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccine preparedness will also support addressing the long-term bottlenecks in the supply chain for vaccines.

Advocacy and innovation for continued learning

The Philippines ended 2020 as the only country in the region with face-to-face schooling fully closed without having ever reopened since March. Through much of 2020, UNICEF sustained advocacy for the safe reopening of schools which involved roundtable discussions with DepEd and key development partners, communications campaigns, and public statements. However, while sectoral leadership agreed to reopen schools, the decision to pilot face-to-face learning in low-risk areas was later reversed, reflecting a lack of clear public support for the re-opening of schools. This has shown the efficacy of evidence-based advocacy and UNICEF’s convening role at technical level, while at the same time brought to light the need to further influence public sentiment and other branches of the government.

Even while the government was discussing face-to-face learning, UNICEF had already been supporting DepEd in rolling out its online platforms to ensure continuity of learning. Online digital technologies such as e-books and ICT4ALS reached millions of children and adolescents who would otherwise have been left out because of school closures. UNICEF also reached 2,636 students in 50 multi-grade schools in remote areas without Internet technology and supported them through the School-in-a-Bag, a joint project with a leading telco in the country to provide a package of ICT materials (laptop, tablets, etc.) with pre-programmed learning materials and mother tongue instruction.

Strengthening the policy environment for children’s rights

The projected increase in poverty reinforces the importance of UNICEF and government collaboration to address all aspects of child poverty. Generating timely and relevant evidence on child rights deprivations can be used to inform government decisions on short- and medium-term policies and programmes to address the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The UNDP-UNICEF assessment of the social and economic impact of COVID-19 (and other studies underway and planned) – conducted using innovative sampling and data collection methodologies to overcome access barriers – is recognized by the government as an important contribution to monitor and understand the evolving situation of children.

To respond to the impact of the COVID-19 measures, UNICEF also led partners on business continuity planning to adapt child protection programmes to the new normal. For example, the SaferKidsPH Consortium rebranded online safety campaigns and highlighted the link between increased online risk and containment measures to inform shifts in strategies ensuring that child protection response is effective during the pandemic.

Shifting to teleworking modality

UNICEF Philippines has spent most of the year teleworking due to the quarantine protocols but has been able to continue its operations as seen in its achievements this year. This sudden, yet relatively smooth, shift was made possible by the agility and resilience of UNICEF staff and the excellent support by the ICT team at all levels.

The Enterprise Content Management was already an established collaboration site for all staff before the pandemic and was a key factor in the new set-up. The all-staff collaboration site supported the transition to teleworking by facilitating efficiency, collaboration, knowledge sharing, remote
accessibility, and transparency. This will continue to be important as strict lockdown measures remain in most of the country for the foreseeable future.