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Report on the end-of-cycle review of the medium-term strategic plan 2006-2013

Summary

This report provides information on the end-of-cycle review of the medium-term strategic plan 2006-2013; it should be read in conjunction with the annex on results and key performance indicators. The report is in response to Executive Board decision 2010/6 requesting a report and discussion on the end-of-cycle review of the extended medium-term strategic plan and the process of planning the next medium-term strategic plan at the first regular session 2013.

* E/ICEF/2013/1.



Looking back to look forward

1. The end-of-cycle review of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006-2013 was carried out in 2012. It drew on a wide range of information sources, including the latest available data on child-related indicators for the Millennium Development Goals, information on progress towards MTSP targets as well as major evaluations undertaken during the reporting period.

2. The analysis presented in this report was developed through a range of consultations: (a) feedback on the MTSP from all UNICEF field offices; (b) questionnaire responses from United Nations Member States and UNICEF National Committees; (c) workshops with key staff from field and headquarters offices; and (d) in-depth reviews of the focus areas, normative principles and cross-cutting strategies of the MTSP. The end-of-cycle review process included a participatory, detailed review of the situation of children globally (summarized in the section on each MTSP focus area). This report complements annual achievements and lessons learned that are presented in the Executive Director's annual report and corresponding data companion. A conference room paper on the status of MTSP indicators is also available.

3. Improvement in the well-being of children is cause for celebration. During the period, under-five mortality has been reduced significantly, from nearly 10.5 million deaths annually in 2004 to an estimated 6.9 million annually in 2011. Treatment availability for children living with HIV has increased by over 500 per cent, and infection rates among women and men aged 15-24 years have fallen, from 0.7 per cent and 0.4 per cent in 2005 to 0.6 per cent and 0.3 per cent in 2011. Globally, the Millennium Development Goal target on drinking water was met in 2010. More girls and boys have access to primary education, with enrolment rates increasing from 86 per cent in 2004 to 91 per cent in 2010. National commitments to the realization of children's rights have continued to improve, influenced by dramatic improvements in the quality of data and data analysis on children and women. However, these achievements at the aggregate level mask the growing disparities in many countries.

4. The past seven years have witnessed an increase in humanitarian emergencies, both in terms of scale and severity, resulting in a higher number of people affected by natural disasters and conflict-related crises, with complex transition and recovery processes. The provision of support to women and children in such emergencies required a combination of conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action, peacebuilding and development assistance. The poorest populations and those still unreached by progress on the global development goals are increasingly concentrated in humanitarian contexts.

5. Macrotrends affecting children indicate that accelerated urbanization, migration, conflict, disaster and climate change will significantly increase stress and vulnerabilities on children in the years to come:

(a) Climate change, especially its impact on the survival, growth and development of children, is the most fundamental emerging area to have grown in significance during the course of the current MTSP. The profound impact of climate change on children indicates a need to mainstream climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into country programmes of cooperation, with greater emphasis placed on strengthening resilience at the community level and reinforcing institutions responsible for delivery of basic social services;

(b) Urbanization and migration are related phenomena. Increasingly large numbers of children and families live in cities, and migrate both within countries and across borders. These migrations have led to large numbers of children living in urban settings where extended families and traditional networks are weakened. Combined with an increase in the scale and severity of natural disasters overall, this has meant that larger numbers of urban populations are affected by humanitarian crises, making an effective response particularly difficult, as evidenced in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

6. The demographic transition that a number of programme countries are undergoing requires additional analysis to address adequately the agenda for young people and adolescents — through a renewed focus on adolescent girls, through support to post-basic education and transition to adulthood and their role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and democratic transition.

7. Great strides have been made in improving the lives of children throughout the world, accelerated by new opportunities made available through innovative technology, the growing evidence base on effectiveness of social policies and programmes, and a significant increase in partnerships at all levels in advancing children rights.

8. However, the increasing disparities in the living conditions of children in many contexts worldwide challenge these advancements. There is a growing awareness of these disparities, as reflected in national and international reports, policy discussions and in the media, along with a consensus of the unacceptability of these trends and recognition of the risks that such disparities among children have on future development and progress. The resulting renewed commitment at all levels to address disparities, leveraging innovations and partnerships, has the potential to reverse the trend and encourage countries to follow a more inclusive and sustainable approach.

9. The equity refocus is now the organization's core strategy for universal realization of child rights. Initial work in identifying the barriers and bottlenecks is helping the most disadvantaged children utilize quality services in health, education, water and social protection and thus assure results for children. Further acceleration efforts are needed to address relevant policy, supply and demand-related bottlenecks and other barriers to achieve sustainable results.

10. The equity refocus of UNICEF has increased attention on data collection and monitoring of the most vulnerable children and families across all sectors; it has further sharpened analysis of the multiple dimensions of discrimination and exclusion that children face. Monitoring and demonstrating tangible results is central to the organization's approach to managing results for children and in reporting them, both in humanitarian and development contexts, to advance child rights.

11. Additional efforts are needed to address barriers for the most disadvantaged to demand and access services. The importance of collaborating with people from underserved communities and strengthening the capacity to demand services has been highlighted as a key lesson. This needs to be complemented by initiatives that improve accessibility to services and their quality. Further attention is needed to supporting policy initiatives and measures to remove financial barriers for access to services, including regulating private sector provision for the most disadvantaged children, families and communities.

12. The various sector programmes have contributed to impressive results for children. As UNICEF concentrates its efforts on the most disadvantaged children, who often face multiple deprivations, well-coordinated, integrated approaches are further needed. These approaches were emphasized in the global evaluations of UNICEF-supported programmes for early childhood development and for adolescents as well as in the evaluation of child protection programmes. At the same time, integrated programmes often depend on the capacity of national partners to coordinate and act locally.

13. During the course of the current MTSP, there has been a significant growth in the number of humanitarian emergencies involving children. Since 2010, UNICEF has focused efforts in improving management of the humanitarian response based on the revised Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), seeking to align them with international standards and make them more results-focused. In addition, it has adopted the UNICEF Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure and simplified standard operating procedures for major emergencies.

14. UNICEF capacity to respond has been strengthened through expanded global partnerships, as well as strategic engagement with the wider humanitarian community. Lessons learned in supporting preparedness planning work suggests that UNICEF will need to continue strengthening national and local capacities for emergency preparedness and response as well as wider disaster risk reduction, with the aim of strengthening the resilience of communities in coping with disasters.

15. Emergence of new technologies and tools promise to enhance the focus and quality of response at all levels. The equity refocus has led to cost-effective innovations in reaching marginalized children and families through the connectivity of social media and mobile phones, increasingly involving young people. Drawing lessons from pilots in several countries of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia — across a broad spectrum of development and humanitarian assistance — and taking them to scale will have to be a major part of the UNICEF approach to assuring results for children.

16. Strategic partnerships have been forged that are results-focused, based on the comparative advantages of UNICEF and the partnering institution. Although monitoring and evaluating the specific contributions of partnerships are difficult, UNICEF has focused on the quality of the collaboration. A key lesson learned is that strategic partnerships require both greater selectivity and a systematic approach to managing partnerships in order to maximize effectiveness. Institutional challenges, such as the need for dedicated resources, clarity of procedures as well as exit strategies (when partnership has not fulfilled its purpose or is not effective), will require attention in future.

Summary of results achieved and lessons learned for each focus area

Focus area 1: Young child survival and development

17. Overall, good progress has been made in supporting countries to achieve improved coverage for key interventions, such as polio eradication, sustaining routine immunization, measles elimination, malaria prevention, vitamin A and micronutrients supplementation, universal salt iodization and improved drinking

water. Through these and other interventions, UNICEF has contributed to accelerating the reduction of both child and maternal mortality — with 15 out of the 66 high-burden countries on track to reduce under-five child mortality rates by two thirds.

18. All regions have shown progress, with the annual rate of decline in child mortality rising to 3.2 per cent in 2000-2011, compared to 1.8 per cent per year in 1990-2000. Almost two thirds (64 per cent) were caused by infectious diseases, such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, meningitis, tetanus, HIV and measles. Around 40 per cent of all deaths of children under five occurred in the neonatal period (within the first 28 days of life), the majority from preterm birth complications and intra-partum-related complications (during delivery).

19. Maternal mortality has declined, from an estimated 320 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 210 per 100,000 live births in 2010. Annual maternal deaths declined significantly, from 543,000 in 1990 to 287,000 in 2010. Still, too many women are dying — and millions more suffering from illness and injury — from causes related to pregnancy, child birth and the postnatal period. The lifetime risk of maternal mortality is 1 in 39 in sub-Saharan Africa, compared with a lifetime risk of 1 in 4,700 in wealthy countries. This stark contrast reflects inequality in access to emergency obstetric care as well as prenatal and postnatal health care.

20. Although the proportion of underweight children declined from 25 per cent in 1990 to 16 per cent in 2011, globally, a quarter of children under five — about 165 million — are stunted, suffering largely irreversible physical and mental impairment. Country-specific analyses of disparities are needed to identify and target interventions for the most vulnerable populations.

21. Globally, the Millennium Development Goal target on drinking water was met in 2010, with close to 6.1 billion people using improved drinking water sources. However, 783 million people still lack access to improved drinking water, with over 40 per cent of those without access living in sub-Saharan Africa. Inequalities remain a major concern, with significant differences in access between the poorest and richest quintiles in both rural and urban populations. Further, women and girls continue to bear the burden of collecting water for men and children, especially in homes without piped water. The target on sanitation is out of reach, with only 63 per cent having access to improved sanitation. An estimated 2.5 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation, with nearly 1.1 billion practicing open defecation — putting the health of countless children at risk.

22. Scaling up responses require partnerships for accelerated results, increased focus and larger investments. A number of recent global partnerships provide concrete examples of efforts to influence partners and national authorities to direct their attention to health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene education (WASH) outcomes.¹ Regular updates, with new data and evidence, have helped evidence-based advocacy for scaled-up public health responses in support of the Millennium Development Goals. Initiatives include “Countdown to 2015: taking stock of maternal, newborn and child mortality”; the *Lancet* series on child

¹ The Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health, the Health 4+ and H8 partnerships, the Child Survival Call to Action forum leading to A Promise Renewed, the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women’s and Children’s Health, the United Nations Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children, Scale up Nutrition, and Sanitation and Water for All.

mortality (2007), childhood development in developing countries (2011), maternal and child undernutrition (2008), neonatal survival (2005) and on equity in child survival, health and nutrition (2012), as well as the UNICEF publication *Narrowing the Gaps to Meet the Goals* (2010).

23. While UNICEF has made notable contributions to improving the access to improved drinking water sources, promoting community approaches to total sanitation and child-friendly schools, major efforts will be needed to improve access to sanitation and to encourage communities to adopt safe and hygienic behaviours to prevent morbidity and mortality. The UN-Water annual report, *Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water* (2010), shows that sector disparities (urban-rural, rich-poor households) persist partly due to problems related to targeting assistance.

24. A crowded and fragmented institutional landscape for global health and development poses a systemic risk of overlapping responsibilities and resources in certain areas of need and critical gaps in resources and coverage in others. Sectoral programme managers of governments and partners tend to focus on “vertical or single-disease interventions”, often missing the potential for synergies to be gained through system-wide approaches. The importance of the wider social and economic determinants of health and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases have been recognized — with the focus of UNICEF on multiple sectors providing the scope for greater integration and synergy, thus assuring results, especially for the most disadvantaged.

25. Investments in nutrition programmes have been inadequate — with over 50 per cent of UNICEF support in nutrition going to emergency response and management of acute severe malnutrition (reaching only 10 per cent of those severely malnourished), with only 7 per cent spent on infant and young child feeding. The growing momentum for Scaling Up Nutrition will need to be sustained through increased investment in the delivery of integrated maternal and young child nutrition services to reduce stunting in the coming years.

Focus area 2: Basic education and gender equality

26. While overall trends on primary school enrolment have risen, the pace of reducing the number of out-of-school children has slowed since 2004. Enrolment rates increased, from 86 per cent in 2004 to 91 per cent in 2010, even as the absolute number of primary-school-age children increased considerably. Some 61 million children are still out of school, with more than half (33 million) in sub-Saharan Africa and more than one fifth (13 million) in south Asia. While gender-gaps are narrowing, with 112 of 184 countries having achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment in 2008, continuation into secondary education still needs major effort. In 2010, there were 71 million young adolescents (typically aged 12-15 years) out of school around the world. Of these, some 48 million lived in countries where lower secondary schooling is officially recognized as part of the compulsory education system. The following three factors are the most pervasive for keeping children out of school: (a) being a girl; (b) coming from a poor family; and (c) living in a country affected by conflict.

27. Many countries still face challenges in fulfilling the right to education for all children. Children living in high levels of poverty are in greatest need of support, yet they are the least likely to attend early learning programmes. School attendance and completion are strongly influenced by socioeconomic factors, such as age, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, language, poverty, social norms and location. Almost 42 per cent of out-of-school children live in conflict-affected countries. Enrolment ratios, especially for girls in secondary education, are even lower; yet education accounts only for 2 per cent of total humanitarian aid.

28. While evidence suggests that an increase of preschool enrolment rates to 25 per cent could yield an estimated \$10.6 billion (and a 50 per cent increase could generate \$33.7 billion) through improved higher education achievement, especially for the most disadvantaged children, countries continue to ignore or inadequately invest in improving access to early childhood education and care.

29. Almost half of schools in developing countries do not provide healthy and inclusive learning environments while about half of all children in the poorest countries who have completed Grade 2 cannot read anything at all. Progress in “child-friendly schools” and “child-friendly spaces” provide good models for improving quality and safety for children to learn. Over 790 million adults, two thirds of them women, still lack basic literacy skills. The focus on equity and girls has strengthened UNICEF support in the sector; still, due the intersecting nature of multiple disadvantages related to social class, location, poverty, language, disability and gender, further in-depth analysis and response are required.

30. Alternative delivery mechanisms are integral to addressing the educational needs of the most disadvantaged children, as seen in the progress made in accelerated learning programmes in emergencies and non-formal education initiatives. However, such provisions need to be systematically strengthened and not perceived as second-rate opportunities with less-qualified staff, inadequate financial and political support. Lessons learned suggest that scaling up efforts for the most marginalized, especially in the context of humanitarian action, require strong partnerships at global, regional, national and local levels.

31. UNICEF plays an important role in sector-wide approaches and in the Global Partnership for Education. Under the current MTSP, both education in fragile contexts and climate change adaptation have gained traction but need to be expanded. An important lesson learned is the importance of addressing financial barriers and discrimination to access and of stepping up efforts to improve the quality of education.

32. Information and communication technology is increasingly important as a tool for improving access to education and quality of education through teacher education initiatives, improved monitoring of barriers and bottlenecks, as well as for classroom teaching and learning processes. The extent to which these initiatives have improved access, retention and outcomes in learning still needs to be documented.

Focus area 3: HIV/AIDS and children

33. Marked progress has been made to eliminate mother-to-child transmission, with 57 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV receiving effective combination antiretrovirals for their own health or for prevention of mother-to-child

transmission in 2011 — up from 11 per cent in 2005. The number of new infections among children decreased from 560,000 in 2003 to 330,000 in 2011. By 2011, over half a million children were receiving antiretroviral therapy (up from 75,000 in 2005) — yet the coverage is still only 28 per cent of those requiring treatment.

34. Over 17.3 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS as of 2011. Before 2005, children orphaned by AIDS were much less likely to be in school than children whose parents were alive. In 2011, school enrolment and attendance rates for orphans and non-orphans were in many countries close to parity. Further, the response to children affected by AIDS has catalysed social protection programmes, including cash transfers in many high-prevalence countries, strengthening the resilience of families to withstand external shocks, including the impoverishing effects of HIV, climate change and economic downturn. The number of young people aged 15-24 years living with HIV has dropped from an estimated 5.2 million in 2005 to 4.8 million in 2011.

35. During the current MTSP, UNICEF focused on four programme areas as a part of its contribution to national HIV and AIDS response: (a) prevention of mother-to-child transmission; (b) paediatric treatment; (c) protection of children affected by AIDS; and (d) prevention among young people. Significant progress has been made, with improved access to antiretrovirals a result of a major drop in commodity prices, including for drugs and diagnostics, along with a substantial increase in resources through global initiatives, such as the elimination of mother-to-child transmission and scale-up of social protection programmes in several countries with a high burden of orphans due to AIDS. Progress has been less impressive in prevention. A significant proportion of funding for AIDS response is restricted to improving access to treatment, with less available for prevention and health promotion.

36. A number of inequities are driving the epidemic: between adults and children, between boys and girls, between rural and urban populations and between the rich and the poor. Reaching the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children is at the heart of the UNICEF-supported response in affected countries. Geography, gender, wealth, age and ethnicity, as well as social norms that tend to blame and banish individuals with high-risk behaviours, lead to inequities in the AIDS response. Knowledge has been gained in the last seven years on what helps to prevent new infections, care for those living with HIV and mitigate the impact of the epidemic on families and communities. Efforts to use an AIDS lens to strengthen rights-oriented approaches for basic health services and to link the AIDS response with efforts in improving health systems must now be widened to include other sectors, notably education, nutrition, WASH and child protection.

37. Progress in reducing HIV transmission in young people has been held back by a number of supply and demand bottlenecks and a lack of programmatic focus. Evidence has accumulated that a targeted focus on adolescents (aged 10-18 years), as opposed to a broader focus on young people, could enhance results. Success has been hampered, in many contexts, by a reluctance to tackle comprehensively the vulnerabilities of adolescent girls and their special need for services, as well as risks associated with adolescent males who have sex with other males or engage in transactional sex, and those who use drugs.

38. During the current MTSP, efforts to improve access to treatment and prevention in the context of humanitarian action in line with the revised CCCs have been uneven and need to be integrated better into the UNICEF-supported comprehensive response for disadvantaged children in all contexts.

39. In recent years, financial commitments from donor governments have declined by 10 per cent. Funds raised through the thematic funding window of UNICEF have not met the proposed targets. Just as the tools to achieve an “AIDS-free generation” are at hand, the support and commitment from major funders is waning. Any delay in focused investments committed to the new investment framework for the global HIV response could result in additional suffering and costs; for example, a three-year delay could mean an additional 5 million HIV infections, with an increased AIDS mortality of 3 million people.

40. Access to HIV testing for young people is critical to success in access to treatment and preventing new infections. UNICEF will be guided by the six high-impact interventions noted in the HIV investment framework: (a) prevention of mother-to-child transmission; (b) antiretroviral treatment; (c) targeted interventions for key affected populations; (d) communication for development, with a focus on transformational change; (e) medical male circumcision; and (f) access to condoms. Social protection, as a core element of achieving equitable results for children and adolescents in a world of increasing disparities, will also have to consider those affected by AIDS.

Focus area 4: Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse

41. By 2011, some 108 countries identified areas in their child protection system that required strengthening, with 33 of them conducting comprehensive mapping and assessments. The number of countries with alternative care policies almost doubled between 2005 and 2011, and now stands at 61. The number of countries requiring support for mine action declined from about 30 in 2006 to 15 in 2011, demonstrating an increase in national capacity. Between 2008 and 2011, the number of countries outlawing violence against children increased (from 92 to 112) as well as for outlawing violence at home (from 65 to 79). Likewise, a number of countries signed the optional protocols of the Convention of the Rights of the Child during that period.

42. Child protection is becoming increasingly visible in all countries — recognized as essential for the survival and well-being of all children, across the entire life cycle. Consistent with the UNICEF Mission Statement, during current MTSP, child protection programmes in all countries addressed the most marginalized children, who tend to be easy victims of violence, abuse and exploitation.

43. Political momentum and commitment for birth registration is increasing across all countries, with 52 per cent of programme countries having free and universal birth registration. Although the number of countries using child-friendly and gender-appropriate legislations while dealing with children who are in conflict with the law has increased, in many countries, the numbers of children in detention have shown no decline.

44. In recent years, food and economic crises, along with repeated humanitarian emergencies in numerous countries, have increased the vulnerabilities of families and put them at greater risk of providing inadequate protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation. Analysis of evidence shows that, with increasing levels of income, the priority attention of societies is on survival and development rights and less on child protection. Therefore, the focus in many countries has been on strengthening programmes and policies that address attitudes, social norms and practices that are harmful to girls and boys. Lessons learned reinforce the intersectoral nature of child protection.

45. Emerging areas of concern include the impact of armed violence and guns on children and young people as well as trafficking, unsafe migration and transnational crime that compromise the rights of children. Strategies for including non-State actors, children and families in the dialogue on strengthening child protection systems and on children accessing the justice system require further improvement.

46. Established by the United Nations Security Council (resolution 1612) in 2005, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave child rights violations in situations of armed conflict has been scaled up. To date, UNICEF has led its activation and operation in 15 countries, developed and rolled out supporting tools and guidance, and signed 18 action plans with parties to armed conflicts in order to end the practice of recruiting children and to gain the release of all associated children. Since 2002, more than 50,000 children in over 10 countries have been released from armed forces and armed groups and reintegrated into their societies.

47. Successful programme initiatives to address social norms that uphold violence and harmful practices, such as female gender mutilation/cutting and child marriage, have integrated human rights-based approaches through culturally sensitive strategies with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, social workers, civil society and private sector actors, the media and children themselves. Achieving results in child protection takes time, as better protection not only involves commodities or services, but also requires changes in perceptions, attitudes and values.

48. Innovations related to child protection, such as the mobile phone application RapidFTR, enables aid workers to collect and share information on children separated from their families in emergencies and to trace families and reunite them more quickly. Based on the lessons learned, UNICEF is promoting the adoption of modernized systems for improving birth registration and the introduction of mobile technology to reach out to disadvantaged children and families.

49. The substantial work done in improving data and policy instruments during the current MTSP will strengthen a scaled-up response on the ground, helping to ensure that all children grow in strong and supportive family environments, fully protected from violence, abuse and exploitation. Still, there is a critical need for defining global standards and goals to influence the post-2015 agenda.

Focus area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights

50. Almost all programme countries have seen tangible results either by supporting improved national policy frameworks that underpin sectoral policies or by leveraging budgetary resources to focus on increased or improved investments for children that can contribute to better outcomes and results for children.

51. Major advances have been made in supporting the collection of data on key indicators on children and women — through over 240 multiple indicator cluster surveys in more than 100 countries and by adding modules to enrich the ongoing demographic health surveys in many countries.

52. UNICEF leads an inter-agency effort to increase the use of data in policymaking at the national level. The DevInfo initiative, endorsed by the United Nations Development Group as a tool to monitor the Millennium Development Goals and human development progress at country level, is used to disseminate key development data in currently 135 countries (up from 98 countries in 2006). New

data on child development, disability and child protection indicators have substantially improved planning and monitoring of other programme sectors. Additional analysis, such as the child poverty and disparities studies in over 50 countries, has provided the critical data to advance the equity refocus of all country programmes.

53. UNICEF support to developing social protection policies and programmes in over 93 countries — jointly with other partners, including the World Bank and the International Labour Organization — are promoting an inclusive child-sensitive approach in national development frameworks. In times of economic crises and austerity, the need for high-calibre analyses, backed by evidence-based policy advocacy, has grown; yet such work remains a poorly resourced activity in many contexts.

54. The equity refocus has rightly put the spotlight on regular, timely data on indicators that can monitor barriers and bottlenecks preventing disadvantaged children and communities from fully accessing and using basic social services. These require often subnational, decentralized and innovative approaches, using community-based information systems linked to technology for development, including social networking. Lessons learned from over 20 countries in the application of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) provide valuable lessons for mainstreaming guidance and programme monitoring; these, in turn, can help UNICEF and its partners achieve sustainable results and promote the rights of the most vulnerable, marginalized children and the communities they live in.

55. Stronger linkages with the ministries of planning and finance are needed at the country level, advocating child-friendly policies and promoting quality financing and programmes for the most disadvantaged children and communities. While this is essential in all countries, it will be critical in middle-income countries as a model for future cooperation in assuring children's rights and in supporting national initiatives on monitoring child well-being and child rights. In fragile States and conflict-affected countries, the challenges resulting from the complex institutional contexts must be carefully analysed to ensure that policy advocacy results in concrete improvements for children.

Humanitarian action

56. Evaluations and assessments of major humanitarian crises during the current MTSP have noted important lessons for the future. These include the following:

- (a) Clarified accountabilities and decision-making mechanisms in large-scale emergencies that call for rapid assessment of the response capacity and support;
- (b) Flexible and non-earmarked funding to support an integrated approach to humanitarian action;
- (c) Streamlined and flexible procedures to enable an effective response;
- (d) Strengthened surge-management capacity to enable faster deployment of personnel;
- (e) Strengthened systems for supporting results-based management and adapted for humanitarian performance monitoring;

(f) Strategic engagement with the wider humanitarian community, including United Nations bodies, Member States, and non-governmental and civil society organizations;

(g) Investments in staff capacity to fully internalize challenges related to delivery of humanitarian assistance in high-risk environments;

(h) Increased clarity, knowledge and understanding of the cluster approach;

(i) Strengthening disaster resilience by investing in developing national capacities for emergency preparedness and response as well as wider disaster risk reduction;

(j) Improved measures to support a more sustainable transition from response to recovery and longer-term development.

57. These evaluations and assessments have also shown that UNICEF has improved the efficiency of its response to humanitarian situations, both internally and through broader inter-agency frameworks. The organization's capacity to rapidly mobilize and ship essential life-saving supplies was highlighted in the large-scale responses to the emergencies in Haiti, Pakistan, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region in addition to the ongoing humanitarian situations in Afghanistan, Chad, Niger, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan. While humanitarian funding has grown proportionately as a part of the work UNICEF — largely due to sudden-onset “visible” emergencies — securing non-earmarked resources for chronic, low-profile crises remains extremely difficult. Pooled funding mechanisms, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the Common Humanitarian Fund and Emergency Response Fund, play an increasingly important role in facilitating humanitarian action, with UNICEF maintaining nearly \$100 million in income from CERF annually.

58. UNICEF and other parts of the United Nations system continue to be challenged by the increasingly complex and hostile operational environments; these present many security risks, notably to the safety of staff. Strengthened policies and procedures, coupled with a gradual increase in the numbers of dedicated security advisers, have enabled UNICEF to operate in these environments. Continued improvements in implementing business continuity management have enabled UNICEF and partners to become more resilient to disruptive events and to deliver results, even in crises where its own assets may be affected.

59. In the wake of the humanitarian responses in Haiti and Pakistan, UNICEF adopted in 2011 the Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP), with associated simplified standard operating procedures that allow the organization to define a “Level-3” emergency based on five criteria: (a) scale; (b) urgency; (c) complexity; (d) capacity; and (e) reputational risk. Once activated, the CEAP triggers a unified chain of command, with activation of simplified standard operating procedures and deployment of an immediate response team. Lessons learned have helped UNICEF to prepare similar procedures for “Level-2” emergencies; however, these still need to be tested for effective and efficient organizational response in humanitarian action.

60. Stressing the necessity for frequent monitoring of results, UNICEF has developed and implemented a humanitarian performance monitoring system that supports strengthening of national and subnational systems and structures for

monitoring and reporting during humanitarian crises. Lessons learned from these initiatives will help create linkages with MoRES, as a part of the UNICEF commitment to real-time monitoring and action for addressing barriers and bottlenecks to achieving results for children.

61. The MTSP period coincided with the implementation of the humanitarian reform agenda. Further, since 2011, the MTSP has been influenced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Transformative Agenda whereby UNICEF endeavours to support enhanced leadership, coordination and strategic systems for the humanitarian community as a whole, under the leadership of the Emergency Response Coordinator. Global progress on the management of Inter-Agency Standing Committee clusters has resulted in strengthened partnerships around humanitarian issues, development of capacities and surge-response mechanisms for cluster coordination and sectoral technical specialists, and in addressing critical gaps in standards, tools and guidance.

62. Recent experience in innovative approaches, such as emergency cash assistance to households in response in humanitarian crises, as was used in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia, have important lessons for adaptation and future use in other UNICEF-supported humanitarian action. Further, in Haiti and Uganda, UNICEF adapted mobile phone technologies and SMS for field monitoring, family tracing and reunification, and other programmatic interventions.

63. Experience has highlighted the need for humanitarian and development communities to work more closely together to address underlying vulnerabilities and causes of violence and conflict. This includes the systematic application of conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding strategies to enhance social cohesion and resilience, in order to improve results for children in conflict-affected contexts. UNICEF is currently implementing an ambitious initiative on peacebuilding and education, with the potential for learning and application across many sectors in country programmes of cooperation. This includes, through regular UNICEF country programmes, investing in national systems at central and local levels so that they are able to prepare for and mitigate the impact of disasters.

64. UNICEF aims to develop better programming for enhancing national and subnational capacities for greater resilience of communities so that they can care for children and support their well-being during fragile or rapidly deteriorating contexts. Another area requiring greater attention is advocacy — for UNICEF to provide a platform that gives children a voice, particularly in sensitive contexts, while continuing to provide evidence-based advocacy for child rights.

Mainstreaming normative principles

65. The review was largely based on the 2012 evaluation of the performance of UNICEF with respect to application of the human rights-based approach to cooperation, based on programming evidence from 2007. It underscores successful efforts in supporting Member States in the field of legal reform and engagement with human rights mechanism and processes, such as the Universal Periodic Review, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. However, it also demonstrates lack of consistency in application of all human rights principles, as in the case of non-discrimination,

which reveals a fundamental challenge with respect to the effective implementation of the UNICEF equity strategy — due in part to data collection and disaggregation challenges and limited reporting on specific vulnerable groups (indigenous children, children with disabilities).

66. In gender equality and mainstreaming, strides have been made with respect to the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data and information. Following an evaluation in 2008, UNICEF updated its policy on gender equality. The organization is currently implementing a three-year strategic priority action plan, which is tracked with the help of 19 benchmarks, 13 of which have been operationalized to varying degrees. UNICEF has also introduced a “gender equality marker” to track financial expenditures as a part of its results-based plans in country programmes of cooperation. While gender reviews and gender-sectoral analysis, particularly in education and child protections sectors, have become a regular feature, there is an uneven application across regions and sectors. Moreover, further effort is needed to improve capacity among staff with technical skills on gender.

67. The midterm review of the MTSP in 2008 recognized that climate change and environmental sustainability required greater integration into existing focus areas. UNICEF-supported programmes of cooperation in education and WASH sectors seized to varying degrees on opportunities to develop elements of climate change and environmental sustainability. In some countries, situation analyses of children and women included climate-related risks on children and options for risk reduction and mitigation. In education, the “child-friendly schools” initiative has included explicit modules on climate change and environmental sustainability. Guidance on incorporating environmental sustainability has been updated in the UNICEF Programme Policies and Procedures Manual. While some initiatives have been started, many country programmes of cooperation still have major gaps and face challenges in systematically integrating climate change and environmental sustainability as well as disaster risk-reduction strategies across all sectors.

Implementing cross-cutting strategies

68. In capacity development, UNICEF has made progress across three levels: (a) individual capacity; (b) organizational, institutional and community capacity; and (c) an enabling environment. Using the human rights-based approach to cooperation, greater emphasis has been placed on the participation of both duty bearers and rights holders in capacity development processes. In 2010, following an in-depth review, UNICEF introduced benchmarks for capacity development as standards to achieve in all country programmes of cooperation. In 2011, almost three quarter of the country offices reported either fully or mostly meeting the benchmarks, with the remaining only partially meeting the benchmarks.

69. Communication for development was introduced as an explicit cross-cutting strategy following the midterm review of the MTSP in 2008; it was critical in achieving at least 38 out of the 52 organizational targets. Assessments suggest that communication for development has helped in a number of ways: (a) garner political support for policies and allocation of resources; (b) motivate and mobilize civil society, communities and social networks to claim their rights; (c) engage households and communities to raise awareness and foster positive attitudes and practices; (d) promote healthy and protective behaviours; and (e) facilitate advocacy for increased public and political support for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

70. UNICEF undertook a review of the implementation of the strategic framework for partnerships and collaborative relationships, taking into account the experiences and lessons learned since 2009. This review was presented to the second regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board in 2012, with the following lessons learned:

- (a) Partnerships are driven by results and should be based on the comparative advantages of the partners, which requires greater selectivity;
- (b) Monitoring and evaluation of partnerships are challenging;
- (c) Global partnerships have country-level implications;
- (d) A systematic approach to management maximizes effectiveness;
- (e) Internal coordination promotes efficiency;
- (f) Clear exit strategies are needed in some partnerships.

71. The review resulted in proposing an expanded framework, outlining three priority approaches for effective partnerships: (a) framing the contribution of partnerships to results; (b) investing strategically in multi-stakeholder partnerships; and (c) strengthening organizational capacity for effective collaboration by adopting a systematic approach to the management of partnerships.

72. Knowledge, data, evidence and research form the foundation of UNICEF programming, and are critical to the organization's efforts to accelerate equitable progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. In February 2012, UNICEF presented an Executive Board report, "Harnessing knowledge to achieve results for children", that noted a number of elements that helped to position UNICEF as a knowledge leader on children's issues: (a) unique access to local global knowledge; (b) ability to gather evidence and apply knowledge; (c) a convening and brokering role; (d) ability to focus exclusively on all aspects of children; and (e) high credibility and legitimacy. Accordingly, priorities will be on strengthening the knowledge function. These include: (a) building an evidence base for results for children; (b) putting countries at the centre for knowledge-gathering and use; and (c) strengthening linkages between knowledge functions, areas of focus and levels of action.

Management and operations

Resource mobilization

73. Income from the public sector, including governments, intergovernmental organizations and inter-organizational arrangements, increased by 43 per cent, from \$1,792 million in 2006 to \$2,567 million in 2011; this exceeded the MTSP financial projections at an annual average rate of 11 per cent. Of concern is the proportion of regular resources income to the total income of UNICEF, which reached an all-time low of 26 per cent in 2010. Income from the private sector remained steady, with other resources-regular increasing from \$260 million in 2006 to \$522 million in 2011. The trend of donors to impose certain conditions on the use of contributions to regular and other resources, and the growing multiplicity of donor assessment mechanisms, have significantly increased transaction costs for UNICEF.

74. Global programme partnerships have been a growing source of income for UNICEF, increasing from \$64 million in 2006 to \$184 million in 2011. Thematic funding for MTSP focus areas saw a gradual increase until 2010, before dipping by almost 22 per cent, due to funding cuts following the global economic crisis. The MTSP target of 15 per cent of total income through thematic funds has not been achieved; the share was an average of 12 per cent during 2006-2011. Timely submission of donor reports improved, from 74 per cent in 2006 to over 90 per cent in 2011. However, the varying quality in donor reports is a cause for concern; this requires greater attention at all levels.

Table 1
Performance of critical areas during the MTSP²

<i>Indicator</i>	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Per cent of allocated regular resources expended	93	93	97	93	94	96	97
Management, administration and programme support as a percentage of total regular and other resources expenditure	15.3	14.3	14.1	13.0	14.1	12.1	13.2
Per cent of outstanding direct cash transfer to partners for more than 9 months	3	2	1	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.38
Per cent of recruitment actions completed for established international professional positions within 90 days	17	44	33	25	43	41	48
Per cent of requests for surge capacity responded within 56 days		–	65	74	77	90	81
Per cent of women staff at P5 and above levels globally	36	36	40	42	42	42	43

Human resources development

75. During the MTSP, greater attention has been placed on learning and capacity development of staff across all levels; these have included training courses in collaboration with universities — for example, evidence-based policy advocacy and partnerships, communication for development, equity-focused programming, as well as management and leadership, including through specific programmes, such as the “New and Emerging Talent Initiative” and leadership skills training for staff at entry, mid and senior levels.

76. New approaches to recruitment, including use of generic vacancy announcements and e-recruitment processes to develop talent groups from which candidates can be selected directly, are some of the initiatives that have steadily improved the organization’s ability to attract and retain talent across all levels. Women represented 49 per cent of the international professional category, with the ratio of female staff at the senior level increasing from 36 per cent in 2005 to 43 per cent in 2011.

² This is an illustrative list only; more detailed tables are available in the separate data companion.

Information and communication technology

77. A major achievement during the current MTSP was the upgrade of infrastructure to allow improved bandwidth in communication and the introduction of VISION — a single Enterprise Resource Planning software platform across the entire organization in 2012. This has allowed the organization to introduce results-based plans and expenditure tracking by results at country, regional and global levels, as well as the development of appropriate performance management dashboards to help managers monitor implementation and take corrective action on a regular basis. This will allow UNICEF to achieve its stated objectives according to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and foster transparency, including its commitments to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

Supply and procurement

78. Close to a quarter of all programme assistance by UNICEF during the current MTSP was made through supply assistance. It may be noted that, in addition, \$5.1 billion worth of goods were procured by UNICEF for programmes with funds from other organizations, such as the GAVI Alliance, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United Nations Foundation, and from Governments. UNICEF supply operations have achieved new levels of transparency, with the publication of prices in respect of certain commodities, including vaccines, insecticide-treated bed nets and therapeutic foods. Using its influence on the market dynamics of life-saving products for children as well as through the long-term projection of needs, UNICEF is able to achieve greater price savings for critical supplies. Aided by innovations and research around product development and testing, a number of new products are in advanced stages of introduction to the markets, thus helping countries to accelerate their efforts to achieve their goals and targets for children.

Table 2
Supply expenditure and value of procurement

(In millions of United States dollars)

	<i>Programme assistance</i>	<i>Value of supply assistance</i>		<i>Procurement service</i>
		<i>[\$]</i>	<i>% (of supply)</i>	
2006	2 118.6	649	30.6	688
2007	2 517.0	721	28.6	688
2008	2 808.3	664	23.6	694
2009	2 943.2	763	25.9	1 031
2010	3 355.0	756	22.5	870
2011	3 471.0	649	18.7	1 155
2006-2011	17 213.1	4 202	24.4	5 126

Financial expenditures and administration

Table 3
Programme assistance by years

(In millions of United States dollars)

	Regular resources	Other resources		Total
		Regular	Emergency	
2006	533.2	913.3	672.3	2 118.8
2007	743.4	1 080.5	693.0	2 516.9
2008	746.5	1 315.6	746.3	2 808.4
2009	769.0	1 478.0	696.4	2 943.4
2010	797.0	1 653.0	905.0	3 355.0
2011	790.0	1 683.0	999.0	3 472.0
2006-2011	4 379.1	8 123.4	4 712.0	17 214.5

79. Direct programme assistance expenditure increased steadily during the MTSP, reaching \$3,472 million in 2011 (see table 3 above). This was due to appreciable growth in income, particularly for other resources (regular and emergency), with modest growth in regular resources. During the period, UNICEF continued to maintain a regular resources allocation of at least 50 per cent of programme resources for sub-Saharan Africa, and reached a level of 57 per cent of programme assistance for the least developed countries.

Table 4
Programme assistance by focus areas

(In millions of United States dollars)

Focus area	Regular resources		OR-R	OR-E	Other resources (OR-R+OR-E)		Total	
	[\$]	%			[\$]	[\$]	%	[\$]
(1) Young child survival and development	1 881.0	43.0	3 870.5	2 984.3	6 854.8	53.4	8 735.8	50.8
(2) Basic education and gender equality	665.1	15.2	2 054.1	886.6	2 940.7	22.9	3 605.8	20.9
(3) HIV/AIDS and children	2 96.3	6.8	649.1	52.0	701.1	5.5	997.4	5.8
(4) Child protection	465.2	10.6	880.2	456.5	1 336.7	10.4	1 801.9	10.5
(5) Policy advocacy	944.3	21.6	595.9	270.8	866.7	6.8	1 811.0	10.5
Others	127.2	2.9	73.6	61.8	135.4	1.0	262.6	1.5
Total	4 379.1	100	8 123.4	4 712.0	12 835.4	100	17 214.5	100

80. UNICEF committed to maintaining a regular resources share of 46 per cent for focus area 1 (young child survival and development), 21 per cent for focus area 2 (basic education and gender equality), 12 per cent for focus area 3 (HIV/AIDS and children) and 9 per cent for focus area 4 (child protection). While the shares for young child survival and development and child protection were maintained, those for basic education and gender equality were not met. However, the expenditures for policy advocacy, projected at 11 per cent, were exceeded and almost doubled, partly accounting for the share reductions in focus areas 2 and 4. This was partly due to a substantial emphasis on evidence and increased efforts to collect data and provide support to household surveys that informed national development plans and strengthened evidence-based programming.

81. The corresponding projections for other resources (regular and emergency combined) for focus areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 were 52 per cent, 18 per cent, 14 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively. As can be seen from table 4 above, these were largely met or exceeded for focus areas 1, 2 and 4, but not achieved in focus area 3 on HIV/AIDS and children.

82. UNICEF has reinforced its assurance activities during the MTSP period, by strengthening both the audit and evaluation functions within the organization. An enterprise risk management policy was formulated and organization-wide efforts were undertaken to complete the exercise of risk and control self-assessments during 2010-2011. These are being updated and addressed in the office management plans. The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) certified in 2008 that UNICEF generally conforms to the IIA International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and the IIA Code of Ethics, the highest rating given for such a review. These standards have been maintained since. During the period, UNICEF established an Office of Ethics to raise further the ethical standards in the organization through policy support and standards setting, as well as a financial disclosure programme, capacity development and protection of staff against retaliation.

Draft decision

The Executive Board,

1. *Welcomes* the report on the end-of-cycle review of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (E/ICEF/2013/4) and commends the consultations, performance analysis and evaluation work on which the review was based;

2. *Takes note* of the general conclusions of the review, and recommends considering these conclusions in the preparation of the next medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017.