

## Maldives

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### Executive summary

Overall, the situation of children in the Maldives remained stable throughout 2017. The Government sustained its commitment to allocate a fair share of the GDP to public health and education (4.6 per cent and 6.2 per cent, respectively). The World Bank estimated a real GDP growth of 4.8 per cent and a fiscal deficit of 9.4 per cent of GDP in 2017. The gradual withdrawal of food subsidies continued while the cash transfers to vulnerable households remained limited. Approximately 25 per cent of youth were not employed, in school or in training programmes. Expatriate workers continued to benefit from the growth in the construction and tourism sectors more than Maldivian youth.

UNICEF Maldives' collaboration with national partners focused on enhancing child protection and juvenile justice systems, alternative education for out-of-school adolescents, improving infant and young child feeding, and building information systems. All the activities UNICEF supported were designed to contribute to the UNDAF outcome of improving inclusive, equitable, and high quality social services for all children and adolescents, especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable.

In 2017, UNICEF Maldives and partners achieved significant results for children in the country. A real-time system for reporting and addressing violence against children was established and expanded. Local communities are now able to identify cases of violence against children and use the hotline call number to report abuse. The number of reported cases was on the rise, indicating that a functional reporting system was in place. Trained local community support groups and the police routinely picked up the reported cases and addressed them immediately. At the central level, the Ministry of Gender and Family (MoGF) published monthly gender and age disaggregated reports on violence against children cases. These reports contributed to raising awareness on the responsibility of community members to stop violence against children.

Alternative education opportunities for out-of-school adolescents were established, including for those who were incarcerated by court decision. In 2017, some 43 adolescents enrolled in vocational training, an alternative learning opportunity that was not previously accessible to out-of-school adolescents. The Open Education Information System now allows school management and responsible staff in the Ministry of Education to access real time information about individual students' attendance and learning achievements as well as teacher performance. The establishment of the Health Information System is progressing. It will provide easy access to real-time information on violence against children, education, and health and will contribute to informed decision-making.

UNICEF's new partnership with the Care Society resulted in the production of behaviour change communication materials for the inclusion of children with disabilities. With UNICEF's technical guidance and support, the Ministry of Education successfully applied for and received a grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). UNICEF support is underway for the development of an education sector strategy and plan. However, delays at the Ministry of

Education to meet some of the GPE deadlines is a concern. Both UNICEF and the MoE are looking for innovative ways to overcome this challenge.

In 2017, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health launched a study to better understand the underlying causes of malnutrition, an ongoing challenge for some children in the Maldives. The findings of this ongoing study will help sharpen the programme focus next year.

The delays on the part of the Ministry of Finance to credit direct cash transfers (DCTs) from UNICEF and other UN agencies to the accounts of partner ministries continue to hamper timely completion of activities and liquidation of DCTs. UNICEF continued to discuss a workable solution for routing direct cash transfers (DCTs) through the Ministry of Finance with national partners.

The limited visibility of UNICEF's work in the Maldives and lack of partnerships with the private sector are key shortfalls that will be aggressively addressed in 2018.

### Equity in practice

UNICEF Maldives adopted an evidence-based policy advocacy and institutional strengthening approach to address the barriers that affect the most disadvantaged children and adolescents. National systems were strengthened to generate and analyse disaggregated data required to inform policy development. The country programme incorporated gender equality and implemented the UNICEF Gender Action Plan by addressing social and cultural norms adversely impacting the equal enjoyment of rights by girls and boys.

UNICEF's social inclusion programme included a strategic approach to addressing multidimensional poverty and its attendant deprivations and vulnerabilities. The programme was aligned with the Government's focus on strengthening systems for social inclusion, which entails detailed analyses and use of disaggregated data for policy responses to child poverty.

UNICEF Maldives brought equity in access to education by creating new learning opportunities for out-of-school adolescents, including those in conflict with the law. The new alternative learning program initiated in 2017 by national partners with UNICEF has benefited 43 incarcerated adolescents to date.

UNICEF identified the most vulnerable groups of children as those who are malnourished and newborns who lose their lives within the first 28 days. Despite the significant reduction in infant mortality in the Maldives (from 48 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 8 per 1,000 live births in 2014), every year approximately five newborns out of 1,000 live births lose their lives within the first 28 days. As part of a long-term strategy for reducing infant and newborn mortality, UNICEF engaged international and national experts who supported the Ministry of Health with the training of health care providers on life-saving skills for newborns.

UNICEF Maldives continued to strengthen the community social groups (CSGs) as a first-line response mechanism to support child victims of violence, including victims of sexual abuse.

### Strategic Plan 2018-2021

The UNDAF Mid-Term Review planned for 2018 will provide an opportunity for UNICEF Maldives to review and align the Country Programme Document results framework with the new Strategic Plan. Maldives faces both internal migration from islands to the capital city, and is considered one of the island states most vulnerable to climate change. UNICEF Maldives will

therefore include important emerging areas such as climate change, urbanization, and migration in the Mid-Term Review.

## Emerging areas of importance

**Climate change and children.** Maldives is one of the island states most vulnerable to climate change. Unique geographic features, including the coral landscape of more than 1,000 islands, many of them small and with low elevation, means there is a constant risk of beach erosion and floods. Growing pressure on the coral reefs due to human development and rising air and water temperatures cause an imbalance in the local ecosystems. Temperature is likely to continue to rise because of the increase in carbon dioxide concentrations. Climate scientists anticipate a global rise in the ocean water levels. Maldives is likely to face an increased number of extreme weather patterns, such as extensive precipitation and storms. All these climate changes directly affect children in Maldives, who make up more than one-third of the total population (Census 2014). Unfavourable climate changes impact child mortality and morbidity, malnutrition, rising inequality, and poverty, and increase children's vulnerabilities in many ways.

UNICEF Maldives, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Energy, carried out a study on the effects of climate change on children. The study findings guided the incorporation of climate risk into UNICEF's regular programmes and were used to guide emergency preparedness and response planning through the newly established emergency platform.

**Greater focus on the second decade of life.** UNICEF Maldives prioritized programme interventions for the second decade in a child's life. UNICEF supported the development of alternative learning programmes for vulnerable adolescents who were out-of-school. A multi-sectoral technical committee steered implementation of those programmes, with support from the respective sectors. UNICEF played a convening role in the Steering Committee.

UNICEF successfully advocated for the Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVET Authority) to open up vocational programmes previously offered only to adults to adolescents between 15 and 18 years old. A total of 43 incarcerated adolescents were enrolled in the vocational programmes offered by the TVET Authority. In addition to vocational training (which mostly included diving and water sports, carpentry, photography and IT) the programmes consisted of mandatory life skills education and literacy and numeracy programmes for those who did not possess the required competencies. With UNICEF support, social workers at the Juvenile Justice Unit (JJU) and volunteers from the Maldives Red Crescent were trained to provide life skills courses for out-of-school adolescents. Modules on spiritual education and legal awareness were being developed for inclusion in the alternative learning programme.

UNICEF Maldives supported the institutionalization of life skills education into schools, including secondary schools. School principals and facilitators were trained on providing school-based life skills programmes, which led to increased commitments from the schools to sustain life skills education programmes.

## Summary notes and acronyms

### Acronyms

AMP – annual management plan

AWP – annual workplan

BCP – business continuity plan

C4D – communication for development

CBDRM – community-based disaster risk management

CCC – Core Commitment for Children  
CEDAW – Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women  
CERT – community emergency response team  
CFL – compact fluorescent lamp  
CMT – country management team  
CPD – country programme document  
CPMP – country programme management plan  
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child  
CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
CSG – community social groups  
DCT – direct cash transfer  
DHS – Demographic and Health Survey

DRR – disaster risk reduction  
ECD – early childhood development  
EPI – expanded programme on immunisation  
ERM – enterprise risk management  
ESP – education sector plan  
E-WASH – WASH-in-Emergencies  
FACE – Funds Authorization and Certification of Expenditures  
GAP – Gender Action Plan  
GNI – Gross National Income  
GPE – Global Partnership for Education  
GS – general service  
GSS – Global Staff Survey  
GSSC – Global Shared Service Centre  
HACT – harmonized approach to cash transfer  
HIS – Health Information System  
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus  
HRBA – Human Rights-Based Approach  
HRDT – Human Resources Development Team  
ICT – information communication technology  
IEC – integrated early childhood  
IMEP – Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan  
IP – Implementing Partner  
IYCF – infant and young child feeding  
JJU – Juvenile Justice Unit  
KPI – key performance indicators  
LECRd – Low Emissions Climate Resilient Development  
MEMIS – Maldives Education Management Information System  
MNDF – Maldives National Defense Force  
MoE – Ministry of Education  
MoGF – Ministry of Gender and Family  
MoH – Ministry of Health  
MOSS – Minimum Office Security Standards  
MPI – Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index  
MRC – Maldivian Red Crescent  
NBS – National Bureau of Statistics

NDMC – National Disaster Management Centre  
NGO – non-government organization

NIE – National Institute of Education  
OPHI – Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative  
OR – Other Resources  
ORE – Other Resources - Emergency  
ORR – Other Resources - Regular  
PEP – Post Exposure Preventive  
PER – Performance Evaluation Report  
POG – Programme and Operations Group  
PSD – Procurement Services Division  
PSV – peer support volunteers  
QAD – Quality Assurance Department  
RCO – Resident Coordinator’s Office  
RERC – Regional Emergency Response Centre  
ROSA – Regional Office for South Asia  
RR – Regular Resource  
SDG – Sustainable Development Goals  
SitAn – situation analysis  
SMR – Strategic Moment of Reflection  
SMT – Senior Management Team  
SP – Strategic Plan  
SSFA – small scale funding agreements  
TMS – talent management system  
TOA – table of authority  
TOR – terms of reference  
TVET Authority – Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority  
UN – United Nations  
UNCT – United Nations Country Team  
UNDAF – United Nation Development Assistance Framework  
UNDSS – United Nations Department of Safety and Security  
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization  
UPR – Universal Periodic Review  
VaC – violence against children  
VCA – Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments  
WASH – water, sanitation and hygiene  
WCD – World Children’s Day

## Capacity development

UNICEF Maldives supported capacity enhancement within the National Bureau of Statistics for monitoring child poverty and conducting Multidimensional Poverty Analysis. Subsequently, a conceptual framework for Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index for children was developed.

The staff of the Ministry of Gender and Family received capacity building training on results-based planning and monitoring, enabling them to develop a planning document and monitoring framework for the Ministry’s work for 2018-2019.

Institutional capacity of the police to respond to cases of violence against children was improved through several trainings, enabling them to work on challenging cases more efficiently, and with a child-focused approach.

To improve quality of health services for children, 160 health professionals from five atolls were trained on essential newborn care. A core group of medical doctors received training on advanced paediatric life support, which enhanced their capacity to save more children, including newborns.

Healthcare providers in selected atolls acquired skills for the promotion of infant and young children feeding (IYCF) through several trainings. Subsequently, they provided IYCF informative counselling to families with children whose growth was faltering.

The capacity of community social groups (CSGs) was further enhanced in 2017. Eight out of the 30 groups were working directly with disadvantaged families and children to address their vulnerabilities, including violence against children.

Communities in six islands were mobilized to increase inclusion of children with disabilities in education through implementation of a behaviour change communication strategy addressing negative social norms. Those communities improved physical accessibility to schools and communal facilities and demonstrated increased awareness of the rights of children with disabilities.

Community capacities in disaster management planning and response were strengthened in two of the most vulnerable atolls, increasing emergency preparedness. Community emergency response teams (CERT) established in those communities are now able to respond to emergencies in surrounding islands.

Technical training also was provided for Government WASH and EMIS staff.

### **Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

UNICEF Maldives continued to support evidence generation by developing equity profiles and child analysis, supporting data management systems, and supporting research to collect information on emerging issues and child-related Sustainable Development Goal(SDG) indicators. Equity profiles on child demography, education and child protection are readily available for policy advocacy and dialogue.

The MaldivInfo database was enhanced to provide up-to-date information on critical children related SDG indicators. The Maldives Education Management Information System (EMIS) is designed to provide real-time data on children in school and out-of-school. The use of the Maldives Child Protection Database was expanded to include the Family and Children Service Centres (FCSCs) in the atolls to ensure that cases of child abuse are reported. Discussions were ongoing with the Ministry Health and other relevant partners for the development of a comprehensive Health Information System.

A study on the effects of climate change on children in the Maldives was completed. The study identified the vulnerabilities faced by children and their communities. The study outcomes will guide the way UNICEF and partners engage communities in addressing climate change and disaster risk reduction in 2018.

UNICEF Maldives increased its policy dialogues and advocacy with partners by conducting and participating in public awareness sessions and discussions held at national and subnational levels. Public sessions focused on the SDGs, child rights and child protection, among other

topics. The evidence generated was routinely used to enhance programme design and implementation strategies.

## Partnerships

In 2017, at least seven collaborative partnerships delivered results for children.

A partnership with APLS Australia, Paediatric Association of Sri Lanka, and APLS training in Maldives resulted in training for 14 doctors from four tertiary hospitals on advanced paediatric lifesaving skills.

UNICEF's partnership on LECReD is a joint One UN environmental programme, where UNICEF focus was on capacity building for national partners before handing over the programme to local councils. In this context, the partnership with the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) and local councils around the community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) programme resulted in incorporating child-centered disaster risk reduction and training of an additional 12 personnel from 4 regional bases on community disaster management planning.

The partnership with the NGO Care Society delivered tangible changes in people's attitudes and practices in relation to inclusive, quality education for children with disabilities.

UNICEF's partnership with the Maldives Police Service and the Ministry of Tourism resulted in orientations for the tourism sector on the risks of child sexual exploitation. Thirteen trainers were trained on how to deliver orientations on child-safe tourism. An additional 33 people from the tourism sector, including safari boat staff, participated in orientation sessions.

Within the framework of developing the child focused national Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), tripartite collaboration was finalized with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and National Bureau of Statistics to help develop a child-focused national MPI. As a result, robust and comprehensive child poverty data are available for evidence-based policymaking.

UNICEF's partnership with the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) resulted in development of a training module on WASH-in-Emergencies (E-WASH) for national emergency response teams, revision of the national guidelines on Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs), and enhancing national capacity to plan and respond to emergencies.

## External communication and public advocacy

UNICEF Maldives continued to engage audiences through high-level and public advocacy to complement its support toward upholding the rights and wellbeing of children, especially those who are vulnerable, living in islands with significant disparities. UNICEF Maldives increased its public advocacy efforts through direct engagement with island communities and via its website and social media channels, in-line with the Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy (2017-2020).

During field visits to Haa Alif, Shaviyani, Faafu, Laamu and Gnaviyani atolls, UNICEF Maldives worked together with implementing partners such as the Care Society to engage island authorities and the public, including children, to raise awareness on the rights of people with disabilities and create demand for social services such as increased access to inclusive, quality education for children with disabilities. Communication tools such as video spots and posters complemented the direct engagement with communities to make the rights of children with

disabilities a household topic of conversation. The interventions and public engagement on social media (via products developed) led to an increase in attendance of children with disabilities in schools in the selected islands, installation of ramps in some public buildings, improvements in special-education-needs classes and the inclusion of the hitherto unmentioned status of children with disabilities in the school annual report of Funadhu island, Shaviyani atoll.

UNICEF leveraged the high permeation of communication technologies in Maldives, particularly among younger age-groups, to reach out with key messages, particularly on climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR). Social media posts on climate change and disaster risk reduction had the highest reach and engagement. Posts on the findings of the national study on effects of climate change on children were the most widely read and shared.

### **South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

UNICEF Maldives supported a team of eight officials from the Quality Assurance Department (QAD) of the Ministry of Education to visit the Ministry of Education and selected schools in Bangalore, Karnataka, India to learn from their education quality assurance system. This visit was facilitated by UNICEF Karnataka, India. The QAD team found this study visit to be highly useful and a learning opportunity that exposed them to good practices. During this study tour, QAD learned about the merits of census-based national assessments and decided to initiate policy-level discussions on moving away from the current sample-based national assessments to census-based national assessments for grades 4 and 7 in the schools of Maldives. The QAD also decided to simplify and streamline their current process of external school reviews based on what they learned from the Karanata visit.

Following up on a 2016 learning initiative, UNICEF Maldives fostered collaboration between several parties, both national and international, to enhance the capacity of 14 doctors and nurses working in tertiary hospitals on advanced paediatric life-saving support. Technical support was provided by the Australian Faculty of Advanced Paediatric Life Support and the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians, and facilitation and other support was provided by the Health Protection Agency, Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital and Maldives Paediatric Association. The triangular partnership between national and international parties also resulted in seven doctors being certified as Trainers of Trainers on Advanced Paediatric Life Support.

### **Identification and promotion of innovation**

UNICEF Maldives continued to support the Government to strengthen innovative interventions under the education and child protection programmes.

UNICEF Maldives continued to support the National Institute of Education (NIE) for the development of an e-learning platform to train teachers on how to teach the new National Curriculum. A core team at NIE was trained on instructional design and an e-learning strategy for the NIE was developed that included an operational plan. The e-learning platform was launched in November 2017 by the Minister of Education. The platform offers self-paced and facilitated learning using internet technologies that will enable educators to develop their knowledge and capacities and improve performance. It provides an avenue for educators across the country to collaborate, share experiences in implementing the curriculum and new education policies in schools, and learn new ways to manage emerging challenges.

The Call Centre linked to the Maldives Child Protection Database, together with the mobile application 'Ahan' for reporting of violence against children, were launched by the Regional



Director for UNICEF South Asia in mid-July. Since then, the Call Centre received on average 321 calls per month, including 64 reported cases of violence against children.

### Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages

In 2017 UNICEF Maldives strongly supported cross-sectoral integration in its child protection and education programmes. UNICEF Maldives supported the community social groups (CSGs), composed of MoGF, MPS, MoE, MoH and local councils, to institute a child protection system at the island level. By end of 2017, a total of 30 groups were established and had initiated community-level interventions to address violence against children. As a result, reporting of such violence to the MPS and MoGF increased.

Thirty three per cent of the CSGs continuously worked on prevention and mobilizing the community for prevention, contributing to increased acceptance of the multi-sectoral approach by the community.

A multisectoral collaboration between the Juvenile Justice Unit, MoGF, MoE, Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MoIA) and UNICEF Maldives resulted in the initiation of alternative learning programmes (ALPs) for out-of-school children, including incarcerated youth. A steering committee was established to enhance multisectoral linkages and coordination. UNICEF convened the relevant parties and provided technical support. This coordination mechanism improved understanding on the issues of out-of-school children and mobilized new partners and commitments from agencies such as the TVET Authority of Maldives, MRC (for mentoring support and outreach in the farfetched islands), Maldives Institute of Technology (for skills development) and MoIA (for spiritual development). Discussions with the TVET authority resulted in the enrolment of 30 children in conflict with the law in TVET programmes.

Cross-sectoral interventions have proven to be effective and sustainable and have gained recognition by stakeholders on the importance of strong coordination to leverage results for children, especially for the most vulnerable.

### Service delivery

UNICEF Maldives continued to provide the Government with procurement services for the purchase of vaccines and nutritional items through UNICEF Supply Division. The Government provided funding and UNICEF Maldives facilitated delivery and provided technical support on vaccine forecasting and the procurement process. Vaccines for the expanded programme on immunization and for yellow fever and meningitis were procured through this mechanism. In response to the H1N1 outbreak, UNICEF Maldives funded procurement of influenza vaccine for children under the age of five.

UNICEF Maldives provided one portable water quality testing kit and 3,310 H2S water testing kits to the Ministry of Environment and Energy. With this equipment, the Ministry's capacity was strengthened to create awareness in 11 island communities on safe drinking water, sanitation and good hygiene practices.

With UNICEF support, a regional emergency response centre (RERC) in Nilandhu island (Faafu atoll) was established together with the Government of Maldives. UNICEF Maldives procured personal protective gear for emergency responders, fire suppression equipment and flood and emergency management equipment to ensure that the RERC is equipped to plan and respond to all emergencies within the atoll.

UNICEF also supported the development of standards for quality care and services for children in residential care as well as alternative care programmes.

### Human rights-based approach to cooperation

UNICEF Maldives contributed to the achievement of the human rights-based approach to programming benchmarks through sustained advocacy to expedite the passage of two key pieces of legislation – the Juvenile Justice Bill, and the Child Rights, Child Care and Protection Bill.

UNICEF's partnership with the NGO Care Society continued in 2017, aimed at changing the negative social norms towards children with disabilities. Work was carried out with island councils, parents and schools to implement behaviour change communication interventions in selected islands.

UNICEF supported the Government in drafting action plans for prevention of violence against children, prevention of juvenile crimes and strengthening the judicial system. UNICEF ensured that key stakeholders, including children, were consulted during the development of the action plans. All three action plans were endorsed by the Government as way forward for the next two years.

In preparation for the commemoration of World Children's Day (WCD), with support from UNICEF, 10 children took over the five main divisions of the Ministry of Gender and Family for a day. The three-day programme included the children learning about the workings of each division on day 1, taking over on day 2, and making presentations to the Minister and senior management on the day 3. The children addressed how to get more children involved in the work done by the Ministry as well and proposed ideas for the Ministry's work plan for 2018. On World Children's Day, children took over the popular talk show 'Magey Raajje' on channel TVM. They interviewed key staff from the MoGF about the work done by Ministry on child rights, ending violence against children and children in state care, and showcased their experiences.

### Gender equality

UNICEF Maldives contributed to enhancement of the capacity of the Ministry of Gender and Family and the Maldives Police Service for prevention of and responding to sexual abuse of girl and boys and gender-based violence. UNICEF contributed to establishing effective community support groups, which are now active in preventing and responding to sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

UNICEF supported the design and dissemination of behavioural change messages that promote the role of fathers in creating an enabling environment for exclusive breastfeeding and positive practices of infant and young child feeding. The turnout of fathers for information sessions on feeding practices was low, and service providers continued to explore and innovatively address underlying stereotyped gender role perceptions.

As part of marking the International Day of the Girl Child, UNICEF supported the 'Girls Lead Initiative' of the Ministry of Gender and Family. Thirty girls (aged 16 – 18) from local high schools and colleges took part in mentorship/shadowing programmes where they were paired with leading female professionals from both public and private institutions. This initiative inspired girls and communities about the non-traditional leadership roles women can take in decision-making.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) in developing an Education Sector Plan (ESP) for 2018- 2023. The MoE will use analysis of the current situation to further enhance gender mainstreaming in the ESP.

In 2017 UNICEF Maldives also collaborated with the other UN agencies on the UNDAF Outcome on Gender Equality.

### **Environmental sustainability**

In 2017, UNICEF Maldives continued its partnership with the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) to promote climate resilience and child-centred disaster risk reduction (DRR). Under the One-UN joint programme, Low Emissions Climate Resilient Development (LECRd), the conceptual framework to establish the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) was finalized and validated and induction training sessions for the four CERTs in the islands of Gan, Isdhoo, Maavah and Kunahandhoo were completed. The CERTs, established with UNICEF's support, will be replicated throughout the country to lead all community-level, gender and child-sensitive climate resilience planning/awareness raising, assessing risks and responding to all emergencies.

With support from the UNICEF Regional Office, UNICEF Maldives worked with the Ministry of Environment and Energy to conduct a study on the effects of climate change on children in the Maldives. The Maldivian islands face continued rainfall and sea-surge flooding, coastal erosion, salinization of ground water and a range of issues associated with the rise in average temperatures. The study included detailed qualitative interviews of children and parents in six islands. Findings will guide UNICEF Maldives in defining its climate-resilience-building programme with the Government of Maldives.

UNICEF Maldives also worked with the NDMC, the MNDF, the Island Council of Nilandhu (Faafu atoll, south-central region) and Faafu Atoll Council to develop a Regional Emergency Response Centre (RERC) in Nilandhu. The RERC is an innovative, national approach to build climate resilience and reduce disaster risk, whereby the facility functions as an emergency preparedness/response centre, a community centre for climate resilience/DRR planning and as a fire station. The RERC, managed by the island council of Nilandhu, will work with communities, especially schools, to carry out resilience-building activities, including child-led assessment of risks. It will provide emergency response to all five islands in the atoll as well as the four neighbouring islands of Dhaalu atoll (south-central region). The RERC represents a novel approach to institutionalizing community-led emergency response and climate resilience building.

### **Effective leadership**

UNICEF Maldives continued to emphasize governance mechanisms for effective leadership. This included effective functioning of the programme and operation Group (POG) Team and the country management team (CMT). Key internal workflow processes were reviewed along with the table of authority (TOA). The composition of the statutory committees was reviewed and updated during the annual management review. Terms of reference of committees were shared with respective members to ensure smooth and informed discharge of responsibilities.

The CMT met regularly and reviewed all office performance indicators, including the rate of programme implementation, results achieved, and implementation of management responses of evaluation recommendations. Priority results included in 2017 AMP were discussed in POG and CMT meetings. Key performance Indicators were regularly tracked by the CMT using the

Performance Management Dashboard and scorecards, and corrective actions were taken on a timely basis. The CMT provided guidance and directives to accelerate implementation, and as a follow to the findings of the macro-assessment conducted for the new CPD 2016-2020, emphasized increased risk mitigation.

The CMT reviewed the enterprise risk management (ERM) plan and mitigation measures were identified and incorporated into workplans for follow up. The CMT also closely monitored AMP implementation. The business continuity plan (BCP) was updated to ensure efficient implementation in case of an emergency. The CMT (with support from the senior management team) continuously monitored the security situation of the country, kept staff abreast of developments and ensured that staff were equipped to continue business during instances of high insecurity.

### **Financial resources management**

The CMT oversaw the implementation of key performance indicators (KPIs) with regard to the regional and country office benchmarks, monitoring the performance scorecards regularly. Attention was given to underperforming areas and bottlenecks were identified and addressed.

Total allocations amounted to US\$2,142,000, including US\$897,000 Non-Grant, US\$1,027,000 Other Resources –Regular (ORR) and US\$217,000 IB. The overall year-end financial utilization stood at 100 per cent with 2.67 per cent of the ORR rephrased to 2018.

UNICEF Maldives ensured effective and efficient implementation of harmonised approach to cash transfers (HACT) through consistent monitoring and reporting that was reviewed and discussed in the CMT and Programme meetings throughout the year. A total of eight spot checks and 25 programme visit were carried out in line with the HACT assurance plan developed at the beginning of the year. As of the end of 2017, UNICEF Maldives had completed 100 per cent of all planned HACT assurance activities. Measures were taken to address the capacity gaps identified with the implementing partners regarding the procedures related to HACT and funds authorization, and certification of expenditures (FACE). A total of eight training sessions were held for the main implementing partners (IPs).

UNICEF Maldives took measures to ensure that the implementing partners were reporting on the utilization of funds by increasing the frequency of follow-up. Outstanding direct cash transfers (DCTs) over nine months were kept at zero and DCTs over 6 months were within the regional benchmark of 10 per cent.

UNICEF Maldives efficiently managed its financial resources, maintained bank optimization within established benchmarks and completed all bank reconciliations in a timely manner.

### **Fundraising and donor relations**

Other Resources (OR) represented 48 per cent of the approved budget. UNICEF Maldives utilized 98 per cent of the allotted 2017 resources (RR – 98 per cent and OR – 99 per cent).

Jointly with UNICEF Bhutan, UNICEF Nepal and UNICEF Sri Lanka, UNICEF Maldives contributed to the drafting of a multi-country funding proposal on early childhood development (ECD) for the SAARC Development Fund. If acquired, this fund would support advocacy, awareness and partnership within the area of ECD, help development of standards, enhance quality of services, and expand the provision of holistic ECD interventions.

Under the leadership of UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), in early 2017 UNICEF Maldives submitted three joint project proposals to the UNDG A-P 2030 Agenda Implementation Fund. These included proposals for:

1. Strengthening inclusive education in schools of Maldives by UNICEF and UNESCO
2. Nutrition Data-Strengthening the Growth Monitoring Data to track Under Five Nutrition by UNICEF and WHO
3. Monitoring and Advocacy for Health in SDGs by WHO and UNICEF.

Although the proposals were not selected, the proposal development exercise was useful for UN agencies working together on the same thematic areas.

UNICEF Maldives received thematic funds that were used to support interventions in education, WASH, child protection, and nutrition. To ensure optimal use of funds and that they were utilized by grant expiry dates, fund monitoring mechanisms were put in place, including monthly programme and operations coordination meetings, CMT meetings and in-house tracking tools.

### Evaluation and research

UNICEF Maldives had five PRIME activities consisting of one evaluation and three studies. The social protection evaluation was initiated, and consultation was ongoing to define the scope of the evaluation with national partners. This evaluation will be executed in 2018, with the aim to have the results available before the midterm review of the UNDAF and CPD.

The management response to the recommendations in the life skills education programme completed in 2016 was entered in the evaluation tracker in 2017. The evaluation resulted in introducing modifications to the life skills education programme by focusing on the implementation of the new National Curriculum, which integrates several LSE components. The extra-curricular LSE programme was reinforced in a manner that complements the National Curriculum for students and reaches out to out-of-school children.

The DHS experienced some delays due to funding challenges but was underway at year end. The studies on Household Income and Expenditures Survey (HIES) and the Effects of Climate Change on Children in the Maldives were completed, and the reports were being finalized at year end.

UNICEF Maldives supported the Government to strengthen its M&E system and capacities to meet the requirements of the SDG agenda. UNICEF continued its partnership with the SDG Unit within Ministry of Environment and Energy. Jointly with UNDP, UNFPA, and WHO, national reporting mechanisms were strengthened focusing on raising awareness on the SDGs and routine data collection mechanisms.

As a member of the National Technical Advisory Committee of the impact evaluation, UNICEF is providing technical support to ensure that children with disabilities are fully covered in this evaluation.

### Efficiency gains and cost savings

UNICEF Maldives continued to strengthen a cost-saving culture in the office. Signs were displayed around the office to remind staff to make the conscious decisions on saving energy, reducing carbon footprint, and reducing costs. Positive practices such as responsible use of water and telephone, reuse of paper for internal purposes and turning off lights and air conditioners when not in use were inculcated within the staff.

Initiatives were taken to reduce the number of paper copies filed and to reduce paper consumption in the office. Only one hard copy of a document was filed and more emphasis was placed on strengthening the office electronic filing system. This led to reduction in office space required for the files as well as reduction in the use of paper.

As part of reducing the environmental footprint, management changed all lighting fixtures in the office from 100 compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) 20W tube lights to Smart LED Tube 10W 1000lm lights. Motion detector lights were installed in office spaces not in continuous use throughout the day. These initiatives are expected to significantly reduce electricity costs.

UNICEF Maldives streamlined management practices by reducing the number of office committees, increasing the contract review committee and PRC threshold to the minimum global standards, increasing the small scale funding agreements (SSFA) threshold to the policy standards and undertaking only the minimum number of required spot checks. These steps by management significantly reduced the amount of staff time spent on committees and increased the overall office effectiveness.

### Supply management

UNICEF Maldives significantly improved procurement planning in 2017. The Office prepared a supply plan at the beginning of the year, updated the plan as needed, and regularly monitored plan implementation. The procurement activities are outlined below:

Programme supplies

US\$110,815.61

Service contracting

US\$ 98,037.79

Procurement Services (through Government funding)

US\$146,550.40

Total supply and services received for 2017

US\$355,403.80

The total value of supplies and services decreased by 8.10 per cent in 2017. Supplies were procured to support national and subnational capacities, to create awareness on safe drinking water, sanitation, and good hygiene practices; and to strengthen disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation capacity in island communities.

All service contracting was conducted in an open bidding process. None of the contracts were raised on single sourcing.

With support from the Procurement Services Centre in the Supply Division, UNICEF Maldives facilitated the procurement of vaccines for the Government to ensure reliable and high quality vaccines for the children in the Maldives. The funds for the procurement services were directly transferred to the Procurement Services Division by the Government. UNICEF Maldives will continue to provide this support throughout the country programme cycle.

### Security for staff and premises

The overall security situation in the Maldives remained stable with a low level of security risk.

The security situation in Maldives was closely monitored by UNDSS and information was disseminated to staff in a timely manner. Regular updates were provided to the UN Security Management Team (SMT). Necessary advice was provided in the SMT meetings by security advisors and further disseminated by head of agencies to all staff.

The UNICEF Security Focal Point participated in the first Regional Security Officers and Security Focal Point Network meeting and gained valuable knowledge related to staff safety and security. Two UNICEF staff members participated in wardens training conducted by UNDSS. Post Exposure Preventive (PEP) Kits were distributed to all the residence UN agencies and PEP Kit custodians were provided with relevant training.

In response to incidences of social media harassment reported by UN staff, staff members were informed on the measures they have to take when engaging in social media platforms and were advised to be more mindful of their roles as UN employees and to be extra careful when discussing sensitive issues in the public domain.

An office fire and safety assessment was conducted with assistance from the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) and all recommended improvements were implemented. A fire evacuation drill was conducted by a UNDSS official, after which all staff were given a briefing on fire and safety and on how to use the fire extinguisher. The MOSS compliance level for the office was 95 per cent, and all staff follow the security clearance process while undertaking all travels. The UNDSS Adviser based in Sri Lanka visited UNICEF premises and provided advice to ensure MOSS compliance.

## Human resources

An office-wide learning plan was developed at the beginning of 2017, with support from the human resources development team (HRDT). Requests for individual learning opportunities were assessed considering fairness of opportunities and benefits for further career development. The utilization of the learning budget stood at 50 per cent. Thirty five per cent of staff undertook training programmes for which funding was required. Training also was provided for all staff on child centred disaster risk reduction, funded from the regional learning budget.

UNICEF Maldives maintained a 50/50 gender balance among the 14 staff. Staff included two males in the international professions (IP), three males and four females in the national professional (NP), and two males and three females in the general service (GS) categories. All recruitments in the office for staff, national, and international consultants were undertaken through the talent management system (TMS), thus enhancing efficiency and transparency.

The office maintained 100 per cent completion of the planning phase of 'ACHIEVE' for 2017. The performance management cycle and an office culture of regular PER conversations were well respected. This resulted in better tracking of performance targets and identification of possible areas of performance improvement.

The office developed a workplan to address concerns identified during the Global Staff Survey and actions were underway at year end.

Information and support were continuously provided to staff about the minimum standards in

HIV in the workplace. Measures such as peer support volunteers (PSV's) and flexible work arrangements were in place to facilitate life-work balance.

### Effective use of information and communication technology

UNICEF Maldives established a Universal Wifi to standardize Wireless internet service to both UNICEF users and UNICEF guests. This provided seamless connectivity for UNICEF staff visiting from other offices. All the workstation operation systems were being upgraded to the new Windows 10 operating system (OS). Staff were familiarized with new OS and most completed Windows 10 online training.

UNICEF Maldives replaced ICT hardware ending its life cycle. Five workstation laptops and two servers were replaced with new standard hardware. "VEEAM" backup software was migrated to a new hardware and software was upgraded to the latest version.

UNICEF Maldives established a common shared office 365 (Outlook) calendar for major events, network meetings and training for the year. This led to better management of common events and meetings involving all staff. Technical support was provided for The Child Protection Database Mobile application and the E-learning platform for teachers, Skype was used for interview and meetings, which reduced the cost of international telephone calls. A scanning template was created in the multi-function copier machine for scanning GSSC documents in compliance with GSSC document scanning standards, which reduced disk space and increased internet bandwidth. Physical access to the server room was improved by installing a biometric access control system.

UNICEF Maldives fully complied with the corporate IT security policies.

### Programme components from RAM

## ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

### OUTCOME 1 Cross-Sectoral

#### Analytical statement of progress

Stunting and wasting rates of children under five years old in some communities remained a concern. To address this vulnerability, and to address the underlying behavioural issues associated with feeding, UNICEF Maldives continued to enhance the capacity of healthcare providers on infant young child feeding (IYCF) counselling, and to strengthen the growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) programme. The early childhood development (ECD) components were integrated in to the GMP protocol, which emphasizes providing comprehensive nutrition services. The new protocol highlights the critical window of the first years of life and the importance of early stimulation, play and care beyond nutrition, which is a gap in current services. To complement the GMP protocols, health workers of four Atolls were trained on infant young child feeding (IYCF) counselling. They are now providing nutrition interventions to mothers, families and children under-five whose growth is faltering. Integrated early childhood materials were disseminated to health workers and were being provided to new pregnant mothers when they enrolled in the antenatal programmes at health facilities.

The Child Health Strategy finalized in 2016 identified newborns as a vulnerable group that requires specialized care. In 2017, With UNICEF Maldives support, the National Child Health



Strategy (CHS) was launched. The CHS integrates the country commitments to Every Newborn Action Plan, providing strategic actions for ending preventable newborn deaths. The capacity of healthcare providers from three atolls were built on essential newborn care in trainings that promoted a continuum of care, starting from preconception, further minimizing the risks of premature births and newborn deaths.

Out-of-school children and children in conflict with the law who previously did not have access to any form of learning were identified and reached with alternative learning programs, including vocational skills development programs. A total of 43 OOSC adolescent boys were enrolled. Trainings provided to social workers on working with these adolescents enhanced their skills. These programmes were overseen by a multisectoral steering committee co-facilitated by UNICEF Maldives. The steering committee mobilized technical and financial resources within the relevant agencies and contributed to the programmes. This strengthened communication among agencies involved and is a good example of cost effective, well-coordinated multisectoral response to improve services for the most disadvantaged children.

There was increased recognition of out-of-school children and the need to identify them and track them in the National Data Systems. Increased measures were instituted to address issues that push children out of school and keep them out of school. The Maldives Education Information System (MEMIS), supported by UNICEF Maldives, was developed to track student attendance and notify the authorities as necessary. MEMIS can monitor schools' interventions to address issues of attendance and the behaviours that predispose students to drop out of school.

UNICEF Maldives also supported the Ministry of Education efforts to re-enrol students in school and provide them with condensed learning programs. UNICEF Maldives also supported development of a behaviour management policy for schools that requires schools to ban suspension of children from school for behavioural issues and introduces restorative justice approaches as an alternative to dealing with disruptive behaviours of students.

Violence against children (VaC) was identified as one of the key issues contributing to the vulnerabilities of children. Child victims of violence and victims of sexual abuse are among the most vulnerable children and are often re-victimized due to the weak system and stigmatized due to the prevailing negative social norms. These factors combined with the dispersed nature of the country leads to low reporting and are challenges to address the issue of violence against children.

UNICEF Maldives supported consultations with stakeholders, including NGOs and children, at the National Conference on Violence against Children, National Symposium on Child Rights and Juvenile Justice Systems, and National Seminar on Prevention of Juvenile Crimes. Those events provided platforms to discuss the issues, gaps and ways to address them. The consultations resulted in three action plans that provide a stronger basis for strengthening of the child protection system in the Maldives.

Institutional capacity for responding to reported cases of VAC was improved through support to training of police investigating officers, resulting in improved investigation of challenging cases of violence against children. Capacity building of social workers improved case management. Key stakeholders in the travel and tourism sector were sensitized on child sexual exploitation, an area of high risk, which led to commitments from the Ministry of Tourism and relevant associations to change their staff training programmes.

UNICEF Maldives continued to strengthen the community social groups (CSGs) as a community-level first-line response mechanism. Eight of the 30 groups in four atolls were directly working with identified families. Children from these families were brought back to school.

The mobile application and the 24-hour hotline were launched in 2017, making it easier to report cases of violence against children.

**OUTPUT 1** Policies and strategies for implementation and monitoring of inclusive and equitable child health programmes developed and implemented.

#### **Analytical statement of progress**

In the continued effort to build institutional capacity for nutrition services in the health sector, the Growth Monitoring Standards and Protocol were integrated with early childhood components, including promotion of early stimulation and monitoring of growth and development milestones. Once finalized, the standards and protocol will be disseminated to all 183 public health centres to provide the comprehensive growth monitoring services to children under five.

The islands in the Gaafu-Alifu Atolls had high malnutrition rates. Mothers and caregivers there participated in breast feeding promotion and complementary feeding sessions where they received information and guidance that will help them make informed choices on providing nutritious food to infants. A national-level infant and young child feeding (IYCF) training planned for mid-year and was cancelled due to the H1N1 crisis. IYCF trainings were instead held in the north (Haa-Dhaalu Atoll), and central (DhaaluAtoll) regions improving the skills and knowledge of health workers and nurses in 15 islands. Approximately 472 mothers in islands with higher malnutrition rates received IYCF key messages that will enable them to practice proper feeding practices and improve the nutrition status of their children.

Overall, efforts to build the capacity of health workers on infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF) increased access to counselling for parents, although there were some issues related to supervision and accountability of the workers. More effort will be given to integrate IYCF counselling into supportive supervision of health providers in 2018. Monitoring mechanisms will continue to be strengthened, with updating of growth monitoring data collection and reporting tools.

The development of a behaviour change communication strategy was in its early stages and faced delays due to technical capacity limitations in the partner agency. The strategy focuses on the first 1,000 days of life and is informed by a rapid assessment of feeding practices and factors of malnutrition.

A UNICEF Maldives delegation participated in the SAARC, UNICEF regional nutrition conference on wasting, an advocacy platform to increase the political commitment at regional level to improving maternal and child nutrition. The 10 key outcome messages from this regional consultation contributed to the deliberations on the SAARC Regional Action Framework on Nutrition at the SAARC Health Ministers' meeting in August 2017.

**OUTPUT 2** Enhanced Implementation and monitoring of inclusive, child and gender sensitive education, including learning achievements.

### **Analytical statement of progress**

In 2017, UNICEF Maldives pursued implementation of the two-year rolling workplan on improving quality of education and monitoring of learning achievements initiated in 2016. The curriculum implementation monitoring tools and the strategy developed in 2016 were finalized in 2017. These tools will be used by the National Institute of Education in supervision visits to schools in 2018.

In early 2017, the Ministry of Education established the Quality Assurance Department (QAD) to conduct school reviews and assess the quality of education provided in schools. The School Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (SIQAAF) was being operationalized with the advent of the QAD. UNICEF Maldives supported the development of an operational plan for SIQAAF and the execution of 43 school reviews in 2017. QAD was preparing an analytical report based on the school reviews done in 2016 and 2017 that will provide important input for policy recommendations on improving quality of education.

Building on the work done in 2016 to develop an e-learning platform to train teachers on the new curriculum, in 2017 UNICEF Maldives supported the development of an e-learning strategy and its operational plan. A core team at the NIE were trained on instructional design to build the institutional capacity on e-learning. The platform and the e-learning strategy were launched.

UNICEF Maldives supported the development of a National Strategy and Standards on Literacy along with a five-year plan to improve the quality of literacy and mathematics learning for children. A review of the status of early grade literacy and numeracy was conducted to inform the scoping of the strategy. A key finding of the review was that there is a need for a clearer understanding of overall end-of-grade standards in reading, writing, mathematics and speaking to drive improvement and that there is no mechanism for accountability at the end of primary compared to GCSE at the end of secondary. Consequently, there is no mechanism for benchmarking the performance of primary schools or for categorising schools for support. A new strategy addressing these issues was finalized for implementation in 2018.

UNICEF Maldives, in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MOE), launched the Maldives Education Management and Information System (MEMIS) in 2017. Data from the MEMIS was used by the MoE to monitor student attendance.

In partnership with the NGO Care Society, UNICEF Maldives supported the implementation of a behaviour change communication strategy in six islands to address discrimination of children with disabilities. Joint monitoring activities revealed that the islands were more willing to make the communities more inclusive for children with disabilities. The IEC materials developed under this initiative were launched to mark the International Day of People with Disabilities.

**OUTPUT 3** 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**

A steering committee consisting of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender and Family, the Juvenile Justice Unit (JJU) and UNICEF was established to enhance multi-sectoral linkages and coordination required to plan and operationalize interventions for out-of-school children and

adolescents. UNICEF convened the steering committee and provided technical support, improving coordination and collaboration between the agencies. A forum was organized for a wide range of stakeholders resulting in the identification of new partners and commitments from agencies including the TVET Authority of Maldives (for enrolment in their courses), Maldives Red Crescent Society (for mentoring support and outreach for vulnerable children in the farfetched islands), Maldives Institute of Technology (for enrolment in their skills development courses) and Ministry of Islamic Affairs (for spiritual development of offending children).

The multisectoral committee identified adolescents in conflict with the law as one of the most vulnerable groups that needed to be reached with skills development programs. Building on the agreements from the stakeholder forum, discussions with the TVET authority resulted in children being accepted into TVET's accredited vocational programs. A total of 43 adolescent boys were enrolled in vocational programs offered by the TVET Authority. A program consisting of life skills, literacy and numeracy, a legal awareness component and spiritual education was developed and will be ready for implementation in early 2018.

UNICEF Maldives also supported the Ministry of Education to develop and implement a condensed learning program for out-of-school children who are brought back to school. Capacities of selected teachers working in schools were improved on delivery of accelerated learning programs. Following the training these teachers were teaching newly-enrolled students through individual learning plans based on the condensed curriculum.

UNICEF Maldives provided support to the MOE to develop a school behaviour management policy, which was in its final stages of approval at year-end. Once implemented in 2018, this policy will ban suspension of students in schools, which was one of the reasons why some students dropped out. The policy will also institute restorative justice approaches to conflict resolution between students. Teachers and school management will be given support in dealing with conflict, the most common behaviour issue in schools that has led to expulsion of students.

**OUTPUT 4** By 2020, Institutional capacities for provision of quality Water and Sanitation services are strengthened.

#### **Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF Maldives continued to support the strengthening of the community social groups (CSGs), one of the key pillars of the national child protection system and the community-level first-line response mechanism. By the end of 2017, with support from UNICEF Maldives, the Government had initiated 30 CSGs in four atolls: 12 were just recently formed; 9 had completed a mapping of vulnerable families, and 7 were working with families and had brought 8 children from 2 families back to school. In one atoll, positive changes in behaviour toward victims of abuse were observed, and was attributed to the work of the CSGs.

UNICEF Maldives supported the Government with refresher training for 47 social workers for improved case management and skills such as risk assessments, report writing, development of intervention plans and techniques for interviewing children and adults to work with children victims of violence and women victims of gender-based violence. Twenty seven case workers from alternate care residences were trained on ECE Curriculum, positive parenting and care and management. The number of children running away from these residences declined. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Gender and Family to draft Guidelines for the (alternate) Care Institutions in the Maldives, which was in the process of being adapted by the Government as the minimum standard, streamlined with international standards.

UNICEF Maldives also continued to support to the Maldives Police Service (MPS) in strengthening its capacity for investigation of crimes against children, crimes committed by children and for prevention of violence against children and juvenile crimes. At year-end, 51 Investigating Officers from the Maldives Police Service had undergone the specialized training through the Advanced Certificate in Interviewing Techniques. Out of those, more than 50 per cent worked in the outer islands. The case review reports at MPS showed an increased success rate for cases investigated by the officers with this training.

Capacity of an additional 62 Officers from MPS was enhanced for working with offenders through the Suspect Interviewing Programme. To ensure sustainability of the programmes, UNICEF Maldives supported the Institute for Security and Law Enforcement Studies through the training of trainers. In partnership with MPS, Ministry of Tourism and UNICEF, 48 people from tourist resorts, local guest houses and safari boats received training on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation in the Travel and Tourism Sector.

UNICEF Maldives supported the Government in the formulation of three strategic action plans: the Action Plan for Prevention and Responding to Violence against Children, the Action Plan for Prevention of Juvenile Crimes, and the Action Plan to strengthen the Juvenile Justice System. These two-year action plans will provide a stronger basis for improving the child protection system.

**OUTPUT 5** 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**

Expansion of the Maldives Child Protection Database continued in the first half of 2017. Work began to link up the database at Ministry of Education and Prosecutor General's Office with the Maldives Child Protection Database (MCPD). The MCPD also was linked up with the Call Centre at the Ministry of Gender and Family to ensure that all cases reported are captured, paving way to acquire an improved understanding of the trends and the extent of violence against children in the Maldives.

In the first six months of 2017, UNICEF Maldives focused on increasing access to reporting of violence against children cases in the far off and isolated islands. The mobile application was launched in early July. UNICEF also supported strengthening the Call Centre at the Ministry of Gender and Law, linking it to the Maldives Child Protection Database, so that cases reported can be collated, analysed and responded to in a timely manner. The Call Centre was further strengthened with training of the call centre staff, and establishment of Standard Operational Procedures for the Call Centre. With the launching of the mobile application there was increased access and options for reporting cases of violence against children.

The launch event for the mobile app was attended by UNICEF's Regional Director for South Asia and provided an opportunity for high-level advocacy to reiterate the importance of working together in coordination for both the prevention of and response to cases of violence against children. The number of cases of sexual violence reported increased from 262 in 2016 to 443 cases in 2017.

Additional work is needed to improve the capacity for effective use of the Maldives Child Protection Database and for analysing and using the data for decision-making.

**OUTPUT 6** By 2020, Institutional capacities for provision of quality Water and Sanitation services are strengthened.

#### **Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF Maldives supported the strengthening of the regulatory framework for the provision of water and sanitation services. A total of eight regulations that come under the National Water Bill in the Parliament were drafted with support from UNICEF Maldives. Technical support was provided to the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) (the focal ministry) to develop a monitoring and coordination mechanism for SDG 6.

Support also was provided to develop the emergency preparedness plan (EPRP) for the WASH sector. Constraints in seeking technical support for the MEE delayed that work.

Support provided to strengthen WASH in Schools led to the development of a draft WASH in Schools Policy. Consensus was reached on the WASH in Schools indicators that must be monitored through the Education Information System.

**OUTCOME 2** 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**

This outcome focuses on programme interventions that include strengthening national and subnational capacities for generation and use of data and evidence for policymaking, and planning and programme development, as well as periodic analyses of data on inequities, including climatically vulnerable populations and advocacy on inclusive policies and strategies.

UNICEF Maldives provided support to various partners to generate disaggregated data for vulnerable children. The data was used to inform policy dialogue and advocacy. This included updating the MaldivInfo by incorporating additional disaggregated child indicators from administrative data and developing atoll-level databases. The Maldives Education Management Information System (MEMIS) was officially launched and made functional. The Maldives Child Protection Database was expanded to other sectors for better management of child reported cases, providing real-time data on child cases.

Despite some progress in terms of generating data and evidence, many gaps were identified in targeting the most deprived and marginalized children. Data and evidence on more specific areas such as child poverty estimates, number of children out of school and number of children in conflict with law were not readily available or were outdated. An integrated data management system is needed to address the most deprived and disadvantaged children.

Gaps also were identified in terms of use of data for evidence-based policy and decision-making. More specifically, the social protection schemes were not properly targeted to address the neediest, rather a blanket approach was adopted, limiting access and not reaching the most deprived and vulnerable. The social protection programmes did not focus on removing people from poverty, especially given the significant vulnerabilities of the country such as environmental

degradation and impending threats of climate change. Improved understanding of the processes that help to strengthen resilience at different levels is needed to inform methodologies for monitoring and evaluating impact and effectiveness.

UNICEF Maldives strengthened the capacity of the National Social Protection Agency in data management and monitoring to improve targeting of social protection programmes (single parent allowance, disability, foster parent allowance), and to update the registry to include the most vulnerable children, including children with disabilities.

Within the framework of regional partnership between ROSA and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), a firm commitment was secured with the Government to generate national data on child poverty and child vulnerabilities through development of a child-focused Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) that will select and analyse key indicators from the ongoing DHS. The Child MPI will help profile child poverty and engage the Government on measurement and routine monitoring of child poverty.

With the abolishment of the National Planning Council and National Planning Department in 2014, the process of planning and working for results has considerably weakened. The current government manifesto is seen as the guiding planning document which is weak in terms of realistic actions, achieving results and monitoring. Moreover, government budgetary system is not linked to planning documents, and therefore evidence based programming and budgeting happens in silos (by sectors) which is approved by the parliament without a holistic approach to it. In 2017, initial steps were taken to draft a monitoring framework for the main programmes of the Ministry of Gender and Family (MOGF). The framework will be further enhanced in 2018 to support achievement of key results for children.

Maldives is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its low-lying geography, which makes it susceptible to flooding and inundation, and its dependence on economic activities that are sensitive to climate change, such as fishing and tourism. The country is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, particularly coastal flooding, storm surges and tsunamis. Land scarcity, coupled with limited utilization options and a growing population, also contribute to the country's vulnerability to multiple hazards. Bottlenecks to improving the country's readiness to deal with disasters include the absence of a child-sensitive legal, policy and institutional framework for disaster risk reduction and management, and in particular for climate change adaptation, coupled with limited institutional capacity. Climate change has tangible and disproportionate consequences for children and women and creates real barriers to the achievement of the child survival, development and protection goals.

UNICEF Maldives focused on supporting the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) to strengthen national and local capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies and natural hazards, especially those exacerbated by climate change. The conceptual framework required to establish community emergency response teams (CERTs) was developed, has been nationally validated and endorsed, and includes the training needs of CERTs.

With UNICEF support, the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) established the Regional Emergency Response Centre (RERC) in two atolls, the central hub for atoll-level emergency preparedness and response (for man-made and natural hazards).

UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the National Bureau of Statistics, the National Social Protection Agency and the National Disaster Management Centre on emergency work in island communities.

**OUTPUT 1** By 2020, Institutional capacities for provision of quality Water and Sanitation services are strengthened.

**Analytical statement of progress**

This output focuses on strengthening child-sensitive social protection systems to respond effectively to multidimensional child poverty.

UNICEF continued to support the National Social Protection Agency to strengthen the monitoring framework of the social protection programme in order to increase efficiency and better target vulnerable children. Monitoring trips were supported to Shaviyani and Addu City, where 1,352 beneficiaries (including 687 children, 456 single parent' and 809 people with disabilities) received cash transfers from the three main schemes (foster parents, single parents and disability allowance) and were assessed. Monitoring trips were instrumental in assessing the effects of cash transfer on vulnerable children. The assessments showed improvement in children's lives in terms of access to basic social services. The monitoring visits also resulted in enhancement of the effectiveness of the targeting and greater involvement of local councils in the coordination and implementation of inclusive social protection programmes.

In close collaboration with the UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia, UNICEF Maldives supported the National Bureau of Statistics to develop child-focused national Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) that will generate robust and comprehensive child poverty data for evidence-based policymaking and contribute to the reduction of child deprivation and exclusion. The main objective is to produce a robust, practical and sustainable national C-MPI using the Alkire Foster method, and to lay the basis for this measure to be used effectively in policy-making. The agreement aimed to conduct multidimensional child deprivation analysis using DHS and build capacity and support NBS to model child poverty measurement using a core set of dimensions and indicators that are essential to child's development. The agreement also aimed to design a measure on child poverty that will allow monitoring and informing social policy and programme response.

UNICEF Maldives finalized and signed a costed Action Plan with OPHI and supported the participation of two NBS staff in the OPHI Summer School on Multidimensional Child Poverty Analysis in Morocco from 3 to 14 July 2017. This initiative will help Maldives to produce and report nationally owned baseline estimates on the number of children living in multidimensional poverty, creating the baseline for SDG1 monitoring, particularly target 1.2.

**OUTPUT 2** By 2020, Institutional capacities for provision of quality Water and Sanitation services are strengthened.

**Analytical statement of progress**

Additional data supporting to SDG indicators and sectoral needs were made available through updating of the MaldivInfo database, expansion of the Maldives Child Protection database to additional Family and Children Service Centres (FCSC) and making the Maldives Education Management Information System functional, providing real-time data on student teachers and parents. Updated equity profiles on child demography, education and child protection were used



for policy advocacy, planning and shaping programme interventions. Further analysis of data was carried out using census 2014 data on children, providing crucial information that will be used to inform the midterm review of the CPD and UNDAF.

To supplement the MaldivInfo database databases were customized to provide data at atoll level and were used to develop Atoll/Island Development Plans.

To strengthen the Government planning, monitoring and evaluation function, results-based planning and monitoring was developed and endorsed for the Ministry of Gender and Family. The Ministry's capacity was strengthened through a four-day training on planning, monitoring and evaluation.

UNICEF increased awareness on the SDG indicators by participation in the awareness and localization session carried out jointly with UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and UN Women.

Technical support was provided to complete an ongoing Demographic Health Survey and data analysis of Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Data from these sources, along with administrative data, will provide a good basis to report on SDGs for children and women.

**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 2017, UNICEF Maldives supported the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) to strengthen national and local capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies and natural hazards exacerbated by climate change.

In this regard, UNICEF Maldives 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 (2017/2018). 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 conceptual framework was nationally validated and endorsed and includes the training needs of CERTs, including emergency preparedness planning, first aid and flood mitigation.

UNICEF Maldives also provided support to NDMC to review national guidelines on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) planning. CBDRM exercises were carried out in all 11 inhabited islands in the Laamu Atoll, under the One UN joint programme - LECReD. From the disaster management (DM) plans and the vulnerability and capacity assessments done in each island, NDMC will develop the atoll DM plan and Atoll Disaster Outlook report, a first for an atoll in the Maldives. These documents will provide extensive information on the capacities and challenges within in the atoll, including the capacities built through LECReD programme, island-hazard profiles and how DM, emergency preparedness/response planning for climate-induced and man-made hazards have been incorporated into the island development planning process through policy change efforts carried out by UNICEF and other UN agencies party to the joint-programme.

With support from UNICEF ROSA Emergency Funds, UNICEF Maldives worked with the

NDMC, the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), Faafu Atoll Council and the Island Council of Nilandhu Island to establish a Regional Emergency Response Centre (RERC) in Nilandhoo. It would become the central hub for atoll-level emergency preparedness and response for man-made and natural hazards. The centre would house a well-trained, 19-member (young men and women) CERT and be equipped with fire/emergency response geared to address emergencies within the atoll without requiring central government support. The RERC is expected to provide support to all 5 islands in Faafu atoll and nearby islands from neighbouring Dhaalu atoll, making the RERC pivotal in the work supported by UNICEF to institutionalize national emergency planning/response.

The Nilandhu Island Council was developing plans to engage schools and youth within the atoll through the RERC to carry out resilience building activities including child-led hazard mapping and response actions so facilitate children to become agents of change on DRR.

Through the LECReD programme, UNICEF supported MEE to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry to carry out water safety planning and WASH awareness in Laamu atoll and pre-position water-testing equipment (H2S testing kits) in all 11 islands, allowing communities to carry out water testing prior to household rainwater harvesting and prepare for the long dry period

## Document Centre

### Evaluation and research

Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
Effects of Climate Change on Children in the Maldives	2017/001	Study

### Programme documents

Document Type	Title	Name
CPD	CPD	CPD 2016-2020 approved by EB sept 2015.pdf
CPD	Costed Evaluation Plan 2016-2020	Maldives Country office - Costed Evaluation Matrix1.docx