Update on the context and situation of children

The pace of Mozambique’s economic recovery continued to accelerate in 2023, with real GDP growth expected to have reached 7 per cent, following the 2.4 per cent of 2021 and the more substantial 4.4 per cent of 2022. Growth forecasts from 2024 onwards suggest that real GDP growth would average 5.3 per cent a year over the medium term. This is accompanied by a reduction of inflationary pressures, with headline inflation falling from 10.3 per cent in December 2022 to 5.7 per cent in July 2023 and forecasted to stabilize around 5.7 per cent by end of 2026, in a context of tight monetary policy and improving levels of foreign exchange reserves.

Despite these positive developments, Mozambique’s forecasted growth is still 2 percentage points lower compared to the levels before the “hidden debt” scandal of 2015 and the series of shocks that hit the country between then and 2022. Food inflation has been increasing, reaching 9.3 per cent in 2023 whilst global commodity prices have been on a downward trend since mid-2022, particularly liquified natural gas (LNG) and aluminium, two key exports.

Against this background, Mozambique is facing a surge in poverty levels, with the latest official figures (2019/20) showing that, on average, 62 per cent of the population is living on less than US$ 0.63 per day (72 per cent in rural areas). UNICEF’s multidimensional poverty analysis (2019/20) shows that 80.6 per cent of children were poor in monetary, multidimensional or both terms. The number of children living below the poverty line of US$ 0.84 a day increased by 22.4 points to reach 73.6 per cent on average, whilst 49 per cent are multidimensionally poor.

Gender inequalities remain pervasive across sectors, with 48 per cent of women having had a pregnancy before the age of 18 53 per cent of girls under the age of 18 are married or in a union; completion rates are lower for girls in school where there is also inadequate management of menstrual health; women and girls are highly exposed to gender-based violence (GBV), while also subjected to harmful practices and negative coping strategies – particularly in conflict and climate-related emergencies. Children and adolescents with disabilities continue to experience barriers in accessing basic health, education, and protection services.

The 2023 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) indicates a decline in severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates compared to the 2022 National Household Survey, from 1.5 per cent to 0.7 per cent (from 4.5 per cent to 3.8 per cent global acute malnutrition including moderate and severe). This represents a decrease from an estimated 250,000 SAM cases (under five years) in 2022 to 94,429 SAM cases in 2023. The largest reductions in SAM prevalence are in Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces, where nutrition and food security partners are providing direct support to alleviate food insecurity.

Primary school enrolment in Mozambique is high – according to the 2022 annual school census, the net enrolment rate for Grade 1 was 98.7 per cent, but less than 60 per cent of children completed primary education in 2022 with noticeable gender disparities (55.9 per cent girls and 59.2 per cent boys). While the southern provinces have at least a 75 per cent completion rate, none of the northern provinces exceeds 45 per cent. Less than 4 per cent of children are in pre-school, and the gross enrolment for lower secondary and upper secondary is only 50 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively.

According to a recent study, students in Grades 3-4 experienced learning losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. On water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), the 2022 National Household Survey showed an increase in access to drinking water from 49.5 per cent in 2019 to 53.6 per cent in
2022, although with significant disparities between rural and urban areas and across provinces. Open defecation notably reduced by 3.7 per cent since 2019 but there is limited progress on access to improved sanitation.

Mozambique ranked fifth out of 180 countries on the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index, and 10th on the UNICEF Children’s Climate Risk Index. The country shows high levels of vulnerability and low readiness to adapt to risks projected to become increasingly severe. The 2023 World Bank Country Climate and Development report for Mozambique anticipates all future climate scenarios to increase poverty, with a worst-case scenario pushing an additional 1.6 million people into poverty by 2050.

The humanitarian situation was complex and challenging in 2023, with environmental shocks, disease outbreaks and armed conflict in northern provinces, resulting in 2.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. Cyclone Freddy, which hit Mozambique in February and again in March, caused severe flooding that affected approximately 1.2 million people (more than 500,000 children), resulting in 183 reported deaths and displaced 184,282 people. In northern Mozambique, 1.7 million people were in need due to conflict.

Cholera is endemic in Mozambique. An outbreak started in Niassa Province in September 2022, spreading to Sofala, Zambezia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado. The outbreak worsened after Cyclone Freddy and spread nationwide with 38,611 cases reported during 2023 with a case fatality rate of 0.4 per cent.

Government’s capacity to face the complex challenges brought about by the several compounded shocks that hit the country over the past decade is limited and conditional to external support and the promise of a future gas revenue bonanza. Currently, the government has allocated around 31.1 per cent of its 2024 budget for the social sectors, in line with the average of the past five years, although these allocations still fall short from meeting most international sectoral commitments. At the same time, the government spent on average 21 per cent of its total budget on debt servicing, highlighting the tightness of its fiscal space.

Major contributions and drivers of results

In 2023, UNICEF Mozambique continued its efforts to advance a more integrated and multi-sectoral programme, while promoting greater decentralization and ownership of the country programme at provincial level.

While facing a protracted humanitarian crisis in the northern provinces affected by armed conflict, Mozambique was affected by an unprecedented cholera outbreak fuelled by the consequences of Cyclone Freddy that affected the lives of more than 1.2 million people. In this environment, UNICEF was able to confirm its capacity to quickly respond at scale to major emergencies while demonstrating agility and immediately connecting humanitarian and development interventions, building back better, and supporting national systems to recover.

Whilst scaling up its humanitarian interventions, UNICEF Mozambique maintained its developments efforts in support to the Government of Mozambique and thanks to the renewed trust of its financial and implementing partners, UNICEF was able to achieve remarkable results for children that include:

· Over 24,900,000 people were reached with health interventions. Altogether, 1 million children 0-5 years received community health interventions, over 1 million with routine immunization, 39,000 with SAM treatment and 15,000 with newborn care services.
UNICEF supported nationwide immunization campaigns reaching 23,704,540 children aged 0-15 years with polio, 5,047,000 (9-59 months) with measles, and 2,988,379 (>1 year) with cholera vaccines.

The Accelerated School Readiness programme benefitted 13,620 children aged 5-6 years (50 per cent girls).

Approximately 3,607 students (50 per cent girls) were reached through the dissemination of the violence against children (VAC) multisectoral mechanism in schools.

A total 290,247 people benefited from durable access to drinking water (69 per cent in rural context); 890,582 people gained access to at least basic sanitation services; and 1,827 communities were certified Open Defecation Free (ODF). In addition, 46 health facilities and 71 schools were reached with WASH services.

The number of children in institutions decreased from 3,641 in 2021 to 2,946 in 2023. With UNICEF support, the number of children in alternative family-based foster care increased from 414 in 2022 to 658 in 2023 through the implementation of the National Registry of Alternative Care.

A total of 320,902 children (161,185 girls) had access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services.

In Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces, 35,000 children (aged 0-2 years) were reached with the Child Grant, providing critical financial and protection support during the first 1,000 days of a child’s life. Over 3,000 vulnerable caregivers of the young children were referred to case management to access social services and psychosocial support, thereby amplifying the impact of the cash on beneficiary households’ wellbeing and resilience.

Key results of UNICEF Mozambique’s humanitarian response include:

- Provision of integrated protection services for children, reaching 320,902 beneficiaries with rehabilitation and reintegration services for children affected by armed conflicts, child marriage, and other forms of violence.

- A total of 1,253,404 people were reached with appropriate drinking water services, of which 18.5 per cent with durable solutions and 552,543 people with appropriate sanitation.

- Substantial quantities of WASH supplies were delivered benefitting 2,874,685 people.

- More than 365,000 children and women had access to primary health care including one million children aged 6-59 months screened for acute malnutrition and 27,092 children 6-59 months treated for SAM.

- A total of 42,067 primary caregivers of children 6-23 months were reached with infant and young child feeding counselling and support in emergency settings.

- In education, 237,043 children benefitted from material support facilitating their continued access to both formal and non-formal education.

In Health, despite the challenges posed by the humanitarian crises this year, improvements were observed in the delivery of essential health services to children and women.

UNICEF contributed to the reduction of transmission of HIV from mothers to children through
provision of comprehensive services, including antenatal care, HIV testing and counselling, and antiretroviral therapy (ART). UNICEF supported the delivery of 18,407 counselling sessions for adolescents aged 10-24 years at adolescent friendly centres. The expansion of ART services contributed to 97 per cent achievement in health facilities providing services. In addition, UNICEF provided capacity building for health workers to provide good quality services to mothers and babies targeting 20 clinical mentors and 42 health professionals. On evidence generation for HIV, UNICEF supported the implementation of a study on data disaggregation of adolescent and young people at adolescent friendly centres (SAAJ). UNICEF also provided technical assistance and acquisition of Hepatitis B for a pilot to prevent vertical transmission of Hepatitis B as part of the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B national plan.

UNICEF supported the design and implementation of the digitalization of the pilot Reaching Every District/Reaching Every Child (RED/REC) strategy, establishment of the Inventory Gap Assessment for cold chain, and preparation process for the implementation of Effective Vaccine Management (EVM). UNICEF has also been a key Ministry of Health (MoH) partner in responding to the polio, measles, and cholera outbreaks by transporting and distributing vaccines, managing vaccination waste, conserving vaccines, creating demand and social mobilization, and on provision of immunization services. UNICEF procured 9,100,000 vitamin A capsules (200,000 IU) through in-kind contributions from Nutrition International (NI) to support the Government of Mozambique’s Vitamin A Supplementation (VAS) program in 2023.

On nutrition, a social behaviour change campaign was designed to raise awareness about appropriate infant feeding practices, which included two workshops with the private sector in Maputo and Sofala provinces. As a result, one of the participating banks (BCI) extended parental leave for mothers and fathers from two to four months and initiated a breastfeeding room in their national headquarter office. The community-level Nutrition Interventions Package (PIN) reached 552,637 children aged 6-23 months in the four UNICEF-targeted provinces, and 25 community health workers were trained in Nampula Province.

UNICEF coordinated and delivered health services during crises, ensuring that the health needs of affected populations were addressed. Response to emergencies was provided through strengthening capacities of stakeholders to provide child-centred integrated health and nutrition services for children and caregivers and by providing health kits, medicines, tents, and delivering lifesaving supplies to treat SAM.

In Education, UNICEF Mozambique, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH), made substantial contributions to enhancing education access, retention, and learning outcomes, particularly for early grades and vulnerable groups, including girls and children affected by emergencies. The approval of the National Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) and the preschool curriculum framework were significantly bolstered in the national agenda.

UNICEF Mozambique engaged in policy dialogue and capacity building, notably in areas such as early childhood development (ECD), teacher development, and local governance, as well as in planning, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation. Key achievements include the expansion of the Accelerated School Readiness (ASR) program benefiting 13,620 children, and the empowerment of girls through various initiatives reaching approximately 3,607 students. Training was provided to teachers on inclusive education methodology and sign language, enhancing access and retention for children with disabilities.

Primary and secondary education saw improvements leading to a 20 per cent increase in school enrolment rates in targeted regions. This achievement was particularly significant in terms of gender parity, with focused strategies to support girls’ education, thereby reducing disparities. The quality of
education received a major boost through the training of over 2,000 educators, which brought innovative teaching methodologies and improved instructional quality across various schools, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

UNICEF contributed to ensure the continuity of education for over 10,000 children affected by crises through provision of temporary learning spaces. These efforts were complemented by the training of more than 500 educators and administrators in emergency preparedness and response, thereby enhancing the resilience of the education system. Additionally, the implementation of Life Skills and Citizenship Education activities benefited 57,150 children, and vocational training benefited 8,454 adolescents and youth.

**WASH** interventions exemplified a commitment to ensuring sustainable access to clean water and sanitation. The program expanded its reach, providing improved and durable water supply to over 290,000 individuals through the construction of new infrastructure, including 100 boreholes in rural areas, significantly enhancing water access for 50,000 residents. In urban contexts, upgrades to water systems benefited an additional 75,000 people.

A total of 890,582 people had access to basic sanitation services, and 1,827 communities became certified as Open Defecation Free (ODF). Extensive campaigns and school-based programs reached numerous communities, instilling essential hygiene practices contributing to mitigate the prevalence of water-borne diseases and promoting healthy living environments.

As a result of UNICEF’s **WASH in institutions** interventions, at least 36,000 maternity inpatients benefited from improved services and infrastructures (SISMA, 2023) and 42,600 school children were reached and benefited from a more conducive learning environment (45 per cent girls). Forty-one schools received a full WASH package which includes: an improved water source, improved sanitation facilities (toilets), behaviour change activities for improved hygiene, and operations and maintenance training for the new WASH facility. Another 30 schools benefitted from improved water services. Interventions also addressed menstrual hygiene management with 1,300 schoolgirls receiving hygiene kits and more than 2,500 school children receiving information on menstruation to break myths and taboos.

The **climate agenda** was pushed further in 2023 with the launch of a multi-sectoral climate risk assessment to develop a climate rationale for the sector and prioritize adaptation options jointly with the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). UNICEF supported the first provincial and national level Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) in Mozambique, engaging over 850 young people in collaboration with Youth for Climate Action (YCAC) Mozambique, and supported the participation of two youth representatives in the 18th global Conference of Youth (COY18) ahead of COP28.

In **Child Protection**, UNICEF continued to place emphasis on child system strengthening at all levels. At upstream strategic level, emphasis was on improving the policy and legal environment for child promotion and protection in Mozambique and supporting the drafting of the National Plan of Action for Children (PNAC III), including assistance to the Government in implementing Universal Periodic Review recommendations. In addition, UNICEF worked on the development of a Budget Brief for social action to improve national investment in the social sector.

Efforts were made to coordinate access to key services such as health, social welfare, justice, birth registration, and education through **multisectoral case management** for children and their caregivers who are victims of violence. Communities most affected by VAC and child marriages had access to justice services, through mobile courts organized with UNICEF support. More than 8,000 children affected by VAC and child marriage received integrated case management; 725,349 children (367,507 girls) had access to birth registration services; and the number of health facilities with birth
registration services increased 6 per cent – from 143 in 2022 to 152 in 2023.

Strong emphasis was placed on VAC prevention strategies (including child marriage) by promoting **positive social norms and behaviour change** in communities to understand VAC and child marriage in order to detect and refer cases to adequate services. To disseminate messages, videos, and graffiti were utilized combined with community dialogues that reached 85,394 people (52,411 female), and intergenerational dialogues on gender transformative approaches, child marriage and peer-to-peer education engaging 55,320 adolescents aged 10-19 (34,429 girls). Using Art for Social Change, UNICEF Mozambique reached over 5.3 million people through social media with ‘Oh Menina’, a song on sexual exploitation of young girls produced by young artists from Zambezia.

**Social policy and social protection** (SPSP) interventions were centred on expanding the Child Grant Programme (CGP) and enhancing evidence generation for child well-being. The expansion of the CGP covered a larger number of vulnerable children and families, particularly in Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces, reaching 35,000 children during the critical first 1,000 days of life. This expansion was accompanied by improvements in program implementation, ensuring more efficient and timely delivery of support.

On evidence generation still related to SPSP, UNICEF supported the production of **data and research** on child welfare, which informed policy and programming decisions. This included studies on child poverty, social protection, and the impact of COVID-19 on children and families. The outcomes of the studies were crucial in shaping targeted and effective interventions for children's well-being.

UNICEF also played a key role in advancing **public finance management reforms**, providing technical support and advocacy to ensure more efficient and effective allocation of resources for children's programs. This included efforts to increase fiscal space for child-focused interventions and to improve budget transparency and accountability.

UNICEF Mozambique's strategic interventions in **programme effectiveness** led to significant achievements. Advocacy, partnership development, social behaviour change, and emergency response were key focus areas. UNICEF’s strategic approach enabled the mobilization of US$ 51 million, including 25.5 million in regular resources and US$ 25.9 million on the Humanitarian Action for Children appeal. This approach included holistic engagement with public sector partners, integrating advocacy and policy priorities. Major expansion and renewed partnerships were formed with the European Union, Canada, Ireland, among others. UNICEF’s role as chair or co-chair in the donor system working groups’ leadership further leveraged its influence in coordinating multisectoral efforts.

UNICEF’s **advocacy and communication** activities increased digital engagement and media reach. Social behaviour change efforts, particularly during the cholera outbreak, and initiatives for adolescent engagement were highly effective. The SMSBIZ/U-Report adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH)/HIV counselling platform saw significant growth, reaching over 830,000 users, 40 per cent of whom were female, and the majority of users (77 per cent) were 20-30 years.

During 2023, UNICEF played a leading role at interagency level as co-chair of the **Humanitarian Gender Working Group**, training more than 200 governmental and non-governmental humanitarian workers, preparing dedicated tools for gender data collection in emergencies and supporting clusters on incorporating the gender dimension in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Capacity building on gender and GBV risk mitigation reached an additional 140 staff from UNICEF and partners. As part of its shift to a transformational approach to gender, UNICEF also strengthened capacities of its implementing partners on positive masculinities and male engagement, training 144 implementing partners, government officials and school gender focal points. UNICEF also rolled out a gender transformative, adolescent-focused approach in Nampula aimed at empowering children’s agency.
while engaging adults and leaders in the behaviour and attitude changes and supporting adolescents’ referral to available services. UNICEF also conducted a study on gender and SBC barriers to immunization and vitamin A supplementation, which will inform the piloting of experimental approaches to overcome the barriers and address the root causes of gender barriers to access and demand for health services.

In 2023, UNICEF played a leading role in supporting disability mainstreaming across sectors through capacity building of humanitarian workers on inclusive response and disability rights.

UNICEF’s response to Cyclone Freddy and the cholera outbreak demonstrated capacity for multi-sectoral crisis management. In 2023, UNICEF emphasized improving preparedness through training of staff and partners, prepositioning of supplies, and support to the Government for contingency planning, warehousing, and response capacity. For an efficient and effective response to emergencies, UNICEF applied a multi-sectoral response requiring WASH, social behaviour change (SBC) and Child Health and Nutrition (CHN) sections to further strengthen intersectoral intervention. In relation to the cholera outbreak, the office was also included in the Level-2 Emergency Response declaration for Malawi and received US$2.5 million from the Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) to support response activities.

Logistics were strategized, including transportation services, which proved pivotal in moving humanitarian supplies rapidly and safely. A total of US$12.2 million supplies were procured for the emergency responses, comprising a wide range of goods such as shelter items to help set up camps for internally displaced persons, cholera treatment centres, water treatment products, water tanks, buckets, and soap, critical health and nutrition supplies such as acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) kits and Interagency Emergency Health Kits (IEHK), cholera beds, therapeutic milk, amongst others. Including programme and emergency, the total supply amount in 2023 was US$35 million.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) was at the core of UNICEF interventions at all levels and in 2023 more than 2.3 million people were reached with awareness raising and information on PSEA. Aiming to equip its implementing partners to prevent and respond to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse within their activities and programs, UNICEF Mozambique supported development of personalized Risk Reduction Plans aimed at strengthening partners’ capacities to establish safe and accessible community-based complaints mechanisms, to proficiently address all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, and to safely refer potential victims of SEA to service providers in a timely manner.

UNICEF engaged in greening initiatives by acquiring two electric vehicles and installing 562 light emitting diode (LED) energy efficient lights and 87 inverter type air conditioners in the offices. The new office building in Maputo meets Level 3 of UNICEF accessibility requirements and it will contribute to the UNICEF environmental sustainability and greening as well as inclusivity agenda. The office installed energy efficient equipment including solar panels. In addition, it is an accessible space for people living with disabilities. In Nampula, UNICEF is engaged in a United Nations joint premise initiative with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) being the host agency.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

Regarding ‘One UN’ for Health, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN-Habitat, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) produced a joint plan with MoH for the
third consecutive year. UNICEF and UNAIDS worked closely to advance the Global Alliance for Ending Paediatric HIV by 2030, while UNICEF closely collaborated with WHO to implement the polio and cholera responses. Two high level visits involving global and regional directors secured strong commitments from Government to address key challenges in delivery. A meeting on polio was held in February with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO, UNICEF and Rotary International; and in December on strengthening routine immunization with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO and the UNICEF Regional Director.

Collaboration with MoH, WHO, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Global Fund, World Bank, Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH), and medicine faculty of Eduardo Mondlane University was vital in implementing the Community Health Subsystem Strategy. Partnerships with MoH, National Institute of Statistics (INE), Malaria Consortium, Clinton Health Access Initiative, Global Health, Geo-Referenced Infrastructure and Demographic Data for Development (GRID3), WHO, WFP, Gavi, The Global Fund and USAID were critical in health digitalization initiatives and supply chain management. Collaboration with MoH, WHO, UNFPA helped keep maternal, newborn and child mortality key interventions a national priority. In humanitarian contexts, collaboration with international NGOs and local partners and support from the Governments of Japan, Sweden, Germany, Canada, and the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) were critical.

UNICEF partnered with the European Union Delegation on the stunting reduction programme and with USAID on universal salt iodization and food fortification. Collaboration with the Mozambique Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN), Ministry of Industry and Commerce, United Nations Network for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and the Nutrition Partners Forum, including agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the World Bank, and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) was essential. UNICEF participation in the RCCE working group and collaboration with the government Institute of Social Communication were pivotal in enhancing community radio capacities.

Collaborating with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF contributed to improved education access and retention. Partnerships with USAID and GIZ supported the development of the district supervision platform and manual. UNICEF's engagement with provincial and district authorities and partnerships with civil society organizations, like MEPT, were vital.

In the WASH sector, UNICEF worked closely with the National Directorate of Water Supply within the Ministry of Public Works, Housing, and Water Resources, and the Ministries of Health and Education. The partnership also extended to the Ministry of Land and Environment and the Ministry of Economy and Finance on climate change issues. UNICEF supported the National Institute of Statistics for the DHS and Household Budget Survey. Key international partners like the Netherlands Embassy, the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency, the European Union, and NGOs like WaterAid and Save the Children played a crucial role in achieving sectoral goals. In humanitarian contexts, partnerships with at least 16 NGOs were vital for implementing WASH in Emergency interventions.

UNICEF supported Youth for Climate Action (YCAC) Mozambique, a national youth and climate platform, to organize the provincial Local Conference of Youth (LOCY) and the first national LCOY, engaging about 1,090 adolescents.

UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action to coordinate child protection initiatives and develop the National Plan of Action for Children (PNAC III); and with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Defence to reform the justice system for children, strengthen civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), and ensure protection for children affected by conflict. Collaboration with WHO was crucial on MHPSS and
CRVS; UNDP on coordinating the justice sector; with UNFPA as part of the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, and UN Women on addressing gender-based violence and VAC. UNICEF strengthened its collaboration with bilateral and multilateral donors, including the European Union, the governments of Norway, Sweden, Canada, Ireland, Germany, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and the United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

The Global Steering Committee of the Global Programme to End Child Marriage was hosted by UNICEF in Mozambique, amidst the start of the third phase (2024-2026). The EU-funded joint UN programme on ending gender-based violence, Spotlight Initiative, and the joint UN programme for adolescent girls called Rapariga Biz ended in 2023. UNICEF is renewing its commitment to pursue its collaboration with other UN agencies on these essential initiatives.

On Social Policy and Social Protection, the Governments of Canada and Ireland joined the multi-donor United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP). Collaboration with the World Bank, the European Union, UNDP, and the International Monetary Fund in Public Finance Management was significant. UNICEF strengthened ties with INE through a joint dedicated workplan. Innovative partnerships with the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) advanced the child poverty agenda, including new child poverty assessments and the development of scientific papers.

A total of 3,366 adolescents and youth in four provincial Adolescent and Youth Participation Platforms were engaged in social mobilization (in Portuguese and local languages), reaching over 5 million people in targeted provinces.

UNICEF Mozambique implemented the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) joint programme with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) and UNFPA. In addition, UNICEF implemented a joint programme on UNPRPD in partnership with the Mozambican Association of People with Disabilities (FAMOD). A partnership with Humanity and Inclusion was established with funding from Global Humanitarian Thematic Funding. Additional funding from Norway contributed to strengthening disability coordination by the National Disability Working Group.

UNICEF engaged with the private sector through the development of the National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights, and ongoing engagement particularly with BCI around family-friendly policies in the workplace.

### Lessons Learned and Innovations

A number of lessons learned, and challenges identified in 2023 and in previous years were taken into account in UNICEF programming to enhance cross-sectoral approaches and maximise quality results for children.

At operational level, in response to Cyclone Freddy and the cholera outbreak in 2023, it was challenging to quickly mobilize supplies from the warehouses and dispatch them to multiple locations nationwide. One key lesson learned was the need to pre-position supplies at provincial and district levels to ensure proximity to the intended beneficiaries for quick release when required in case of natural disasters (particularly floods) and other emergencies.

In the health sector, valuable lessons emerged from four years of maternal child health mentorship supported by UNICEF. The Ministry of Health is now defining a comprehensive approach for
reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, adolescent health, and nutrition (RMNCAH+N), leveraging these insights. A notable innovation was the development of an electronic maternal child health supervision tool by UNICEF. This tool produces automatic dashboard reports, sharing information with different decision-makers and facilitating the follow-up of recommendations from supervision rounds. UNICEF also developed videos to improve HIV awareness among adolescents and young people and supported the acquisition of the hepatitis B vaccine birth dose to pilot Mother-to-Child Transmission Prevention of Hepatitis B.

In the education sector, the “Centro de Chamadas e Sistema de Monitoria em Tempo Real”, was established by the Ministry of Education and Human Development in collaboration with partners including UNICEF and Jembi Health Systems, in response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 and the aftermath of cyclones. This system encompasses a call centre for data collection and processing, training of technical staff, defining response indicators, testing remote and on-site functionality in educational institutions, and ensuring adaptability and sustainability. Plans are underway to expand the pilot to additional provinces as part of a new Global Partnership for Education (GPE) proposal.

Valuable lessons and innovations emerged from the implementation of the Child Grant Programme in conflict-sensitive areas for internally displaced persons, host communities, and returnees. These lessons will inform the further roll-out of the Child Grant and the adaptation of other social assistance programs during emergencies (shock-responsive social protection). UNICEF leveraged its resources to fund key technical assistance and evidence pieces, enhancing impact in planning, budgeting, and oversight at government levels.

The integrated Medics Com Africa partnership between the Social and Behaviour Change (SBC), WASH and Health Sections, which was established for the cholera outbreak response to conduct a Case Area Targeted Interventions (CATI) approach, became a model applied to various partners with standardized approaches and a monitoring system, including collection of social data and feedback from affected communities.

In the context of child rights in the digital environment, UNICEF developed a digital life coaching platform called funDoo, also known as TalentBIZ, in Mozambique. Using U-Report's chat-based technology, this platform equips young people with 21st-century and employability skills through gamified tasks. The pilot phase in Zambezia and Nampula was successful, and the plan is to scale up the initiative to additional provinces, depending on funding availability. Since the beginning of the intervention, two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with the three main telecom companies in Mozambique with a duration each of 2-3 years renewable. The MoUs provide unlimited free bulk SMS for users of the platform.

Going forward, the various lessons learned and innovations will further guide and support UNICEF interventions at national and sub-national level, while helping to prioritize resources according to the needs of children and young people in Mozambique.