

Maldives

Update on the context and situation of children

In Maldives, the state of public health emergency, declared by the Minister of Health in March 2020, continued until 13 March 2022. At the end of November 2022, 185,584 cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and 311 deaths had been confirmed, and vaccination rates were 88.15 per cent for first dose and 85 per cent for second dose. Booster doses were also introduced, though uptake remains low, at 37 per cent for the first booster dose and 0.30 per cent for the second. These vaccination rates allowed the pandemic to be kept under control.

The latest Maldives Development Update underscores the growing momentum of the economy supported by a sustained recovery in tourism, while identifying potential risks to growth. In fact, Maldives is expected to see strong economic growth in the medium term, with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) expected to grow 7.6 per cent in 2022 and to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels of 10.2 per cent in 2023.

However, the country's high debt levels are a major concern (World Bank's biannual regional update). Moreover, the country is vulnerable due to imports of fossil fuels making up a large share of its GDP, a reduction in tourists from Russia and Ukraine, and further increases in global energy prices, which may cause an additional fiscal burden. Tourism could be adversely impacted by new waves of COVID-19 infections. However, there is some potential to increase tourist arrivals from traditional source countries and new markets.

The preliminary findings of the study “Cost of Inaction of Climate Change in Maldives” (UNICEF Maldives, October 2022), show the economic damage and losses that will be sustained if nothing is done to prevent climate change or to mitigate its effects. Based on a business-as-usual scenario, the region could lose an average of 1.8 per cent of its annual GDP up to 2050, increasing to 8.8 per cent annually by 2100. According to the model (PAGE09), Maldives would be the most impacted country, losing an average of 2 per cent of its annual GDP until 2050. Based on the projection of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for 2023, this is a loss of at least US\$97.8 million per year in the next few years, further affecting the country's capacity to invest in social sectors.

From January to October 2022, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services received 1,066 reported cases of violence against children (466 boys and 600 girls). The most frequently reported type of case was negligence at 246 (130 boys and 116 girls), followed closely by 244 cases of sexual violence (49 boys and 195 girls). The statistics show that boys experience more physical violence, while girls experience more sexual violence.

As of October 2022, there were 183 children (76 girls and 107 boys) under state care. Children under state care were previously placed in two large central institutions. However, in line with the change in government policy in 2021, children are now placed in 15 small shelters across the country. With UNICEF advocacy and support, the government has continued its efforts to de-institutionalize children under state care and move towards family-based care options for these children. Additionally, the Department of Juvenile Justice has established diversion programmes, and the judiciary has made progress in ensuring child-friendly justice processes in line with the new Child Rights Protection Act, the Juvenile Justice Act and international standards including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Government has taken steps to repatriate and reintegrate families and children from war affected countries. Anecdotal evidence suggests that 106 are reported to be in Northeast Syria, with 82 women

and children in the Al-Roj camp in the area controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces. Approximately half of these are believed to be children aged between three and 14. An estimated 36 are adult women. Those living in camps in Syria, mostly women and children, face serious threats from violence, disease, malnutrition, exploitation and indoctrination by those still loyal to Islamic State. Given the conditions in the camps, there is an urgent need to bring Maldivians home, particularly children. As a 'One UN' response, the Joint Scoping Exercise was finalized, and UNICEF is advocating for repatriation and community-based rehabilitation of children and women. To reinforce this, UNICEF provided technical support and facilitated a study visit to Uzbekistan to learn from their experiences and lessons learned in the repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration process.

Furthermore, the child malnutrition rate and the recent drop in immunization rates remain a concern. The Demographic Health Survey (2016–2017) shows that 15 per cent of children under five years are stunted, while 5 per cent are overweight. The survey also revealed that nearly 23 per cent of children (under two years old) did not receive routine vaccines at all or did not receive all the necessary doses. Vaccine hesitancy has been observed and is a possible contributing factor. Early childhood development services remain fragmented, lack multisectoral coordination and technical capacity and resources to deliver comprehensive, quality services.

The COVID-19 pandemic was in its third wave when schools resumed for the second term of the academic year 2021–2022 in January, after a three-week break. The country was seeing record numbers of cases and special prevention measures were taken in schools in particular in the Greater Male' area. However, by mid-March 2022, all schools in Maldives (including preschools) resumed in-person learning, as per the regular school arrangements, with adequate prevention and control measures. Vaccine booster doses were administered to adults and eligible children, and risk communication and community engagement activities continued with Govt.

School closures resulted in unprecedented levels of learning losses for children in pre-primary and primary grades. The Ministry of Education reported the impact of learning loss on students, and the need to support recovery of lost learning and address the psychological impact of disruptions on students. It is acknowledged that children with disabilities, children from poor households and children in state care institutions did not benefit as intended from the distance learning provided during COVID-19.

Major contributions and drivers of results

This year marked the beginning of the 2022–2026 Cooperation Country Programme (CCP) between the Government of Maldives and UNICEF. Five priorities were focused on: positive parenting, mental health, adolescents' skills development, climate change, and strengthening convergence at local level with Community Social Groups (*IBAMA* in Dhivehi).

The Maldives Country Office (MCO) strengthened relations and advocated with the highest level of government, private sector, international community and civil society organizations to better position and give visibility to children's rights in the country. In this sense, it supported the government to organize the following major national multi-stakeholder advocacy events: (1) the first ever Child Rights Symposium led by the Children's Ombudsperson's Office; (2) the National Conference on Prevention, Protection and Investigation of Violence Against Children, led by Maldives Police Service; (3) the launch of the National Mental Health Communication Strategy and Campaign led by the Ministry of Health; (4) launch of the UNICEF-Government of Maldives Joint Positive Parenting Programme, led by the Ministry of Education; (5) a pre-27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) buzz event, led by the Ministry of Environment. These events demonstrated high-level commitment to UNICEF's efforts to advance children's rights in Maldives, with the participation of the President and

Vice President of Maldives, the First Lady, ministers and high-level government authorities.

UNICEF supported participation of government officials and academics in the Regional Faith Engagement Forum for South Asia, providing a platform for knowledge exchange to help identify key entry points for engagement with the faith community on child rights issues such as eradication of harmful practices, promoting positive parenting, addressing issues of mental health, nutrition and vaccine hesitancy.

Within the “young girls and boys develop and thrive” programme component, UNICEF has supported the country to build back better post COVID-19, with an integrated approach to programming and convergence to reduce the disparities and achieve the progressive realization of the rights of children in the Maldives. The Country Programme Document (CPD)'s Outcome 1 focuses on early years survival and development, through strengthening of the primary health-care platform for equitable, high-quality services for children and adolescents in the areas of health and nutrition. The new CPD recognizes the need to strengthen immunization systems, strengthening of early nutrition services as well as the importance of early childhood interventions across all relevant sectors. For this, strategic actions were conducted to achieve results in child survival and development with strong focus on the critical first 1,000 days of life.

UNICEF significantly contributed to the revitalization of Primary Health Care (PHC) in Maldives, which aimed to improve key services for children, women and communities within a broader, life-course approach that promotes holistic child health and well-being. UNICEF’s country and regional offices’ close support and technical backstopping, along with support from other UN agencies, has led to accelerated efforts to advance PHC reforms, paving the way for the country to achieve Sustainable Development Goal Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all. Specifically, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to determine the cost of primary health interventions, providing crucial information to strengthen PHC.

In efforts to reduce child malnutrition, UNICEF focused on strengthening child and maternal nutrition interventions at national level. The efforts are contributing to enhance quality of antenatal care services, a by improving the quality and standardizing care services across health facilities. In line with UNICEF’s life-course approach, the roll-out of the first 1,000 days of life strategy has made positive changes to infant feeding practices. In order to address the gap in comprehensive knowledge on breastfeeding and early nutrition, UNICEF developed and disseminated across the country, reaching a total of 7,811 caregivers. UNICEF continued to strengthen the growth monitoring and promotion platforms and supported to build capacity of health workers to provide mothers with information and counselling on breastfeeding, and guidance on appropriate and responsive feeding. Over 200 health workers were trained to deliver key messages to parents and pregnant women. Overall, these efforts are contributing strengthening nutrition services and promoting good nutrition and improved breastfeeding promotion and subsequently improve the nutritional status of children of the Maldives.

In 2022, following the easing of travel restrictions, UNICEF and the Health Protection Agency completed the final field work for the Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) assessment. The EVM assessment was launched in March 2022, and the Country Improvement Plan (CIP) was subsequently launched to address the key findings of the assessment. EVM and the CIP have informed the subsequent immunization supply chain strengthening activities this year, including addressing cold chain gaps. Significant technical support reinforced the national immunization programme at central and regional levels and strengthened the overall supply and cold chains. UNICEF will continue to provide support on these fronts, building in-country immunization supply management capacity, and conducting a follow-up EVM in the next two years to monitor improvements.

In 2022, UNICEF supported the government to initiate the Joint Positive Parenting Programme (JPPP),

which aims to improve parents' knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and practices to improve developmental, health, education and protection outcomes for children. The JPPP takes a life-cycle approach and includes a gender-responsive content. The content is intended to be developed through a consultative process with children, parents and other key stakeholders. A soft launch of the JPPP by the First Lady was held in April and subsequent sessions brought much-needed attention to the programme. As a result of UNICEF's high-level advocacy efforts, a multisectoral national-level steering committee was established to guide the process of development and roll-out of the JPPP and ensure its institutionalization.

To establish a baseline for the JPPP, UNICEF is supporting a knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) study to identify challenges and parenting skills gaps, as well as the institutional capacities that need to be strengthened to ensure that teachers, social workers and relevant government staff are equipped to address such gaps.

Within the programme component "Girls and boys, with a particular focus on adolescents, learn, are protected from harm and meaningfully participate", school closure during the COVID-19 pandemic caused huge disruption to children's learning. UNICEF supported a learning recovery programme, consisting of a literacy and numeracy strategy, a remediation plan, guidance on assessment, differentiated instruction and socioemotional learning. Approximately 1,000 teachers were trained to implement the programme in schools.

UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Education to revise the Education Sector Preparedness and Response Plan (ESPRP), which now includes pandemics, flooding, fire and terror attacks as emergency scenarios. School emergency drills were conducted in the Greater Male' region.

UNICEF supported community engagement for disability inclusion in some of the hard-to-reach atolls (i.e. Meemu, Faafu and Noonu), reaching 291 stakeholders (176 males; 115 females). This has strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration between local councils, schools, persons with disabilities, police and women's development committees. The three atoll councils have committed to a funded action plan to enhance disability inclusion. A total of 99 teachers were also trained on universal design for learning, enabling them to implement the inclusive education policy more effectively in their schools.

UNICEF has provided support to start implementing UPSHIFT in Maldives. The UPSHIFT curriculum was contextualized to Maldives and integrated into the national curriculum. Technical and financial assistance was given to build national capacity on the UPSHIFT methodology. A total of 136 facilitators (31 males; 105 females) and 1,100 teachers (474 males; 626 females) from the 53 pilot schools were trained. A total of 96 adolescents (54 girls and 42 boys) were reached through three bootcamps, which provided constructive feedback that was included in the contextualization process. Preparations are underway to launch UPSHIFT through a digital regional platform called UNISOLVE in January 2023 in the 53 schools.

With the ongoing focus recovery from COVID-19, UNICEF leveraged on the opportunity to further strengthen the child protection system and community-level mechanisms to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. It concentrated efforts on high-level advocacy in several thematic areas to change policy directions. This included de-institutionalization of children under state care, repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of children and women from conflict zones, and the roll-out of *IBAMA* to support prevention and response services to vulnerable groups.

UNICEF supported a high-level delegation to travel to Georgia to exchange knowledge on de-institutionalization of children under state care, advocating for best practices to be contextualized and implemented in Maldives. This supports the government's new initiative to move children under state care from two large central institutions to smaller institutions across the country, with a focus on

promoting family-based care options. UNICEF also supported a high-level delegation to travel to Uzbekistan to learn best practices in repatriation and reintegration of children and women from conflict zones, to strengthen current processes and to better balance social protection issues with national security concerns.

UNICEF also presented the concept of *IBAMA* to the social council at the President's Office, to get policy buy-in for its roll-out at community level, to support decentralizing services to community level, which is a key priority for the government.

UNICEF also supported several system-strengthening and capacity-building initiatives for the roll-out of the landmark Child Rights Protection Act (CRPA) and Juvenile Justice Act (JJA). UNICEF provided consultancy during the drafting of judicial regulation under the CRPA and development of a multisectoral standard operating procedure (SOP). To move towards standardizing practices, UNICEF also supported training in the victim-centered approach to child exploitation investigation, juvenile justice for judges and magistrates, sensitization to child rights and child protection for investigation officers, and others.

Through support for *IBAMA*, UNICEF helped demonstrate in practice what decentralization of services at island level would look like, and how collaboration between different social sector agencies can fill service gaps. With several *IBAMA* groups having conducted interventions to assist vulnerable families, impactful results were shown, contributing to the sustainability of the programme. Regulation formalizing the work of *IBAMA* members was published, and training of trainers sessions helped build capacity for the roll-out of training of *IBAMA* members.

The National Mental Health Communication Strategy and the *Kihineh?* campaign was launched by the President of Maldives in December 2022. UNICEF supported the Health Protection Agency to develop the strategy, which was informed by a rapid assessment on mental health knowledge, attitudes and practices. The strategy aims to positively engage key audiences to reduce stigma around mental health, build mental health literacy, and promote mental health and resilience at individual and community levels. The campaign will strive to create a more tolerant, nurturing and compassionate community. UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education to implement the Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) programme in schools. This aims to teach adolescents and their parents techniques to positively influence their behaviour, which in turn will promote positive mental health and prevent mental health conditions among adolescents. The programme has built the capacity of 41 facilitators in 20 schools around the Maldives.

UNICEF is also supporting the Ministry of Education to increase nutrition literacy among parents and school children, with a focus on changing behaviour related to obesity and overweight. The intervention is helping to increase knowledge and skills on nutritious food choices at household level, while involving children and adolescents as agents of change.

Within the “Sustainable environment policy and financing for children” programme component, UNICEF has provided technical and financial support to the Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS) to implement the 2022 Census, helping design the census questionnaire to include six core questions on functional disability, as recommended by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. Training on disability information data collection was provided to all census enumerators, supervisors and officials to increase the reliability and validity of disability information and other data collected in the census.

In Vaavu Atoll, data collection of routine information from the islands was piloted. Roll-out is expected to take place in the first quarter of 2023. To strengthen data collection and its digitalization, a module was developed and introduced to the island councils. This will fully automate registration of births and deaths in all islands. Currently, a data extraction module is under development that will provide vital registration of births and deaths information on a real-time basis.

UNICEF also provided technical support to the development of integrated data management and information system for the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO). The data portal is now able to publish data on case workload, and on ongoing and prosecuted cases, by office, locality and magistrate. These data at decentralized level are used for programming and policy intervention, shaping the work plans of 2023-2024.

UNICEF provided support to develop a comprehensive social sector analysis, leading to a costed development plan for the sector. The social sector analysis and development plan was presented to the social council at the President's Office, focusing attention on investing and allocating more budget to the social sector, especially in building the capacity and sustainability of social workers. The social council was also convinced of the need to amend the current social protection framework to include care worker schemes, increasing the allowances of some existing schemes, such as disability, and increasing coverage of the current schemes. UNICEF was able to support the government to develop a mobile application for the social protection programme which will potentially reach the most marginalized groups so that the overall coverage is increased. Piloting of the mobile app and official launch is planned for next year.

UNICEF has strengthened its positioning and visibility as a strong advocate for climate change in the country with high-level advocacy events being conducted in the last two years, engaging adolescents and young people as advocates and agents of change in climate action in their communities.

UNICEF has supported enhancing young people's capacities as advocates for environmental sustainability and climate action. A pre-27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) buzz event was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Education and national non-governmental organizations. More than 150 young people from Male' and 20 atolls participated in the event, in addition to high-level government authorities and officials and international agencies. The event was designed as a panel discussion in which various stakeholders from Maldives participated, as well as young delegates from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, providing their perspectives as climate activists in their countries. Three technical sessions took place, focusing on: (1) plastic-free Maldives; (2) environment protection and conservation; and (3) energy and innovation. A youth declaration was also presented, and subsequently taken by the ministry of environment to COP27 in Egypt.

In preparation for the event, an orientation on climate action was conducted for 29 young people from Male' and atolls as part of the government's efforts to support young people in climate action and advocacy. The goal was to provide insight into COP27, stimulate dialogue, and foster an environment for participants to openly discuss climate impacts in their respective communities.

A study on the cost of inaction on climate change was conducted in 2022 which will be made available and used as an advocacy tool as soon as it is reviewed and validated by the government.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

This year, the Maldives Country Office continued strategic partnership with 15 ministries and public institutions, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Environment, the National Disaster Management Authority, the National Social Protection Agency, Local Government Authority, Maldives Bureau of Statistics, the Department of Judicial Administration, Judicial Academy, Department of Juvenile Justice, the National Institute of Education, Maldives Police Service, the Prosecutor General's Office and the Office of the Children's Ombudsperson.

The Maldives Country Office also continued, and scaled up its partnerships with academia, civil society organizations and the private sector. These included Advocating the Rights of Children (ARC), Maldives Red Crescent (MRC), Care Society, Maldives Autism Association, Eco Org, Women in Fuvahmulah, Maldives National University, Islamic University of Maldives, and Villa College.

The Maldives Country Office began to implement its partnership and fundraising strategy, negotiating and coordinating with private sector companies, such as Mövenpick, Soneva and Ooredoo. It has also continued cooperating and exchanging information with international cooperation agencies and the diplomatic community.

As part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF), UNICEF continued to reinforce partnership with the United Nations Development System, providing inputs and ensuring that child rights and strategic interventions are an integral part of the UNSDCF outcomes. It also participated in thematic groups to address cross-cutting areas of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNICEF's work in immunization systems-strengthening was undertaken jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO) and supported by donors such as COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access, and bilateral donors such as the Government of Japan and the Asian Development Bank. UNICEF also maintained close relationships with donors such as the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The partnership between WHO and UNICEF has therefore been instrumental to the successful roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine. The absence of a digital health information system remains a significant gap in the health sector, which is a barrier to successful implementation. UNICEF recognized this as a key bottleneck and together with WHO, supported the development of an electronic immunization registry. This included supporting the roll-out of training modules to educate health workers to use the system. With UNICEF's support, 90 facilities, including all Greater Male' region facilities, atoll and regional facilities, almost 50 per cent of children born in 2022 were added to the system and 9,200 children were tracked in the system. The electronic immunization registry will contribute to real-time data tracking, informing decision-making for vaccination campaigns and improving immunization programming and response.

The Joint Positive Parenting Programme is a joint initiative of the Government of Maldives and UNICEF. A national steering committee was established to develop, roll out and monitor the programme. The members of the steering committee, in addition to UNICEF, are as follows: Ministry of Education (lead), Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, Ministry of Health/Health Protection Agency, Maldives Police Service, Department of Juvenile Justice and National Drug Agency.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Within the "Young girls and boys develop and thrive" programme component, UNICEF has

proactively engaged with donors supporting immunization systems-strengthening. The systematic information sharing with the Asian Development Bank, USAID and World Bank has contributed to more coordinated support, minimizing duplication of resources. Further improvements can be made with regular sharing of information among all key partners working in the same areas, and support to health sector on common areas can be further streamlined.

The health sector was in emergency response mode at the beginning of 2022, due to government staff working both on routine programming and COVID-19 response. This led to delays in activity implementation, specifically of time-bound donor funds. To address this, UNICEF assigned personnel or consultants to programmes to facilitate activity roll-out and monitoring, leading to progress with activities and achievement of results. The lesson learned for UNICEF is to identify capacity bottlenecks that impede timely implementation, and to be agile enough to address them.

To promote integrated, comprehensive and coordinated services, efforts should focus on bringing stakeholders together to improve child health and early childhood development. Consultation on ANC/PNC and the child health record brought health subsectors together. However, high-level leadership is needed to bring together a wider range of relevant stakeholders beyond the health sector.

The roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine underscored the need for stronger immunization and cold chain systems. UNICEF also used the opportunity to carry out evidence-based advocacy for systems strengthening to improve routine immunization.

It was important to establish the steering committee at the beginning of the JPPP to ensure broader participation and ownership. The steering committee is also helping to increase participation and contributions from different sectors and to ensure a multisectoral approach. A review of existing programmes delivered by different sectors, with the participation of the steering committee has been critical to ensure agreement among partners on existing gaps in content, human resources capacity and to decide on the way forward.

A key lesson learned in 2022 was the importance of multisectoral collaboration to ensure success of interventions. UNICEF paid particular attention to ensuring that its support was geared to include multiple stakeholders in programmatic processes, to help standardize practices across the social sector and maximize benefits for children. This also serves the additional benefit of making programmes more comprehensive and reducing duplication of resources through strengthening articulation, synergy and complementarity between different agencies. In this sense, UNICEF's support to programmatic activities was undertaken with a multisectoral approach, whereby all relevant stakeholders were involved. For example, all relevant sectors were involved in the juvenile justice training for judges and magistrates, so that all actors were aware of the standards that the judiciary would adhere to in child protection and juvenile justice cases; and the standard operating procedure on case conferences was developed in a multisectoral way, so that all child protection actors adhered to the same standards.

Another key learning is the importance of knowledge exchange and learning from best practices of other countries on new and emerging issues. For example, study visits to Georgia on de-institutionalization provided an opportunity to learn best practices in family-based care options, which UNICEF has been advocating for. Exposure to existing best practices helps in learning what does and does not work, and ways to adapt to the country context. High-level participation in these exposure study visits also helped facilitate high-level advocacy.

UNICEF also learned the importance of making programmes sustainable and institutionalized. Engagement with key policy-level decision makers was crucial to scaling up relevant programmes. For example, high-level engagement was crucial in the roll-out of *IBAMA* to address potential pitfalls and ensure its sustainability. The concept was presented to the Social Council at the President's Office and an orientation session was also presented to the councils of the islands, atolls and cities to increase

understanding. Wider dissemination of the concept is important for active participation, continuity and scaling up of the initiative.

In the “Sustainable environment policy and financing for children” programme component, UNICEF has been able to position itself as a valid actor in key priority areas through high-level engagement and advocacy events.

In fact, the MCO’s decision to emphasize five flagship programme components has allowed human and financial resources to be oriented to these areas and to position them in the national agenda to generate tangible results. The five flagship programmes received strong commitment from the highest levels of the government; clearly showing the government’s willingness to work closely with UNICEF to achieve results for children and young people. It will be critical for the country office to maintain and strategically manage these relations to amplify advocacy and strengthen investment in priority areas.

UNICEF’s efforts to engage with young people through participatory consultations such as the pre-COP27 buzz event, as well as engaging children and young people of all ages in developing content and advocacy messages, were strengthened in 2022 post-COVID-19 restrictions. However, there needs to be more accessibility and inclusivity in communications and advocacy messages and content. Use of less complex language and more Dhivehi translations for key messages will help messages reach more children and families, especially those left furthest behind.

In areas such as youth-led climate action and advocacy, creation of an innovative mechanism will enable the MCO to continue regular engagement with children and young people, beyond the reach of one or two-day events. This will help the country office to mobilize young people to push forward the child rights agenda and provide meaningful, strategic ideas and recommendations led by young people on policies, regulations and initiatives that impact their future.

Shifting from sectoral to an integrated approach to programming has not been easy, requiring much more interaction and time from programme staff to understand the process, to make plans and implement together. Although much is still to be done, the MCO was able to progress on the integrated approach internally, thanks to systematic coordination. However, the country office hopes to leverage more partnerships with the private sector next year to advance the child rights agenda.