

Update on the context and situation of children

A key highlight of 2019 is the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Ethiopia's Prime Minister for his work on peace with Eritrea. Ethiopia's Government continued moving forward in its ambitious political and economic reform agenda. In April 2019, a new civil society law was issued giving the latter a role in promoting human rights. Ethiopia embarked in 2019 on its three-year 'Home-Grown Economic Reform' agenda aimed to address key macro-economic, structural and sectoral bottlenecks as a foundation for Ethiopia's next ten-year Perspective Development Plan. While Ethiopia moved from 117th rank in 2018 to 82nd rank in 2020 in the Global Gender Index, women still suffer from underdevelopment in health services, education and economic opportunities.

2019 was also marked by inter-ethnic violence and insecurity in several spots, which resulted in displacement, disruption of economic activity and access restrictions. Political violence was witnessed, including assassination of the Amhara Region President and clashes between supporters of opposition and security forces in Oromia resulting in 80 deaths in October 2019.

Ethiopia made progress in reducing the monetary poverty rate from 45.5 per cent in 1995 to 23.5 per cent in 2016. However, the actual number of people that crossed the national poverty line over the two decades was only 2 million. The current average annual population growth (2.5 per cent) makes it challenging to achieve zero poverty by 2030. The 2019 UNICEF-supported multidimensional child poverty report revealed that 88 percent of children (approximately 36 million children - 94 per cent in rural and 42 per cent in urban areas) live in multidimensional poverty, lacking access to at least three social services such as health, nutrition, housing, education and/or water sanitation. Based on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 1.2, Ethiopia needs to reduce multidimensional poverty by at least four per cent each year to halve the poverty level by 2030. UNICEF is advocating for measuring both monetary and multidimensional poverty in the upcoming ten-year Perspective Plan of Ethiopia.

Public spending for children is a challenge: a 2018 UNICEF-supported SDG financing analysis estimated that achieving child-sensitive SDGs would require approximately US\$ 230 per capita, per year, far higher than the estimated investment of US\$ 40 per capita in 2018.

With an inflation rate of 14.6 per cent reported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in October 2019, meeting basic needs is becoming increasingly difficult for Ethiopian households.

Implications for children

The Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Ethiopia (SITAN) launched in October 2019 revealed an improvement in the overall situation of children compared to a decade ago; however, the slow rates of progress will not make it possible to achieve SDG targets by 2030.

Ethiopia's Mini-Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) 2019 indicates that stunting reduction has plateaued, with 37 per cent of children (5.6 million) under the age of 5 years being stunted, compared to 38 per cent in 2016 and 44 per cent in 2011. Although major strides were made in under-five mortality, neonatal mortality did not improve - currently 30 per 1,000 live births, compared to 29 per 1,000 in 2016.

Despite improvements in school enrolment, transition from primary to secondary school is still low for both boys and girls, due largely to high dropout rates across the primary cycle (less than 6 out of 10 complete primary education). The 2019 UNICEF SITAN reported 2.6 million primary school children as out of school. The Education Management Information System (EMIS) (2018/19) reports an increase in primary school dropout rate from 11.1 per cent in 2017/2018 to 17.7 per cent in 2019. Secondary school gross enrolment rates are only 48 per cent for Grades 9-10 and 13 per cent for Grades 11-12, largely in favor of boys. The lower value attached to girls' education, coupled with domestic chores, high child marriage and gender-based violence all contribute to reduction of girls in secondary education.

Child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) declined since 2000, but with stark regional differences. Ethiopia still has 15 million child brides or 40 per cent of women aged 20-24 years married before age 18. FGM reduction needs to be seven times faster than observed over the past decade, and child marriage reduction six times faster to achieve 2030 targets. According to the 2016 EDHS, more than one out of four Ethiopian women experienced physical violence since age 15, and one out of ten Ethiopian women experienced sexual violence since age 15.

Based on the 2019 Joint Monitoring Programme report, only 11 per cent of Ethiopia's population uses safely managed drinking water (minimal increase over the 2010 estimate of 8 per cent), with vast rural-urban divide (5 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively). Ethiopia has the lowest coverage of improved sanitation in Africa at 7 per cent, with approximately 23

million people practicing open defecation. Only 38 per cent of primary schools have access to water and 48 per cent have access to gender separated toilets.

Major advocacy results for UNICEF include greater visibility of children's issues through expanded partnerships with influencers speaking for children, a growing digital footprint through which UNICEF communicates to and engages with the public, and greater engagement with the media, including two memorandums of understanding with major media channels.

Humanitarian situation

Whilst Ethiopia has been struck successively by drought spells and floods in the past, a distinctive feature of 2019 was the large-scale internal displacement induced by inter-ethnic conflict. According to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), there were 8.86 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Children (0-17 years) are disproportionately affected by Ethiopia's humanitarian crises accounting for 55 per cent of total humanitarian need (4.89 million children). Ethiopia hosts over 720,000 refugees, mainly from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea, 63 per cent of whom are children. Children remain at risk of malnutrition, preventable diseases, violence, exploitation and abuse. Ethiopia remains vulnerable to epidemic outbreaks, with cholera, measles, vaccine derived polio virus type 2, malaria and chikungunya outbreaks reported in 2019. As of December, 2,677 cases of measles were reported.

At the height of displacements in March 2019 there were 3.19 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Ethiopia (HNO, 2019). Of those, 2.5 million were conflict-induced, 600,000 were climate-induced; and 61 per cent were children. After the return of many either to their areas of origin or to secondary displacement locations, there were 1.6 million IDPs by October 2019 (International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix 19). However, returnees remain vulnerable due to homes and crops being damaged or destroyed, lost incomes, disrupted education and separation from family. The 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan estimated there were 13,071 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Ethiopia. Displacement leads to increased risk to cholera, measles and circulating vaccine derived polio virus (cVDPV) outbreaks, and interrupts access to food, worsening existing vulnerabilities to acute malnutrition. The adoption of the global WHO guidelines on children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) will increase the SAM caseload by 26 per cent (from 462,506 to 582,724).

UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), revised in May 2019 to reflect the need for US\$ 143 million has reached 2.58 million people with lifesaving interventions; 55 per cent of those are children. HAC funding stood at 39 per cent in December 2019. Underfunding caused significant gaps in the Education (20 per cent funded), Health (26 per cent funded) and WASH (25 per cent funded) response. Lack of funds meant that over 400,000 people targeted by UNICEF Ethiopia's HAC in 2019 did not receive the assistance they required to meet immediate life-saving needs.

UNICEF is involved in the Durable Solutions initiative for IDPs and in the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. With approval of the workplan for Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), key achievements in 2019 included nomination and capacity building of PSEA focal points, training of partners (including suppliers and contractors) on PSEA concepts and requirements, and integration of PSEA actions into partner response plans. In addition, UNICEF provided technical support to develop the United Nations (UN) Agency PSEA workplan. The Gender-based Violence in Emergency (GBViE) Specialist also supported a review across all sectors of efforts to ensure alignment with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines.

Major contributions and drivers of results

Goal 1. Every child survives and thrives

Despite child mortality rates reducing from 65 per 1,000 in 2016 to 55 per 1,000 in 2019 (EDHS 2019), neonatal mortality rates remain stagnant indicating the quality of postnatal care needs more attention. In 2019, UNICEF supported the Government in upgrading 49 (of 80 planned) neonatal intensive care units to level III. However, significant challenges remain, including limited capacities at regional level in optimal use of existing equipment, a weak referral system from remote areas, limited data on post-discharge conditions of babies admitted to units, meaning limited advocacy possibilities. UNICEF is introducing innovative technology to address challenges, focusing on the four regions where most neonatal deaths occur.

Routine vaccination coverage has improved with diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) coverage increasing from 53 per cent in 2016 to 61 per cent in 2019. However, 1.2 million children remain unimmunized for DTP3. Weak microplanning, limited supervision, conflict, and population movement are challenges facing routine immunization. UNICEF is supporting the Government to develop an acceleration plan to reach unimmunized children. This involves UNICEF support for equity analysis to prioritize the most vulnerable children, clarifying reasons for missing vaccinations, developing tailored strategies and establishing monitoring systems. Ethiopia was declared polio free in 2017, but in 2019, five cVDPV cases were

identified in three regions. Efforts are under way to increase inactivated poliovirus routine vaccine coverage to reduce cVDPV risk.

Along with WHO, UNICEF Ethiopia addressed several cholera outbreaks. In 2019, 2,566 cholera cases were reported and 770,000 Oral Cholera Vaccines doses were administered. Investments by UNICEF and the Government in preparedness and early response played a key role in reducing the vulnerability of children and their families to cholera, with reported cases significantly lower than 2018.

As of end October 2019, UNICEF had supported treatment of 315,601 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM); 67 per cent of the 2019 target; with only 56 per cent of funding received. For preparedness, supplies were prepositioned in areas where insecurities and road blockages were foreseen. Children reached through UNICEF support account for 54 per cent of Ethiopia's 2019 SAM caseload of 582,724. Data available indicates that 87.8 per cent of children were cured, 1.9 per cent defaulted on treatment and 0.3 per cent did not survive. While the loss of any child is dismaying, these results are well above Sphere standards.

In 2019, UNICEF supported improvement in key nutrition services in 100 *woredas* (districts). In these *woredas*, Vitamin A supplementation, to support growth and help fight infection, reached 74.9 per cent of the approximately 1.9 million children aged 6-59 months (compared to 61.9 per cent nationally). Growth monitoring was 52.4 per cent among the approximately 700,000 children targeted, compared to 33.1 per cent nationally. Deworming of children under 5 reached 78 per cent of the 1.3 million children targeted, compared to 66 per cent nationally. The 100 *woredas* generate evidence on how the government programme could be monitored and implemented more efficiently, to support policy or strategy changes for better coverage of nutrition services.

UNICEF Ethiopia supported the Government to amend vegetable oil importation guidelines to include mandatory vitamin A and D fortification, potentially reaching 80 per cent of the population.

Technical support was provided to develop the revised acute malnutrition guidelines in line with WHO standards. The updated guidelines are based on the new middle-upper arm circumference cut-off point of 11.5 cm at admission. This will result in a 26 per cent increase from 2019, bringing the total caseload from 462,506 to at least 582,724 SAM children. In collaboration with the World Food Programme, UNICEF supported integration of management of moderate acute malnutrition into SAM management at the health facility level in 100 *woredas*.

UNICEF Ethiopia support enabled the launch of the National Food and Nutrition Policy by the Minister of Health, closely involving seven other ministries. This inter-ministerial collaboration will ensure the minimum package of services (nutrition-specific interventions, sanitation, agriculture, social protection) are delivered. The policy focuses on nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, ensuring quality interventions including all forms of foods across production, import, processing, distribution, and purchase.

UNICEF support enabled research and piloting of the Acute Respiratory Infection Diagnostic Aid (ARIDA) for diagnosing pneumonia in children – currently responsible for approximately 44,000 child deaths per year in Ethiopia. ARIDA are non-invasive medical devices used in low resource settings to aid in pneumonia diagnosis. Nearly 4,500 devices were distributed to 2,000 health posts and 500 devices to 500 health centers and primary hospitals.

UNICEF facilitated development of a roadmap for the Optimization of the Health Extension programme (OHEP), with partners including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID, covering 12,528,260 under five children per year. Through OHEP, the Government intends to double the number of Health Extension Workers (HEWs) per health post from an average of two to four, increasing the number of rural HEWs from 32,000 to 64,000.

Baby WASH is an innovative communications approach using an interactive radio magazine programme with a baby hygiene theme, with materials developed in six Ethiopian languages. This approach is showing promising results - even short-term exposure (15 minutes) to three episodes has influenced knowledge, behavioral intent, and attitude. Frontline Public Health staff (22 women and 28 men), 290 female HEWs, and the Health Development Army (approximately 8,700 women) have improved communication skills on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) practices for babies.

UNICEF is actively involved in shaping key strategic and coordination forums such as One WASH, the Nutrition Seqota coordination and the Health SDG Pool Fund, as well as leading WASH and Nutrition Clusters ensuring strong linkage between humanitarian and development actions. For example, WASH and Comprehensive Integrated Nutrition Services schemes are being developed for refugee and host communities, and priority is being given to robust climate resilient responses in line with the One WASH Climate Resilience strategy.

Goal 2. Every child learns

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UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) to engage with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to revise the Early Childhood and Education (ECE) Framework. UNICEF worked with the MoE, World Bank, and partners to devise crucial preparatory steps for a national ECE strategy and costed federal and regional-level operational plans.

MoE set an ambitious goal to increase the ECE Gross Enrollment Rate from 34 per cent in 2013/14 to 80 per cent by 2019/20. UNICEF collaborated with the MoE in a diagnosis of the national ECE system, identifying bottlenecks including planning and resource allocation, quality assurance, and parent/community engagement. These will inform future UNICEF support to the MoE to improve access to and quality of ECE services.

UNICEF assisted 101,000 children (51,171 girls), including 18,514 (9,067 girls) in refugee and host communities and 33,890 IDPs (16,867 girls), to access ECE programmes. This included support for enrolment of 70,386 children through the summer Accelerated School Readiness programme; 11,045 children through Child-to-Child approach to school readiness; and 19,569 through O-class (pre-primary).

UNICEF supported the MoE in a comprehensive curriculum review and analysis process, culminating in a National Curriculum conference. Additionally, 2,472 teachers and MoE and Regional Education Bureau (REB) curriculum teams (444 females), and 121 instructors from Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE) were trained on curriculum reform and classroom-based continuous assessment for learning. Participants included 280 refugee children teachers and 280 host community teachers.

UNICEF provided advocacy and technical support to the MoE and Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs to improve refugee education coordination and trained 540 government partners on crisis-sensitive planning. Access to quality education for 122,580 refugee and host community children was supported through school construction, recruitment of refugee teachers, teaching and recreational materials, and capacity building of refugee teachers. UNICEF supported enrolment of 684 refugee teachers into CTEs, to establish a sustainable and quality platform for refugee education.

UNICEF strengthened the capacity of federal and regional education emergency clusters to assess education needs and restore education of children affected by emergencies in partnership with non-government organisations (NGOs) and REBs, UNICEF constructed 92 Temporary Learning Spaces, trained 340 teachers and provided educational materials to help keep schools functional and provided support to 142,060 emergency affected children (65,980 girls).

To support the enrollment, retention and learning of pastoralists and children in remote communities, UNICEF worked with *Woreda* Education Officers to strengthen the quality of Alternative Basic Education Centers (ABECs). ABECs are low cost learning spaces, providing out-of-school children access to good quality basic education. Training in teaching methodology was provided to 303 (27 per cent female) teachers/facilitators - improving the quality of instruction in 112 ABECs for over 12,600 students. UNICEF support enabled 55,880 (42 per cent girls) pastoralist children to access the second cycle of education (Grades 5-6) through training of 110 (28 per cent female) teachers from 22 ABECs. Scaling up education opportunities for pastoralist communities remains a challenge.

UNICEF supported the MoE to develop and disseminate gender club guidelines, in eight languages, in over 36,000 primary and secondary schools. Gender clubs are essential platforms to promote child rights and gender equality. A life skills manual for personal empowerment, active citizenship and enhancing learning skills of adolescents is being finalized, which will guide life skills education and civic engagement for 10 to 14 year-olds. An estimated 6 million adolescents (4.5 million girls) could benefit from life skills delivery. UNICEF will work further on this as part of its next Country Programme 2020-2025.

UNICEF supported finalization of the Education and Training Roadmap 2030 through partnership with UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning. The Mid Term Evaluation of Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP V) was supported by UNICEF, resulting in adjustment of change strategies in accelerating equitable and inclusive access to quality education for all school age children. Advocacy priorities for UNICEF include creating a separate budget line item for ECE and continued publishing of annual disaggregated sub-sector expenditure to track per capita expenditures, hence informing policy and sector strategies.

Goal 3. Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

In August 2019, the *National Costed Roadmap to end child marriage and FGM/C (2020-2024)* was launched by the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, with Ministry of Women Children and Youth (MOWCY), senior officials, UN Agencies, development partners, faith-based organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs), media and adolescent girls in attendance. The launch was the culmination of several years of advocacy and support from UNICEF. UNICEF's focus in the next phase will be on supporting the Government to operationalize this roadmap and implement it, and advocacy for resource allocation.

As part of global efforts for a framework to measure change in social norms on FGM by UNICEF and the UN Population Fund, Ethiopia is one of two countries testing the 'ACT' (assessing, context and tracking) framework. This macro-level framework, developed by Drexel University, evaluates the effectiveness of communication interventions aimed at altering social norms around FGM. Key lessons were generated, including the sensitivity of some topics in specific contexts, framing questions in age appropriate and culturally sensitive ways, timing and duration of modules and replicability of the process. This will contribute to fill the national gap in measuring change in social norms.

MOWCY endorsed the first national child protection case management framework. UNICEF supported preparation and validation of a manual for testing, rolling out the framework and a supervision and mentoring manual for case managers. UNICEF helped ensure engagement of officials from child protection and allied sectors, UN agencies and NGOs. The framework reflects an inclusive approach to all children across development and humanitarian contexts, including children on the move. The tools were tested in emergency affected *woredas* in four regions with 150 social workers and community service workers who managed a caseload of 5,223 unaccompanied and separated children (2,383 girls, 2,840 boys) in 2019. This work a building block of a child protection system that can be used for all children across all contexts.

UNICEF played a key role bringing together the UN Refugee Agency, Save the Children, Plan International, Danish Refugee Council and International Rescue Committee (IRC) to initiate the transition from Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) to CPIMS+ and promote and support the use of standard interagency CPIMS for the child protection sector based on the national child protection case management framework. Improved features in CPIMS+ include rigorous confidentiality measures and adaptability to emergency and development settings at scale. The new tools are being introduced in Gambella and Somali regions to facilitate effective case management.

Evaluation of the UNICEF-supported project (2014-2018) on Birth Registration and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health showed the project was critical in establishing functional birth registration structures, coordination mechanisms, and an improved enabling environment. Investments are likely to be sustained, ensuring accessibility of protection and health services to children, as a result of the establishment of functional civil registration structures, inter-operability with health and integration of civil registration and vital statistics in national policies and health strategies. Great efforts are required to ensure universal birth registration.

Between January and October, 9,829 children (5,816 girls) who experienced violence were reached by health, social work and/or justice/legal services in Addis Ababa and seven regions. This increase in registration of services (from 3,922 in 2018) reflects the positive impact of investments in social service workforce.

In emergency settings, UNICEF provided 85,161 children (41,501 girls) with psychosocial support services through child friendly spaces and intersectoral programming interventions. Furthermore, 117,164 children and women were provided with risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions to address GBVIE. Humanitarian response results show the need for a longer-term plan for GBVIE and PSEA and dedicated expertise.

Goal 4. Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

Implementation of phase two of the One WASH National Programme (OWNP) started in October 2019. UNICEF Ethiopia successfully advocated for the programme document to incorporate Climate Resilient WASH and emergency components and provided both financial and technical assistance for the programme's development. UNICEF is supporting Government involvement in the Sanitation and Water for All partnership - a global platform for ministers of water and sanitation.

UNICEF collected data on sanitation coverage at the *kebele* level across all regions in collaboration with regional health bureaus. Subsequently endorsed by Federal Ministry of Health, this data was fundamental for developing sanitation micro plans for all regions. Support was provided to the OWP Team to develop a National Open Defecation Free Campaign aimed at ensuring Ethiopia attains an open defecation free status by 2024. This represents huge potential for Ethiopia, but campaign success requires stronger political leadership and an acceleration strategy.

UNICEF partnered with IRC (International Water and Sanitation Centre) and Hywas Engineering Consultants to carry out longitudinal sustainability checks of rural WASH services constructed by UNICEF and others. The study was conducted in six regions in the August 2018 rainy season and during the February 2019 dry season, providing insights into water supply systems across Ethiopia's seasons.

UNICEF supported 516,003 people in rural and urban areas with water, and 320,582 people were reached with hygiene promotion activities. UNICEF provided 1.8 million people access to safe water in emergencies and 1.6 million people with non-food items such as soap and water treatment chemicals. UNICEF supported cluster coordination and data collection, which was essential in immediate response, coordination of durable solution responses with OneWASH, and for efficient use of resources.

UNICEF's menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) programme was expanded to an additional 56 schools in an adolescent-focused project with nutrition and education, benefitting up to 34,000 girls. In all school platforms boys' engagement has been increased and their supportive role significantly changed so girls can exercise MHH rights without fear and discomfort. A supply chain study was conducted to expand local production of menstrual pads. UNICEF has a close working relationship with all partners in this sector to advance the cause of MHH, including Freweini Mebrahtu of Mariam Saba who, with UNICEF support, was recognized as CNN 'Hero of the Year'. Given the strong interest of development partners in this area, there is great potential for further work in 2020 and beyond, directly enhancing girls' education.

UNICEF worked with the MoE WASH team to revise the WASH in Schools construction and maintenance manuals. The maintenance manual will be distributed to all schools to encourage regular maintenance of their WASH facilities, with regional score cards, with an aim to improve the sustainability of school WASH facilities.

Goal 5. Every child has an equitable chance in life

Social spending represented approximately 40 per cent of public expenditure in 2019, though year-on-year education spending decreased by 7 per cent, WASH by 14 per cent, with health increasing by 15 per cent. The federal government budget allocated for social protection was 3 per cent of the total budget in 2019/20 - a 1 per cent decline from 2018/19. UNICEF prioritized advocacy for realization of children's rights, and analysis of gender. Budget briefs were produced to measure and monitor investments in education, health, and social protection and for advocacy so that budgets and expenditures work better for children. MOF- and UNICEF analysis showed progress during the past decade, and evidence was used to promote the need for acceleration in several indicators to reach the SDGs and reduce inequities.

In 2019, 4.87 million children benefited from the rural Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and Urban Productive Safety Net Programme (UPSNP), and 10 million children benefited from Community-based Health Insurance (CHBI). UNICEF supported PSNP beneficiaries to receive fee waivers for CHBI, leading to increased enrolment of families in pilot *woredas*. For shock-responsive social protection, UNICEF contributed through the contingency budget of PNSP for cash transfers supporting 436,900 PSNP and non-PSNP clients. UNICEF supported the government to make PSNP child and gender sensitive through development and rollout of Gender, Social Development and Nutrition mainstreaming guideline and Social Behavior Change Communication tools. UNICEF piloted the cash plus model including linkage to social services and establishment of multi-sectorial coordination. These initiatives increased the timely transition of pregnant and lactating women to Temporary Direct Support. UNICEF is supporting the design of the next phase of PSNP, leading the nutrition technical working group and engaging in the Donor Working Group.

The first National Social Protection Conference was organized by MoLSA with UNICEF support under the theme Social Protection for Inclusive Development. A key policy forum, the conference strengthened collaboration of national and regional authorities and development partners. The forum called for the establishment of a National Social Protection Council to build stronger political commitment for integrated social protection. The Council is not yet established. Building on the momentum created by the Conference is essential, otherwise efforts in this direction may dwindle. Instituting a functional social protection working group bringing together government and development partners is an important step, as well as a better definition of the social protection governance structure.

A UNICEF-commissioned study on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Child Wellbeing in 2019 showed progress towards gender equality during the last decade in primary school attendance, women's literacy rates, reduction of child marriage (CM) and FGM. However, it also highlighted the need for acceleration on ending CM and FGM, reducing anemia in women, reducing food and micronutrient deprivation for girls and boys, comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS, and girls' educational attainment.

The periodic GOE state reports on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are due respectively in December 2019 and June 2020. With support from UNICEF and MOWCY leadership, a progress report is underway. The concluding observations and recommendations from the African and UN Child Rights Committees were translated into Amharic, Oromia and Tigrigna and widely disseminated and discussed in workshops organized by MOWCY and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission with UNICEF support. Based on the Child Policy issued in 2017, a Child Rights Strategy was drafted under the leadership of MOWCY with technical support from UNICEF. The key challenge however remains its implementation.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

The year 2019 was the last year of the current country programme that will end in June 2020. It was also a year of transition in management with changes in three senior positions in the office, in addition to two new section chiefs and three new chiefs of field offices. As part of the process for developing the new UNICEF Ethiopia Country Programme 2020-2025, a number of analyses were undertaken, including a Country Programme Evaluation, a Perceptions Study among Key UNICEF partners and a Gender Review. The Office looked also at its approach to humanitarian action and its engagement with the Government in terms of its support to institutional strengthening. UNICEF is also fully engaged in the shaping of the 2020-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), in particular providing data/analysis for the Common Country Assessment and in designing outcomes and outputs which encompass the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

Four key lessons emanating from these reviews will be presented here. First is the need for UNICEF to strengthen programme focus and narrow scope in a more integrated manner. To this end, Government and UNICEF identified four flagship results which will be addressed in the context of the 2020-2025 Country Programme in an integrated manner, notably: End Child Marriage; End Open Defecation; Stop Stunting; and All Children Access Learning Opportunities. In addition, prioritized activities were identified in selected regions to “do less, but better”, and there will be increasing resources for system strengthening, evidence generation and leveraging fiscal space in favor of better services and results for children.

Second is the need to improve work processes and efficiency, especially stronger monitoring and accountability with/by partners. To this end, Government and UNICEF set up a Task Force to review and streamline their partnership implementation modality; work planning will move from one year to rolling workplans in line with UNICEF global guidelines, and work will be done to simplify work processes without losing accountability, and training will be done for partners on financial and programme reporting procedures. In particular, and concerning effectiveness and efficiency of the approach adopted so far for support to institutional strengthening and capacity development among partners, UNICEF in Ethiopia will partner with UN agencies and development partners to a more structured process for assessing capacity development needs and developing a harmonized strategy with those partners to avoid duplication and ensure that the support provided contributes to Government’s capacity to achieve the ambitious targets it set for itself in the Home Grown Economic Reform Agenda and the long perspective development plan.

Third is the need for UNICEF to be a stronger voice and advocate for children and widen its partnerships in that regard. To this end, UNICEF will build a solid advocacy strategy with partners including with UN, CSOs, and the media around the flagship results since those require large-scale mobilization. As part of the next country programme, a number of legal and policy frameworks points affecting children were identified informed by a comparative analysis carried out on the concluding observation and recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (2019), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2019), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016), Convention on the Rights of the Child (2015) and African Convention on the Rights of Women and Children (ACRWC 2014). At policy level, thanks to UNICEF advocacy a national campaign to combat open defecation was launched; the formation of a Nutrition Council is in the final stages; the Ministry of Education agreed to embark on an Education Act.

Fourth is the need for UNICEF to strengthen its humanitarian action. This is critical especially given the experience of increased inter-ethnic conflict during 2019 and the upcoming elections in 2020. Ensuring sustainable cluster leadership especially in education and child protection will be critical, putting in place mechanisms for stronger partnerships that enable swift response to rising emergency situations, as well as a better articulation of the link between humanitarian and development action are critical and will be a priority in 2020 UNICEF Ethiopia’s plans.

The office continued its efforts in creating a healthy work environment. In addition to several sensitization sessions on Organizational Values and Workplace Culture, the office conducted surveys to get feedback from staff on potential challenges in creating a safe space and encouraging a speak-up culture. A dedicated Culture Change Action Plan has been developed and regular follow up is made on the same. The office also invested in strengthening confidential reporting mechanisms for raising issues on workplace harassment, as well as is demonstrating from management the commitment to take necessary and timely action.