

Maldives

Executive Summary

The economic and socio-political situation of Maldives has been more stable in 2016. UNICEF Maldives started implementation of its new Country Programme (CP) 2016 – 2020 this year. The basic services such as free and compulsory education and universal free health care to all continued during the year. Few key developments during the year included Government's development of a National Human Rights Framework under the auspices of the Attorney General's office with support from UN agencies. This is aimed at addressing recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) UPR, concluding observations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recommendations of the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. UNICEF worked closely to ensure all concluding observations are duly reflected.

Further, the Government has now guaranteed 14 years of free and compulsory education including early childhood education for all children. UNICEF Maldives's pivotal role was in advocating for the importance of Early Childhood Education, and the transition to secondary education. Higher secondary education, which was not previously accessible in all the islands across the country, will now be made accessible to all adolescents, especially in remote islands.

Another major change in the country is the increased awareness and commitment to address disparities and inclusion through social protection mechanisms. Through UNICEF's support, a review of the social protection framework has been undertaken and the targeting mechanism strengthened to include vulnerable children as well as people with disabilities, thereby increasing "coverage of children with disabilities.

Key achievements for UNICEF Maldives country office included development of an e-learning platform for continuous professional development of teachers, especially those in far and hard to reach islands, for improved classroom instruction aimed at improving learning achievements of children. Further, a policy framework for provision of alternative education programmes has been developed, giving opportunities for vocational training for out of school children and those at risk of dropping out. Additionally, timely reporting and response to Violence against Children (VAC) especially from far and hard to reach islands has been enhanced through development of a mobile application with a call-center. This has been further strengthened by the established multi-sectoral Community Social Groups at island-levels responding to vulnerabilities including VAC cases, a key milestone in data generation on vulnerabilities at island community levels, informing programs at national level. Furthermore, the endorsement of the five year Child Health Strategy and action plan is notable, providing strategic directions for quality equitable child health services in the country.

Despite the key results achieved, few challenges included continuous changes in political

appointments calling for continuous briefings and advocacy to the new appointees. This, to a large extent, takes time and causes delays in decision-making and implementation. Secondly, the long pending bills - the Child Rights Bill and the Juvenile Justice Bill are still awaiting submission to the parliament, despite several high-level advocacies efforts. Finally, the high cost of implementation and monitoring of programs at island levels, especially the far and difficult to reach continues to be a great challenge. This is coupled with the low capacity of staff both at national and island levels, and low presence of CSOs in the country, more so at the island community levels.

UNICEF Maldives continued to foster partnerships with different agencies supporting delivery of results for children. This involved partnerships with UN agencies for various initiatives including the development of the National Human Rights Framework under the Attorney General's Office, and development of the UN inter-agency Contingency Plan and preparedness plans. In addition, the implementation of the One-UN Low Emissions Climate Resilient Development Programme continued. UNICEF Maldives supported building capacities of Island Communities in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction. Further, in collaboration with WHO Maldives ensured the global Polio Switch was successfully implemented in Maldives, contributing to the global polio eradication plan. In addition, UNICEF Maldives supported development of a behavior change communication strategy to promote inclusion of children with disabilities in education was developed in partnership with the NGO Care Society.

Notably, UNICEF within its upstream strategy has worked closely with Government at National and island community levels, focusing on those with high disparities as compared to the capital Male, to increase results for children, especially the most disadvantaged.

Humanitarian Assistance

N/A

Strategic Plan 2018-2021

UNICEF Maldives reviewed the draft strategic plan and found that it provides a good framework for programming at country level and appreciated the idea of having flagship results under each of the goal areas. The strategic framework is very relevant and provide opportunities to include emerging areas important to the country context such as urbanization and migration, as Maldives faces both internal migration from islands to the Capital city and other cities in the country. Further, it is also has a large population of migrant workers.

The Strategic Plan also aligns with the priorities of the Government of Maldives in areas of Education, Health and Nutrition, Child Protection and Social Inclusion, making it more practical for advocacy and implementation.

Moreover, the note on the theory of change for the Strategic Plan 2018- 2021 will strengthen the country offices' accountability to demonstrate their contribution to results for children and will provide guidance for more focused programming.

A major challenge foreseen is the inclusion of equity as a broad goal with cross sectoral elements

such as gender, adolescents and equity itself, while these are also cross cutting elements across the other goals. Interpretation of these at programmatic levels and alignments of programmes, particularly with Government plans may cause a great challenge and this may need to be reviewed.

Emerging Areas of Importance

Climate children and children: Maldives is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, particularly coastal flooding, storm surges and tsunamis. Hence, UNICEF Maldives within its new Country Programme, promotes child and gender-sensitive resilience and climate change adaptation, by notably supporting the integration of child-centred, multi-hazard risk assessments into development plans at national and local levels. In 2016, the National Disaster Management Centre – NDMC, was supported to draft the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the establishment of the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), the primary responders in all island settings to climate hazards and emergencies. The SOPs allows NDMC to institutionalize training regimes and equipment to the CERTs under the national budget and ensures that the missing component of real-time disaster monitoring (at times of climate and man-made hazards) is done through the teams, and these will feed into the national Emergency Operations Centre and other relevant databases.

Under the Community-Based Disaster Risk management (CBDRM), UNICEF Maldives supported work in 11 inhabited islands in the Laamu Atoll (South Central region) on community-led learning and data collection to understand island-specific climate and man-made hazards and how to prepare a community-led response. The exercises allowed engagement with community members, most importantly children, youth and women to internalize preparedness and response actions to ensure safety, while building resilience to climate change. Greater focus on second decade.

UNICEF Maldives also prioritized programme interventions for the second decade. In Education programme, focus was maintained on improving transition rates to higher secondary education, which is quite low, compared to the enrolment rates at the primary and lower secondary levels. Recommendations of a study carried out last year on vulnerabilities that pre-dispose adolescents to drop-out of school suggested access to psycho-social support programs, tackling bullying and rewarding a culture of caring in schools and providing flexible and alternative forms of education to at-risk children be prioritized as program interventions. Following these recommendations, UNICEF Maldives supported the MoE to develop school-based psycho-social support programme especially those migrating to Male. This program will be implemented in 2017. UNICEF Maldives further successfully supported development of a draft framework for alternative learning programmes (with a focus on adolescents who are at risk of dropping out or those who are currently out-of-school), now being reviewed by the Ministry of Education. In addition, support was provided to institutionalization of the life skills into the curriculum, which is now being implemented across the country in all schools

UNICEF Maldives, under the Child Protection programme also aimed at reducing offensive behaviours among adolescents and young people, while advocating for removal of punitive punishments for adolescents in conflict with the law. As such, UNICEF Maldives supported the Government to establish a model for the community based diversion programmes for children in

conflict with law. The community-based programme emphasizes community level correctional and monitoring with a strong angle of reintegration into the society. As a result, a total of 19 adolescents with criminal records are now under the diversion programme, while also engaged in an internship programme, building vocational skills for future employability.

Urbanization and children: Maldives has one of the highest urban populations in South Asia, and a significant proportion of these are children. The country is gearing itself to address the trend through the population consolidation policy, which has identified three cities, and another two potential communities that will soon attain the city status. Internal migration is mainly from islands to the Capital city and the other urban settings in search of opportunities and quality education and health services. The challenges of the rapid urbanization include a highly congested capital island home for more than one third of the population, resulting in overcrowding, high demand for space, increased pollution and service constrains. At times, it has also led to threats to controlling of communicable diseases especially the vector-borne diseases including Dengue and viral fever. These issues are exacerbated by the complexities of climate change such as flooding. Social issues such as juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and crime has also accelerated in the urban settings, and poses greater risks for children with regards to Violence Against Children. UNICEF Maldives's education programme addressed this through programmes for OOSC, with development of alternative and flexible learning programmes. The child protection programme has targeted interventions to child conflict with law with a focus on diversion programmes. UNICEF Maldives has also supported to strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Drug Agency.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

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AMP Annual Management Plan

APLS Advanced Pediatric Life Support

ARC Advocating the Rights of Children

AWP Annual Work Plan

BCP Business Continuity Plan

C4D Communication for Development

CCC (UNICEF's) Core Commitment for Children

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CMT Country Management Team

CO Country Office

CPD Country Programme Document

CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child

CSG Community Social Groups

DCT Direct Cash Transfer

DFID Department of Foreign Investment and Development (UK)

DRR Disaster Risk Reduction

ECD Early Childhood Development

EPI Expanded Programme on Immunization

ERM Enterprise Risk Management

FCSC Family and Children Service Centre

FPA Family Protection Authority

GBV Gender-Based Violence
GSSC Global Shared Services Centre
HACT Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRBA Human Rights-Based Approach
HRDT Human Resource Development Team
HQ Head Quarters
ICT Information Communication and Telecommunication
IMEP Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IPV Inactivated Polio Vaccine
IYCF Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices
KPI Key Performance Indicators
LSE Life Skills Education
MCPD Maldives Child Protection Database
MoA Memorandum of Agreement
MoE Ministry of Education
MoGF Ministry of Gender and Family
MoH Ministry of Health
MoRES Monitoring Results for Equity System
MOSS Minimum Operating Security Standards
MRC Maldivian Red Crescent
MTR Mid-Term Review
NBS National Bureau of Statistics
NDMC National Disaster Management Centre
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
NIE National Institute for Education
OR Other Resources
PAS Performance Appraisal System
POG Programme and Operations Group
ROSA Regional Office for South Asia
RR Regular Resources
SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
SEN Special Education Needs
SitAn Situation Analysis
SMR Strategic Moment of Reflection
SMT Senior Management Team
SP Strategic Plan
TOT Training of Trainers
UN United Nations
UNDAF United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDSS United Nations Department of Safety and Security

UNESCAP United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UPR Universal Periodic Review
VAC Violence against Children
VCA Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
VSSM Vaccine Supply and Stock Management
WASH Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO World Health Organization
WinS WASH in School

Capacity Development

At National level, through the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF ROSA), capacity of the National Bureau of Statistics was strengthened in profiling and reporting on equity and deprivations facing children (Education, Child Protection and Malnutrition). Using Census 2014, equity profiles were generated in key areas and are now being used for advocacy for increased investments for children.

Further, UNICEF Maldives, working with the Ministry of Gender and Family and the Police Service, trained police officers on Advanced Child Interviewing techniques, Child Sex Tourism and Combatting Online Exploitation of Children. This was aimed at child sensitive procedures in addressing and handling child abuse cases.

Additionally, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance officials participated in SUN/UNICEF EAPRO regional workshop on “Public Finance for Nutrition in Asia”. This enhanced their capacities on multi-sectoral nutrition budgeting and costing of nutrition plans, largely contributing to the investment case for nutrition, costing of multi-sectoral nutrition plans and mobilization of resources for nutrition.

At the island levels, health care workers from selected four Atolls with high prevalence of stunting, have skills on infant and young child feeding practices, breastfeeding counselling, and maternal and child nutrition, and are now closely supporting families through the growth monitoring platform.

Furthermore, capacity of members of the newly formed “Community Social Groups” at the island community levels in 14 communities has been built on monitoring child abuse, reporting as well as counselling of families and children to prevent violence against children. Data, informing interventions is now available from community levels on VAC.

UNICEF Maldives also, through the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA), supported building capacities of communities in identification and profiling of hazards and development of appropriate preparedness and response actions. Communities are now aware and are carrying out preparedness activities at island levels.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

At the National level, the Census 2014 data was analyzed to generate information on the most vulnerable children across the country. These data was used to refine the equity profiles in Education, Protection and Nutrition. Data generated on out-of-school children was used to advocate for development of the alternative education learning programmes framework (ALP) with the Ministry of Education. A conceptual and policy framework for ALPs has been developed for implementation in 2017. Further, support was provided to add additional modules

on capturing out of school children in the Education Management Information System (EMIS).

Furthermore, equity profiles developed in health and nutrition have re-ignited a new focus of the Ministry of Health in nutrition in the Country. This has resulted in new leadership appointed in office with increased staff for implementation of new initiatives on nutrition and also informed the finalization and adoption of the Child Health Strategy and plans. The strategy, with a focus on reducing new-born mortality and promoting early childhood provides strategic directions for equitable and quality child health services.

Holistically, UNICEF Maldives, using the equity profiles, has held policy dialogue with key Government Officials including Ministers on the importance of a strong focus on equity and leaving no child behind within the sustainable development agenda of the country. These discussions led to an ongoing initiative on development of an Investment Case study for children in the country, with also Governments willingness to incorporate a chapter on Children in the Census Publication. These will be used for further advocacy for increased investment on children.

Partnerships

Within the new Country Programme framework, UNICEF Maldives continued its efforts to strengthen partnership with key stakeholders, Government and civil society. With a strong focus on upstream strategy, UNICEF Maldives worked closely with Government partners, to strengthen the institutional mechanisms as well as human capacities for delivery of quality services to children. A strong focus was given to inclusion and improved quality, targeting the remote islands with child deprivations such as high malnutrition and violence against children. The office continued the one UN joint programme on Low Emissions Climate Resilient development (LECREED) implemented in Laamu Atoll. Notable achievements include conduction of Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) in all eleven islands, with the participation of children and young people; and development of the LaamuInfo database. The VCA and the LaamuInfo will inform the development of child-centred Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Planning and Island level child-centred planning and development.

In partnership with the NGO Care Society, a behaviour change communication strategy was developed, creating greater awareness among local community leaders, schools and parents on the importance of inclusion of children with disabilities in education. This strategy will be implemented in 2017 by the Ministry of Education.

Further, UNICEF Maldives initiated discussions with the Accor Hotels on child friendly tourism, awareness on child online sexual abuse and training of hotel workers on child abuse. The pact will be initiated in 2017, and more opportunities on the same will be sought with other hotels. Partnership between Advanced Paediatric Life Support of Australia, Paediatric Association of Sri Lanka, and Indhira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Maldives (main tertiary hospital) and UNICEF resulted in development of capacity of 20 doctors to efficiently manage critically ill infants and children, promoting saving of lives related to paediatric emergencies. Future plans include expansion of the APLS programme.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF Maldives conducted high-level advocacy throughout 2016, advocating for inclusion and quality services to all children, especially those in islands with significant disparities. Continuous advocacy with Ministers led to high focus on those excluded/regions with high disparities for increased services, such as development of e learning platform, expanding free education to include preschool and development of alternative learning programmes for out-of-school children. Additionally, commitment to strengthen monitoring frameworks for Government plans and improved coordination at the ministerial level on issues affecting children was secured.

UNICEF Maldives in consultation with the National SDG Coordination Unit, launched SDGs focusing on Children issues, led by the Minister of Environment and Energy, responsible for the coordination of SDGs. This was done together with celebrations of the 70th Anniversary, in an event which also rallied seven key Ministers directly linked to children's wellbeing agenda to sign a "Renewed Call for Every Child: No Child Left Behind". The Ministers, together with UNICEF signed the pledge, which within the SDG agenda, reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of the Maldives and UNICEF; assuring that every child survives, thrives, learns and has a protective environment as granted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Further, key messages on Education, Health, protection and inclusion were put on all advocacy materials disseminated, attended by hundreds and covered by the local media.

UNICEF Maldives also developed visibility materials including a song and video presentation, containing information of the role of UNICEF in promoting child rights with equity in the Maldives.

UNICEF Maldives used Facebook and Twitter to communicate and reach-out to adolescents and youth. Further, communication through social media laid-out the groundwork for subsequent advocacy work carried with the greater public to fuel social engagement. For instance, Youth engagement for the HLM3 Challenge was sought through social media.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

UNICEF Maldives was active in supporting south - south Cooperation through knowledge exchange and sharing good practice. For instance, the High Level Meeting on Cooperation for Children's Rights (HLM3) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was the highest political advocacy event for children in the larger Asia-Pacific region (covering South Asia, East Asia and Pacific). UNICEF Maldives supported the participation of the Maldives Government delegation to this meeting. Maldives Government was able to showcase its progress in social protection for children, and its successful free universal health coverage, and lessons learnt from other countries in the areas of social protection and combatting violence against children.

Beside the establishment of bilateral agreements with other countries on advancing the child rights agenda, Maldives made firm commitments to improve its social protection programme to be more child sensitive and to strengthen the public financial planning for sustainability of its universal health coverage programme. Further, the delegation made arrangements for a future visit in 2017 to the Government of Malaysia to learning exchange in the area of child protection.

Additionally, UNICEF Maldives, with support from UNICEF ROSA and UNICEF Sri Lanka, supported the participation of a delegation of medical staff in the South–South Cooperation Regional training-of-trainers (ToTs) on Advanced Pediatric Life Support in Sri Lanka. The ToTs have conducted similar trainings for local medical teams, offering services in three hospitals and clinics serving children.

Identification Promotion of Innovation

UNICEF Maldives, with support from the Global Innovation Fund supported the Government to develop innovative interventions in Education and Child Protection.

In Education, UNICEF Maldives supported the National Institute of Education (NIE) establish an e-learning platform to improve teacher capacity and enhance implementation of the new national curriculum. The objective was to improve the learning outcomes of children. The teacher's continuous professional development is highly affected by the high cost of training teachers in the dispersed islands, across the Indian Ocean. The e-learning offers an innovative and viable solution to overcome the resource challenges. The design of the content for the Module-based e-learning platform was informed by an analysis of teacher training needs. The arrangements to host the platform on a server is completed and seven out of the eleven e-courses are now developed. The platform has features to collect real-time data on learners' activities and their feedback to improve the platform. Once all the courses are developed, the NIE team will be trained on managing and facilitating learner's activities and monitoring the learning activities on the platform, and is expected to go live nationally and made accessible to all teachers in early 2017.

In child protection, UNICEF Maldives supported development of mobile application (call centre) for reporting of violence against children, establishing a call center linked to the Maldives Child Protection Database (MCPD), and development of an e-learning platform for training of social workers across the country. Through increased access, the initiative is contributing towards improving reporting and responding to cases, especially in the remote islands. By December 2016, 50% of the 19 Family and Children Service Centers across the 19 Atolls have been connected to the MCPD, linking the key service provider at central and regional level, such as the Police and social workers.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF Maldives continued its support to the expansion and strengthening of the Community Social Groups (CSGs) at the island community level, which was initiated in started in 2015. The CSGs comprises of select members from the Family and Child Social Center, the School, The Health Centre, the Police, the Islands Councils as well as community leaders and civil society representatives.

The CSGs provide a coordinated and coherent approach to address issues that warrant a cross sectoral response at community level. They also provide a platform for working together on issues related to women and children including children with disabilities. Even in its initial stage, the initiative has increased cross sectoral coordination and has improved dialogue between partners in attending to issues of children at the island levels – this is critical as there the certain Departments that are not represented at the community level. Discussions have begun in the

CSGs on formulating interventions to strengthen parenting capacities on prevention of abuse including child sexual abuse and exploitation. Moreover, discussions on finding alternatives for children who are out of school has picked momentum; for example, in the atoll of Fuah Mulaku in the south region, the CSG initiated the identification of vulnerable children and families that need to be supported by the respective sectors. The Government has requested UNICEF Maldives to support further expansion of CSGs to additional vulnerable atolls.

The CSGs have become a cross sectoral force supporting monitoring of child rights at the island levels, liaising with relevant ministries for support in interventions. Additionally, they are working with vulnerable families and children at risk of abuse in early identification and response to avoid the risk of abuse.

Service Delivery

Within the new Country Programme framework, UNICEF Maldives continued its strong focus on upstream strategy, working closely with Government partners to strengthen the institutional mechanisms as well as human capacities for delivery of quality services to children. A strong focus was given to inclusion and improvement of quality, targeting the remote islands with child deprivations such as high malnutrition and violence against children, rather than service delivery. UNICEF Maldives also maintained strong advocacy for child-sensitive policies based on sound evidence and strategic technical assistance.

Procurement of Vaccines was facilitated, as in other years, through the UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen. While the Government provided funding for the vaccine, the Country Office through the UNICEF Copenhagen (Procurement and Supply Division), provided technical support for vaccine forecasting and management, as well as facilitated procurement of all the routine (vaccines in Expanded Programme for Immunization - EPI) vaccines for children, as well as non-EPI vaccines (such as travel vaccines and Influenza vaccine), Vitamin-A and de-worming tablets.

Maldives executed the “the Switch” in April 2016; as part of the Global Polio Endgame strategy. The use of oral polio vaccine (OPV) was stopped, beginning with removal of the type-2 component of trivalent OPV (tOPV), through a switch to bivalent OPV (bOPV). As the process needed to be globally synchronised, comprehensive planning, close implementation, monitoring was essential. WHO and UNICEF Maldives, with close support from ROSA, provided support to ensure timely planning and implementation of the Switch-plan, resulting in successful recall and disposal of tOPV, and introduction of bOPV in all islands by the required date. Timely supply of bOPV was ensured through close liaison with UNICEF Copenhagen.

UNICEF Maldives will continue its assistance to the Government procurement requests in 2017, to ensure adequate vaccines are available in the country in a timely manner.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

Efforts made by UNICEF Maldives to achieve the HRBA benchmarks include support provided to Government to implement the recommendations of the CRC concluding observations. Notable initiatives include training of Ministry of Gender and Family officers and police on online exploitation and sexual exploitation, development of a call-center and mobile application to enhance reporting of violence against children and response to cases in remote islands. UNICEF Maldives supported the recommendation on promotion of other measures to detention of children

in conflict through support to development of a model for diversion programs for children in conflict with the law. Additionally, support was provided to development a national strategy to address drug abuse by children, and finalization is ongoing.

To enhance inclusion in education, UNICEF Maldives, in partnership with NGO, Care Society, supported the formulation of a Behaviour Change Communication Strategy to address discrimination of children with disabilities. The strategy stipulated key programmatic interventions that will be implemented in 2017. Further, UNICEF Maldives supported the development of a policy framework for alternative education programs for vulnerable and out-of-school children with participation of children out-of-school, informing the design of potential programs.

UNICEF Maldives also supported capacity development of Police Officers and Social Workers to implement the obligations of the CRC. UNICEF Maldives, in partnership with NGOs held consultations with children on the CRC and the Sustainable Development Goals to mark the Children's Day. This enabled a constructive dialogue with children, increasing their awareness of their rights.

Furthermore, advocacy programs supported by UNICEF Maldives have highlighted the roles of key stakeholders and accountabilities in the quest of reaching, especially the children from the hard to reach islands with quality services. These have resulted in getting stronger commitment from the key Government Ministries, and other stakeholders.

UNICEF Maldives also contributed to the One UN Human Rights Action Plan to strengthen reporting on Human Rights Mechanisms and monitoring of treaty body recommendations, being developed by the Attorney General's Office. .

Gender Equality

UNICEF Maldives, together with the other UN agencies, supported review and strong advocacy with parliamentarians for the passage of the Gender Equality Bill in the country.

UNICEF Maldives advocated with the National Action and Coordination Group against Violence against Children (NACG) to look at the incidence of child marriage which led to in an initial rapid assessment of Child Marriage to understand the drivers of child marriage in the country by an NGO Society for Health Education. The findings indicate poverty as the main driver. Recognition that the child marriage due to poverty is requires deeper understanding, and the need to link this with the social protection system in the country needs to looked into. The NGO plans to undertake a more representative assessment to explore the issue further, and UNICEF Maldives will support the process. The issue of child marriage and the possible drivers is an area for follow-up, monitoring and advocacy with Government in 2017.

Further, under a key outcome on Gender in the UNDAF, gender has been mainstreamed into the respective programme activities. Notably, the nutrition programme focuses enhancing capacity of mothers and fathers to make better choices for infant and young child feeding, with a specific focus on the supportive role of the father during breastfeeding, while Community Social Groups have a key role on identifying and responding to child sexual abuse, especially for girls, as well as responding to Gender Based Violence in the 14 islands where CSGs are established. In

education, gender has been mainstreamed in the new curriculum as well as in the teaching and learning materials.

In 2016, in its capacity as the lead agency for contingency planning in the country, UNICEF Maldives with support from UNOCHA and UNICEF ROSA, in collaboration with other UN agencies, Government and NGO partners led the development of the Inter Agency Contingency Plans. The Plan includes priority preparedness activities such as training of partners on gender-based violence and exploitation using available minimum standards such as the UNICEF CCCs and UNFPA's Gender-based Violence guiding principles. Priority Response activities also included measures to combat Gender-Based Violence during emergencies.

Environmental Sustainability

In 2016, UNICEF Maldives partnered with the Government, particularly the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), to support key activities to promote climate resilience and child-focused DRR. Under the UN joint programme on Low Emissions Climate Resilient Development (LECReD) the conceptual framework needed to establish Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) was developed. NDMC now has the capacity to support communities to develop CERTs and institutionalize them. In addition, UNICEF Maldives also supported establishment of Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) capacity (in all 11 target islands of Laamu atoll). These communities now have the capacity to identify their hazard profiles and develop appropriate preparedness and response actions. The CBDRM exercises also increased engagement of children and young people whose participation is vital for sustained CCA/DRR work in the country as they are most vulnerable to the hazards.

With support of UNICEF ROSA, in 2016, UNICEF Maldives provided 18 dewatering pumps to 9 islands, which faced continuous flooding throughout the year. The NDMC had reported that those target islands no longer request for support during monsoon season and are currently better at planning for such eventualities. These islands now have the ability to update their vulnerability and capacity assessments and disaster management plans which are key components of the island development plans.

Effective Leadership

With the beginning of the new Country Programme, the management reinforced emphasis on programme assurance and enforcement of HACT assurance plan. The Country Office continued placing emphasis on its governance mechanisms for effective leadership; this include the Programme and Operation Group (POG) Team and the Country Management Team (CMT). Similarly key internal workflow processes were reviewed along with Table of Authority (TOA). Statutory committees were reconstituted and Terms of Reference shared with respective members of the committees to ensure smooth functioning of the office and tracking efficiency and effectiveness.

In addressing the programme management performance, UNICEF Maldives continued its use of an implementation and performance monitoring tool – essentially the Performance Management Dashboard and score cards - to track progress and corrective actions taken on a timely basis with focus on results for children. Office also ensured implementation of management responses of evaluation recommendations. Results in key areas were discussed in POG and CMT meetings for

strategic directions and actions. . The CMT provided guidance and directives to accelerate implementation, and placed emphasis on increased monitoring on implementing partners to reduce risks as a follow on the findings of the Macro assessment conducted for the new CPD 2016-2020.

The CMT reviewed the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and mitigation measures were identified and incorporated into work plans for follow up, while monitoring closely the AMP implementation. Likewise, the Business Continuity Plans (BCP) was updated to ensure efficient implementation in case of an emergency. The CMT (with support from the SMT) continuously monitored the security situation of the country, and kept staff abreast of developments and ensured that staff are equipped to continue business during instances of high insecurity.

Financial Resources Management

The CMT ensured regular implementation and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), including the score cards, with set benchmarks outlined in the Annual Management Plan (AMP). Any area lagging behind the AMP and regional benchmarks are discussed and any bottlenecks identified with clear actions by management to alleviate the bottlenecks. and

By end 2016, all KPI's had been met with no outstanding DCTs over 6months. This was achieved through continuous monitoring by CMT, improved planning, timely implementation, continuous monitoring with implementing partners. Special measures were put in place to ensure full utilization of OR funds with shorter life span and those grants expiring in 2016. At year-end, implementation rate stands at 95 percent.

Moreover, cash and treasury management was undertaken with the objective of maintaining an optimum level of cash at bank as per the financial procedures. The office has smoothly transitioned to Bank transfer payment system and as of now about 90 % of the payments are processed using bank transfers. The bank charges for transactions other than replenishment charges have been completely negotiated and removed, thereby making savings on bank charges. Bank reconciliation is completed on a timely manner with guidance from GSSC, liquidations of DCTs is completed on time, and effective cash forecasts are prepared with the coordination from programme sections.

Utility costs were monitored regularly in the POG meetings and actions to reduce costs identified. Subsequently, electricity and telephone have decreased by 17% and 15% subsequently compared to the 2015.

Additionally, increased compliance with HACT (scheduled spot checks and systematic programme visits) added to the efficiency in programme implementation and utilization of funds through a quality Assurance and Assessment Plan, which included timely programme visits with counterparts and closely monitoring of programme. By 2016, completion of quality assurance of HACT is at 100 percent.

Fundraising and Donor Relations

UNICEF Maldives, with 54 percent of Other Resources (OR) budget of the total budget, continued its resource mobilization efforts in 2016. Out of total allotment for 2016, the Country Office utilized 95 percent of this amount (RR – 94% and OR – 95%).

The office continued to implement the resource mobilization and partnership strategy to meet the funding gap. Bilateral engagements with Diplomatic missions in-country continued, holding discussions for probable partnerships with High Commissions of India, China, and Sri Lanka. Potential partnerships were explored with the private sector, including hotels and resort companies such as Accor hotels for future collaborations. Further, a senior management team undertook a mission to Sri Lanka to meet with the diplomatic-missions discussing potential areas of partnerships. The meetings enabled identification of potential areas of interest, including supporting initiatives for out-of-school -children expressed by Embassy of Kuwait. The team also met United Arab Emirates who encouraged to leverage partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Country Office also received thematic funds, used to support interventions in education, child protection, HIV/AIDS, DRR, Water Sanitation and Hygiene. During the year, the Country Office obtained funds from Innovation Fund, which are currently being used to implement two innovations in education and child protection programmes.

Several proposals submitted to obtain thematic funding were successful for Nutrition, Health, HIV/AIDS, and Child protection. Further, the country office secured funding for Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) from DFID through the Regional support. Under the One UN LeCRED programme, the UNICEF secured funding for a synergistic implementation of the DRR component of the programme with other UN agencies and partners.

To ensure optimal use of funds, fund-monitoring mechanisms are in place, including monthly programme and operations coordination meetings, CMT meetings and in-house tracking tools to ensure all funds were utilized by grant expiry date.

Evaluation and Research

The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for UNICEF Maldives for the year 2016 was prepared and endorsed by the CMT at the beginning of the year. It was regularly monitored by the CMT and ensured 100 per cent implementation by end of the year

The finalization of the evaluation of Life Skills Education (LSE) programme initiated in 2015 was completed. Management responses developed for each of the recommendations, were as follow:

1. Development of a strategy to monitor the implementation of the national curriculum
2. Strengthening in-service training of teachers and school management on teaching the new competency (life skills based curriculum)

These recommendations were monitored by the CMT and are now integrated into existing programmes. The national evaluation capacity is improving due partly to the support provided by ROSA and the support provided by UNICEF Maldives to Government partners. Due to UNICEF advocacy the evaluation function is mainstreamed in Government sectoral key ministries and will be enhanced in 2017.

Key evaluations in 2017 include: Impact evaluation of the social protection programme jointly with 3ie.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

With the commencement of the new CPD in 2016, and the limited space for staff, the country office moved to new premises. The efficiency gains from this move included cost savings in the long-run in term of comparing the options of host meetings in house rather than opting for hall hire, as well as, given the new strategic location, reduction in time spent on travels for meetings.

The office also strengthened the cost saving culture where staff are more conscious on saving energy, reducing carbon foot print and reducing costs. Positive practices inculcated include turning off lights and air conditioners when not in use, responsible use of water and telephone and the re-use of paper for internal purposes. In an effort to reduce the expenses on communication, the mobile packages for the staff were revised to ensure a further reduction on mobile bills.

The reduction of bank charges due to removal of transaction charges further reduced banking costs. The country office initiated the process of receiving daily e-bank statements which has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of managing the cash at bank. The country office has also ensured sharing of printers and printing black and white and double sided, which are now compulsory to reduce the day to day running expenses of the office.

The movement of payment processing to GSSC has also led to drastic increases in efficiency items of reduction in time taken for processing transactions and increased reliability.

Supply Management

In light of the Maldives' transition to a upper-middle income country, the Country Programme (2016- 2020) was designed to support high level advocacy, evidence generation and capacity development. As such, supply and procurement services was limited to technical expertise and vaccines.

With support of UNICEF Procurement and Supply Division based in Copenhagen, the UNICEF Maldives facilitated the procurement of vaccines, for the Government, ensuring required documentation, communication between the two parties, and funds directly transferred to PSD by the Government. The Country Office will continue this support in 2017

With discussions with the Government and based on identified technical gaps, technical expertise was provided in the form of consultancies to support implementation of programmes. Additionally the efficiency of recruiting consultants has also improved due to the launch and integration of Talent management System (TMS) in the recruitment process. This has increased effectiveness, transparency and time consumed throughout the hiring process.

Security for Staff and Premises

The security situation in the Maldives continued to fluctuate, with political environment being considerably sensitive and dynamic.

The Representative is a member of the Security Management Team (SMT) and participated in all meetings where security matters were deliberated and solutions proffered with regard to the evolving political context in the country. The security situation was closely monitored to ensure staff security both inside and outside of office, staff were updated whenever announcements were made by political parties on rallies and demonstrations, and any other emerging security situation or eminent threats. Advisories were provided as necessary, security updates and guidance was provided by the security team, along with precautionary messages on how to ensure safety and the proper use of social media in such events.

In order to enhance security of the new Country Office, and to comply with MOSS Standards, reinforcements to the office were made against MOSS with funding support from ROSA. Some of the reinforcements included installation of a security door to reinforce the main entrance. Furthermore a 24 hour CCTV camera system was installed at key locations in the building. As per the MOSS requirements, Shatter Resistance Films (SRF) was installed in all the glass doors and windows of the country office premises. Support was provided by the regional office to ensure that the new office premises is reinforced as per the security requirements with the help of Regional Contingency Funds (RCF).

Furthermore, UNDSS for Maldives based in Sri Lanka visited the new country office premises and provided continued support to ensure MOSS compliance of the Office.

Human Resources

The Learning Plan was developed at the beginning of 2016. Human Resources Development Team (HRDT) considered each request in light of need, fair opportunities, available resources and added benefits to career development. The learning plan identified key gap areas based on the resources available, and the implementation was monitored through the HRDT.

Additionally, through the Regional HRDT envelope, joint staff training was conducted in the Maldives Country Office addressing office-wide learning need identified as “Strengthening advocacy skills including use of social media”. Further, all staff in the country office undertook a 3 day training on Results Based Management (RBM) with the support from the Regional Office. Along with other UN staff, UNICEF staff also underwent a first-aid training which focused on health and safety aspects. With support from UNICEF ROSA, an Emergency Preparedness and Response Training was conducted, increasing staff awareness on socio-political and environment risks, and ways to address them through the Business Continuity Plan.

In recruitment, the office undertook five recruitments within the stipulated timelines, which included three national posts, 1GS post and 1TA post. The present staff mix comprises of 43 percent males and 57percent females totaling to 14 staff.

The office continued to support the implementation of Global Staff Survey Action Plan activities of work-life balance and seeking career development opportunities.

Staff performance was monitored through regular interactions with the supervisor and supervisee through regular check-ins as per the new performance monitoring system achieve. The office

gave emphasis on staff learning, maintaining work-life balances and use of flexi time when needed.

In order to enhance staff capacity, with a focus on identified staff gaps, throughout the year staff have benefited from specialized programmes within and outside the region, including network meetings. In addition, Staff continuously used AGORA to access learning opportunities in various areas of need.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

The Country Office leveraged resources to standardize (CAT6 network with CISCO switch) and strengthen ICT infrastructure (installing IP PABX), which is now fully functional since moving out from UN Common House in 2014.

Office 365 significantly improved the mobility of accessing the ICT resources. To further enhance communication and efficiency, all staff mobile devices can access office emails allowing timely receipt and response. Throughout the year, there has been increased use of Skype and Skype for Business (Lync) by staff to host online meetings and conduct interviews. This has improved efficiency and cut down cost of telephone charges, both local and overseas. Moreover, the use of video conference facilities have been made available to further increase efficiency and effectiveness. The Maldives country office have also been monitoring our IT needs and procuring items to ensure that all ageing items are replenished accordingly.

The Country Office used Onedrive synchronized staff documents in their laptop which make them work wherever the internet is available.

In addition, to reduce ICT footprint common printers were installed in two locations within the Country Office and staff advised to use the most cost efficient printer settings. This has resulted in remarkable reduction consumables.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Inclusive equitable and quality social services for children (and adolescents), especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable are improved by 2020

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF Maldives supported the incorporation of Early Childhood Components in the Growth Monitoring Promotion protocols. The new protocols emphasises the critical window of the first few years of a child's life and the importance of early stimulation, play and care beyond nutrition. In an effort to build capacity of health workers of North region were trained on Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling. They are providing IYCF informative-education on child feeding practices.

From February to May 2017, the health sector was mobilised at a national level to implement the Measles Elimination Campaign and respond to the H1N1 crisis. UNICEF supported the communications material, and the training of health staff for Measles elimination. The country

has now achieved the Measles free status. UNICEF supported H1N1 response activities including, awareness on prevention and management of flu, and financial support to procure the influenza vaccines. The Health sector functioned on emergency response mode during the crisis, postponing the programme activities for the period.

Costing of Child Health Strategy has commenced, with the development of key pre-requisite documents; with support from WHO, the operational plan for the Strategy and Action plan, and the data configuration for the Online Health Tool configuration is complete. The costing exercise and data sets will provide country data for the Essential New Born Action Plan.

In light of the relatively higher neonatal deaths (within IMR), capacity of health care providers from three atolls were built on Essential Newborn Care (ENBC). Further, under the joint collaboration of Australia and Paediatric Lifesaving (APLS) Association and Sri Lanka Paediatrician Association, capacity of 14 Doctors were built in advanced lifesaving skills, strengthening national capacity to better respond to children with paediatric emergencies, contributing to savings of more lives.

In education, key interventions initiated in 2016 on improving quality of education continued in 2017. As such, the curriculum monitoring strategy and tools were finalized and is ready for use in school reviews. Support was provided to conduct school reviews under the School Improvement, Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (SIQAAF) and to develop an operational plan for SIQAAF. Further, UNICEF Maldives supported the launching of the Education Management Information System and education data is now readily available for decision making, tracking attendance and monitoring actions taken by schools to address behaviour issues among students to prevent school dropout. UNICEF Maldives also supported the development and finalization of a behaviour management policy which was aimed at strengthening inclusion and retention in schools and fostering child-centered, restorative justice approaches to dealing with behavior issues.

Capacity of the National Institute of Education (NIE) for provision of professional development to teachers through online technology was strengthened. A strategy on providing e-learning was developed and finalized and training was provided on instructional design to the NIE to enable them to produce online courses for them to improve the quality of teachers. Further, in response to the findings of the National Assessment for English and Dhivehi Language at primary level, UNICEF Maldives supported the development of a literacy and numeracy strategy along with development of national standards for literacy and numeracy, which is expected to be finalized by end of 2017.

With support from UNICEF Maldives the Ministry of Education and the Juvenile Justice have initiated development of flexible learning programs to cater to the different needs and circumstances of vulnerable and out-of-school children. Under the guidance of a multi-sectoral committee a learning package consisting of a condensed learning program, literacy and numeracy program, life skills and vocational skills development programs are being developed. Preparations are under way to enrol children in conflict with the law in Technical Vocational Education and Training programs (TEVT) offered by the TVET authority.

UNICEF Maldives continued with its support to establish the Community Social Groups - a key component of the system for prevention of violence against children (VAC), juvenile crimes and for prevention of drug abuse among children and adolescents. To date, 20 CSGs in four Atolls

have been initiated, with intervention level services provided by five. CSGs play a key role in identifying vulnerable families in the respective island, where children are at-risk of facing different forms of violence. As demonstrated by one active CSG, the group can contribute to increasing awareness of parents and the larger community.

Institutional capacity for responding to reported cases of VAC was improved through support to training of Police investigating officers being trained in Advanced Certificate in Interviewing Techniques. In addition, with the aim of building capacity of key stakeholders to prevent and address child exploitation and trafficking, with support from Girls Guide Association, a ToT training was conducted to were strengthened from Ministry of Tourism, Maldives Police Service, Live Aboard Association of Maldives,

The mobile application “Ahan” and the 24-hour hotline “1412 Child-helpline” was launched in 2017, making reporting cases of VaC more accessible. Maldives Child Protection Database (MCP) expansion continued in 2017, linking up with other key databases in the sector: Ministry of Education and Prosecutor General’s Office. The MCP was also linked up with the Call Centre at the Ministry of Gender and Family to ensure that cases reported are captured in the database, which is essential to identify trends and efficiency, scope of the VaC problem in the country with geographically desegregated data. These different components of the child protection systems is supporting to generate data on VaC and other child protection.

OUTPUT 1 Comprehensive mechanism for child and adolescent nutrition interventions strengthened, especially in the regions with high malnutrition rates.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF Maldives’s support to the nutrition programme in 2016 focused on building institutional capacity on maternal and child nutrition among healthcare workers, with a focus on areas of high malnutrition rates. In this regard, the key target for this year, the finalization of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) National Standards has been achieved. The standards provide clear guideline to practioners on recommended intakes of food children, and enable the health service providers to deliver consistent information and messages to mothers and other caregivers on early, exclusive and continued breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding

Initial steps to support prevention and treatment of malnutrition through IYCF intervention took place this year. As such, IYCF trainings were conducted for health staff in health centres from six atolls with support from UNICEF Maldives (Shaviyani and Noonu Atoll in the North region, Fuahmulah and Addu in the South Region, and Alifu Alifu & Alifu Dhaalu in central region). Further, assistance from WHO and UNICEF Maldives supported an IYCF training of health care workers in all islands of Laamu Atoll (South Central), which was facilitated by Training of Trainers (ToTs) that were trained in by UNICEF in 2015. The newly trained 75 health workers in the islands provide messages on breastfeeding complimentary feeding to parents and caregivers of 7,800 Under five children, and counselling to parents of children whose growth is faltering. The increased knowledge and awareness on good feeding practices among caregivers is contributing to increased knowledge and skills of health workers and subsequently, increased access of families to IYCF services in these islands.

Further, with the aim of promoting awareness on maternal and child nutrition (MCN), several IEC tools were developed in 2016, including video spots, posters and leaflets with key behaviour change communication messages on MCN. The resources are being distributed to all 189 islands in the country, and will provide useful tools to impart nutrition messages through the health centres. The TV spots are reaching to the households throughout Maldives, including the ones that are difficult to access. The updating of Growth Monitoring Standards and tool were delayed due to technical expertise limitation, and will continue in 2017, once completed, data will be compiled, analysed to monitor improvement on nutritional status of children

OUTPUT 2 Policies and strategies for implementation and monitoring of inclusive and equitable child health programmes developed and implemented.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The key target for this year, the Child Health Strategy and Action Plan, with a focus on reducing new-born mortality and promoting early childhood has been endorsed, providing strategic directions for equitable and quality child health services. The strategy provides strategic guidance and the action plan outlines a road map to implement the strategy and roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders, with a focus on quality equitable services. The costing of the strategy and action plan has been delayed, and pushed back to next year, due to difficulties in collecting data and staff capacity limitations. UNICEF ROSA has supported to build their capacity on the costing tool, through a regional south-to-south cooperation training on costing of Essential New-born Action Plans in Sri Lanka.

With support from UNICEF ROSA the Maldives team participated in another South-South cooperation knowledge exchange to China, to learn from the well-established maternal and child mortality surveillance system. Maldives will initiate maternal near-miss audits in 2017, and strengthen the maternal and health Information system.

Anti-natal care (ANC) programme in Raa and Baa Atoll (North Central region) was strengthened with support from UNICEF Maldives, with 73 health providers trained on preconception and ANC interventions. Monitoring of Integrated Management of Childhood Illness and Essential New Born Care services in regional hospitals took place in 2016, and gaps in services were identified. A key finding was that there were limited IMCI trained practioners. The recommendations will be used to improve services and strategize capacity building interventions. WHO and UNICEF ROSA's collaboration also led to building capacity of immunization managers from 18 Atolls on vaccine management.

Additionally, UNICEF supported capacity building on Advance Pediatric Life Support (APLS) Training across three trainings. Two APLS trainings were South-to-South regional trainings held in Sri Lanka supported from UNICEF ROSA. The Training of the Trainer course was instrumental as it enabled the ToT trained Maldivian Doctor to co-facilitate the subsequent APLS provider course in Maldives to 16 Medical staff. Technical expertise was provided by APLS Australia and Pediatric Association of Sri Lanka. The training is helping to improve the early management of pediatric emergency cases. Development of knowledge and skills necessary

to efficiently manage critically ill infants and children is contributing to saving more young lives, including the newborns.

The HIV/AIDS Biological and Behavioral Survey is ongoing, and UNICEF is supporting the data collection and providing technical expertise to include adolescent Young Key Affected Population in the survey. The findings will be instrumental for developing targeted interventions for YKAP in the future.

OUTPUT 3 Enhanced Implementation and monitoring of inclusive, child and gender sensitive education, including learning achievements.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In 2016, the focus under this output was to develop a monitoring mechanism for the implantation of the National Curriculum and to operationalize the School Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (SIQAAF). This was geared towards improving quality of education and monitoring of learning achievements.

In this regard, UNICEF Maldives supported development of a system for monitoring and reporting of the national curriculum at the national and subnational level. A review of the curriculum implementation was undertaken, which informed the development of a strategy on monitoring the curriculum along with a set of monitoring tools and indicators. The monitoring tools and the strategy are in the process of being finalized and will be implemented in 2017. UNICEF Maldives also supported the National Institute of Education (NIE) to develop an e-learning platform to train teachers across the country to enhance implementation of the Curriculum. A training needs analysis was undertaken to inform the design of a Moodle-based e-learning platform. Bottlenecks such as slow speed of Internet in the islands, limited IT infrastructure at NIE and shortage of staff at NIE were identified in the consultation and appropriate actions were taken to reduce them.

Consensus was reached on the key courses, the learning model to be used and the hosting arrangements of the learning platform. Content for seven e-courses (Curriculum subjects including English, Islam, Science, Health and PE, Inclusive Education, Creative Arts and Assessment for Learning) and the platform to host them is being developed and the hosting arrangements are confirmed to be with the Ministry of Education. Additional courses will be developed in 2017 after the platform is launched.

UNICEF Maldives also continued supporting the development of EMIS which started in 2015. Support in 2016 was geared towards development of a module on tracking vulnerabilities among students, identifying students at risk of dropping out and inclusion of children with disabilities. This module is being developed and will be incorporated into the core module that was developed in 2015. EMIS data is currently used by the Ministry of Education to monitor student's attendance and appropriate actions are taken by the schools and the Ministry. Support provided to operationalize the SIQAAF resulted in development of a school health and safety strategy. Once implemented in 2017, the strategy will strengthen the implementation and monitoring of school health dimension of the SIQAAF thereby, creating healthier and safer schools for children.

UNICEF Maldives in partnership with the NGO, *Care Society* and the NIE developed a behavior change communication strategy to address discrimination of children with disabilities, in particular promoting their inclusion in education. The strategy will be finalized and implemented in 2017.

OUTPUT 4 Alternative education system for the most vulnerable children established and operational.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

In 2016, the focus under this output was to develop a Policy Framework for provision of alternative and flexible learning programs for vulnerable and out-of-school children. Analysis of education data from Census 2014, suggested students were more at risk of dropping out at lower secondary level (Net attendance rate 74%) and analysis of secondary data shows that boys drop out more than girls. This was further supported by the data on juvenile delinquency from the Juvenile Justice Unit, which suggested 95% of children in conflict with the Law are school drop outs and they are mostly adolescent boys. Majority of drug users are also in the age group 15-19 years (National Drug Use Survey, 2012). The Assessment of Vulnerabilities among Adolescents which UNICEF Maldives conducted in 2014 suggest lack of interest in studies and bullying to be the main factors that predispose adolescents to drop out of school. Hence, UNICEF Maldives aligned its results to address the issue of adolescents, particularly to prevent adolescents from dropping out of school and opting risky behaviours such as drug use, offending and participating in gang activities.

In 2016, using the above data, UNICEF Maldives successfully advocated with the Ministry of Education to develop alternative education programmes and flexible learning programmes for children and adolescents who show disinterest in academics, are not coping well and for those who are out of school. This advocacy resulted in the development of a policy framework for the provision of alternative learning and flexible learning strategies. Currently, this framework is being reviewed by the senior management of the Ministry of Education.

Once finalized, the set of alternative learning programmes will be developed in 2017 and institutional capacity will be strengthened to deliver and monitor the programmes. Further, the programs will be piloted in selected areas chosen by the Ministry of Education.

OUTPUT 5 Child protection system effectively prevents, and responds to VAC, CiCWL, and for prevention of drug abuse, by 2020. % of cases of VAC that received response and successfully closed as defined by standardized operational procedures, and by trained professionals

Analytical Statement of Progress:

With an aim of creating a holistic child protection system at national and community level that prevents, protect and respond to cases of violence against children, UNICEF Maldives Country Office, together with the Government focused on building capacity of the communities and the

institutions.

Community Social Groups (CSGs) are considered a key element of the child protection system in the Maldives. If they function well, they can significantly help to address violence against children, including sexual abuse. 14 CSGs across 3 atolls have been initiated. The CSGs have started to involve officials from education, health, police, island councils, and civil society groups. They facilitated coordination, discussion and interventions on child abuse cases, where multi-disciplinary responses are required. Six out of the fourteen CSGs have initiated the identification of vulnerable children and families, while another 6 CSGs have begun to develop community interventions for the prevention of violence against children including sexual abuse. UNICEF Maldives Country Office is supporting the CSGs in developing island/community level plans for prevention of violence against children, including sexual abuse.

28 Social Workers participated in refresher training on risk assessments, report writing, development of intervention plans, and techniques for interviewing children and adults. How to work with colleagues from other sectors was also covered.

To improve investigation of child protection cases, 33 Investigating Officers from the Maldives Police Service participated in a course Advanced Child Interviewing Techniques Course. Since then, 60 child abuse cases have been investigated by trained Investigating Officers. UNICEF Maldives Country Office, provided technical support to Maldives Police Service in developing the course. 49 government stakeholders such as the Department of Immigration and Emigration, Prosecutor General's Office, Police and Social Workers were oriented on the emerging issue of on-line sexual exploitation and sex tourism, UNICEF Maldives Country Office provided technical support to deliver the orientation Screening of persons with sexual abuse reports during visa approval processes, sensitization of Immigration Officers at the airport, and training of police officers and social workers were identified as important needs that are now included in the 2017 sectoral plans of the government.

If police officers can engage with communities and the CSGs, they can more effectively prevent juvenile crimes. The first batch of 30 Police Offices from some atolls and Male' were trained as Community Engagement Officers who will work closely with the CSGs for the prevention of juvenile crimes and violence against children.

19 adolescents with criminal records are now under the diversion programme that also provides them with internships, building vocational skills for future employability.

63 schools in Male' and across 8 atolls have developed school level Child Protection policies. UNICEF Maldives Country Office assisted the Ministry of Education in drafting of the national level policy, development of the templates and guidance document for the school level policy and for the rollout to schools in 4 atolls, with Ministry of Education leading the expansion to additional atolls

OUTPUT 6 Effective coordination and monitoring mechanism operational for timely response to VAC and CiCWL at national, selected atolls and islands with high prevalence of child abuse.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Currently, the response to violence against children and the treatment of children in conflict with law is ineffective because of the absence of a comprehensive legislation and a working monitoring and coordination mechanism, at national, atoll and island levels.

The establishment of Community Social Groups at island level is paving the way, by demonstrating what an effective coordination mechanism can achieve. Based also on this experience, the Minister of Gender and Family established a technical working group consisting of members from Maldives Police Service, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Prosecutor General's Office and UNICEF. The technical working group coordinates policy and practice between key actors, and generates multi-disciplinary solutions for child protection, including protection of children from sexual abuse. UNICEF Maldives Country Office plays a key role in the discussion by bringing international standards and best practices onto the table.

The National Drug Agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs is leading the preparation of the National Strategy for Drug Abuse Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children and Adolescents. Key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health are involved in the drafting. Consultations have taken place at atoll/regional level and at national or central level policy makers including young people and civil society groups. UNICEF Maldives is providing technical support and using international best practice as the basis for the strategy. The Maldives Child Protection Database, operated by Maldives Police Service, continues to expand. Data input and analysis has become easier through a conversion to a web based application. Half the 19 Family and Children Service Centers in the atolls are linked to the MCPD. All police units in the atolls, the Ministry of Gender and Family, and the Juvenile Justice Unit of Ministry of Home Affairs have undergone training on the use of the MCPD. A mobile application for reporting of violence against children under development by the Maldives Police Service with support from UNICEF Maldives Country Office. The Ministry of Gender and Family is committed to establish a call center, and plans are in an advanced stage, with testing to begin by the beginning of January 2017. All calls to the call center will be received by a dedicated staff. The call center will also linked to the MCPD to ensure cases are recorded, analyzed for a complete picture increasing the efficiency of the response. UNICEF Maldives Country Office played a key role in the conceptualization and is providing support to establish the protocols and operational procedures, based on international standards, for the call center. UNICEF held a number of advocacy meetings at ministerial level to expedite the passage of the long pending bills on child rights and juvenile justice. These bills are crucial to ensure that the emerging issues faced by children both as victims of abuse and children in conflict with law are addressed, with the best possible solutions.

OUTCOME 2 Evidence generated for policy advocacy for inclusion in social services by 2020.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

This programme area includes strengthening national and subnational capacities for generation and use of data and evidence for policymaking, and planning and programme development, as well as analyses of inequities, including climatically vulnerable populations and advocacy on inclusive policies and strategies.

Important developments have been noted under this outcome including completion of the Chapter on Children in the 2014 Census Government publication. The Census Chapter described the demographic profile of the child population, and provided a comprehensive profile of children on the following key areas: Age-sex composition and population density, sex ratio for

under-five population (sex ratio 104, Census 2014) and children, literacy, school attendance and educational attainment, child workers and the sectors of employment, Nuptiality and fertility of child population, living arrangement and household composition, and exposed the pockets of social deprivation faced differently by boys and girls. This equity analysis was strategically advocated for to highlight children's issues and centralize their agenda within the development planning of the country.

With additional capacity building and technical support provided by UNICEF ROSA, NBS was able to improve the equity profiles which are currently being used to strengthen policy-advocacy and development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks aimed at tracking reduction of disparities among vulnerable children and families.

Various reforms have been made to the social protection programmes to improve the targeting system. In this regard, some schemes have been changed to better target the intended beneficiaries, for instance, electricity and fuel subsidy was abolished and universal food subsidy was changed to target the poor only. The food subsidy programme which cost the government annually MVR 307 million (\$19 million) was very recently (October 2016) abolished and the intended beneficiaries under the scheme currently receive MVR 2400 annually. This in turn helps attaining the goal of greater fiscal space and deficit sustainability, hence increasing Government ability to fund of social sectors. National Social Protection Agency's capacity was strengthened in monitoring to improve targeting of social protection programmes and to update the registry to include the most vulnerable children.

Agreement is secured with Government to generate national data on child poverty and child vulnerabilities by inclusion of the MODA module into the ongoing DHS and HIES national surveys. Dialogue is ongoing with ROSA through a partnership with credible international institution to support the secondary analysis of DHS and HIES surveys to profile the child poverty, and engage with Government on measurement and routine monitoring of child poverty.

The fiscal deficit and the debt conditions resulting from the impact of the global economic shocks still pose major challenges and constraints on the National Budget, and has impacted on the Government's ability to address issues affecting children in quality health care, especially in remote islands, education and unemployment, child protection and social protection, especially the most vulnerable in the far-flung islands. In this regards, high level dialogue engaged with the Ministry of Finance to strengthen child friendly budgeting resulted in the launch of the investment case study aimed to analyze the current budget allocations vis a vis the current situation of children and the possible impacts in the long term against a no investment scenario; and articulate concrete recommendations on how the government of Maldives (GoM) can improve equitably the quantity and quality of public spending on children.

The geographic dispersion of islands in the Maldives has always hampered prompt emergency response to both weather and man-made hazards. As proven during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the numerous other hazard events in the Maldives, children and women are most vulnerable to such events, namely due to lack of awareness and absence of planned response actions. As part of the One UN joint programme on Low Emissions Climate Resilient Development Programme (LECRoD), UNICEF supported the National Disaster Management

Centre (NDMC) to build capacities of Island Communities to prepare and respond to climate hazards. UNICEF Maldives supported NDMC to carry out child and gender-sensitive community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) activities (including the development of Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments and Disaster Management Plans) in all 11 inhabited islands in Laamu Atoll. The participatory CBDRM activities, which are designed to encourage girl's and women's participation (since children and women are more vulnerable to climate hazards), allowed community members to identify potential hazards including destructive weather events and how best to prepare for them beforehand. UNICEF Maldives encouraged the participation of children and young people in such island-level planning as it prepares them to be agents of change.

UNICEF supported the NDMC to develop the SOPs required to establish Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) at island level. The conceptual framework currently being finalized underwent initial review from ROSA and EMOPS which provided clarity on how the CERTs will operate in an island context to support planning and implementation of preparedness and response activities. The framework would also determine the capacity building regime and equipment/support the CERTs will be afforded under the guidance of the National Disaster Management Centre. The CERTs are planned to be institutionalized in the Maldives whereby they will become the first responders to any emergencies in an island context, working together with the Maldives National Defense Force (where MNDF presence is available).

The partnership include the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, the National Bureau of Statistic, the National Social Protection Agency and the National Disaster Management Centre. Emergency work involves local NGOs and islands communities.

OUTPUT 1 Social protection systems strengthened for improved targeting of the most vulnerable.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

During the year the output focused on strengthening the social protection programmes through improving the coordination and monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the ministry levels as well as sharpening the targeting criteria for vulnerabilities.

With support from UNICEF Maldives the National Social Protection Agency (NSPA) increased its capacity to strengthen data management and monitoring systems. This enabled NSPA to improve the targeting criteria and mechanism of social protection programmes, which has now increased coverage of the social schemes to vulnerable children.

Similarly, UNICEF supported NSPA to conduct regular monitoring of the programmes to track changes in eligibility criteria of beneficiaries and to assess effects (both positive and negative) of the programmes on children. In this regards, three monitoring trips were supported in Raa Atoll, GaafAlif Atoll and Gnaviyani Atoll, during which the status of 1307 beneficiaries (including 244 children, 648 adults with disability and 476 single parents' children) have been reviewed through the existing targeting mechanisms and included in the registry. In the absence of systematic

collection of data to track inclusion and exclusion errors, the monitoring visits were determinant in correcting inclusion and exclusion errors from misinterpreted and fraudulent cases.

Also UNICEF Maldives supported the Social Protection Management Information System review, which now includes disability information from 6,224 beneficiaries including 1,795 children eligible for the disability allowance. The review was based on the WHO International Classification of Disease (ICD) criteria. The review generated a refined database which is currently used to manage the information of the person with disabilities eligible for the disability allowance.

UNICEF Maldives, also supported the NSPA to develop sensitization materials and to conduct sensitization sessions to raise awareness of current and potential beneficiaries of existing social protection programmes in far-flung islands. These sensitization sessions increased the number of applications by 10 per cent in the three schemes available including single parents, foster parents and disability allowance, and hence contributing to increase the coverage of services since the maximum numbers of beneficiaries in the far and hard to reach islands.

UNICEF continued its advocacy to a more coordinated child sensitive Social Protection with a functional monitoring framework to respond to the existing fragmented and inefficient social protection programme. In this regard, UNICEF supported 3 joint coordination meetings with NSPA to discuss progress related to implementation, major bottlenecks and mitigation measures to fast track achievement of planned results. In addition, the coordination of the Social Protection Programme was further strengthened between NSPA and the Ministry of Gender and Family in the occasion of the 3RD Asia – Pacific High Level Meeting (HLM3) on Child Rights held in Malaysia and focused on Social Protection among others themes. This coordination mechanism, and the monitoring framework will be further strengthen in 2017.

OUTPUT 2 Systems for generating evidence are strengthened at national and sub national levels for inclusive and equitable policies, plans and services, especially for the most disadvantaged.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

During the year the output focused on delivering monitoring and evaluation frameworks for key social sectors, equity profiling and development of equity briefs and support strengthening of sectoral databases for children.

Through technical assistance from UNICEF ROSA, the NBS was supported to develop and refine Equity profiles on Education, Nutrition and Child Protection, which were disseminated and currently used for evidence based policy making and policy interventions. Further refinement is expected with the release of the DHS and HIES in 2017. Their publication are expected in 2017. The Census Chapter on Children which was initiated in 2015, was completed, providing socio economic data on children to planners and policy makers.

With UNICEF Maldives support through Result based Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and Equity Profiling trainings, capacities of Government entities were strengthened to better report on results for children using available evidence.

Additionally, with support from UNICEF ROSA, initial inter-ministerial diagnostic consultations were held to inform the development of a comprehensive and integrated Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks for the key social sectors, including Education, Health, Gender & Family and Social Protection and Environment and Energy in 2017. This initiative has the endorsement of the Ministry of Finance, with commitment to link child deprivations to the quality of public expenditure and budgetary decisions that leaves no child behind.

MaldivInfo database was updated with administrative data from sectoral databases and data from census 2014 with CensusInfo. This overall database provides disaggregated data on children which is now used for policy planning and decision making for children and refinement of the Equity profiles. In addition, UNICEF supported the NBS to finalize and launch LaamuInfo, which is currently used for island level policy making and local planning process. With the training on LaamuInfo, 16 island Councils members from 11 islands of Laamu Atoll, are now able to use LaamuInfo to support island level planning.

Key partnership include the National Bureau of Statistic and key sectoral ministries, particularly the Ministry of Education with the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) development, the Ministry of Gender and Family with the Child Protection Database (MCPD).

Focus will be on the finalization of the national surveys (DHS and HIES) to profile child poverty and update of equity profiles to continue to inform policy making in 2017

OUTPUT 3 Child and gender sensitive disaster resilience and climate change adaptation plans and programmes institutionalized and operational at national and sub-national levels.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

During the year the output focused on supporting the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) to strengthen national and local capacity to prepare and respond to disasters.

In this regard, UNICEF provided technical assistance to NDMC through a national consultant, which improved its capacity to better plan, coordinate, implement and monitor activities under the joint annual work plan (2016/2017). With UNICEF's support, NDMC was able to develop the conceptual framework required to establish CERTs, as the primary responders to address climate hazards and emergencies locally. The initial conceptual framework, which was jointly reviewed by UNICEF ROSA and EMOPS New York, includes the training needs of CERTs

including disaster preparedness planning, first aid and flood mitigation.

Also UNICEF Maldives provided support to NDMC to carry out Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) exercises in all 11 inhabited islands in the Laamu Atoll, under the Joint UN LECRED Programme. With this CBDRM work, island communities have now the capacity to identify their own hazard profiles, assess their risks and vulnerabilities, and develop their own response actions. The disaster management plan (as an output of the CBDRM) was annexed to the island development plan, ensuring institutionalisation of DRR and CCA at the island level. This process ensured continuous engagement with community members, most importantly through the participation of children, youth and women to internalise preparedness and response actions and to build resilience to climate change.

Additionally, with support from ROSA, in 2016, UNICEF Maldives provided 18 dewatering pumps to 9 islands, which faced continuous flooding throughout the year. With this equipment, the target islands no longer request for support during monsoon season and are currently better at planning for such eventualities. These islands now have the ability to update their vulnerability and capacity assessments and disaster management plans which are key components of the island development plans. Key partnership include NDMC, local NGOs and island communities.

Document Center

Evaluation and Research

Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
School Sanitation and Hygiene in Maldives	2016/001	Study

Other Publication

Title

Lessons Learned

Document Type/Category	Title
Innovation	Development of an e-learning platform for education purposes
Innovation	a Call Centre and a mobile application for reporting of child abuse

Programme Documents

Document Type | **Title** | **Name**