

---

# UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-21

*Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged*

## **Draft** Theory of Change Paper<sup>1</sup>

---

### Contents

Theory of Change Overview.....	4
Introduction: Theories of change and the UNICEF 2018-21 Strategic Plan .....	4
Overview of the theory of change .....	4
Goal Areas (outcomes).....	9
Outputs .....	9
Output Definition ‘Lens’ in Theory of Change Design.....	11
Risks and Assumptions.....	12
Implementation strategies (HOWS).....	15
Organizational Performance Enablers .....	18
Goal Area 1: Theory of Change .....	19
Outcome Statement.....	19
Theory of Change Statement .....	19
Link to SDGs and CRC .....	21
Context:.....	23
Leaving no child behind .....	23
Humanitarian Response, Risk and Sustainable Development .....	25
Lessons Learned 2014-2017.....	26
Theory of Change .....	28
Overview .....	28
Assumptions, risks and risk management measures.....	31

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a working draft of the Strategic Plan Theory of Change paper. The final draft will be submitted with the full package of Strategic Plan related documents for consideration at the Second Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board in September.

Key Partnerships .....	35
Goal Area 2: Theory of Change .....	36
Outcome Statement.....	36
Theory of Change Statement .....	36
Link to SDGs and CRC .....	39
Context.....	40
Leaving No Child Behind .....	40
Humanitarian Response, Risk and Sustainable Development .....	42
Lessons Learned 2014-17.....	42
Theory of Change .....	44
Overview .....	44
Assumptions, risks and risk management measures.....	48
Key Partnerships .....	52
Goal Area 3 Theory of Change .....	53
Outcome Statement.....	53
Theory of Change Statement .....	53
Link to SDGs and CRC .....	56
Context.....	58
Leaving No Child Behind .....	58
Humanitarian Response, Risk, and Sustainable Development .....	60
Lessons Learned 2014-17.....	61
Theory of Change .....	61
Overview .....	61
Assumptions, risks and risk management measures.....	67
Key Partnerships .....	71
Goal Area 4 Theory of Change .....	74
Outcome Statement.....	74
Theory of Change Statement .....	74
Link to SDGs and CRC .....	76
Context.....	78
Leaving No Child Behind .....	78
Humanitarian response, risk, and sustainable development .....	78
Lessons Learned 2014-17.....	79
Theory of Change .....	80
Overview .....	80
Assumptions, Risks and risk management measures .....	84
Key Partnerships .....	87
Goal Area 5 Theory of Change .....	89
Outcome Statement.....	89
Theory of Change Statement .....	89
Link to SDGs and CRC .....	92
Context.....	93
Leaving No Child Behind .....	93

Humanitarian response, risk, and sustainable development ..... 94  
Lessons Learned 2014-17..... 94  
Theory of Change ..... 95  
    Overview ..... 95  
    Assumptions, risks and risk management measures ..... 101  
Key Partnerships ..... 106

DRAFT

## Theory of Change Overview

### Introduction: Theories of change and the UNICEF 2018-21 Strategic Plan

This paper complements the Strategic Plan by elaborating the broad theory of change that underpins the Strategic Plan and the more specific outcome level theories of change that help explain how UNICEF will contribute directly to the outcomes in the plan and the assumptions and risks framing its work. The overarching theory of change summarizes how the impact and outcomes will be achieved across each of the five goal areas of the Strategic Plan as a result of the concrete actions that UNICEF takes at country, regional and global levels, and outlines the assumptions and risks that underpin the organization's work in relation to results for children.

The impact statement of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is ***“Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged”***. This envisaged impact will be achieved through five Goal Areas:

- (a) Every child survives and thrives;
- (b) Every child learns;
- (c) Every child is protected from violence and exploitation;
- (d) Every child lives in a safe and clean environment; and
- (e) Every child has an equitable chance in life.

It is by delivering on these five areas that we can ensure that we realize the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged, because they continue to represent the greatest challenges to the world's children and the rights of all girls and boys cannot be realized without significant progress across all five areas. These Goal Areas are underpinned by the cross-cutting priorities of gender equality and humanitarian assistance. The Strategic Plan also promotes synergies across multiple Goal Areas to address early childhood development, adolescent development, and issues affecting children with disabilities. The Goal Areas are interlinked, reflecting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda. Progress under each Goal Area requires, and contributes to, progress under the others. For example, results in basic sanitation contribute to improvements in child survival and learning outcomes, while also promoting a clean environment in which children can live and play. Progress in basic sanitation can also promote gender equality.

Summarizing a global theory of change for a highly decentralized organization such as UNICEF continues to be challenging because so many of the expected results and related implementation strategies are nationally-led and specific to a particular context. Furthermore, the change processes that are needed to fulfil the rights of all children, especially the most disadvantaged are often non-linear and challenging to plan or predict with sufficient detail for the short to medium term. Therefore, the theory of change for the work of UNICEF globally needs to strike a balance: it must be rigorous and specific enough to provide strategic direction for the organization as a whole, while being flexible to allow sufficient scope for decision-making based on local context through country programmes of cooperation.

### Overview of the theory of change

The purpose of all UNICEF work is to help fulfil realization of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. The foundation of this work is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through the Sustainable Development Goals, the world has a framework of action till 2030, providing the basis for the Strategic Plan and its Results Framework. The Strategic Plan and Results Framework define UNICEF's

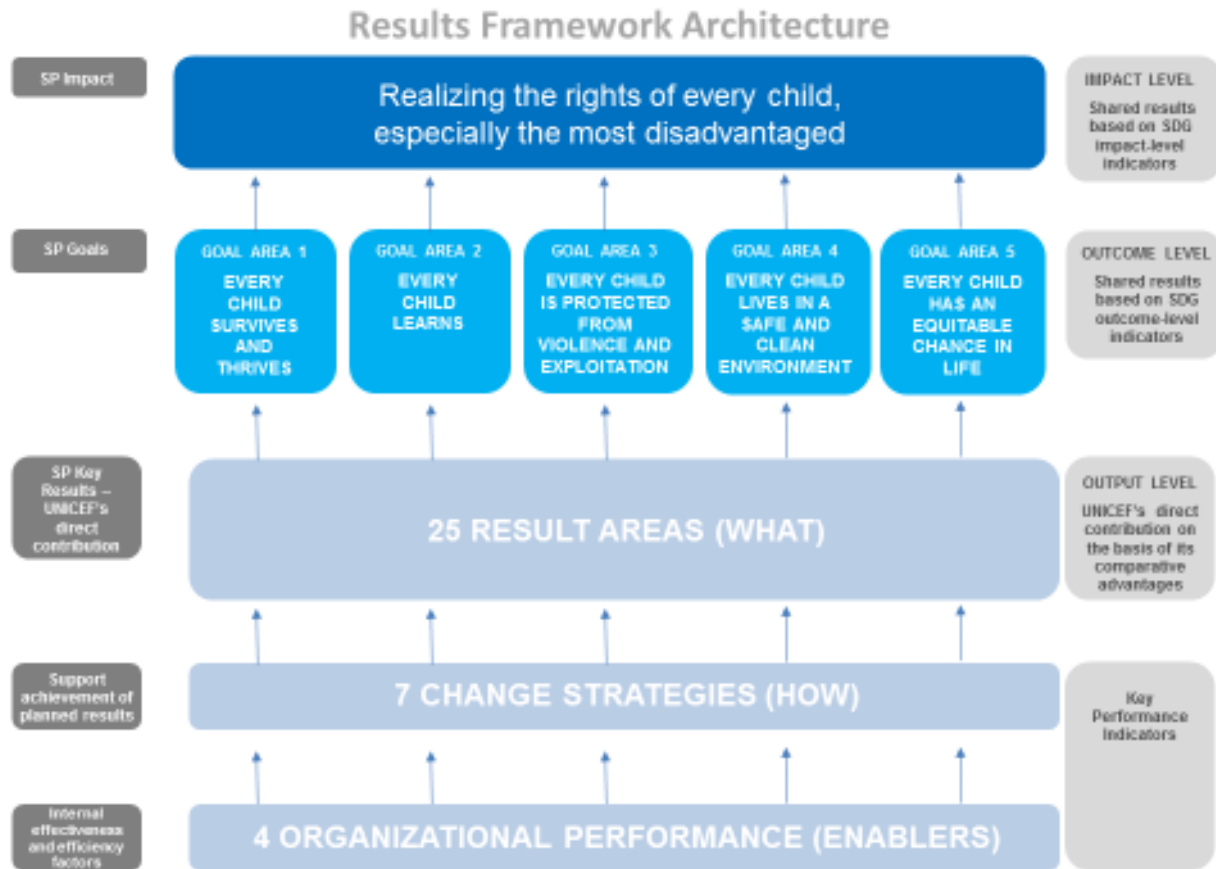
contribution to the 2030 Agenda. The impact of the Strategic Plan, consistent with results-based management tools, will be measured through a set of impact indicators that track changes in the lives of children resulting from the shared, global commitments to children.

The theories of change are based on UNICEF's commitment to work with partners to respect, protect and promote human rights standards and principles, and fundamental freedoms for all children, without distinction of any kind whatsoever. Like the corresponding plan the theories of change are anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and work under each goal area is linked to relevant articles of the CRC. The theories of change pursue a vision of realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. UNICEF works to promote the rights of all children in programming, advocacy and operations. It does so by starting with the most deprived, because a focus on equity accelerates progress towards achieving the rights of all children.

In working to capture UNICEF's contribution to the SDGs, the organization has framed its work through 25 outputs contributing to 5 outcomes (goal areas). UNICEF's direct contribution to Agenda 2030 is measured through output indicators, baselines and targets. UNICEF formulated its outputs and the corresponding indicators based on: a) whether changes in our theories of change could be attributable to UNICEF (outputs) or whether UNICEF would be one of many partners contributing to a particular result (outcomes), b) whether UNICEF could hold itself accountable for delivery of the related targets (affirmative in the case of outputs), and c) whether a result was an accurate representation of the deliverables of UNICEF programmes at field level.

The consequence of this approach is that the results framework represents an accurate delineation of results for which UNICEF will be accountable for delivering (outputs) and those to which it will be accountable for contributing (outcomes). It also allows the output level results and indicators to capture the full range of support that UNICEF provides in various country contexts, including efforts in the provision of services, including in humanitarian situations, capacity support for systems strengthening, policy processes and normative work, including child rights monitoring and advocacy, and various types of support related to changes in social norms.

This approach to developing a theory of change and articulating the UNICEF contribution through output formulation is strongly anchored in a rights-based approach to programming. It is also based on a lesson learned from the previous Strategic Plan, where it was not always easy to track the various types of contributions that UNICEF made at output level or to manage related accountabilities. It also responds to a recommendation of the Evaluability Assessment of the previous Strategic Plan on strengthening the design and application (of the plan) as a framework rather than a prescriptive logframe that would apply a global and corporate results logic to nationally-owned country programmes.



UNICEF’s overarching theory of change also seeks to explain the link between change strategies and the delivery of outputs that contribute to higher level results, including the SDGs. In order to capture the approaches that UNICEF is using to ensure that its programmes are effective in terms of both delivering results directly and leveraging the capacities and comparative advantages of others, the Strategic Plan theory of change has identified 8 change strategies that the organization uses across the full spectrum of its work in all five goal areas. They are as follows:

- *Programming excellence for at-scale results for children.*
- *Gender-Responsive Programming*
- *Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public.*
- *Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children.*
- *Harnessing the power of business and markets for children.*
- *United Nations working together.*
- *Fostering innovation for children.*
- *Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.*

The overarching theory of change also captures 4 organizational performance enablers that refer most directly to efficiency, professionalism and ethics in the leadership, management and administration of the organization, these enablers support the delivery of results and change strategies and are composed of four interconnected elements. They are as follows:

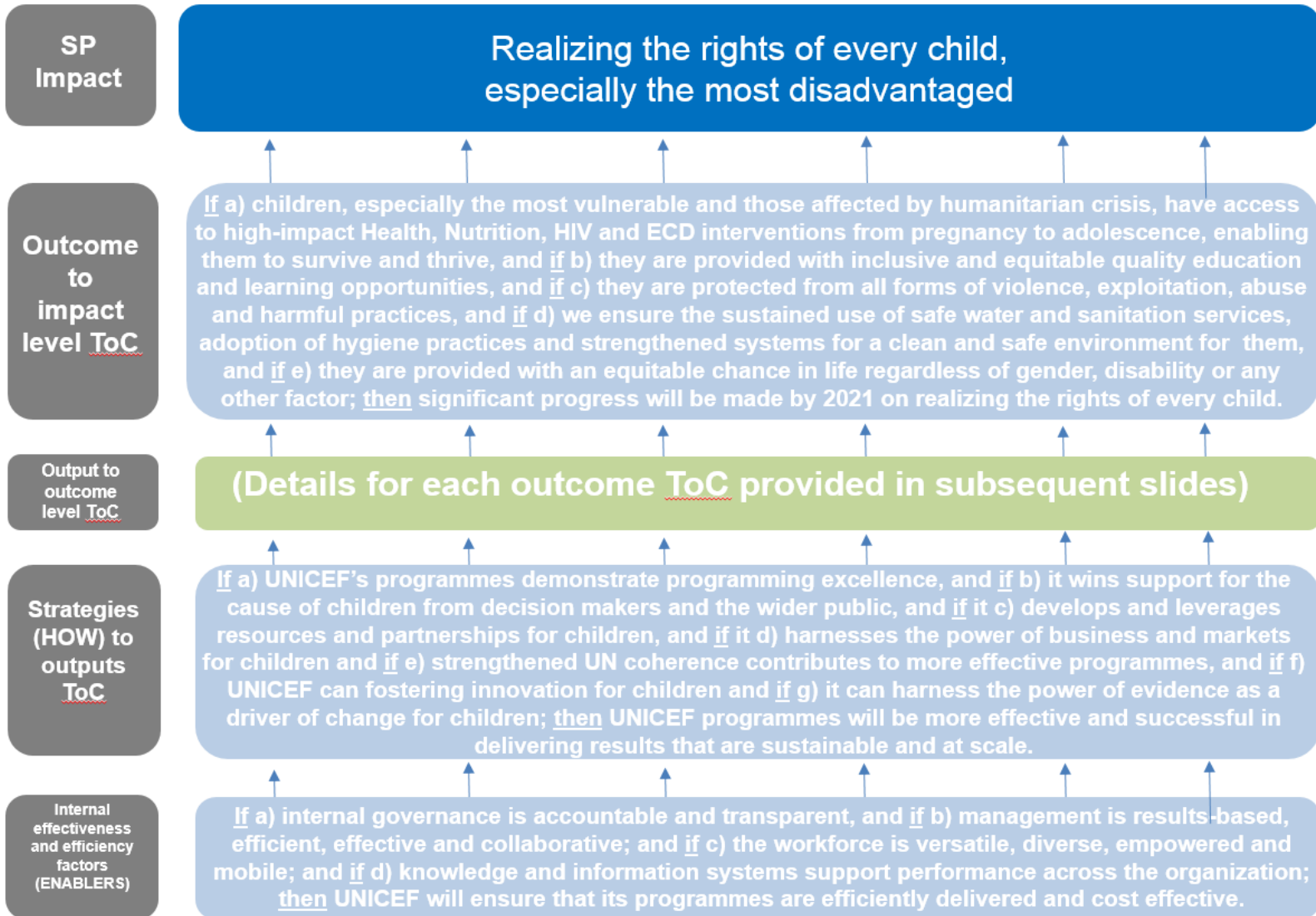
- *Governance (Modern, transparent and accountable governance for the organization)*
- *Management (Results oriented, efficient, effective, and collaborative management)*
- *People (Versatile staff, staff as agents of change)*
- *Knowledge and information systems (Efficient, safe and secure systems connecting results & people)*

The theory of change model reflects all contributions from the organization for delivery of results, including staff members' efforts and financial resources. They are also based on UNICEF's commitment to work with partners to respect, protect and promote human rights standards and principles, and fundamental freedoms for all children, without distinction of any kind whatsoever. Like the corresponding plan the theories of change are anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and work under each goal area is linked to relevant articles of the CRC. The theories of change pursue a vision of realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. UNICEF works to promote the rights of all children in programming, advocacy and operations. It does so by starting with the most deprived, because a focus on equity accelerates progress towards achieving the rights of all children.

The theories of change have also consciously avoided making humanitarian assistance a stand-alone area and instead humanitarian response, risk and sustainable development/resilience are integrated as a cross-cutting priority across each of the outcome level theories of change, broader change strategies and enablers. This is seen as strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus in all of UNICEF's work and providing programming direction to UNICEF programmes. UNICEF's performance in humanitarian response can nonetheless be tracked in the Strategic Plan Results Framework through specific indicators under each outcome area.

Lastly, in developing the overarching ToC underpinning the Strategic Plan and its results framework, UNICEF has identified all of the associated assumptions and the related risks. It has also identified measures that are being taken to manage the risks to the Strategic Plan and ensured that its strategies and enablers are designed to respond more systematically to them.

## Strategic Plan ToC





## Goal Areas (outcomes)

To achieve impact, the Strategic Plan identifies five Goal Areas<sup>2</sup> that orient the organization's work for 2017-21:

**Goal Area (outcome) 1:** Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive

**Goal Area (outcome) 2:** Girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.

**Goal Area (outcome) 3:** Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices

**Goal Area (outcome) 4:** Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices and strengthened systems for a clean and safe environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian crisis.

**Goal Area (outcome) 5:** Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life.

These outcomes represent major changes and progress in relation to realizing the rights of children. However, the full achievement of these outcomes will not be solely attributable to UNICEF but will result from the combined and collaborative contributions of UNICEF and other partners including government, UN partners, civil society and the private sector. UNICEF has already worked with UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA to identify outcomes areas where there is 'collaborative advantage' and the work of the organizations' together will reflect that over the coming years. In subsequent chapters this paper outlines the theories of change for each of these outcome areas in turn.

## Outputs

For each of the five Goal Areas (outcomes) UNICEF has identified a number of outputs that represent the organization's contribution to outcome level change and by extension to the related SDG targets. In developing the outputs, UNICEF sought to formulate results for which it is confident that the delivery of the change would be attributable to UNICEF's work and for which UNICEF is prepared to be held accountable.

Output formulation was also guided by the definition provided in the UNDG RBM Handbook which specified that outputs are "changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions", or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within a development intervention within the control of the organization. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified" and "**are the level of result in which the clear comparative advantages of individual agencies emerge and accountability is clearest. Outputs are linked to those accountable for them giving the results chain a much stronger internal logic**"<sup>3</sup>. The parameters of the definition being further elaborated in the Handbooks Annex 1 which outlined examples of outputs involving direct service provision to beneficiaries.

---

<sup>2</sup> Presented as outcomes in the results framework

<sup>3</sup> <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>

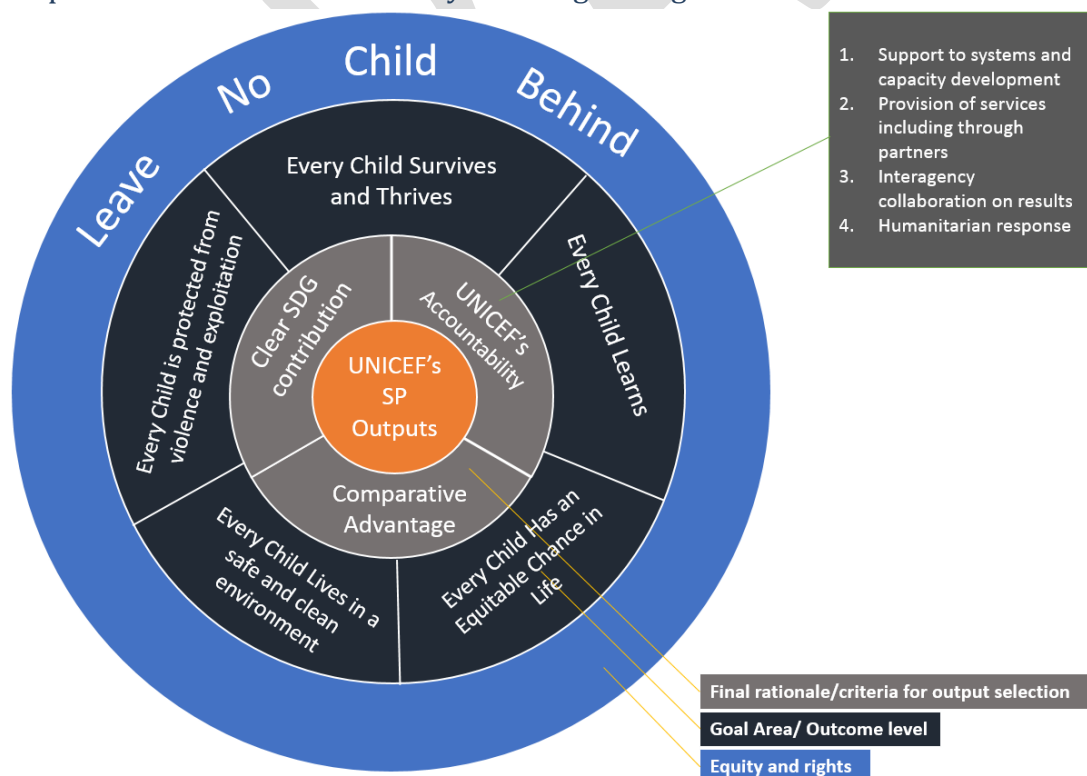
The related theory of change, strongly anchored in a rights based approach to programming, from output to outcome level is summarized on the following table:

Goal Area (Outcome) Statement	Output to outcome level ToC
<p>Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive.</p>	<p><b><i>if</i></b> mothers and newborns receive an essential package of quality maternal and newborn care services at scale, including prenatal and postnatal home visit support, and <b><i>if</i></b> there is achieved and sustained immunization coverage at national and district levels towards the realization of Universal Health Care, and <b><i>if</i></b> children under five receive treatment for curative services for pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, and other child health conditions, and if girls and boys receive services for the prevention of stunting and other forms of malnutrition, and <b><i>if</i></b> they receive services for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition, and <b><i>if</i></b> girls and boys under five have increased access to quality early childhood development services, and <b><i>if</i></b> there is enhanced country action in support of gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition, and <b><i>if</i></b> girls boys and pregnant women receive comprehensive prevention interventions to reduce HIV incidence, and <b><i>if</i></b> girls and boys living with HIV receive treatment and care to reduce AIDs-related morbidity and deaths; <b><i>then</i></b> girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have the chance to survive and thrive in their communities.</p>
<p>Girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.</p>	<p><b><i>if</i></b> the multiple and complex barriers to access to education for girls and boys from early childhood to adolescence, are understood and addressed, including those related to gender, children with disabilities and minorities, children living in poverty and other vulnerable groups including children in humanitarian crises; <b><i>if</i></b> strengthened education systems support improved quality of teaching and learning; and <b><i>if</i></b> girls and boys especially from vulnerable groups are provided with increased opportunities to develop the skills they need for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, <b><i>then</i></b> every child, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, can learn.</p>
<p>Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices</p>	<p><b><i>if</i></b> girls and boys receive prevention and response services for violence against children, and <b><i>if</i></b> girls receive prevention and care to address sexual exploitation and harmful practices such as FGM/C and child marriage, and <b><i>if</i></b> girls and boys that come into contact with the law are treated in accordance with international standards, <b><i>then</i></b> girls and boys will be better protected from violence and exploitation.</p>
<p>Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices and strengthened systems for a clean and safe</p>	<p><b><i>if</i></b> children, their families and communities have access to safe drinking water, <b><i>if</i></b> open defecation is ended and people have access to adequate sanitation and hygiene; <b><i>if</i></b> national and local governments seek to anticipate and mitigate the risk arising from natural disaster or conflict; <b><i>if</i></b> national, subnational and municipality plans developed in ways that are risk informed and sensitive to needs of children; and <b><i>if</i></b> countries</p>

environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian crisis.	monitor and plan ahead for a child-friendly sustainable environment, <b>then</b> children will be able to grow and develop in a safe and secure environment.
Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life	<b>if</b> children, their families and communities have access to safe drinking water, <b>if</b> open defecation is ended and people have access to adequate sanitation and hygiene; <b>if</b> national and local governments seek to anticipate and mitigate the risk arising from natural disaster or conflict; <b>if</b> national, subnational and municipality plans developed in ways that are risk informed and sensitive to needs of children; and <b>if</b> countries monitor and plan ahead for a child-friendly sustainable environment, <b>then</b> children will be able to grow and develop in a safe and secure environment.

The outputs were identified when designing the theories of change and by using a programming lens that focused in the first instance on child rights and equity, then the specific goal areas/outcomes to which UNICEF would contribute with partners (including the broader UN Development System) and finally by focusing on results for which UNICEF could be held accountable, had a recognized comparative advantage, and represented a clear contribution to the SDG targets.

### Output Definition 'Lens' in Theory of Change Design

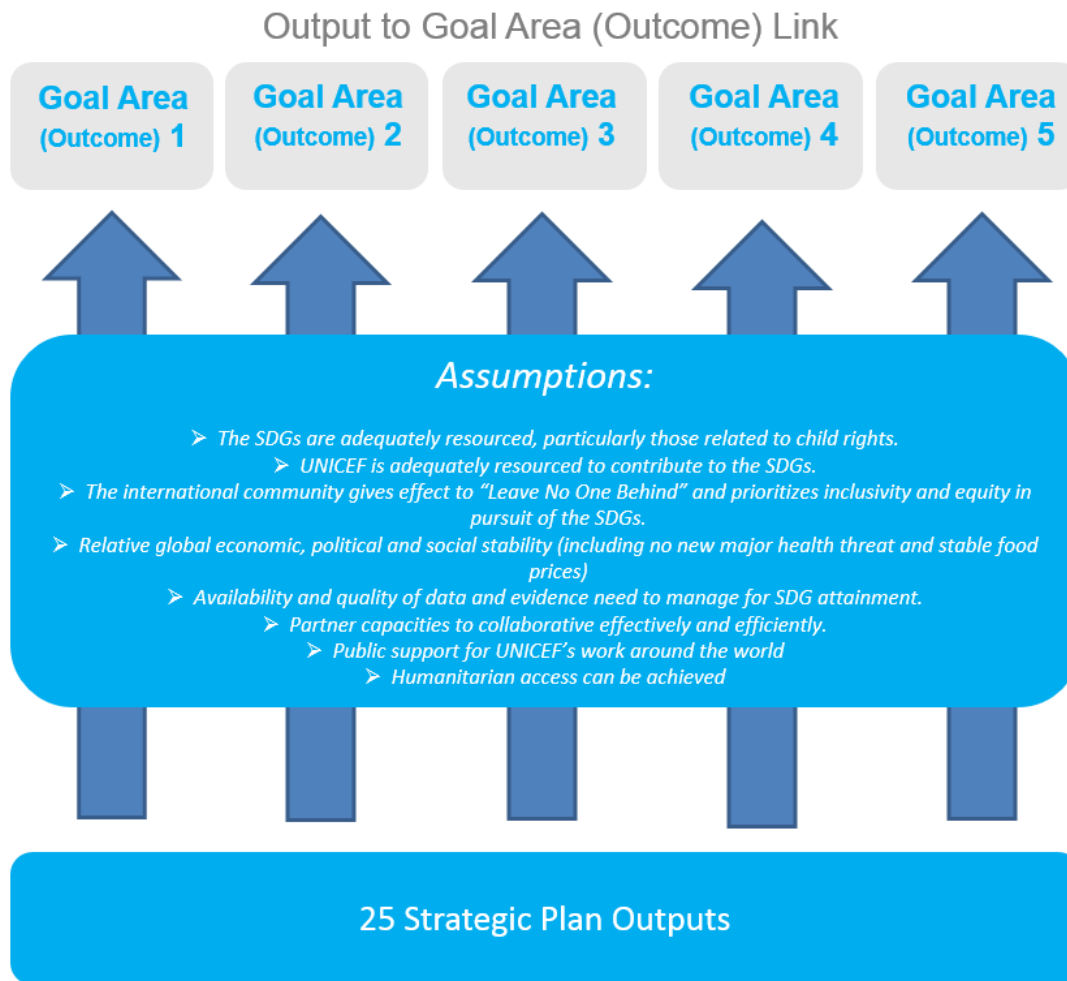


## Risks and Assumptions

Assumptions in relation to each outcome are presented in the outcome by outcome chapters in this paper. However, an analysis of the common assumptions across most outcome areas and in the development of the overarching theory of change provide the following set of critical assumptions in relation to the Strategic Plan:

- *The SDGs are adequately resourced, particularly those related to child rights.*
- *UNICEF is adequately resourced to contribute to the SDGs.*
- *The international community acts to “Leave No One Behind” and prioritizes inclusivity and equity in pursuit of the SDGs.*
- *Relative global economic, political and social stability*
- *Availability and quality of data, including disaggregation*
- *Effective and healthy collaboration across the UN Development System*
- *Partner capacities are strong and collaboration is effective and efficient.*
- *Public support for UNICEF’s work around the world*
- *Humanitarian space and principles are maintained*
- *UNICEF Country Programmes align with the SP results, adequately resourced by host respective governments, partners, donors and UNICEF;*
- *UN wide and Agency directed reforms promote and reinforce delivery of results, restores the rights of the most deprived children everywhere;*
- *The pursuit of peace in all contexts is anchored on humanitarian – development nexus and operational efficiency*

These assumptions represent the implicit beliefs or understandings contained in the ToC(s) that explain the expectation of change that underlies the link from one results level to another.



There are some risks specific to certain outcomes in the Strategic Plan, certain operating contexts, and certain levels of the overall Strategic Plan ToC. However, the following risks were identified as among the most significant horizontally (across all outcome areas) and vertically (potential for negative impact on assumptions at multiple levels in the Theory of Change).

- *Insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda*
- *Decrease in humanitarian space and unpredictable and additional major humanitarian crises*
- *Inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies*
- *A varying focus on results for children among United Nations partners working together*
- *Adequacy of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together*

- *Challenges in implementing multi-sectoral approaches.*

These risks are the main factors that present a threat to the assumptions holding true in the context of the ToC. Please also note that the 8 Change Strategies (HOWs) and the 4 'Enablers' in the ToC also, by their very nature, represent a strategic response to the major risks that characterize UNICEF programmes around the world.

UNICEF measures to manage assumptions and their related risks are outlined in greater detail in subsequent sections where Goal Area (outcome) level ToCs are examined more closely. However, the following represent the major systemic responses to the 8 critical risks identified in the Strategic Plan and through its theory of change:

Key Risk	UNICEF Measure
Insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda	It is important that national governments and the UN systems be sufficiently funded to achieve the SDG targets. And as a part of such, UNICEF. Sources of resource need to include national budgets and ODA from the public and private sectors. Likely with an increase in portion from private sector. In order to get the maximum results from funding, UN organisations, including UNICEF, need to make efficient use of funds via cost-effective programmes and decision making on internal processes and expenditures that is driven by value for money. UNICEF will be an advocate and practitioner for resource mobilization on behalf of national governments and the UN, as well as internal efficiency and effectiveness.
Decrease in humanitarian space.	UNICEF has the experience and capacity to allow it to respond to emergencies quickly and effectively, particularly given its field level experience and partnerships on the ground in many countries. UNICEF also supports governments and other partners with disaster preparedness and response capacity, developing their capacity to plan for and respond to humanitarian crises, including through training and technical assistance, and building the resilience of communities and families to deal with shocks. This is undertaken collaboratively with other UN agencies in support of national systems and communities; for example supporting governments to develop social protection systems that extend social assistance also to people in disaster response or humanitarian crisis situations. In humanitarian situations UNICEF designs its response so as to allow a gradual integration into existing or developing social protection systems and poverty programmes. However, access might remain unachievable particularly where warring parties are immune to international pressure.
Inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies	UNICEF works to systematically integrate the developing of partner capacity wherever possible into its programmes. The limited capacity among some of UNICEF's partners to monitor results is being managed with continued investment in stronger systems and approaches to gather, analyze and use evidence. Complementing this effort, the organization also sees a mobile, versatile workforce, enabled by agile deployment arrangements, as an important means of strengthening implementation capacity where it is most needed, including in sudden-onset emergencies,
A varying focus on results for children among United	As noted in the Strategic Plan, UNICEF will work with the rest of the UN development system in aligning behind the SDGs and will use the concepts of 'collaborative advantage' and 'comparative advantage' to determine the best

Nations partners working together	approach around which to work together. Linked to the SDGs, UNICEF will work to leverage the new UNDAF process at country level to ensure better integration of the needs and rights of girls and boys into the UN development systems country-level plans and strategies.
Inadequate establishment of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together	The new UNDAF is seen as an opportunity to better manage the complementary programming processes and systems across UN agencies, and as noted above UNICEF will be fully engaged. UNICEF will also continue to fully embrace and work in Delivering as One contexts and through the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) where government has asked the UN Country Team to adopt that approach. Lastly, in terms of operations, it is anticipated that linked to the SOPs the growing flexibility in business operations will increase interoperability with key United Nations partners.

### Implementation strategies (HOWS)

With human rights standards and principles at the core of its activities, UNICEF delivers change by combining rights-based, gender-responsive, and high-quality programmes at scale, harnessing innovation and collecting evidence, in partnership with Governments, United Nations partners, civil society, the private sector, communities and children. It uses these to leverage wider change nationally and globally through advocacy, communications and campaigning. UNICEF also builds public support around the world to volunteer, advocate and mobilize resources for the cause of children, and works with partners to achieve an even greater impact. The Strategic Plan theory of change has identified 8 change strategies that the organization uses across the full spectrum of its work in all five outcome areas. They are as follows:

- *Programming excellence for at-scale results for children.*
- *Gender-responsive programming*
- *Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public.*
- *Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children.*
- *Harnessing the power of business and markets for children.*
- *United Nations working together.*
- *Fostering innovation for children.*
- *Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.*

These strategies support UNICEF and the theory of change in explaining the link between organizational effectiveness and efficiency and the delivery of outputs that contribute to higher level results, including the SDGs. They also represent the approaches that UNICEF is using to ensure that its programmes are effective in terms of both delivering gender-responsive results directly and leveraging the capacities and comparative advantages of others, and that critical risks are managed in a systematic way. The strategies are also consistent with and serve to reinforce the principles that provide the normative foundation for the UNDAF and integrated programming in all country contexts, with leave no one behind as the overarching and unifying principle, underpinned by human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability.

There are assumptions inherent in linking the implementation strategies with improved programmatic performance in delivering outputs that contribute to outcome level change.

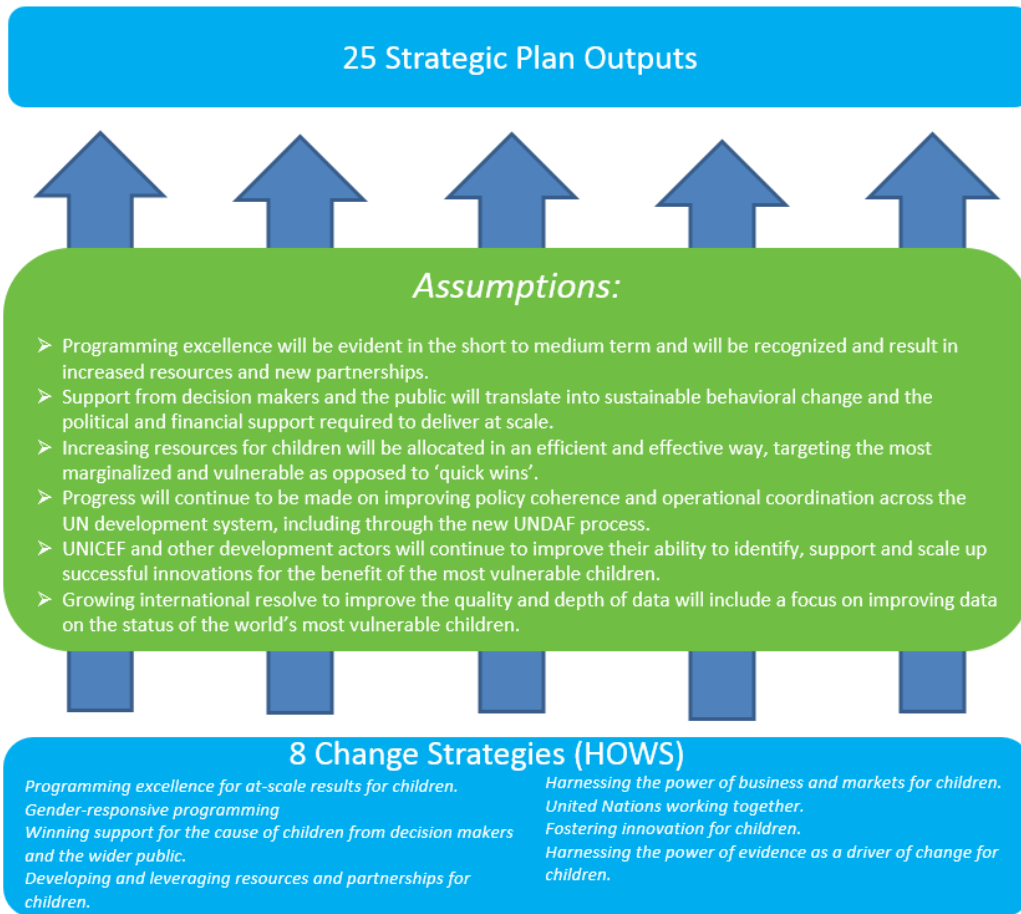
- Programming excellence will be evident in the short to medium term and will be recognized and result in increased resources and new partnerships.
- UNICEF will strengthen its capacity for gender analysis and gender-responsive programming.
- Support from decision makers and the public will translate into behavioral change and the political and financial support required to deliver at scale.
- Resources for children will be allocated in an efficient and effective way, targeting the most marginalized and vulnerable as opposed to 'quick wins'.
- Progress will continue to be made on improving policy coherence and operational coordination across the UN development system, including through the new UNDAF process.
- UNICEF and other development actors will continue to improve their ability to identify, support and scale up successful innovations for the benefit of the most vulnerable children.
- Growing resolve to improve the quality and depth of data will include a focus on improving data.

The theory of change statement that captures how the change strategies contribute to higher level results is the following:

***If*** a) UNICEF's programmes demonstrate programming excellence, and ***if*** b) it that programming is gender-responsive and ***if*** c) it wins support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public, and ***if*** it d) develops and leverages resources and partnerships for children, and ***if*** it e) harnesses the power of business and markets for children and ***if*** f) strengthened UN coherence contributes to more effective programmes, and ***if*** g) UNICEF can fostering innovation for children and ***if*** h) it can harness the power of evidence as a driver of change for children; ***then*** UNICEF programmes will be more effective and successful in delivering results that are sustainable and at scale.



## Change Strategies (HOWS) to Output Link



The following are the risks that have been identified as presenting a threat to these assumptions holding true. Please note that just as the change strategies are a response to many of the critical risks at the output to outcome level, the organizational performance enablers often represent the institutional response to the risks at the change strategy level.

Key Risk	UNICEF Measure
Support for vulnerable children from decision-makers and/or the wider public does not result in action.	UNICEF's work in advocating for children will be accompanied by rigorous analysis of the data and evidence available on the status and trends with regards to the lives of vulnerable children. As such the organization will remain vigilant to situations where apparent support for children is not manifesting as action in terms of behavioral changes and political/financial support, and will raise awareness and advocate accordingly.
Resources for supporting vulnerable children are effectively allocated	UNICEF will continue to represent a highly effective and reliable partner through which resources can be directed towards helping children and will strengthen analytical and evaluative capacity to ensure that it continues learning how to have the greatest impact with its resources and deliver value for money for its stakeholders. It will also continue to track allocations for children more broadly and their related impact on children.

Lack of progress on strengthening United Nations development system	UNICEF has full confidence that the QCPR process has delivered the means through which the UNDS can be strengthened and made fit for purpose for delivering on the 2030 Agenda.
Persistence of findings in relation to gender analysis capacity (as identified in the Review of Development Effectiveness 2012-2015)	GAP 2, presented at the same time as the new Strategic Plan and developed with it, will present the full response and UNICEF’s measures for strengthening gender programming in UNICEF.
Decline or perceived decline in programme quality	UNICEF will continue to invest in strengthening results based management in the organization in order to protect and further improve its reputation for programming excellence. This will include investment in the capacity of staff and partners, and the continued development of related systems and processes for every point in the programming cycle. This is a key dimension of the management enabler.

**Organizational Performance Enablers**

The overarching theory of change also captures 4 organizational performance enablers that refer most directly to efficiency, professionalism and ethics in the leadership, management and administration of the organization, these enablers support the delivery of results and change strategies and are composed of four interconnected elements. They are as follows:

- *Governance (Modern, transparent and accountable governance for the organization)*
- *Management (Results oriented, efficient, effective, and collaborative management)*
- *People (Versatile staff, staff as agents of change)*
- *Knowledge and information systems (Efficient, safe and secure systems connecting results & people)*

The theory of change statement that captures how the change strategies contribute to higher level results is the following:

***if*** a) internal governance is accountable and transparent, and ***if*** b) management is results-based, efficient, effective and collaborative; and ***if*** c) the workforce is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile; and ***if*** d) knowledge and information systems support performance across the organization; ***then*** UNICEF will ensure that its programmes are efficiently delivered and cost effective.

## Goal Area 1: Theory of Change

### Outcome Statement

Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV, ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive.

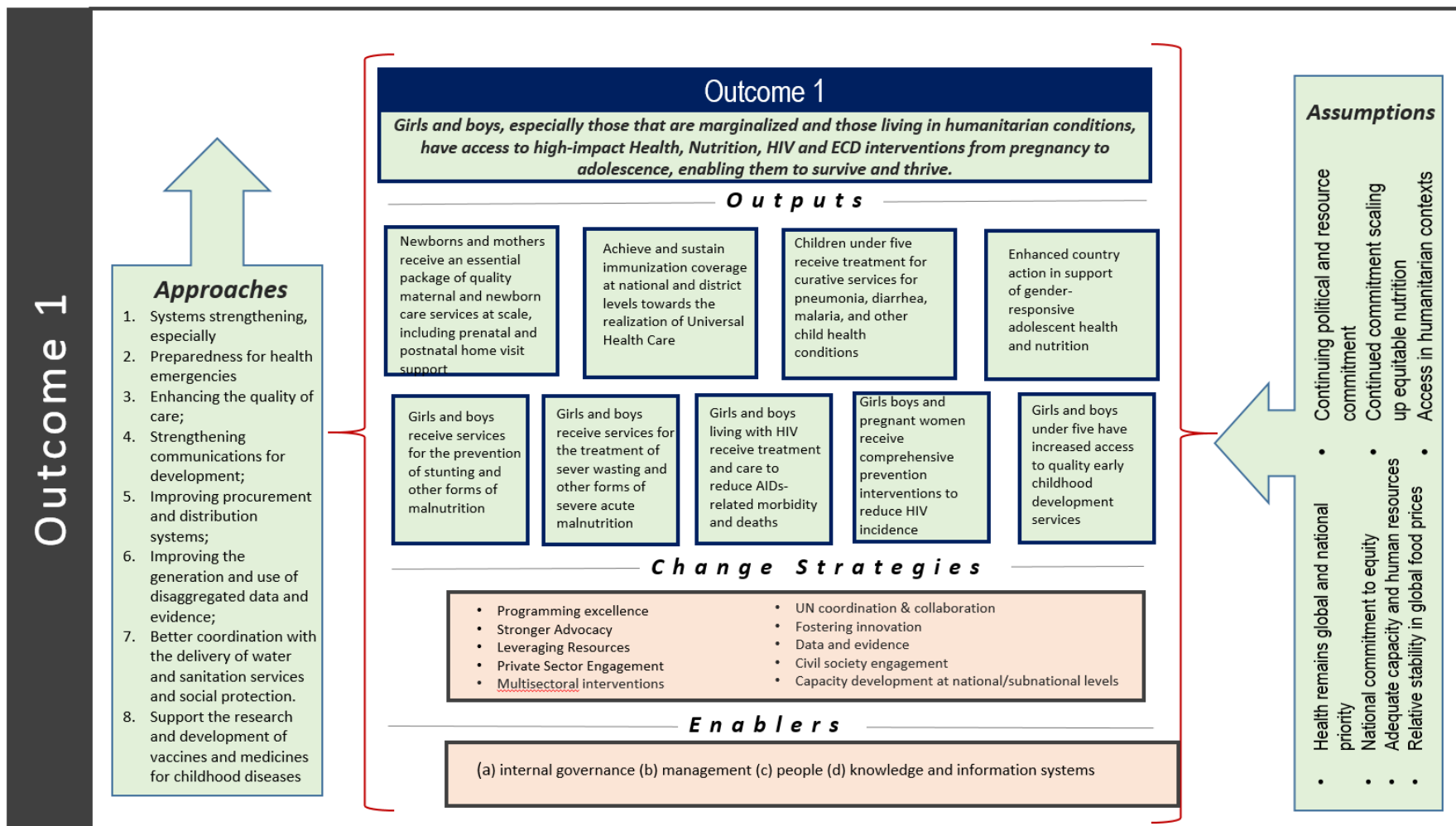
---

### Theory of Change Statement

If newborns and mothers receive an essential package of quality maternal and newborn care services at scale, including prenatal care and postnatal home visits support, and if there is achieved and sustained high levels of immunization coverage of traditional and new vaccines at national and district levels towards the realization of Universal Health Coverage, and if children under five receive prevention and treatment services for curative services for pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, and other child health conditions, and if girls and boys receive services for the prevention of stunting and other forms of malnutrition, and if they receive services for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition, and if girls and boys living with HIV receive treatment and care to reduce AIDS-related morbidity and deaths, and if girls, boys and pregnant women and adolescent girls and boys receive comprehensive prevention interventions to reduce HIV incidence, and if girls and boys under five have increased access to quality early childhood development services, and if there is enhanced country action in support of gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition; then girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have the chance to survive and thrive in their communities.

---

UNICEF's contribution and approach across this area of work reaches beyond ending preventable death in young children to attaining the growth and developmental potential and wellbeing of all children and adolescents. It will include systems strengthening, especially at the subnational and community level, and in relation to preparedness for health and nutrition emergencies and other humanitarian crises, enhancing the quality of care and improving procurement and distribution systems; strengthening communications for development; improving the generation and use of disaggregated data and evidence; research and development of novel health, nutrition and early stimulation products; and related results in other areas, notably enhanced coordination with the provision of water and sanitation services (under Goal Area 4), birth registration (under Goal 3) and social protection (under Goal 5).

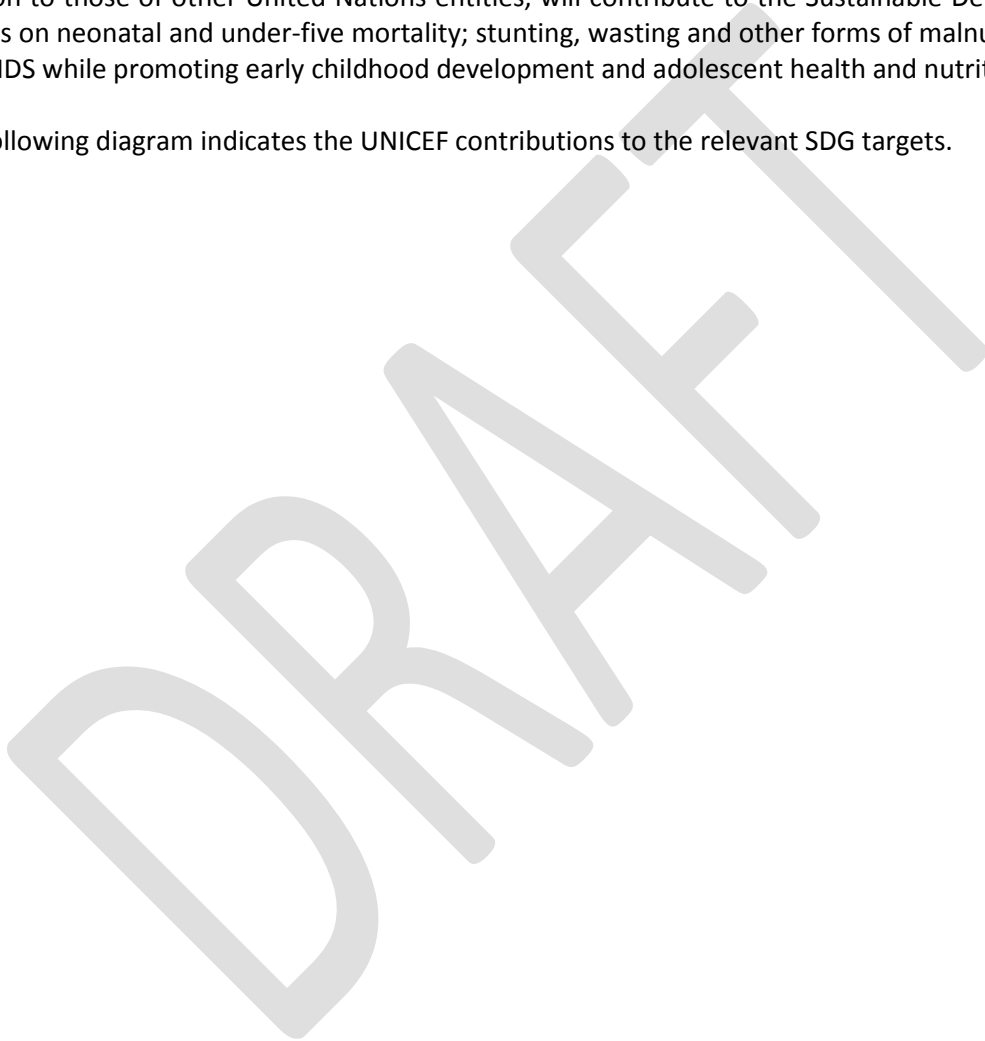


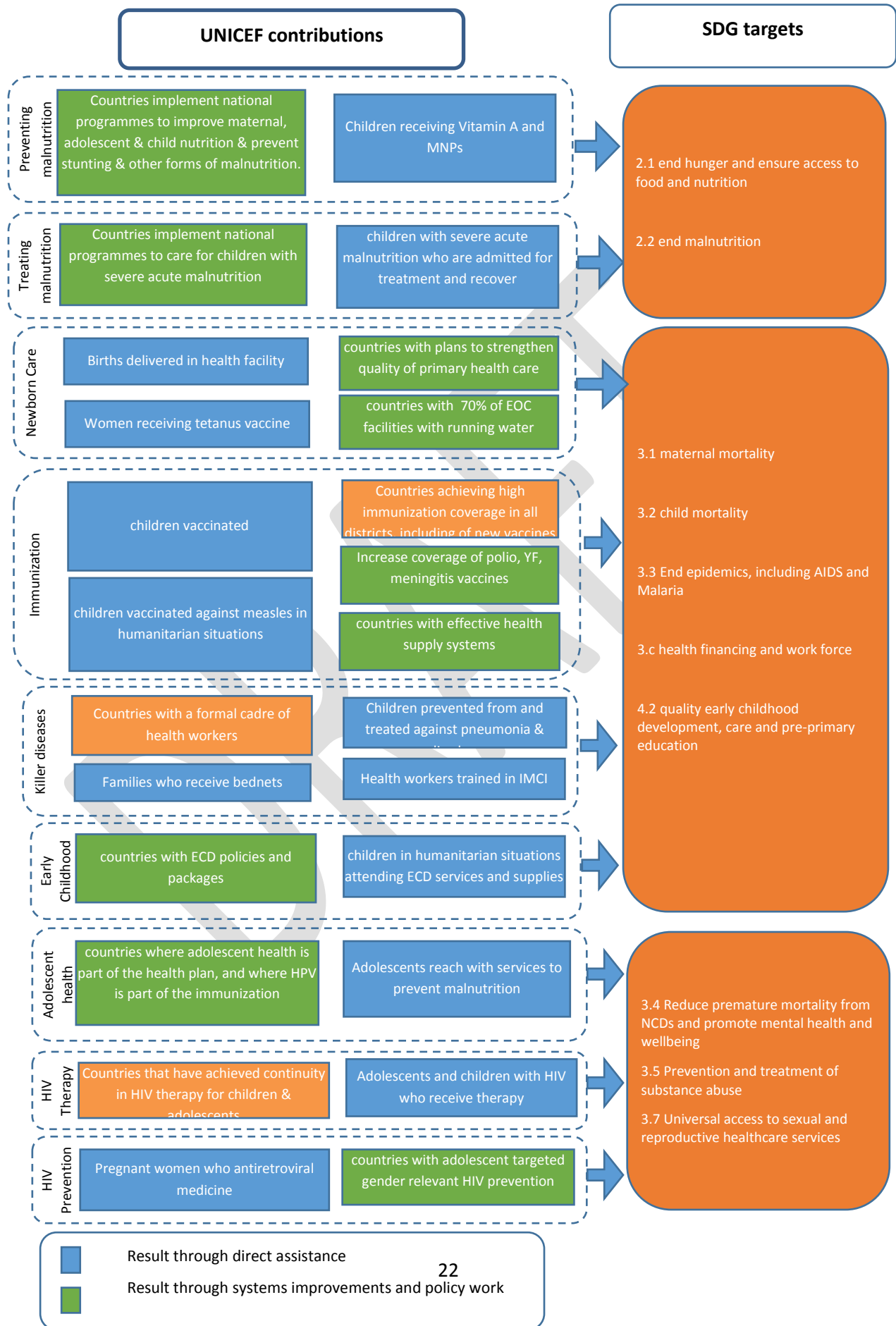
Key UN partners: WHO (health systems strengthening), WFP (nutrition), UNFPA (adolescent health), UNAIDS (HIV), World Bank, Gavi, Global Fund, etc.

## Link to SDGs and CRC

UNICEF's work under Goal Area 1 of the new Strategic Plan supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture); 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages); 4 (Promote lifelong learning) and 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) in both humanitarian and development contexts; and supports articles 6 (the child's right to life) and 24 (the child's right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The right to health is also central to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNICEF, leveraging its comparative advantages in relation to those of other United Nations entities, will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal targets on neonatal and under-five mortality; stunting, wasting and other forms of malnutrition, and HIV and AIDS while promoting early childhood development and adolescent health and nutrition.

The following diagram indicates the UNICEF contributions to the relevant SDG targets.





## Context:

### Leaving no child behind

Despite commendable progress on child survival, deep inequities persist within and across countries in helping children not only survive but also thrive. In 2016, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia accounted for more than 80 per cent of global under-five mortality. Compared to children in the highest income group within many countries, the poorest children are nearly twice as likely to die before the age of 5, twice as likely to be stunted, and five times more likely to be out of school. More than 40 per cent of children under five are at risk of not reaching their physical, cognitive, psychological and/or social and emotional potential due to poverty or poor health and nutrition.

Infectious diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria remain the leading causes of death among children under five, with neonatal mortality accounting for a growing proportion of deaths among this age group. Malnutrition is an underlying cause of approximately half of under-five deaths, resulting in about 3 million preventable child deaths each year. Among those who survive, severe acute malnutrition (SAM) contributes to perpetuate stunted growth and other forms of malnutrition, affecting children's prospects of surviving and thriving in all areas of their lives.

Of all people living with HIV, children under five face the highest risk of AIDS-related death. Children living with HIV are at increased risk of neurological and neuropsychological problems. AIDS also remains a leading cause of death among adolescents. New HIV infections among adolescents are projected to rise from 250,000 in 2015 to nearly 400,000 annually by 2030 if progress in reaching adolescents with comprehensive HIV knowledge and prevention services stalls.

Improving infants and young children's diet is critical to reduce stunting, which affects an estimated 17 million children. Breast milk provides all the energy and nutrients an infant needs in the first six months of life, and it continues to be an important component of children's diet until at least 2 years of age. It is therefore critical to protect and support breastfeeding practices, particularly among the most vulnerable populations.

With regard to the amount and quality of diet, half of young children aged 6-23 months old are not being fed the minimum number of times a day and less than one third are fed at least four food groups during this critical period of growth and development. In all regions, children from the poorest households suffer the worst rates of dietary diversity in all regions, but even in the richest households, far too many young children are not being fed a minimally diverse diet.

Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) among under-fives reduces mortality; VAS delivered in Child Health Days and other campaign-style events is less inequitable than most other child survival interventions, but coverage is nevertheless higher among the rich than the poor. Iodine deficiency is a major cause of preventable cognitive impairment and can be effectively controlled through salt iodization. Previous analyses indicated that that iodized salt use was directly related to wealth, but more recent analyses led by UNICEF found no predictable patterns of disparity in relation to relative wealth.

On the other hand, anemia prevalence shows clear inverse associations with wealth, and is generally higher in women than in men. Iron-deficiency anemia is leading cause of disability because it stunts physical and mental growth. It is particular concern for adolescent girls, as their nutritional status affects not only their health during pregnancy, but also their ability to learn and function fully in society.

Good progress has been made on reducing pneumonia-- the largest single killer of children under the age of 5—including due to scale up of pneumococcal vaccine (PCV). Scale up of this life-saving vaccine, along with Rotavirus- which protects against the most virulent strains of diarrhea-- in low income countries has been supported by Gavi. Many children in middle income countries do not have access to PCV and given its impact, UNICEF will work with governments and industry to increase access. Similarly, including due to climate change and urbanization, cases of mosquito-transmitted disease are increasing. Extra effort will be made to help countries increase coverage of Yellow Fever and Meningitis vaccines to reduce and prevent epidemics.

Children with SAM face an increased risk of dying and require urgent treatment to save their lives. Scaling up the early detection and treatment of children with SAM is therefore critical. While the number of countries providing services for children with SAM and the number of children admitted for treatment has steadily increased in the last six years, the scale up of SAM management remains insufficient, currently reaching less than one in five children who suffer from SAM. About three-quarters of the world's children with severe wasting live in lower-middle income countries. Indeed, the burden of SAM is higher in non-emergency contexts; however, these children are less likely than children in emergency contexts to access treatment. Limited resources for the care of children with SAM remain a critical bottleneck to scale up programmes.

Gender equality is one of the three most fundamental inequalities humanity faces (along with poverty- and geography-based inequality). While progress was made on a number of fronts for women and girls under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—including in health, nutrition and HIV—women and girls continue to struggle under significant levels of disadvantage and burden vis-à-vis men and boys in all parts of the world. In poor communities and societies these disadvantages tend to be multifold. Roughly 300,000 women per year still die from preventable causes related to childbirth and pregnancy; 99 per cent of these deaths occur in developing countries. Adolescent girls' risk is higher than other women, with complications relating to childbirth being the leading cause of death among girls 15–19 years of age.<sup>4</sup>

Gender and other social and economic inequalities heighten the vulnerability of adolescent girls to HIV and AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region most impacted by HIV, girls account for three out of every four new infections among adolescents aged 15–19.<sup>5</sup> In 2015, 450,000 new infections occurred among adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24 years, which translates into approximately 8,600 new infections per week, the vast majority of them in southern Africa. The persistent patterns that characterize the epidemic in adolescent girls and boys – slow progress in the reduction in new infections, rising mortality, predominance of new infections in adolescent girls and vulnerability of key adolescent populations – underscore the need to reach the hard-to-reach and to address gender equality issues in HIV prevention, treatment and support.

UNICEF's mandate on women and children provides a special opportunity for addressing gender inequalities—by shaping the lives and opportunities for the next generation of girls and boys to formulate and live in a more gender equitable world; there is strong evidence for childhood investments in gender equality resulting in multifold positive outcomes for children and their communities as adults. UNICEF's mandate also recognizes the intimate link between the welfare and rights of women and the welfare and rights of children. The evidence base consistently shows that when women are well-off and empowered, children benefit more than anyone else.

---

<sup>4</sup> WHO, 'Maternal Mortality,' November 2016. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/>



Health systems provide a platform for a range of child health, growth and development outcomes, and thus serve to address the underlying causes of the inequities described here. Therefore government health sectors need to be supported so they have strong technical capacity; professional, valued and reliable workforce; and sufficient financing. Over the coming years, ODA financing of health will undergo material change including a decrease in funding via important global public private partnerships (Gavi, GFATM) to governments with economic growth. Support to national budget decision-making, use and domestic resource mobilization becomes increasingly critical. Another important focus is strengthening capacity at the subnational and community level merits particular focus- notably including the essential cadre of community health workers as a part of the formal health system. While greater efforts have been put forth to reduce the fragmentation of the global health architecture, partnership management and inter-agency coordination are still weak in many countries limiting the benefits of working together on unified goals. Sustained advocacy will be necessary for governments to implement via multisector collaboration and overcome the challenges linked to its complex implementation. In addition, good quality health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and ECD data, disaggregated well enough to detect inequities and act upon them, are a persistent issue requiring further strengthening of local capacity.

### Humanitarian Response, Risk and Sustainable Development

A key determinant of children's well-being today is whether they live in fragile, conflict-affected, or disaster-prone contexts: such children are twice as likely to die before the age of 5, to be out of school, or to lack access to safe water. Disasters and conflict exacerbate the most common causes of childhood illness and death including diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria, malnutrition and neonatal causes due to disruption of health systems and essential services. Young children living through crises and fragility are exposed to high levels of toxic stress that have a significant negative impact on their brain development and functioning.

As populations are displaced away from shelter and services, their exposure to health and nutrition risks increases. Conflict and displacement exacerbate the risk of HIV transmission due to increased vulnerability to sexual violence, interrupted access to prevention and health care and protection systems as well as engagement in negative coping mechanisms such as transactional sex. Families lose access to social safety networks, and the needs of the youngest children become even greater as their vulnerability increases.<sup>6</sup>

According to the World Bank, 35 countries and territories faced the twofold challenge of fragile situations and a reversal in progress in maternal, newborn and child health. New epidemics, such as Zika, affect newborns, the most vulnerable of population groups. The discovery of previously undetected wild poliovirus cases in Nigeria in August 2016 is a potent reminder of the need for continued vigilance in the fight against the spread of infectious diseases. Mass migration across national borders underscores the need for global health agencies, including UNICEF, to invest in innovative approaches for routine surveillance and reinforce the resilience of national health systems.

In humanitarian crises, key life-saving and preventative interventions must be scaled up to reduce excess morbidity and mortality and protect gains in nutrition status, prevention and treatment of women and children with HIV, and early childhood development (ECD). At the same time, to ensure more resilient communities it is necessary to increase attention to strengthening flexible delivery systems and services to anticipate and prepare for the risks of disaster, conflict, climate change and other shocks.

---

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO (2007) Education for all –Strong foundations: early childhood, care and education .

## Lessons Learned 2014-2017

While the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan builds on its predecessor, it has evolved in several ways. The most obvious of these is the composite nature of Goal Area 1, which incorporates early childhood development, health, HIV and nutrition, with links to WASH. This change reflects the importance of the life course approach that integrates child survival, growth and development across both decades of a child's life. This was a key lesson, drawn from the mid-term review of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and elsewhere, and has informed the development of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan and associated theories of change.

A number of the other lessons highlighted in the Strategic Plan document have particular bearing in UNICEF's work under Goal Area 1. Of particular importance is the lesson that UNICEF and its partners have learned that investing in the health and survival of the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and brings about greater impact. Indeed the forthcoming UNICEF report "*Narrowing the Gaps: The power of investing in the poorest children*" demonstrates investing in the health and survival of the most deprived children and communities provides more value for money, saving almost twice as many lives for every US\$1 million spent as equivalent investments in less deprived groups. As such this is also entirely consistent with the 2030 Agenda and the call to 'leave no one behind' and reach the 'furthest behind first'. It is also a cornerstone of UNICEF programming under Goal Area 1, now and in the future. As elsewhere across UNICEF's portfolio of work there continue to be lessons related to the need to scale-up equity-focused programming and advocacy, including through better targeting of interventions to focus on these most disadvantaged children and the strengthening of national systems. An important lesson learned has been of addressing the social determinants of child survival, growth and development, which are the same for early childhood development, health, HIV and nutrition; and that numerous opportunities are lost and resources wasted by not addressing children's development at the same time as their survival.

There is clear evidence of the effectiveness of high-impact, low-cost interventions for maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition. Such interventions have been instrumental in the decline in under-five mortality rates since 1990 of more than 50 per cent in all regions. However, in many countries significant gaps remain in service coverage, quality and resilience of health systems and communities. Including the capacity and market access to introduce new technologies. A systems approach is therefore critical to address the unfinished business of the MDGs, ensure sustainability of results achieved, build resilience and realize the ambitious SDG targets. To address this, UNICEF, with national and UN partners, has developed its approach to health systems strengthening (HSS), including attention to community engagement, strengthening national child health policy and financing and multisectoral engagement.

Important lessons were learned from the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa for UNICEF and for the broader United Nations development system. Promoting healthy behaviours and risk reduction requires approaches tailored to the norms and dynamics of each community, recognizing the possibility of enormous cultural and behavioural variations, even in small countries. It is difficult to launch such approaches in response to an emergency if there has not been prior investment in a cadre of trained health workers, social mobilization and C4D work. The supply function is also critical in health emergencies, to ensure the availability of rapid diagnostic tests and the development of vaccines specific to each virus. Thus, another lesson is that sustainable response must be based on national resources and capacity, supported and strengthened by international resources.

An important nutrition lesson emerging from the current Strategic plan is that prevention nutrition services, when delivered at scale for the children who need them most, can bring about significant declines in stunting. Improved knowledge about the form, timing and delivery of nutrition interventions

has contributed to scaling up nutrition interventions to unprecedented coverage levels, resulting in unprecedented progress, as the number of stunted children has declined from 198 million in 2000 to 155 million in 2016. Three main drivers of stunting are poor maternal nutrition and care, poor child feeding and care practices, and poor access to nutritious and safe foods for children and women. A second nutrition lesson is that sustainable and effective SAM interventions should be community-based and integrated within existing routine services for children.

Key to the success of global efforts to prevent the mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV has been a combination of improving knowledge and attitude about HIV, and massive roll out of services, delivered as 'one pill once a day' within primary facilities, and decentralized services delivered at the point of health care. We have learned that simpler antiretroviral therapy (ART) regimens, advances in reliable point of care HIV-testing approaches that do not need sophisticated laboratories, and provision of ART to pregnant women living with HIV (including close linkages with nutrition programmes) have proven to be very effective.

The importance of simpler HIV testing technologies and ART regimens delivered at the lowest levels of care is a lesson that has yet to be fully introduced in child health services supporting children living with HIV. To maintain the progress to date, it will be crucial to address the needs of people for continuous protection, care and treatment during emergencies. Vulnerability to the virus is heightened because of greater exposure to sexual violence and transactional sex to meet basic needs as well as interruption of health care services. Health and protection systems need to be built to anticipate those risks and needs and be prepared to deliver in exceptional circumstances.

The challenge of addressing HIV prevention and treatment in the second decade of life has already been highlighted in the theory of change for the Strategic Plan, but the experiences of 2014 and 2015 demonstrate that even more effort is required. Epidemiological evidence shows that new HIV infections continue to occur, mainly in adolescent populations, especially among adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa and marginalized populations outside Africa, and that HIV-related deaths continue to rise among adolescents. This points to the importance of tailoring prevention responses to the adolescent population through dialogue and engagement with adolescents themselves. The 'All In' initiative has mobilized commitment and action to address HIV among adolescents; continued advocacy to address gender-related issues and avoid stigmatization of key populations is needed and scale up of new technologies (e.g., injectables, home tests, etc.)

UNICEF's approach to gender mainstreaming, encapsulated in the Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014–2017, provides a result-oriented and practical approach to addressing stubborn gender barriers and bottlenecks that hinder the achievement of gender equitable outcomes. The GAP approach has been validated by noticeable progress on both gender programming and institutional mainstreaming, even within the short timeframe of the last three years. The attention brought to specific gender inequities through the GAP targeted priorities has been successful in achieving results, especially around key interlinked issues for adolescent girls.

Mobilizing resources for health systems strengthening and making programming responsive to country needs (high-burden versus middle-income countries) requires flexible and long-term investments. As a result of resources for child health tied up in large global vertical programmes, this presents a distinct challenge, particularly at a time when resource partners increasingly want to see immediate, short-term results.

## Theory of Change

### Overview

The aim of outcome 1 is to realize the rights of all children and adolescents to equitable survival, growth and development, including in humanitarian crises. Taking a life course approach, the ambition of this outcome reaches beyond ending preventable death in young children to attaining the growth and developmental potential and wellbeing of all children and adolescents. Given the commonality in the social determinants of health, growth and development, integrated strategies that address the common and related causal factors are required. In nearly all countries there are numerous lost opportunities to address survival and development within the existing systems and resources.

Based on its theory of change and strongly anchored in a rights based approach to programming, UNICEF has identified nine outputs for the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan as its contributions to the outcome of *“Girls and boys, especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions, have access to high-impact Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence, enabling them to survive and thrive.”* Those outputs are as follows:

- Newborns and mothers receive an essential package of quality maternal and newborn care services at scale, including prenatal and postnatal home visit support
- Girls and boys receive services for the prevention of stunting and other forms of malnutrition
- Girls and boys receive services for the treatment of severe wasting and other forms of severe acute malnutrition
- Children under five receive treatment for curative services for pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, and other child health conditions
- Girls and boys under five have increased access to quality early childhood development services
- Country action in support of gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition is enhanced
- Girls and boys living with HIV receive treatment and care to reduce AIDs-related morbidity and deaths
- Girls, boys and pregnant women receive comprehensive prevention interventions to reduce HIV incidence.

The nine outputs of this goal area are intended to address inequities in child and adolescent outcomes. They will require a priority focus on strengthening systems including emergency preparedness, response and resilience; and promoting integrated, multi-sector policies and programmes.

UNICEF has renewed its focus on health system strengthening, and in that context will work to ensure girls and boys receive the essential package of routine services for child survival, growth and development and to expand options for community-based service delivery as part of primary health care programmes. UNICEF will work to link prevention and treatment services, and actively advocate and support for better integration of regular health, nutrition and HIV-related services with key sectors such Food Security, ECD, Health, Social Protection and WASH. Focusing on health systems strengthening prioritizes generating demand for disaggregated data (and its collection, analysis and use) and improved procurement, supply and distribution. It contributes to social protection systems that support the demand for health services

and healthy behaviours, while bolstering efforts towards universal health coverage. It also supports engagement with the private sector and improving the quality of health care.

In humanitarian crises, as needed, UNICEF will support the delivery of scaled-up interventions through population- and community-based activities that will save lives. UNICEF will continue to support people's equitable access to essential health services with sustained coverage of high-impact preventative and curative interventions, including life-saving treatment for children, adolescents and pregnant women living with HIV where possible.

UNICEF's focus on health systems strengthening also incorporates the nexus between humanitarian and development programmes in the health sector through its focus on governance and financing, its specific attention to community-level services and improving data and information systems, and its support for better domestic procurement and supply systems. Strong functioning in each of these areas is as critical to establishing healthy societies as it is to humanitarian responses in the health sector, and to effective responses to public health emergencies.

At the same time, emergency settings often require the flexibility and adaptability that characterize a well-functioning health system during a non-emergency period. They provide excellent opportunities to decentralize decision-making and budgeting according to local needs, to strengthen community-engagement and participation, to improve local data gathering and its use in planning, and to decentralize and establish adaptability in procurement and supply systems. After the emergency, all these activities will have contributed to a stronger and more resilient system.

The effectiveness of UNICEF's interventions under Outcome 1, the extent to which it is able to ensure that its approaches and outputs are cost effective and have maximum impact on the lives of vulnerable and marginalized children, is reinforced by the deployment of organizational programming strategies (the HOWS). Each of the following strategies are deployed in UNICEF's efforts to ensure that every child survives and thrives:

*Programming excellence for at-scale results for children:* UNICEF continues to exhibit the highest standards of results management across its work on health, nutrition, ECD and HIV/AIDS. In response to the call to leave no child behind, UNICEF's programming will renew and heighten its focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized children, improving data sources, disaggregation and management in order to support increasingly accurate definition of those left behind, and advocate and monitor their access to services, and the broader development impact of the work of UNICEF and its partners. It will also continue to foster cross-sectoral and multisectoral programming and support policy, capacity development and systems strengthening at the national and subnational levels to improve the delivery of essential services to the most disadvantaged children. For example, priority interventions to eliminate the paediatric HIV treatment gap have focused on integration approaches, including using community platforms as part of the integrated management of childhood illnesses and other child platforms (in both outpatient and inpatient services) and nutrition clinics. Harnessing the power of communication for development to ensure communities actively demand quality services and there is uptake of essential family practices, community engagement and mobilization to improve accountability of policy makers and service providers, working with communities and service providers to address social, behavioural and cultural

determinants and norms to minimize the gap between supply and demand and overall empowerment and greater participation leading to predictable and sustained positive change contributing to survive, thrive and transform outcomes. Key examples of this include engaging with communities, health workers, religious and traditional leaders and using community-based processes, media, digital platforms and outreach to create demand for and build trust and acceptance of vaccines against polio and other diseases (measles, yellow fever, cholera, etc.); to promote antenatal care, assisted delivery and early exclusive breastfeeding; and to educate people about the danger signs of pneumonia and diarrhoea and the need to seek immediate care.

Winning support for the cause of universal and health care that leaves no one behind, and well-being for children, adolescents and their families from decision makers and the wider public. Advocacy will continue to be a significant element of UNICEF's work under outcome 1 and it will continue working with others to build alliances and movements for change and progress, in order to ensure that no child is left behind and those furthest behind are prioritized, survive and thrive. Examples of this include UNICEF's advocacy work for improved integration of micronutrient powders into infant and young child feeding programmes; its advocacy for child-responsive food systems to be part of the priority nutrition agenda, including through policies/legislation; its work on making the case for the prioritization of water and sanitation accessibility in health facilities to prevent maternal and newborn deaths as well as contributing to quality of care for children with SAM; and making the case for investments into ECD.

Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children's and adolescent's health and wellbeing. UNICEF will influence international and domestic financing and budgeting for children's and adolescent's health. For example, advocacy for inclusion of procurement of vaccines and essential drugs and commodities, severe and acute malnutrition as part national systems and routine services for children with government funding; and production and mobilization of ECD financing tools (e.g. investment tracker/costing tools); and on equity-focused programmes to influence country investments in maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health through domestic and international funding channels, such as Gavi or the Global Fund. Harnessing the power of business and markets for children. UNICEF will continue to leverage the power of private sector partners to support the delivery of its key results in health and nutrition.

United Nations working together. In alignment with the 2016 QCPR, UNICEF will work with other United Nations entities to strengthen system coherence with a view to achieving better results for children and adolescents and more integrated approaches to the 2030 Agenda. Key examples include: UNICEF's chair of the H6 health partnership of U.N. systems organizations and its role in developing an operational framework to help countries implement the Secretary-General's Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health; UNICEF's work with UNAIDS and co-sponsors on a 'super fast track' approach to HIV prevention and treatment in children, adolescents and young women; and UNICEF collaboration in support of measures to achieve global nutrition targets, as outlined in the Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition. UNICEF has made a number of practical proposals to the broader United Nations family, including the adoption of an online, real-time information system across agencies; more disaggregated data to reveal vulnerabilities affecting the most marginalized children; and more flexible funding and greater coherence across development and humanitarian efforts.

*Fostering innovation for children and adolescent's health.* This change strategy will also involve identifying the most promising innovations for application in different contexts while supporting partners to adopt, adapt and scale up the most successful approaches. For example, UNICEF's work with markets to pull development and availability of products that can transform outcomes, including diagnostics, vaccines and health technologies. UNICEF's U-Report, a free social messaging tool with more than 3 million active users in more than 30 countries, continues to be used to share critical information on HIV prevention with youth; and in 2016 it was activated in the Latin America and Caribbean region to share Zika virus prevention information, much the same way it was used in the Ebola crisis in West Africa.

*Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.* Evaluations, research and data are key elements of sound programming, advocacy and leveraging partnerships for children. There will be a continued strong focus on research, policy analysis and evaluation of what works for children and adolescents in the health sector. For example, guidance and knowledge generation on the effectiveness of integrated IYCF-MNP (powder) programmes in development and emergency contexts; filling research gaps and programme guidance on implementation of universal salt iodization; leading the knowledge generation on effectiveness of adolescent nutrition programmes, including multisectoral linkages; promoting the testing of new models for improving adolescent mental health services, and supporting data and evidence generation to demonstrate the effectiveness of ECD packages.

UNICEF will also work to strengthen systems, methodologies and both internal and external capacities to gather and manage disaggregated data (sex, disability, age, location, etc) to ensure that the organization and its partners can respond to the Agenda 2030 call to 'leave no child behind' by accurately and progressively identifying the girls and boys that are most vulnerable and marginalized.

Underpinning these programming strategies and the organization's drive for ever greater effectiveness, UNICEF will also continue to ensure that its programmes are efficiently delivered and cost effective through its four main enablers of organizational performance: (a) internal governance, as UNICEF continues its transformation into a more transparent and accountable organization; (b) management, focused on results, efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration; (c) people, including a workforce that is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile across different contexts and sectors; and (d) knowledge and information systems that contribute to programmatic results or organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Assumptions, risks and risk management measures**

UNICEF has identified a number of cross-cutting risks that are applicable to all of its outcomes and results areas, including its work under outcome 1. These include: siloed operations and funding arrangements; insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda; unpredictable humanitarian crises and their lasting effects on children; inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies; a varying focus on results for children among United Nations partners working together; inadequate establishment of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together; rapidly evolving technological requirements; and challenges related to results-based budgeting in a decentralized organization. Many of the change strategies and enablers discussed above are explicitly

designed to help to mitigate these risks, in particular through their emphasis on flexibility and agility – in systems, human resources, funding and management arrangements – and on partnerships and new technologies. Other specific measures to address risks identified across the Strategic Plan are identified in the first section of this paper.

Planning assumptions, also include increased domestic and international investments to complete the ‘unfinished business’, expanded investment to child health, nutrition and development, and a commitment to health systems strengthening. The latter will require the management of national health systems at all levels, but especially at the local level, to be informed by analysis of risks related to the need to integrate disaster, conflict, climate change and other shocks. In addition, it will be critical for UNICEF to maintain the technical expertise and to develop new skill set in the SDG era to meet the evolving needs.

In addition to these broader risks and assumptions, there are others that are more directly relevant to UNICEF’s work under outcome 1 and the application of its associated theory of change. These are presented in the table below along with the related UNICEF measure.

DRAFT



Assumption/Risk	UNICEF measures
Health and nutrition remain global and national priority. It is assumed that programme countries remain determined to address and achieve SDG targets related to Outcome 1 result areas. The related risk is that without this commitment UNICEF will struggle for partnerships and operating in a challenging programming environment.	UNICEF continues to advocate at global and national levels that Health, Nutrition, HIV and ECD remain priorities and will leverage its strategies within outcome one areas to that end.
It is assumed that the convergence and multisectoral integration across sectors is efficient and effective. The risk is that if this proves incorrect it could have negative consequences for effectiveness of interventions and for investment.	Strategic use of data and systems for tracking the efficacy of approaches and identifying challenges and bottlenecks.
Increased domestic and international investments to complete the 'unfinished business' including expanded investment to child health, nutrition and development.	UNICEF will emphasize and continue to demonstrate the importance of attention to equity in global discussions, among donor and programme countries.
It is assumed that no significant new global threats emerge. The risks from such a new threat emerging include a de-prioritization of results areas under outcome one with the related consequences for partnership, prioritization and investment.	UNICEF will continue to advocate for long term increased investment in these and other SDG targets.
It is assumed that humanitarian access to support the provision of water and sanitation for vulnerable populations can be achieved. There is the risk that access is being denied	UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities quickly as they arise. Especially where warring parties are immune to international pressure, access might remain unachievable
It is assumed that programme countries are prioritizing results for children and equity principles.	UNICEF and its alliances for children will continue to generate evidence that investments in children – including the most vulnerable - are providing the greatest returns
There is a risk regarding eligibility criteria for many countries to access health resources coming from GPPS	In the relevant and effected countries UNICEF will work with partners and national systems to build mitigating measures into its programming in the sector and continue working to strengthen national systems and the efficient use of national resources.
It is assumed there will be a sustained, and growing, commitment at all levels to health systems strengthening. The related risk is that the key focus and approach of UNICEF interventions across outcome 1 results areas will be in question.	UNICEF will both advocate and work to demonstrate the effectiveness of health system strengthening and systems strengthening more broadly as the most effective means for sustained impact.
It is assumed that systems strengthening will be made more sustainable by the adequate integration of risk analysis and management into plans	UNICEF will also work with the management of national health systems at all levels, but especially at the local level, to be informed by analysis of risks

and strategies. If not there is a risk that gains could be jeopardized by shocks, emergencies, etc..	related to the need to integrate disaster, conflict, climate change and other shocks.
It is assumed that coordination and collaboration between UNICEF and UN partners will only increase in terms of delivering results for children.	UNICEF will continue to work through the new UNDAF process and other interagency processes and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency or working closely together.

DRAFT

## Key Partnerships

UNICEF will continue its long-standing practice of building capacity, leveraging resources and influencing policies and programmes through partnerships with national and local governments, sister U.N. agencies, civil society, academic institutions, foundations/funds and the private sector to achieve the outputs for outcome 1. These include:

- UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage -- later marriage, reduces threat to adolescent girls' health, i.e. problems related to adolescent pregnancy
- 'Every Woman Every Child' movement -- to improve the health of women, children and adolescents everywhere)
- Global Health Partnership H6 (UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, World Health Organization and World Bank Group) -- focus on the country level and aim to leverage the strengths and capacities of each of the six member organizations to support high-burden countries to improve the survival, health, and well-being of every woman, newborn, child and adolescent.
- WHO-led Accelerated Action for Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!)
- Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance – save children's lives and protect people's health by increasing access to immunization in poor countries, including vaccines to protect young girls against cervical cancer (HPV vaccine)
- Working with WFP on nutrition.
- Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement that aims to end stunting and malnutrition in all its forms. UNICEF will work towards the achievements of this results area through its global network of sub-national, national, regional and global offices and will continue to provide leadership and support to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and other global, regional and national action frameworks.
- Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN), is the 1<sup>st</sup> ever global partnership for ECD. Through the ECDAN, joint actions implemented by partners to scale up multi-sectoral services, catalyze sustainable finance and advocate for increased commitment to young children, will help to give every child the best start to life.
- All In to End Adolescent AIDS (partnership between UNICEF, UNAIDS, PEPFAR, GFATM, WHO, UNFPA, MTV Staying Alive Foundation and PACT) to drive better results for adolescents by encouraging strategic changes in policies and engaging young people in the effort.
- Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free Super-Fast Track Framework (PEPFAR, UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO, EGPAF) for ending AIDS among children, adolescents and young women by 2020.

## Goal Area 2: Theory of Change

### Outcome Statement

Girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.

---

### Theory of Change Statement

If the multiple and complex barriers to access to education for girls and boys from early childhood to adolescence, are understood and addressed, including those related to gender, children with disabilities and minorities, children living in poverty and other vulnerable groups including children in humanitarian crises; if strengthened education systems support improved quality of teaching and learning; and if girls and boys especially from vulnerable groups are provided with increased opportunities to develop the skills they need for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, then every child, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, can learn.

---

UNICEF works in three fundamental ways in order to give effect to this theory of change:

- Through strengthening of education systems at all levels - assisting governments to achieve greater access including for the most vulnerable children, to ensure the education system is safer, resilient to crisis more gender responsive and inclusive<sup>7</sup>, and to deliver better learning and skills outcomes. System strengthening includes enhancing the many components of national systems at all levels – from the central to the community level – to work coherently in providing long-term benefits for children. It encompasses the promotion of communities', parents' and children's engagement in understanding entitlements and gaps and contributing to planning, supporting, monitoring and holding relevant authorities accountable for the provision of educational services and learning opportunities. The Strategic Plan indicators count the number of countries that make significant progress in strengthening key elements of education systems with UNICEF support.
- Through direct service delivery, including the provision of emergency education services that help fulfil the right to education and provide safe spaces for children and adolescents (including WASH services), essential learning materials, teacher training and direct support to communities to help children and adolescents access education and learn. Supplies and cash, also in the form of financing large scale training programmes, logistics, or NGO operations for formal or non-formal education and early learning are provided, mainly in Least Developed Countries, fragile countries, and humanitarian situations. Even where UNICEF provides large scale supply or financial systems, UNICEF usually also helps governments to improve their formal and non-formal education and training system.
- Through contribution to global and regional public goods such as analytical reports, evidence, disaggregated data that identifies disadvantaged children, evaluations, methodological guidance and tools, the promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation/sharing, co-chairing and

---

<sup>7</sup> Including a focus on ensuring responsiveness of the education/training system to disability and gender.

contributing to international education initiatives, involvement in strategic partnerships and support to dialogue and advocacy for inclusive education and effective learning.

DRAFT

# Outcome 2

## Approaches

1. Assisting governments to reform and improve their **education systems**, to achieve greater access including for the most vulnerable children and better learning outcomes.
2. In humanitarian and fragile situations and in Least Developed Countries, provision of **essential services** directly helping children to learn (usually accompanied by efforts to help governments to improve their formal and non-formal education system), including learning materials, emergency education services, teacher or community training.
3. Contribution to global public goods, partnerships and dialogue at the **global and regional levels**.

## Outcome 2

*Girls and boys, in particular the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities.*

### Outputs

Increase and sustain access to education for girls and boys from early childhood to adolescence, including children with disabilities and minorities

Increase learning outcomes for girls and boys

Increase access for girls and boys to the skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability

### Change Strategies

#### System strengthening

- Evidence-based plan & strategy development
- Policy dialogue & coordination
- Accountability systems (incl. to communities)
- Capacity development

#### Service delivery

- Education provision in emergencies
- Provision of quality learning materials
- Training for quality teaching
- Community mobilization

#### Global partnerships & public goods

- Knowledge products/tools
- Partnerships & dialogue, including with civil society
- South-South & triangular cooperation

### Enablers

(a) internal governance (b) management (c) people (d) knowledge and information systems

## Assumptions

- Sufficient, efficiently used domestic resources
- Access in humanitarian contexts
- No worsening of the economic, political and social environment
- Global support & resourcing of education, including in emergencies
- Evidence-based approach to improving learning
- National commitment to equity
- Data disaggregation and use
- Consistent commitment to reform processes

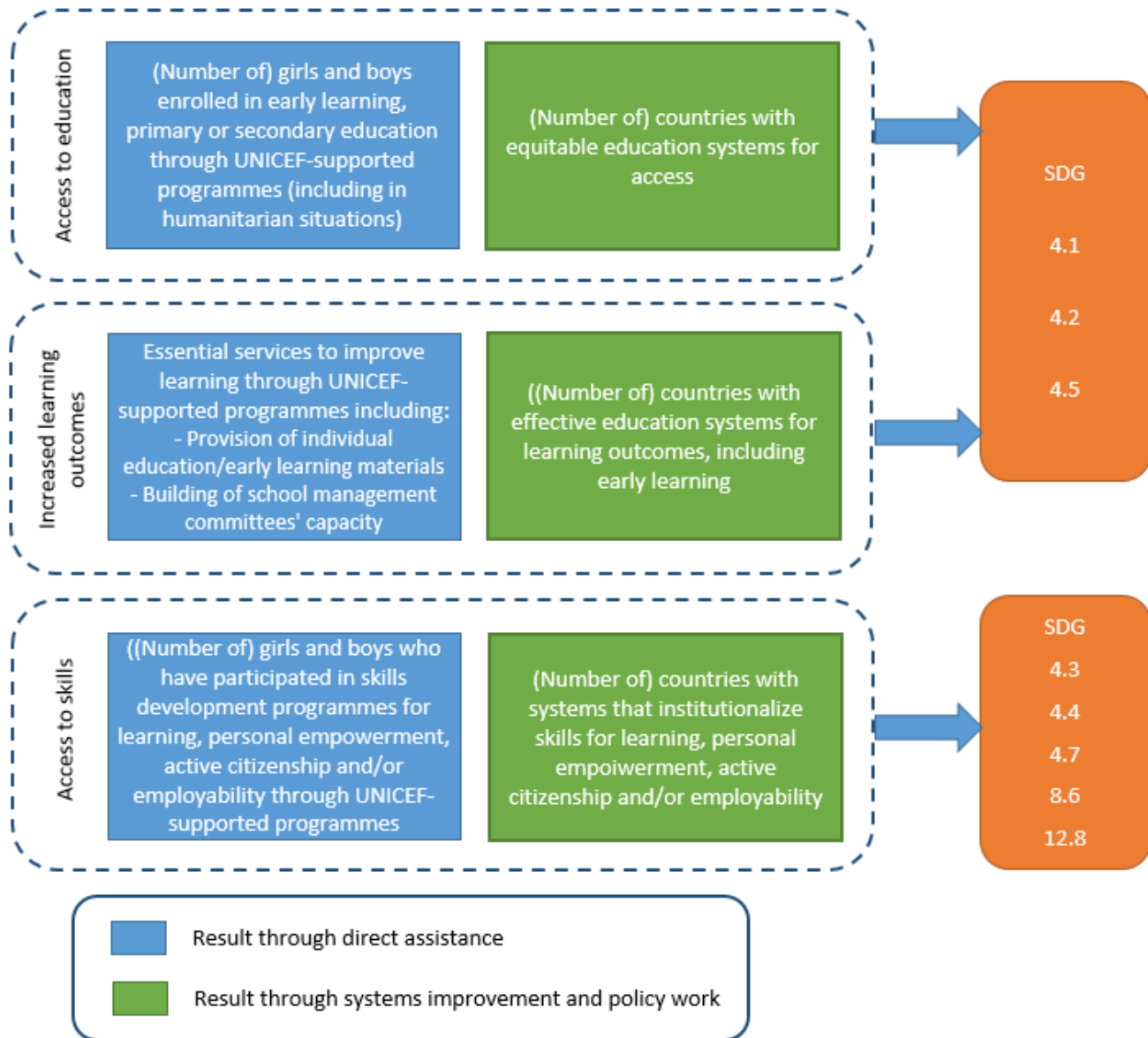
Key UN partners: UNESCO (curriculum), UNHCR (humanitarian), ILO (skills development), World Bank, GPE, etc.

## Link to SDGs and CRC

Education is a right enshrined in articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as other conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is also a driver of equity (including gender equity), poverty reduction, empowerment, peaceful and inclusive societies and economic growth. Education – especially of girls - is a particularly transformative force, in both humanitarian and development contexts. Evidence shows that educating girls and women has the power to transform gender relations in society and economy. Girls with primary and secondary education are up to six times less likely to marry as children than girls with three years of schooling, thus educating girls can contribute to reducing the rate of early marriage. In addition, a mother’s educational attainment is a strong contributing factor in reducing child mortality and increasing her child’s school attendance. Education also has a significant impact in promoting and sustaining peace; and mounting evidence points to the strong role of equitable quality education in building peaceful, inclusive societies<sup>8</sup>. Education and learning therefore support (and are supported by) the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all). The importance of leaving no child behind, particularly for the most marginalized girls and boys and children in humanitarian situations has been emphasized. The following diagram indicates UNICEF’s contributions to the most relevant SDG targets, acknowledging that further linkages exist with most SDG goals, including Goal 10 (reduced inequalities), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 16 (peace and justice) and Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation).

---

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Omoeva, C. & Buckner, E. (2015, April). Does horizontal education inequality lead to violent conflict? A global analysis. Washington, D.C.: FHI360 Global Data Center and Omoeva, C.; Hatch, R. & Moussa, W. (2016). The Effects of Armed Conflict on Educational Attainment and Inequality. Washington, D.C.: FHI360 Global Data Center.



## Context

### Leaving No Child Behind

In rich and poor countries around the globe, education has long served as a great leveler of opportunity because it helps people realize their potential and contribute to their communities and the world. Education is associated with increased incomes, reduced poverty, women’s empowerment and improved health. Quality education has the power to end intergenerational cycles of inequity, improving the lives of children and the societies in which they live. For generations, quality and equitable education has provided children with a pathway out of deprivation. What has been true for the prospects of individual girls and boys has also held true for the future of nations. Education increases knowledge, sparks innovation, builds skills that drive nations’ growth and prosperity, and fosters inclusive societies. Simply put, education is key to reaching those that continue to be left behind by global development.



But for education to play this role, it must begin with strong early learning and development foundations and continue with quality learning opportunities that provide all girls and boys, especially the most disadvantaged, with a fair chance to thrive. Particular attention must be paid to those at greatest risk of being left behind.

And yet, millions of girls and boys around the world are still being denied their right to education. Globally, it is more than half of preschool-aged children, 61 million primary-school-aged children and 60 million lower-secondary-school-aged adolescents that lack access to learning and skills development opportunities. Among older children and youth, 23 percent of 15-24 years old in seventy-five UNICEF programme countries (with data available) are not in education, employment and training. The number of out of school children has stagnated in the past few years, partly due to limited progress in reaching the poorest and other vulnerable groups<sup>9</sup>, including displaced children, children with disabilities, children from rural or remote areas and minority groups. Gender analysis shows that gender often compounds existing disadvantage, with poor girls living in rural areas usually having the least access to education and adolescent girls being more likely to be illiterate than adolescent boys. Overall there are more primary school aged girls than boys (32 million vs. 29 million) that are out of school and in countries where the gender parity index is the worst, it is more often girls that are disadvantaged. Discrimination based on ethnic origin or disability and prevailing social and cultural norms (often gender-based) can further exclude children from quality services. Lack of involvement of parents and communities in school management also contributes to low access to education. Armed conflict, natural disasters and the impacts of climate change often deprive children of the chance to go to school and learn. Attacks on schools during armed conflict are alarmingly frequent and carry grave risks for children. School violence and bullying have a negative impact on children's education. The basic quality of school facilities are an important factor in learning and retention, yet minimum standards are not always met in rural and conflict affected areas, including lack of WASH facilities which can create health risks<sup>10</sup> and impede adolescent girls' ability to manage their menstruation. At primary school age, children living in fragile, disaster prone and conflict-affected contexts account for more than half of out-of-school children. In low income countries, the poorest children are five times more likely to be out of school and 8 times more likely to be missing out on pre-primary education compared to children in the highest income group.

Charting a path towards universal access to early learning, primary and secondary schooling begins with identifying the children, including adolescents left behind and their needs. When public resources are not allocated on the basis of evidence pointing to the greatest need, education systems can entrench inequities rather than dismantle them – for example, in low income countries, almost half of public education spending is allocated to the 10 percent most educated of children.

By itself, however, access to education is not enough to guarantee that a child learns. Globally, an estimated 250 million primary school aged children are not learning the basics of reading and mathematics, (for 130 million of them this is despite reaching grade 4). There are also large learning gaps within and between countries. Weak education system capacity to coherently incentivize and support better learning (including weak capacity and accountability at local levels) and protracted crises<sup>11</sup> are common underlying causes among those countries that have been unable to meet children's learning needs.

---

<sup>9</sup> One other reason for the stagnation in out of school numbers is demographic growth. Numbers of children are increasing fast in many of the poorest countries, and increasing enrolment to meet the increasing demand for education may not be sufficient to lead to a decline in out of school numbers.

<sup>10</sup> Including diarrheal disease, acute respiratory infections and stunting which, if not addressed, can impede school attendance and learning.

<sup>11</sup> Including lack of a safe school environment in crises and beyond.

Finally, while education can play a key role in social cohesion and rights promotion and in helping children thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, there is often a mismatch between skills developed by children and adolescents and what is needed in their future life. For example, it is estimated that, today, some 40 percent of employers are finding it difficult to recruit people with the skills they need<sup>12</sup>. Skills development is a critical area for improved learning outcomes, citizenship and empowerment, including violence prevention and gender equality. Providing children with skills to cope and manage risks and challenges in their lives empowers girls and boys, including adolescents, to exercise their rights and agency, build more gender-equitable relationships; postpone marriage and childbearing; and seek help for violence when it occurs. In this context, there is a need to strengthen education systems that develop skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, from early childhood onwards.

### Humanitarian Response, Risk and Sustainable Development

A key determinant of children's well-being today is whether they live in fragile, conflict-affected, or disaster-prone contexts: such children are twice as likely to die before the age of 5, to be out of school, or to lack access to safe water. Increasingly complex emergencies and protracted crises are impeding the right to education. In conflict situations, education is often under fire either directly or indirectly, as conflict damages schools and endangers the lives of teachers and students. These emergencies do not just temporarily interrupt children's lives and education, they close doors on education for the length of a childhood, or even a lifetime. An estimated 75 million children aged 3 to 18 in 35 countries are in desperate need of educational support, according to a recent report. Of these children, 17 million are refugees, internally displaced or part of another population of concern.

Though an armed conflict, epidemic or natural disaster can devastate the life of any child, the poorest and most disadvantaged children are the most vulnerable. Conflicts have a disproportionate impact on girls' access to education due to safety concerns of parents and, at adolescence, conflicting domestic obligations<sup>13</sup>, while adolescent boys face increased risks of recruitment by armed groups and pressure to economically support their families. Addressing the learning needs of children during emergencies is an essential investment – as is investment on resilient education systems that can help minimize the impact of future crises. Attending schools can also be life-saving for children as in that it can contribute to protecting them from exploitation and other increased vulnerabilities in humanitarian situations.. During crises, traumas may seriously affect a child's capacity to learn hence the importance of linkages with child protection in emergencies. Strengthening education/training systems in fragile contexts and supporting schools and learning institutions to be responsive to all forms of violence against girls, boys and adolescents, working alongside other social sectors helps build the resilience of systems, institutions, communities and children.

### Lessons Learned 2014-17

While the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan builds on its predecessor, there are some changes. Outcome 2 includes a result area on skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, hence broadening the notion of "learning" to reflect the need to enable children to develop the wide range of transferable skills they may need for their future life. There is also an increased prioritization of learning, starting with foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy, placing a stronger emphasis on education outcomes while retaining due attention to access, participation and completion of education, especially for the most disadvantaged children. Perhaps the most important lesson that UNICEF has

---

<sup>12</sup> Noting that in developing countries, 89% of new work is in the informal sector.

<sup>13</sup> A UNICEF study found that adolescent girls spend 50 per cent more time on chores than boys.

learned in this area is that starting with the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and practical.

As in other areas of UNICEF's work there is a clear need to scale up equity-focused programming and advocacy, and to target interventions to focus on the most disadvantaged children, including adolescent children, children with disabilities and minorities. Increased investment in equity measurement through disaggregated data will also be of critical importance moving forward.

For education to fulfil its role as a catalyst for equity, it must begin with early childhood interventions that help mitigate the disadvantages faced by children born into poor and non-literate environments. Investment in quality early childhood care and education produces a double benefit: it is both fair and efficient in achieving learning goals for children, but the SDG target of one year of universal pre-primary education will require an increase in investment and support by UNICEF and its partners. The new Strategic Plan also places an increased focus on adolescents – including through the identification of the specific situation and needs of marginalized adolescent and support to embed appropriate strategies in the education system (e.g. lower and upper secondary education, development of second chance education opportunities, skills training/apprenticeship, etc.). In line with SDG 4, the focus will be on improving the transition of marginalised children and adolescents through the education system, and providing them with increased opportunities to learn. This is particularly relevant for marginalized adolescent girls who, very often, have never attended school or dropped out at an early stage as a result of being asked to do domestic work, the expectation to be married or be sexually active, the likelihood of pregnancy along with the experience of sexual and other violence.

The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan will also place an increased emphasis on strengthening national education systems so that all system components – from the central level to the community level - are coherently aligned toward the achievement of better results. This reflects the potential of system strengthening to leverage resources and ensure value for money in a context in which UNICEF resources represent only a fraction of resources at country level. Using Child Friendly School standards to inform basic minimum standards adopted by governments for all schools, rather than the physical construction of a relatively limited number of schools is an example of the new emphasis on education system strengthening. System strengthening is also a much needed tool to ensure sustainability and resilience. With regard to gender, gender responsive sector planning can provide an opportunity to ensure that resources are used to promote gender equality in and through education and the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan will also integrate lessons learnt from the first years of implementation of the Gender Action Plan. One area of system strengthening that will take an increasing importance in this strategic plan relates to community engagement and social behavior change (a key cross cutting strategy to achieve all sectoral goals). This acknowledges that education is not merely an issue of supplying quality service and that, with the new SDG focus on people centered, sustainable development, education processes must engage persons more substantively and systematically in decisions and processes that affect their lives<sup>14</sup>.

UNICEF's programming experience in recent years also points to the importance of integrated approaches that address the underlying causes of service gaps. The 2016 QCPR further emphasizes the use of such integrated approaches. In this regard, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its partnerships with Governments and within the United Nations development system, with a view to accelerating progress in this area. At global and country level, UNICEF will work with development partners active in education to coherently support the development and implementation of national Government policies and plans.

---

<sup>14</sup> For more details regarding the importance of these issues, see e.g. World Bank's 2015 World Development Report "Mind, Society and Behaviour".

As in other areas of its work, UNICEF will also continue to build upon its strengths and comparative advantages, including its strong and diverse country programmes, network of National Committees, critical fundraising role in responding to the needs of children in humanitarian situations, keen focus on achieving at-scale results for children, growing partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and advocacy for the rights and needs of all children. UNICEF recognizes the importance of good nutrition in supporting children learning. In humanitarian/food insecure settings, WFP plays this important role of supporting school feeding, and in other low income settings UNICEF would work with governments, communities and other partners to determine the most affordable approaches.

## Theory of Change

### Overview

UNICEF's decades of experience of working in education, including lessons learned during the current 2014-17 Strategic Plan, has taught the organization and its partners that equitable access to education, improved quality of teaching and learning outcomes, and increased access to skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, are necessary factors in ensuring that all children will be provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities. This is the key rationale for the identification of the outcome and outputs on education in the new Strategic Plan.

UNICEF will emphasize strengthening education systems to ensure that education opportunities starting from early learning/pre-primary and including secondary education and alternative learning and skills programmes throughout the life cycle - are equitably provided and translate into learning outcomes and skills development, including for the most marginalized adolescent girl. Strengthening systems will include deepening engagement with communities and children themselves in contributing to school-level planning and monitoring of implementation. UNICEF will also work to ensure access to education for crisis-affected children and adolescents, including through targeted service delivery, to ensure that these children are not left behind.

Based on its analysis of the challenges and strongly anchored in a rights based approach to programming, particularly through the lens of equity and inclusivity, and the lessons UNICEF continues to learn about the kind of interventions that can deliver change, UNICEF through its theory of change has identified three main outputs for the 2018-21 Strategic Plan as its direct contributions to the outcome of *"Every child, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, is provided with inclusive and equitable quality education and learning opportunities."* Those outputs are as follows:

- Increase and sustain gender-equitable access to quality education for girls and boys from early childhood to adolescence, including children with disabilities and minorities.
- Increase gender-equitable learning outcomes for girls and boys.
- Increase access for girls and boys to the skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability.

Across each of these outputs, UNICEF works in three fundamental ways in order to deliver results to scale that are sustainable and resilient:

- Through the strengthening of education systems at all levels (from the central level to the community level) - assisting governments to reform and improve their education systems, to achieve greater access including for the most vulnerable children, to ensure the education system is more safe and inclusive (and in particular disability and gender responsive), and to deliver better learning and skills outcomes. System strengthening includes enhancing key components of national systems such as data, planning, budgets, implementation, quality assurance and

monitoring, and supporting the analysis of supply and demand side barriers to education. It encompasses the promotion of communities', parents' and children's engagement in contributing to planning, supporting, monitoring and holding relevant authorities accountable for the provision of educational services and learning opportunities. Improved national education systems at all levels – from the central to the community level - provide long-term benefits for children, and the indicators count the number of countries that make significant progress with UNICEF support.

- Through direct service delivery, including the provision of emergency education services, quality learning materials, training for quality teaching and direct support to community mobilization to help children access education and learn. Supplies and cash, also in the form of financing large scale training programmes, logistics, or NGO operations for formal or non-formal education and early learning opportunities are provided, mainly in Least Developed Countries, fragile countries, and humanitarian situations. Even where UNICEF provides large scale supply or financial systems, UNICEF usually also helps governments to improve their formal and non-formal education and training system.
- Through contribution to global and regional public goods such as analytical reports, evaluations, methodological guidance and tools, the promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation/sharing, co-chairing and contributing to international education initiatives, involvement in strategic partnerships and support to dialogue and advocacy for inclusive education and effective learning.

Key dimensions of UNICEF's work to support access, learning and skills development<sup>15</sup> are informed by existing global evidence of what works to ensure that every child learns. Evidence needs to be contextualized, however, as what works in one context does not always work (or work in the same way) in another – hence UNICEF also supports the development of contextualized evidence through support to data systems and education sector and system analysis, including political economy and gender analysis.

- With regard more specifically to education access, UNICEF's focus is on addressing the main dimensions of education inequality (such as poverty, emergency/conflict, disability, gender and ethnicity), through support to: i) improved gender equity in education access, including addressing demand issues and promoting gender-responsive environments and attention to school related gender based violence within education policies and plans, ii) the provision of inclusive education for children with disabilities, advocating for improved infrastructure and assistive technology, training and community awareness, iii) the development, budgeting and implementation of education sector plans/strategies, addressing equity issues<sup>16</sup>, and iv) emergency preparedness/resilience. As support to equity along these different dimensions is only possible if contextualized data enabling the identification of most marginalized children and a better understanding of the barriers they face is available and analyzed, UNICEF also supports v) the strengthening of EMIS providing disaggregated data<sup>17</sup> and their transparent use, including to provide information to beneficiaries. UNICEF engages in direct service delivery (provision of education access) in humanitarian situations, least developed countries and fragile contexts, hence responding to the most pressing needs while also helping governments make long-term improvements to their education systems.

---

<sup>15</sup> Skills development is a critical area for violence prevention.

<sup>16</sup> Identifying and targeting the most marginalized/disadvantaged groups in the country context e.g. ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities including indigenous groups; children on the move and children affected by violence, conflict and crisis (incl. refugees and IDPs); children with disabilities, children from poorest households; disadvantaged girls/boys; children in rural/hard to reach/remote areas; orphans; children affected by HIV/AIDS; working children; street children; low demand populations (e.g. pastoralists), and other disadvantaged children.

<sup>17</sup> Including where relevant embedding of additional e.g. real time information within national data systems.

- With regard to learning, evidence points to the importance of preschool education, language of instruction, teachers/teaching and school leadership, , accountability (including community-led monitoring), and the provision of materials. Analysis also stresses the importance of strong and coherent education systems, which incentivize and support learning (rather than just enrolment) as a critical factor<sup>18</sup>. A number of health and nutrition interventions contribute to better learning – such as school feeding, micronutrient supplementation and food fortification, and the prevention and control of anemia and malaria, which points at the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation. Drawing on recent evidence, and the need to prioritize the most marginalised, UNICEF priorities include i) gender-responsive teaching and learning<sup>19</sup>, ii) increased quality early learning/pre-primary education opportunities, iii) strengthened learning assessment systems, iv) mother tongue/multilingual education, v) quality teaching, including, but not only, early grade literacy and numeracy, and vi) community participation. It also delivers a variety of direct services - including essential materials and training in humanitarian situations, least developed countries and fragile contexts.
- With regards to the development of skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, UNICEF recognizes that skills are developed from early childhood to adolescence and expects to focus on the need to ensure coherent systems for skills through formal and non-formal programmes, working closely with partners. It is aligned with the education SDG, which is more comprehensive than the education MDG. UNICEF will build on its previous work on life skills and strengthen further its focus on the needs of the most marginalized children and adolescents, too often left behind by the education system.
- There will be an emphasis on i) the mainstreaming of skills development within the national education/training system (including strengthening of community engagement to support the coordination/delivery of formal and informal skills development programmes<sup>20</sup>) and ii) ensuring responsiveness of the education/training system to the demands of the labour market. Girls and boys are often tracked based towards subjects based on gendered perceptions of their abilities or gender-biased labour markets. UNICEF will support the creation of opportunities for girls to develop skills for employment especially those in which girls are underrepresented and lead to better paying jobs. Direct service delivery of skills will also be undertaken in the countries most in need – essentially humanitarian situations, least developed countries and fragile contexts.

In humanitarian situations, UNICEF in collaboration with the other UN system agencies and the aid community, will negotiate with parties to a conflict to allow access to children and arrange for schools to become safe places. UNICEF and Save the Children co-lead the education cluster in emergencies, to coordinate education activities of the aid community. Through its almost global field presence, UNICEF staff are on the ground in humanitarian situations, and ensure that urgent needed education supplies are reaching the facilities and are put to good use. The safe spaces offered by UNICEF supported schools or kindergartens significantly help children to deal with the trauma of the crisis.

The effectiveness of UNICEF’s interventions, the extent to which it is able to ensure that its approaches and outputs are cost effective and have maximum impact on the lives of vulnerable and marginalized children, is reinforced by the deployment of organizational programming strategies (the HOWS).

---

<sup>18</sup> Prichett, Creating Education Systems Coherent for Learning Outcomes: Making the Transition from Schooling to Learning, Dec 2015

<sup>19</sup> This includes consideration of the need to reduce gender-based disparities in learning and development of skills, including STEM (Science, technology, Engineering & Math)-related skills.

<sup>20</sup> For example, through parent teacher associations (PTAs), student councils, youth groups, Scout movements, etc.

UNICEF has identified several such overarching strategies that are deployed to ensure the effective achievement of Strategic Plan outcomes as a whole, including its work in outcome 2. These include programming excellence for at-scale results for children, winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public, developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children, harnessing the power of business and markets for children, the UN working together, fostering innovations in programming and advocacy processes and practices, and harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.

These strategies have different importance and are expressed differently in each outcome area. Change strategies under outcome 2 can be organized under the headers of system strengthening, service delivery, and global and regional level work. They include:

- Under national system strengthening: support to the development and implementation of evidence-based, budgeted national education sector plans or strategies that are gender and disability responsive and risk informed. This may be supported by evidence development, policy dialogue and coordination (particularly as part of local education groups or similar structures gathering donors, International Governmental Organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector under the leadership of the government at national levels). System strengthening also includes support to the evaluation (hence building the evidence-base) and the identification and scale-up of innovations that can help efficiently address the needs of the most marginalized children. The development of capacity at central and decentralized levels (including broader reforms impacting on the education sector), and the strengthening of systems to ensure greater accountability and community/parental/student involvement is also included under system strengthening. Coherent accountabilities relationships and incentives, in particular, are crucial to successful reform implementation.
- Under service delivery: support is provided in various forms, mostly in emergency settings (in which case support to education in emergencies may cover a wide array of efforts from the setting up of safe spaces or temporary structures, the provision of learning materials, provision of psychosocial support, training/financial support to teachers, etc.) but also in some low income and fragile contexts. Direct service delivery includes direct UNICEF support to communities, parents and children to promote their engagement in education planning, and influence parenting and social norms through multiple communication channels and platforms, including addressing gender equity, stigma and discrimination. It also covers services delivered for the specific purpose of testing promising innovations for evaluation and potential scale-up.
- Under work at the global and regional levels: UNICEF contributes to global and regional knowledge, coordination and cooperation. This includes the development of knowledge products and tools such as global reports, education sector analysis guidelines, and specific analysis or programming tools. It also involves contribution to global partnerships (often through chairing or co-chairing), global dialogue (e.g. by contributing to shape SDG indicators) and coordination (in particular working together with other UN agencies). Finally, this involves support to South-South and triangular cooperation.
- UNICEF continues to support data improvement and evidence-building for effective and equitable programming. In the goal area 2, support to the production of disaggregated data includes strengthening of inclusive Education Management Information Systems, of learning assessment systems (in particular at the early grades), production and implementation of new household survey modules (foundational skills; parental participation; child functioning; and school environment for children with disabilities, in partnership with the Washington Group). Also, aligned with the corporate RBM agenda, UNICEF continues to strengthen its work in building and

brokering evidence, and in evaluating the impact of its diversified education programmes, from early childhood education to secondary education.

Underpinning these programming strategies and the organization's drive for greater effectiveness, UNICEF will also continue to ensure that its education programmes are efficiently delivered and cost effective through its four main enablers of organizational performance: (a) internal governance, as UNICEF continues its transformation into a more transparent and accountable organization; (b) management, focused on results, efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration – including increased analysis of UNICEF's value for money in education; (c) people, including a workforce that is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile across different contexts and sectors, building on efforts initiated through the update of technical competencies for education with an increased focus on analytical, program design and results reporting skills and their integration into generic job descriptions, vacancy announcements and education talent group recruitment; and (d) knowledge and information systems that contribute to programmatic results or organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

### Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

UNICEF has identified several risks that have the potential to limit the full roll out of the Strategic Plan, including its work in outcome 2. These include: siloed operations and funding arrangements; insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda; unpredictable humanitarian crises and their lasting effects on children; inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies; a varying focus on results for children among United Nations partners working together; inadequate establishment of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together; rapidly evolving technological requirements; and challenges related to results-based budgeting in a decentralized organization. The change strategies and enablers discussed above are explicitly designed to help to mitigate these risks, in particular through their emphasis on flexibility and agility – in systems, human resources, funding and management arrangements – and on partnerships and new technologies. They are also a direct response to the findings of the UNICEF Review of Development Effectiveness 2012-2015.

In addition to these broader risks and assumptions, there are others that are more directly relevant to UNICEF's work under outcome 2 and the application of its associated theory of change. These are presented in the table below along with the related UNICEF mitigation measures.



Assumption/Risk	UNICEF mitigation measures
<p>It is assumed that the global community continues to prioritize the strengthening of education systems, as part of their ODA to programme countries, and that support to education in humanitarian situations is increased. However there is a risk that weakened global financing for education may delay or impede education reforms by programme countries and that donors no longer readily finance the cost of learning or schooling in crisis situations. Directly reaching beneficiaries with education, learning materials and large scale operations also depends on available resources.</p>	<p>It is a major strategy of UNICEF to play a critical role in global partnerships for education (such as the GPE, especially for developing countries, and ECW, for humanitarian situations). UNICEF will continue to support these partnerships and strengthen global advocacy for education, including through the UNICEF communication channels and networks, and by contributing evidence, needs assessment and success stories that strengthen the case for continued global investments in education.</p> <p>UNICEF will also even more strongly demonstrate its own 'value-for-money', to maintain the confidence of potential donors that the requested resources for UNICEF will help achieve the UNICEF planned education results and make the expected contribution to the SDG targets.</p>
<p>It is safe to assume that programme countries remain determined to equitably expand access and quality of education. Most countries consider improvement in education a national priority. There is the risk, however, that the focus is on educational access and quality for the broad majority, with insufficient attention to inclusion and equity. Pressures to rapidly expand education systems without a strong equity focus could exacerbate inequities in both access and learning. Also early learning is not yet given the importance it deserves.</p>	<p>UNICEF can count on the interest of the Ministries of Education to expand and improve their education systems. A key role will be to draw attention to those 'left-behind' and most marginalized groups, and to review systems not only for achieving better averages, but to become more inclusive and equitable. References to the CRC, conditionality attached to resources directly provided by donors or partnerships to countries, and the strengthening of alliances supportive of education for marginalized children will be important.</p> <p>UNICEF will continue to demonstrate and propagate the evidence on the best returns of investments that early learning and school readiness programmes provide – especially when targeting the most vulnerable groups.</p>
<p>There is a risk that programmes will continue to assume that education inputs alone (e.g. lowering class sizes) will deliver improved learning.</p>	<p>To address this risk, UNICEF will continue to monitor the impact on learning of any intervention; will build and share knowledge through evaluation, engagement in global public goods (e.g. MICS) South South learning and knowledge management on promising efforts and innovations.</p>
<p>Administrative data systems should be able to track access and learning outcomes, and point to education system failures. There is a real risk in many countries that EMIS do not sufficiently disaggregate, preventing the development of measures to reach and support those not enrolled or dropping out. Data may not be available, especially on learning, or may not be sufficiently systematically or transparently used, with limited accountability for results. Contextual data e.g. related to disability or WASH may also be insufficient.</p>	<p>Strengthening education data systems is a regular component of UNICEF assistance. This will include support for more disaggregation of data – including information on children with disabilities, strengthened national learning assessment systems, and a more systematic and transparent use of data (including social accountability) to improve education access and learning for all.</p>
<p>It is implied that programme countries will be able to manage their education reform process. There is a risk that a reform agenda is not</p>	<p>In countries with donor-assisted sector-wide approaches, reform processes are more likely to be effectively steered and managed. UNICEF will, in all programme countries, support education ministries (and often local governments) in their</p>

<p>consistently pursued. Lack of coherence in education system change can hamper the successful achievement of reforms.</p>	<p>strategic and annual work planning. UNICEF will be ‘at the side’ of education officials to support evidence-based planning, set and monitor milestones and help countries engage in coherent system change that incentivizes and supports access, learning and skills.</p>
<p>It is assumed that countries aim to use their own budgets effectively and efficiently. There is however a significant risk that education remains under-resourced, and that available resources are used inefficiently for lack of sufficient, context-relevant evidence.</p>	<p>UNICEF will continue advocating for increased and better used domestic funding for children and their education. This will include support to the development and use (including related capacity building) of contextualized, country-specific evidence of what promotes equitable access, learning and skills development. UNICEF will increasingly consider methodologies for ‘public financing for children’ (PF4C) – measures that focus resources on their best returns for access and quality of education for all children.</p>
<p>Public support should exist in programme countries for inclusive and equitable education. There is the risk that this is not the case – for example for the inclusion and special measures for children of ethnic minorities, or the inclusion of children with disabilities. There is also a risk of increasing attacks on schools and/or on the principles of gender equality and human rights.</p>	<p>UNICEF will, as needed, help to initiate and maintain a public discourse on contentious education policy issues – including through civil society channels or direct media presence. It will promote behavior change strategies, evidence-building/training in program countries as well as within the organization.</p>
<p>It is assumed that principled humanitarian access to support the education and learning of children can be achieved and sustained through advocacy with humanitarian partners and strong engagement across integrated UN agendas. There is the risk that access is being denied.</p>	<p>UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities as they arise. In its work under outcome 3, UNICEF will be strengthening its support in situations of armed conflict to strengthening systems to protect children from violations of international humanitarian law. However, especially where warring parties are immune to international pressure, access might remain unachievable.</p>
<p>There are additional risks linked to external factors that are not education specific but affect children’s opportunity to learn or to translate learning into life opportunities. This includes the risk that the number and complexity of crises increases, that demographic growth outweighs progress in education access, and that national economic, political and social environments prevent youth from translating skills into decent employment.</p>	<p>To help mitigate these risks, UNICEF will deploy a number of strategies. It will increase efforts to address new challenges such as children on the move, to bridge the humanitarian and development divide, and to integrate adaptation to urbanization and climate change and disaster-risk reduction into the education sector. It will continue to promote girls’ education (linked to decreased fertility), as well as health and protection-related efforts by UNICEF and its partners. Finally, UNICEF will increasingly link with partners and other agencies (including ILO, the World Bank and other development banks, key donors and the private sector) already active in addressing the factors that impede the transition between education and work.</p>
<p>It is assumed that other UN partners coordinating and collaborating with UNICEF will deliver their contributions on areas of collaboration. The risk is that if other partners do not deliver then</p>	<p>UNICEF will continue to work through the new UNDAF process and other interagency processes and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency or working closely together.</p>

UNICEF's collaborative work with those entities may not be as effective or sustainable as planned.

DRAFT

## Key Partnerships

Strategic partnerships are seen as a key means of operationalizing the organization's 'how' strategies, managing risks and assumptions in the theory of change, and building coalitions around UNICEF's vision for change. UNICEF is a key driver in creating, maintaining and supporting global partnerships for education, many of which are crucial for the achievement of the outcome and the related SDG targets. UNICEF helps to increase the global understanding of education as a public good and mobilize resource flows between donor countries and private initiatives on one side, and recipient countries and development agencies on the other. UNICEF is a member of the Board of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and manages GPE funding in most fragile and conflict-affected GPE country partners. UNICEF is a champion for supporting education in fragile contexts and is hosting the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund as its Funds Custodian and Administrator. ECW will be one of the major conduits for channeling education resources to agencies working in humanitarian situations. UNICEF is also co-chairing and contributing to the global Education Cluster and the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) as well as co-leading the Humanitarian Education Accelerator with UNHCR in order to identify and support cutting-edge education innovations go to scale in emergencies.

The UNICEF Executive Director was a Commissioner of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, which was set up to reinvigorate the case for investing in education and identify innovative financing mechanisms. It brought together the best research and policy analysis to identify the most effective and accountable ways of mobilizing and deploying resources for education. UNICEF contributes to and hosts the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), and works closely with the World Bank, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the Global Education Monitoring Report, and others to support the further development/refinement of indicators to measure SDG 4 and the collection and analysis of comparative data and knowledge on education outcomes and national systems around the world. UNESCO IIEP, GPE, DFID and UNICEF also team up to design global public goods, such as education sector analysis and planning guidelines and tools. Taken together and through its role in the SDG4-Education 2030 as one of 8 co-convening agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women and ILO), UNICEF significantly contributes to setting the global education agenda and resource flows – including the shaping of the SDGs themselves which now include early learning and school readiness targets.

UNICEF is also involved in partnerships to advance cross-sectoral areas. In particular, it leads a global network of more than 80 partners to advocate for equitable access to WASH in Schools as part of the SDG 6 agenda and in support of SDG 4 targets.

At the country level, UNICEF continues working through Local Education groups (gathering donors, International Governmental Organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector under the leadership of the government) and similar structures (including country-level Education Clusters, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations against children in armed conflict, and other sector coordination mechanisms for education in emergencies) to support the development and implementation of evidence-based, financially sustainable and politically feasible Education Sector Plans.

## Goal Area 3 Theory of Change

### Outcome Statement

Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.

---

#### Theory of Change Statement

*If* child protection systems are strengthened so that girls and boys receive prevention and response services for violence against children including in humanitarian situations, and wider protections under international humanitarian law, *if* girls receive prevention and care to address harmful practices such as FGM/C and child marriage, as well as exploitation and *if* institutional capacity is strengthened so that girls and boys that come into contact with the law are treated in accordance with international standards, *then* girls and boys will be better protected from violence and exploitation. Further, *if* children living in areas of highest risk of disaster, conflict and other shocks are prioritized for access to key preventative and remedial measures, *then* children and their families will be more resilient to the impact of violence, conflict and harmful practices.

---

UNICEF will contribute to this outcome through an approach that addresses the protection needs of girls and boys while investing in strengthening child protection systems and community dialogue for behaviour change. Across each of the outputs, the life course perspective, cross-sectorality/multi-sectorality (legal, police, health, social service strengthening and education sectors), age and gender-sensitive approaches and use of technologies and information management systems will help accelerate equitable progress. UNICEF will focus on advocating for and helping to align policies and budgets with protective outcomes for children and empowering children, families and communities to strengthen protective environments underpinned by the State and its workforce including social workers, teachers, health workers, police and the judiciary.

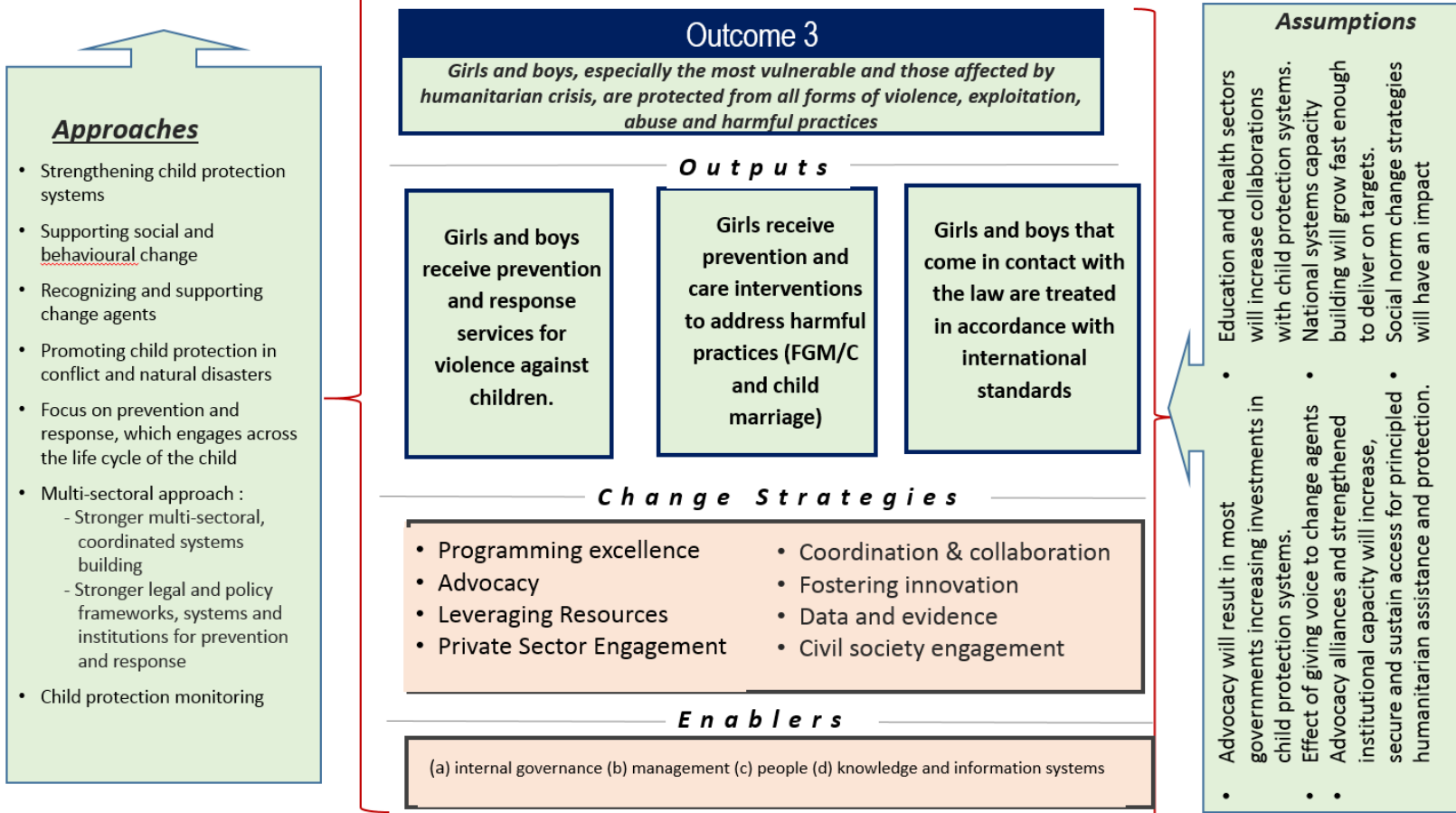
UNICEF will engage in increasing the capacities of children and families to protect themselves and to prevent violence, exploitation and harmful practices and behaviours that affect children; strengthen children's ability to identify key protection risks and how to report violations; raise awareness and build capacities of child protection practitioners (including social workers, teachers, health practitioners, community and religious leaders, civil society, faith-based organizations, media and the private sector) to shift social norms and help break the silence around practices that harm children and to transform deeply

rooted sociocultural beliefs and practices. Including to reduce sexual exploitation of girls and reduce institutionalization of children.

UNICEF will invest in linking humanitarian response with development programming and in achieving results more effectively in humanitarian and long-term resilience building for achieving more sustainable results in fragile contexts where child protection prevention and response services must also address mental health, lack of access to services for children on the move, and increased risk of gender based violence. UNICEF will also focus on protection results for children specific to situations of armed conflict, where exposure and vulnerabilities to armed violence and grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law are heightened, requiring both prevention and response. This includes for girls and boys recruited and used by armed forces and groups, those exposed to landmines and other explosive weapons, those children that are abducted, separated from their care-givers, have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation, and where protection strategies must be strengthened to safeguard access to life-saving and protective services in line with international humanitarian law and principles.

UNICEF's approach to child protection in humanitarian situations will include support to direct delivery with a range of implementing partners where there is an imperative to act in a humanitarian crises, where capacities and resources are low, and/or the national authorities are unwilling or unable to uphold their responsibilities to affected populations. UNICEF will support governments to improve data (including administrative data) on the prevalence and impact of violence on children, identifying vulnerable groups, risk factors and protective assets and mechanisms. Post humanitarian crises, UNICEF will monitor the situation of children who face ongoing post-shock vulnerabilities, in particular the increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation that girls face. Finally, UNICEF will collaborate with partners to produce global and regional public goods including standard setting and programmatic tools to deliver its outputs and achieve the child protection outcome.

# Outcome 3



UN partners: UNFPA, UNWOMEN (violence, FGM/C), WHO, UNHCR, IOM (violence, migrants/refugees), UNODC (detention), etc.

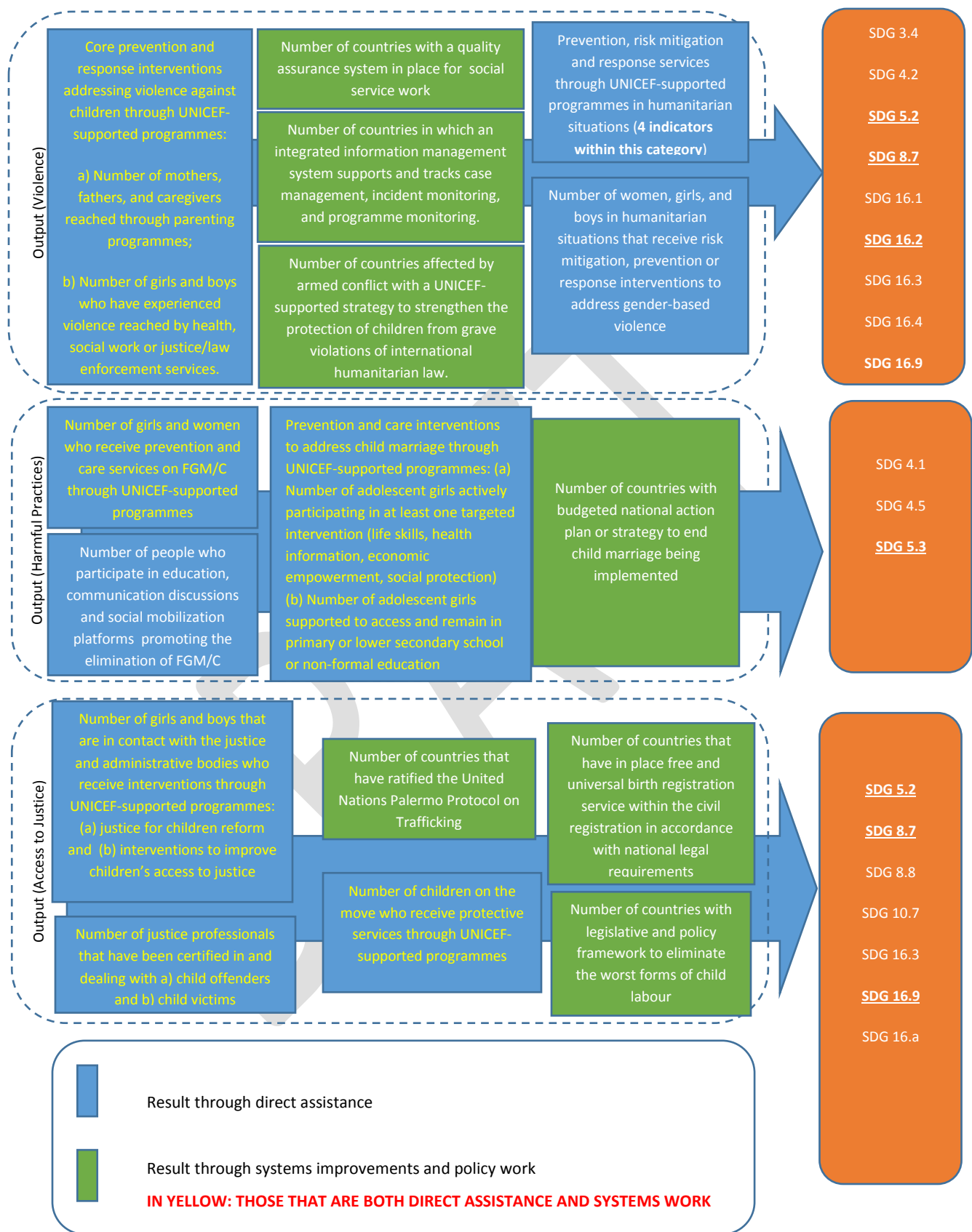
## Link to SDGs and CRC

Through Outcome 3 will work to ensure that every girl and boy is protected from violence, exploitation and harmful practices, in both humanitarian and development contexts, regardless of wealth, location, age, disability, gender, ethnicity, language or minority status. It supports the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 16 (ending violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking against and torture of children against children and promoting access to justice); Goal 8 (ending all forms of child labor) and Goal 5 (ending all harmful practices/violence against girls and women), but also Goal 4 (quality education) and Goal 3 (good health and well-being). UNICEF's commitment to achieving equitable and improved prevention of and response to violence, exploitation and harmful practices is central to realizing the organization's universal mandate to promote the rights of every child and every woman, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, including right to life, survival, and development, the right to protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices, and the impacts of conflict, and the right to access to justice, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The following diagram indicates the how UNICEF's work under outcome 3 contributes directly to the SDG targets.







## Context

### Leaving No Child Behind

Violence against children, (including various forms of gender based violence), from birth through adolescence, occurs everywhere and takes many forms, in many settings, and is exacerbated in emergencies. Global estimates point to hundreds of millions of children experiencing some form of violence, exploitation, or harmful practice and much of the violence having a gender dimension. Six in 10 children worldwide experience regular physical punishment by caregivers. School-related violence affects an estimated 246 million children every year with slightly more than 1 in 3 aged 13-15 years reporting bullying on a daily basis. In addition, hundreds of thousands of refugee and migrant children are at grave risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including trafficking and smuggling.

A gender analysis demonstrates that a lot of this violence has clear gendered distinctions, often driven by unequal power and gender norms in communities and schools: In 2012, almost 1 in 5 homicide victims worldwide were children, 70 per cent of whom were adolescent boys. While both girls and boys experience sexual violence, girls are particularly vulnerable; 1 in 10 girls under the age of 20 worldwide have experienced forced intercourse or other sexual acts; the number of child sexual abuse materials online URLs (websites) more than doubled between 2014 and 2015, the majority of which involve girls; nearly one third of adolescent girls have experienced emotional, physical and/or sexual violence by their husbands or partners at some point in their lives.

Around one in seven adolescent girls aged 15-19 are married or cohabiting as if married; at least 200 million girls and women alive today in 30 countries with national prevalence data have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting. FGM/C and child marriage are both human rights violations. FGM/C has no health or other benefits and often leads to long term medical complications, including severe pain, prolonged bleeding, infection, infertility and even death. Girls who are married as children are more likely to be out of school, have limited career/vocational opportunities, suffer domestic violence, contract HIV/AIDS and die due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Child marriage also hurts economies and leads to intergenerational cycles of poverty. The interdependence of child marriage and FGM with education, social norms, and other social determinants is another powerful reason to focus on this particular issue.

Around 11 per cent of all children – 168 million girls and boys – are engaged in child labour with half of them working in hazardous conditions. Of the 17.2 million children aged 5-17 engaged in domestic work, 67 percent are girls<sup>21</sup>; the hidden nature of this work increases girls' risks and sometimes takes the form of servitude or slavery. Child abandonment is considered as a form of violence against children. At least 2.7 million children live in residential care; long-term residence in such facilities has a long-term negative impact on children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, particularly so in the case of very young children. A high rate of placement of children in formal care can be an indicator of how inadequate or ineffective systems and social services are perpetuating social exclusion, vulnerability and inequity rather than helping to protect children from neglect, abuse and violence. It can also be an indicator of the inability of the social protection system to address the socio-economic vulnerabilities of families which are too often leading to unnecessary family separation.<sup>22</sup> Children with disabilities are disproportionately affected by placement in institutions, and are particularly vulnerable to violence and neglect in such facilities. The frequent 'institutionalization' of children with disabilities, denying them the

---

<sup>21</sup> ILO, 2013. Marking progress against child labour - Global estimates and trends 2000-2012.

<sup>22</sup> "A child's right to live in a nurturing family environment: A Regional Agenda and Theory of Change for Europe and Central Asia", UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office, October 2016.

right to grow up in a nurturing family environment, can further impact their ability to grow to their full potential and can increase their vulnerability. Children and adolescents with disabilities are three to four times more likely to experience violence and neglect than children without disabilities<sup>23</sup>, leaving girls with disabilities disproportionately vulnerable to all forms of violence, abuse and institutionalization. In some countries, 68 percent of girls with intellectual disabilities will be sexually abused before they turn 18.<sup>24</sup> With limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and access to modern forms of contraception and often deprived of the right to make decisions about their bodies or sexual and reproductive health, girls and women with disabilities are at an increased risk of forced sterilization, abortion and sexually transmitted infections.<sup>25</sup>

1.1 million children are estimated to be detained through justice systems worldwide at any one time. Access to justice is a priority because it is a right as well as a means to enforce other rights by designing and applying child-friendly criminal, civil and administrative proceedings. It entails the ability to obtain equitable, timely and effective remedies for rights violations, including grave child rights violations, as well as those related to the right to education, health and social protection. Current estimates suggest that the births of approximately 230 million children under age 5 have not been registered. Wherein universal birth registration is instrumental in ensuring equity over a broad scope of services and interventions for children<sup>26</sup>, migrant children and children living in remote and hard to reach areas are most likely to be missed by CRVS systems and deprived the right to an identity, increasing their risk of statelessness. Almost 50 million children have left their country of birth or been forcibly displaced, and 1 in 70 currently live outside their country of origin.<sup>27</sup> While migration can benefit children and their families as well as host and sending communities, for many children, unsafe migration as well as being left behind brings exposure to violence and exploitation, with devastating consequences.

The underlying causes include lack of state commitment and political leadership for child protection, lack of supply-side capacities, knowledge, motivation and support of those in contact with the child, weak delivery systems, social norms and socio-cultural factors, lack of demand-side knowledge, skills and mechanisms that exist to promote children's engagement/participation in decisions that affect them, and protracted humanitarian crises. It is often the case that state social service sectors remain constrained by insufficient technical capacity, high staff turnover and low financing. Cross-sectoral coordination and management that are critical for effective and efficient case management and referrals are still weak in many countries. Sustained advocacy and adaptation of successful and costed models will be necessary for governments to recognize the importance of multisector collaboration and the overcoming of challenges linked to complex implementation. For example, good quality child protection data, disaggregated well enough to detect inequities, identify the most vulnerable groups of children act upon them, and maintain a case file on each child are an example of capacity gaps that need strengthening. These issues will be directly addressed by a combination of UNICEF's outputs under Outcome 3, complemented by the deployment of the organization's strategies (HOWs) and sector specific approaches.

---

<sup>23</sup> UNFPA.

<sup>24</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission, 2010. *Family Violence — A National Legal Response*.

<sup>25</sup> UNICEF, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Knowing the age of children is critical to protecting them from child labor and from arrest and treatment as adults in the justice system; from conscription in armed forces and armed groups; forcible conscription in armed forces; child marriage; and trafficking and sexual exploitation. It helps with the acquisition of national identity cards and passports. Knowing the family links supports family tracing and reunification (e.g. in cases of trafficking, formal care, separation during migration). Birth registration within civil registration and vital statistics systems is central to ensuring that children are counted and have access to basic services such as health, social services and education.

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF, 2016, 'Uprooted – The Growing Crisis For Refugee and Migrant Children', New York.

## Humanitarian Response, Risk, and Sustainable Development

Protecting girls and boys in humanitarian crises is not only a critical life-saving measure, but also a sound investment in reducing the negative – often life-long – impact on their well-being and development, particularly during childhood, the most intense learning and growing time in life, which we know can be derailed by exposure to violence and other causes of toxic stress. In emergencies, additional child protection interventions are necessary to address heightened vulnerabilities due to the protection risks that humanitarian crises exacerbate, and new protection risks that emerge, in particular for children displaced, children who are unaccompanied, separated or orphaned, children and women that are at risk of/or directly affected by gender-based violence (GBV), and those that are living in areas affected by armed conflict. All the protection vulnerabilities that are compounded or emerge in times of crises are aggravated by underlying vulnerabilities driven by gender, age, disability and other socio-economic divisions. For example, children with disabilities face heightened vulnerability during emergencies but they are often ‘invisible’ and their rights and needs frequently overlooked. The psychosocial impacts of humanitarian crisis on children are also a critical threat to children’s well-being and development, and the maintenance of peace and security. As humanitarian crisis often bring a surge in protection concerns and threats to children, response systems – themselves affected by the same crisis - are often ill equipped or overwhelmed to respond.

Today, nearly 250 million children live in countries affected by conflict, and tens of thousands of children – boys and girls under the age of 18 – are still estimated to continue to be recruited and used by armed forces and armed groups worldwide. Children and their families in conflict-affected areas face exposure to death and injury, including as a result of the widespread use of explosive weapons in populated areas that characterizes many of today’s conflicts. For every child killed in warfare, three are injured and acquire a permanent form of disability.<sup>28</sup> Humanitarian protection agencies are increasingly faced with situations where parties to conflict act in blatant violation of international humanitarian law – including widespread grave violations against children – in an environment of impunity where accountability of parties to conflict is negligible. In increasingly complex crisis, the availability of and access of affected populations to existing basic life-saving and protective services are under threat, as is humanitarian access for the provision of principled assistance and protection. Existing national and sub-national systems for the protection of children’s rights are often undermined and de-capacitated in conflict – sometimes purposefully - and the international humanitarian system’s cross-cutting attention to protection becomes all the more important.

One of the benchmarks of UNICEF’s Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action is to strengthen key child protection mechanisms in emergency affected areas. There is an ever growing need for UNICEF to provide both immediate life-saving protection services in response to humanitarian needs, as well as longer-term development approaches to strengthen the overall protective environment for children, and to build the resilience of children and their families to future crisis. Resilience in children can only be built when children’s homes, schools and communities are safe spaces, when they are cared for, and their capacity to deal with adversity is developed. The resilience of individuals, families and communities are supported through a range of protection measure that address multiple hazards such as population mobility, harmful social norms, gender-based violence, and trauma associated with conflict.

---

<sup>28</sup> World Health Organisation, cited at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/pwdfs.pdf>.

## Lessons Learned 2014-17

Lessons pertinent to UNICEF's work on child protection were identified through the mid-term review of the current Strategic Plan in 2016 and provided much of the learning that supported the development of the theory of change for the new Strategic Plan. For example, experience across all regions, combined with the findings from recent global evaluations on violence against children and child protection in emergencies, confirm the importance of a combined approach that addresses the specific protection needs of children and working with caregivers and families (for example supporting parents and caregivers by providing them with parenting skills) while making investments in strengthening national child protection systems. This includes service delivery mechanisms, workforce capacity, and coordination and referral mechanisms at the national and community levels, underpinned by strengthened laws, policies and guidelines. A trained social service workforce that is in contact with families and communities is vital as are effective referral pathways between the child protection system (including the social service and justice systems) and the social protection, education and health systems. Such an integrated approach has proven essential to achieving results, as illustrated by the experience of birth registration within the broader framework of CRVS.

The 2015 evaluation "*Protecting Children from Violence: A comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme*" performance highlighted that child protection systems need to be more sensitive to addressing violence against children, particularly children with disabilities, and that UNICEF needs to deepen its work on helping states to create effective interventions to address harmful social norms and practices. The evaluation also emphasized that addressing violence against children needs to be a multi-sectoral priority.

UNICEF has also learned from helping states leverage the power of data and evidence to inform and strengthen communications campaigns and advocacy at the national and international levels, as well as advocacy to enhance compliance with international standards and recognition of the principle of State accountability, for the protection of children during humanitarian situations, including situations of armed conflict. The UNICEF publication *Hidden in Plain Sight*, the first-ever compilation of global data on violence against children, helped to support advocacy for the inclusion of a global target on violence against children in Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. The #ENDviolence against children initiative drew on evidence and human interest stories to reach new audiences and to bolster action in more than 70 countries. Lessons learned from 2014-2017 Strategic Plan implementation also highlight the importance of intensifying community mobilization. UNICEF has improved knowledge of the potential role, ability and impact of the social media, real-time monitoring, and the use of social and behavior change strategies for community mobilization to change social norms.

## Theory of Change

### Overview

UNICEF has identified three outputs, strongly anchored in a rights based approach to programming, for the 2018-21 Strategic Plan as its contributions to the outcome: "*Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.*" Those outputs are as follows:

- Girls and boys receive prevention and response services for violence against children

- Girls and women receive prevention and care interventions to address harmful practices (FGM/C and child marriage)
- Girls and boys that come into contact with the law are treated in accordance with international standards

The decision to focus on these three outputs follows from the lessons learned during the review of the current strategic plan, notably the understanding that if the state is to have a hand in reducing physical, sexual and emotional violence against children then it needs to build social service systems capacities, and, in turn, for sustainability, the workings of these services need to be underpinned by a stronger support from the justice and enforcement systems. Our situation analysis indicates that physical and sexual violence, FGM/C, and child marriage, are the most common rights violations that member states have agreed UNICEF should focus on, including in collaboration with WHO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, and other partners. Other programme areas, such as reducing sexual exploitation, are becoming important areas of work where UNICEF's engagement is essential and the organization will continue working with partners during the Strategic Plan period to further develop its programme logic and data collection capacity in this area.

Responding to the 2030 Agenda and the call to 'leave no one behind' and reach the farthest behind first, UNICEF will help states close equity gaps related to child rights, which affect predominantly the hardest to reach and the most vulnerable, including: children with disabilities, children of minorities, children living in poverty, children of migrant workers, children in residential institutions, children on the move, rural children, children in impoverished urban areas, and children living in complex, high threat humanitarian environments. Thus UNICEF will focus on the right to protection and specific needs of girls and boys through the strengthening of the protective environment and investment in national systems, and promoting at-scale implementation of social and behavior change communication across individual (including men and boys), community, and institutional levels. It is important to note that emphasis is on preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and harmful practices rather than on particular categories of children. This will be done through interventions which raises awareness and empower children, families and communities to break the silence. Taking a life course perspective, cross-sectoral/multi-sectoral (particularly justice, health, social service, and education sectors) and gender-sensitive approach and use of technologies and information management systems will be part of UNICEF's broader strategies (HOWs) to ensure the achievement of outputs and the contribution to the outcome. Focus will therefore be put on supporting governments to strengthen and expand their social-service infrastructure and ensure the social service work-force collaborates with practitioners from all other sectors that play a key role in child protection.

UNICEF Gender Action Plan's approach of implementing four interlinked, targeted priorities for gender equality is proving essential to strengthening prevention and response services for violence against children and the elimination of harmful practices, such as FGM/C and child marriage. As an example, girls with secondary school education are six times less likely to marry as children; educating girls reduces the rate of early marriage; girls who marry later in life are less likely to have a first pregnancy during adolescence, have reduced incidence of sexually-transmitted infections and are less likely to be a victim of intimate-partner violence.

- Girls and boys receive prevention and response services for violence against children

Violence against children, (including various forms of gender based violence), from birth through adolescence, occurs everywhere and takes many forms (physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, sexual

exploitation, neglect or deprivation) in many settings (home, school, community, care, justice systems and over the internet), and is exacerbated in emergency situations.

UNICEF will support states to strengthen and expand their social service workforce infrastructure, and will work with communities and families to increase their capacity to protect children and thus reduce violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation. Expanding the social welfare workforce will not only help reach more children who have experienced violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, but also prevent future re-victimization. This will involve helping states expand the number of para social workers working at the local level to identify and help children at risk, in the early stages of, or experiencing prolonged violence or exploitation. Where para social workers are most effective they coordinate with the education, social protection and health sectors, as well as the police, the tourism sector and local administrations to identify and set in course a case-by-case management system. These local level social workers need support from more qualified social workers who are based in urban areas and here too UNICEF will work with other sector partners to increase their numbers including through support for the development of training and licensing capacities as well as the budgeting of such posts by the state. UNICEF will work with partners to provide tools such as management information solutions for case management, and the linking of these systems to social protection cash transfer management information systems.

In terms of at-scale implementation of social and behavior change communication, UNICEF will support mothers, fathers and other caregivers to build more nurturing parent/child relationships and have improved positive parenting and gender equitable attitudes, skills and practices. UNICEF's work is based on growing evidence suggesting that parent support and training programmes show promise for improving parent/child relationships, increasing positive parenting, and preventing violent discipline and other forms of child maltreatment and neglect.<sup>29</sup> Parent support programmes include: home visits for new mothers, community-based programmes for mothers and fathers, comprehensive support services for mothers, fathers and other caregivers, and multi-level strategies that include C4D strategies such as behaviour change communication programmes.

Increasing the capacity of all concerned stakeholders to outreach most vulnerable families, ensuring the development and provision of support plans, and reinforcing the capacity of local authorities to identify and respond violence against children also contribute to addressing family separation. UNICEF will use a combination of approaches including: the development of family support packages (social services in balance with social transfers, promoting actively an integrated approach) aiming at preventing family breakdown and supporting most vulnerable children to live in a caring and protecting family environment; addressing social norms / behaviour change in order to contribute to the development of an enabling environment with social norms conducive to prevent family breakdown and the separation of children from their family when not in their best interest; and supporting municipalities to implement local protocols for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect. This refers to community mechanisms that enable dialogue to take place between practitioners coming from different sectors around specific cases of violence, abuse and neglect of children. Sectors involved are all those who have a mandated role to identify, refer or respond to violence and include social services, education, health, police, justice professionals or representatives of NGO engaged in direct community-service provision. The aim of the cross-sectoral cooperation is usually to put a support plan for the child in place, but can

---

<sup>29</sup> Much of this evidence comes from high income countries, but the evidence based from low and middle income settings is growing. Knerr W, Gardner F, Cluver L: Parenting and the prevention of child maltreatment in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review of interventions and a discussion of prevention of the risks of future violent behaviour among boys. In. Pretoria: Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Medical Research Council, and the Oak Foundation; 2011. Knerr W, Gardner F, Cluver L: Improving positive parenting skills and reducing harsh and abusive parenting in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review. *Prev Sci* 2013, 14(4):352-363.

also be about custody and care issues or measures that are/need to be taken to address domestic violence. It aims as well at better defining the accountabilities of professionals working with children in the identification (including outreach work), referral and responses to cases of violence against children.<sup>30</sup>

Child protection systems can significantly reduce and mitigate the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, and can help build resilience in vulnerable communities. This holds true before, during, and after humanitarian situations, including natural disasters. Child Protection programming to strengthen child protection systems at local, community and national levels, is integral to emergency preparedness planning and disaster risk reduction. Strategies and practices to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks help to mitigate the impacts of emergencies on children, in alternative care reform, justice for children, psychosocial support, prevention and response to child labour and violence against children, including sexual and gender-based violence, as well as addressing grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict situations, and through the promotion of social norms and practices that protect children, including transitional justice and peacebuilding efforts. In addition to system strengthening efforts, UNICEF will support community-based protection approaches, including for psychosocial support, and through the provision of safe spaces, and referral systems, and by building the protection capacities of communities. Further, in accordance with UNICEF's Core Commitment for Children (CCC), UNICEF will continue to play an active role in developing interagency international standards, tools and mechanisms as well as promoting adherence of all parties to human rights and international humanitarian law in humanitarian settings. These strengthen responses in family tracing and in the provision of psychosocial support in natural disasters, as well as for the prevention of recruitment and the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. UNICEF's strategic actions to better protect children from the impact of armed conflict and natural disasters (as per the Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies) are grounded in international humanitarian and human rights law as well as UNICEF emergency experience. In 2018-2021, efforts will be invested in linking humanitarian response with development programming and in achieving results more effectively in fragile contexts where there are particular vulnerabilities such as lack of support for psycho-social and mental health, lack of access to services for children on the move, and increased risk of gender based violence.<sup>31</sup>

In order to support increased reach of children affected by armed conflict, including grave violations, with preventive and response services, UNICEF will strengthen monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children and women, and advocate with all parties to conflict for enhanced compliance with international humanitarian and human rights standards; support a community-based approach to mental health and psychosocial support for children affected by armed conflict to strengthen preexisting resources and mechanisms in the communities, and proactively engage children, caregivers and their families in their psycho-social well-being; develop capacity, programming and accountability metrics as per UNICEF's GBViE programme response resources; scale up critical life-saving, age-appropriate support services to survivors of GBV (e.g. health care, psychosocial and legal/justice services and material support); address barriers to access and support adolescent girls' and women's economic empowerment through livelihoods opportunities; mitigate GBV related risks by implementing programming per the 2015 IASC GBV Guidelines across all UNICEF sectors; develop global advocacy and services to prevent family separation and support family tracing, reunification and reintegration for unaccompanied and separated children; prevent child recruitment and support the release and reintegration of children formerly

---

<sup>30</sup> "A child's right to live in a nurturing family environment: A Regional Agenda and Theory of Change for Europe and Central Asia", UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office, October 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Specific efforts will also be invested in building the capacity of UNICEF and partners to more effectively responding to the critical child rights and protection challenges present in complex and high threat conflict contexts, through a principled approach to humanitarian assistance and protection. Taking the efforts below to scale is vital for reaching the ambitious development goals by 2030.



associated with armed forces and armed groups; strengthen information management systems to support the monitoring of child rights violations and to link these with timely and appropriate responses, including case management; provide specialized emergency child protection support in response to L2/L3 emergencies; develop risk education programmes that seek to reduce the risk of death and injury from weapons by raising awareness and promoting behaviour change; advocate for policy and legislative change for the protection of children affected by armed conflict; to prevent the use of indiscriminate weapons (landmines, cluster munitions, use of explosive weapons in populated area) and to provide related victim assistance; establish sector coordination; and strengthen preparedness/risk-informed programming.

- Girls and women receive prevention and care interventions to address harmful practices (FGM/C and child marriage)

In addressing harmful practices, namely child marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), evidence suggests that when the underlying causes — the drivers of harmful practices including poverty; lack of educational and economic opportunities; social expectations of behaviour; discrimination against girls and women and restrictive gender roles; beliefs about protection of girls; and low awareness of and access to alternatives — are eliminated, the practice will decline and, ultimately, end.<sup>32</sup> In many contexts, these harmful practices are a social norm. Adolescent girls, families and communities may see the practice not only as legitimate but also appropriate, and even necessary way to protect girls. In addition, adolescent boys and men, adolescent girls, families and communities may believe that men are entitled, and even expected, to marry young girls. Their beliefs and practice are sustained by the fact that they see others around them also engaging in child marriage.

In order to address the underlying gender norms and barriers girls face that make them particularly vulnerable to harmful practices, namely child marriage and FGM/C, support to increase reach with UNICEF-supported multi-sectoral, at-scale programmes will be provided through key prevention and care interventions. These include: supporting at-scale implementation of integrated inter-personal and media-based behaviour & social change platforms at institutional, community & public levels; empowering girls with information, skills, support networks; empowering and mobilising parents and members of the society (promoting gender equality and the rights of the girl child); strengthening capacity of governments and partners to take to scale the evidence-based cross-sectoral strategies; increasing national capacity to provide multi-sectoral (health, education, justice and social protection) preventative and response/care services, including services that aim to increase the agency of girls; supporting the education sector in ensuring safe and inclusive education; supporting cash and incentive schemes; conducting communications campaigns; and providing technical assistance and advocacy on legislative and policy shifts addressing FGM/C practices or minimum age at marriage, with a special emphasis on the implementation of existing legislation and the commitment of financial resources from governments of programme countries.

The theory of change also recognizes the critical importance of engaging with families and the broader communities (including religious and community leaders) as gatekeepers and decision makers. A central aim of the will be to work directly with local communities (primarily, though not exclusively, with NGO partners). While adolescent girls remain at the heart of UNICEF programming, there is considerable evidence to suggest that a failure to engage with families and communities, and in particular decision makers and opinion-shapers at the local level, will undermine the impact of the interventions. For

---

<sup>32</sup> “UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage – Progress Report (to the Governments of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the European Union)”, UNFPA and UNICEF, June 2017.

example, in the effort to achieve abandonment of FGM/C, community and intergenerational dialogue among religious leaders, council of elders, women and girls, and men and boys provide opportunities to challenge gender relations in communities where men and women rarely interact. In the medium term, in 5-10 years, it is expected that a critical mass of adolescent girls, adolescent boys and men, families and communities have changed aspirations, social expectations and behaviours related to child marriage; and in the longer term, in 10-15 years, that aspirations for, and the value of, adolescent girls have shifted at the national-population level and are upheld by corresponding new social norms and behaviours.

For child marriage, emerging evidence indicates that girls' empowerment— increasing their agency and their access to information, services, resources and opportunities—is likely to have the biggest impact on child marriage rates. In this regard, high-quality education, particularly secondary school, is an especially effective lever for empowering girls, preventing child marriage, and mitigating the consequences for girls who are already married. On eliminating FGM/C, one of the key assumptions (among others) is that giving greater voice, visibility and resonance to those who have committed to the new norm of keeping girls intact will stimulate discussion and strengthen movement to end the practice. This can be accomplished by encouraging manifestations of commitment, including public declarations to end harmful practices by communities, religious leaders and groups, and other personalities. UNICEF will continue to harness the collaborative advantage of working with sister agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women at the field level on this output.

- Girls and boys that come into contact with the law are treated in accordance with international standards

Justice systems play a key role in addressing child rights violations including addressing violence and exploitation of girls and boys, and preventing its re-occurrence. Children encounter the justice system as victims, witnesses, because they are in conflict with the law or as parties to a justice process, such as in custody arrangements. Juvenile offending is inadequately addressed including through the wide-spread application of pre- and post-trial detention rather than investment in diversion and alternative sanctions that support reintegration and rehabilitation. While detention should be used as a last resort and for the shortest period of time, children suspected or accused of having committed an offence are often detained. Accessing justice can help poor families to restore entitlements such as social benefits that have been denied; can help minority children or children with disabilities and their families to challenge decisions excluding them from mainstream schools; can help families and children to challenge a decision to withdraw parental rights and place the child in residential care, which are all ways to mitigate poverty and exclusion. Girls and boys may also come into contact with justice systems in relation to their perceived or actual association with armed parties to conflict.

Committee on the Right of the Child's General Comment on the right of the child to be heard (General Comment 12, 2009) emphasizes that article 12.2 of the CRC applies to all relevant judicial proceedings affecting the child, without limitation, including, for example, separation of parents, custody, care and adoption, children in conflict with the law, child victims of physical or psychological violence, sexual abuse or other crimes, health care, social security, unaccompanied children, asylum-seeking and refugee children, and victims of armed conflict and other emergencies. Protection of children from violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation, often involve custody and care decisions where courts play a key role and children's participation is paramount. Children's participation in criminal proceedings is central to bringing perpetrators to justice but their re-victimization during the procedures must be avoided.

To contribute to the realization of the rights of all children, victims, witnesses and perpetrators seeking to access justice, and/or participating in criminal, civil and administrative justice processes and to ensure

that children participating in these processes are treated in accordance with international standards, and building on the principle of State accountability, UNICEF will support the strengthening of the capacity of justice and administrative bodies as well as of the civil registration systems. UNICEF will also advocate for policy and legislative changes in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law and standards, and support capacity development of national human rights institutions to facilitate access to child-friendly remedies. Access to justice is the ability to seek and obtain fair, timely and effective remedy for violations of rights as put forth in the international, regional and national legal frameworks. It therefore goes well beyond juvenile justice. If justice systems and other accountability mechanisms are accessible to all, justice systems could be a tool to overcome deprivation and restore rights that were denied.

Underpinning these programming strategies and the organization's drive for ever-greater effectiveness, UNICEF will continue to ensure that its programmes are efficiently delivered and cost effective through its four main enablers of organizational performance: (a) internal governance, as UNICEF continues its transformation into a more transparent and accountable organization; (b) management, focused on results, efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration; (c) people, including a workforce that is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile across different contexts and sectors; and (d) knowledge and information systems that contribute to programmatic results or organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

### Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

UNICEF has identified a number of cross-cutting risks that are applicable to all of its outcomes and results areas, including its work under Outcome 3. These include: siloed operations and funding arrangements; insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda; unpredictable humanitarian crises and their lasting effects on children; inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies; inadequate establishment of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together; and challenges related to results-based budgeting in a decentralized organization. Many of the change strategies and enablers discussed above are explicitly designed to help to mitigate these risks, in particular through their emphasis on flexibility and agility – in systems, human resources, funding and management arrangements – and on partnerships and new technologies.

However, in addition to these broader risks and assumptions, there are others that are more directly relevant to UNICEF's work under outcome 3 and the application of its associated theory of change. These are presented in the table below along with the related UNICEF measure.

Assumption/Risk	UNICEF measures
Political commitment, including provision of funding, towards building a multi-sectoral framework; willingness of various agencies and sectors to work inter-sectorally. Structural barriers or siloed mindset that hamper meaningful/sustainable multi-sectoral work.	Provide innovative and practical packaging of key interventions for countries to implement, with explicit articulations of roles/responsibilities of each sector UNICEF will also step-up effort to advocate for political commitment, including for required budget allocations, an intersectoral mindset and advocacy towards enhanced protection for children.
Openness of service providers and professionals to new norms, willingness of parents, caregivers families, societies to acquire more knowledge and information on positive parenting and to better protect their children from all forms of violence. Risk: C4D/SC interventions not sustainable due to small scale or unsystematic approaches.	Technical assistance and advocacy on including national C4D framework/action plan in a national development plan.
Giving greater voice, visibility and resonance to those who have committed to the new norm of keeping girls intact/preventing girls from early/forced marriage will stimulate discussion and strengthen movement to end the practices. Risk: Strong resistance from influential groups/leaders (e.g. religious groups/leaders) that can undermine efforts.	Use evidence-based multi-platform approaches (dialogue, social mobilization, media-based strategies) to engage these groups in social norms change
Political will to address FGM/C and Child Marriage. Risk: Limited change in legislation, policy and financial investments.	Supporting countries where there is momentum in addressing FGM/C and Child Marriage. In addition, partnering with civil society organizations who enhance government accountability and build public will for changes in policy/legislation through communication and advocacy campaigns
Effective program and policy implementation of the FGM/C and Child Marriage national programs. Risk: Inadequate capacity of government partners, civil society and other implementing partners.	Dedicated resources towards capacity development either through resource allocation or provision of technical support UN HQ/RO's, between countries or from external technical partners.
Quality assurance mechanisms (such as certification of justice and social service professions) combined with capacity building will lead to adapted criminal, civil and administrative procedures and proceedings that protect child rights Risk: Administrative data systems are weak in many countries. Reviews of court files and	UNICEF efforts in the area of enhancing access to justice must focus on strengthening disaggregated administrative data and identifying alternative ways for tracking progress (e.g. review of court case files, questionnaire feedback from justice and other relevant practitioners, opinion surveys on use of remedies by vulnerable groups).

other methodologies for tracking progress can be difficult to implement	
There is an assumption that data availability, particularly administrative data will be strengthened in the coming years to capture child protection outcomes. However, there is serious risk that data may not be available, or may not be sufficiently systematically or transparently used, with limited accountability for results. Data around disability will likely be insufficient.	Strengthening data systems is a regular component of UNICEF assistance. This will include support for more disaggregation of data, including information on children with disabilities, as well as support for strengthened incidence monitoring, prevalence monitoring, and programme monitoring.
It has been assumed that UNICEF will at least maintain the average funding level of the last years in child protection. There is risk that weakened global financing for child protection will be compounded if the sector fails to deliver on the measurable results.	It is of utmost importance that UNICEF more strongly demonstrate its own 'value-for-money', to maintain the confidence of potential donors that the requested resources for UNICEF will help achieve the UNICEF planned child protection results and make the expected contribution to the SDG targets.
There is strong political will and funding is being allocated for the justice system Risk: Laws are developed but unable to be implemented due to weaknesses in the justice system including lack of expertise and resources.	Provide evidence to support the development of national planning and budgeting capacities for key child protection stakeholders, advocate for greater resource allocation for cost effective and impactful child-protection initiatives; improve the visibility, transparency and accountability in national child protection expenditure.
Resources/capacities both as an agency and on the ground to sustain efforts; access to operate in humanitarian settings. Risk: Human resources are sometimes limited, coordination is poor, and no access in certain situations, particular in humanitarian settings.	Diversify partners, build resilience to cope with humanitarian situations, leadership in coordination/advocacy.
Advocacy alliances will succeed in strengthening, expanding and sustaining access to children for principled humanitarian action	Engage in a wide partnership across national actors and the international humanitarian and human rights systems to promote and protect international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as engaging in broader UN integrated frameworks to ensure protection of child rights features in common objectives.
Political will to more effectively prevent, respond to and strengthen accountability for grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict. Risk: Politicisation of mechanisms designed to enhance compliance of parties to conflict with international humanitarian and human rights law.	UNICEF will continue to advocate through the CAAC agenda and relevant stakeholders for enhanced engagement with all parties to conflict to prevent and end grave violations against children, and for the development of multi-sectoral and multi-year programmes and advocacy to enhance the protection of children in situations of armed conflict

<p>It is assumed that UNICEF will successfully implement a learning agenda in relation to other programme areas under child protection, such as reducing sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>UNICEF will continue working with partners during the Strategic Plan period to further develop its programme logic and data collection capacity in this area.</p>
<p>It is assumed that other UN partners coordinating and collaborating with UNICEF will deliver their contributions on areas of collaboration. The risk is that if other partners do not deliver then UNICEF's collaborative work with those entities may not be as effective or sustainable as planned.</p>	<p>UNICEF will continue to work through the new UNDAF process and other interagency processes and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency or working closely together.</p>

DRAFT

## Key Partnerships

Strategic partnerships with United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, national Governments, civil society, the private sector, faith-based communities and academia will continue to play a central role in advancing equitable results for children in Goal Area 3 of UNICEF's Strategic Plan, and more broadly, within the context of the 2030 Agenda. More specifically, contribution of partners are critical to the delivery of the outputs and the related contribution to outcome level change. UNICEF will pursue existing, new and innovative partnerships and networks to develop common positions and programming approaches, scaling up the use of our expertise, leveraging resources, and leveraging the programming of partners for better child protection delivery. Moreover, it will pursue global, regional and national partnerships, as they are the cornerstone of UNICEF programmatic engagement, advocacy and leveraging of funds, and are instrumental in translating commitments into concrete action on the ground.

Internally, partnerships bolster effectiveness, improve efficiencies and support attainment of institutional outcomes. Externally, partnerships enable an amplification of results through coordinated action and pooling of resources; build efficient economies of scale; create more efficient streamlining and division of labour; and provide synergy and harmonised approaches to building and sharing a repository of knowledge, data and analysis on child protection issues. In addition, partnerships ramp up the collective development of global standards and public goods. UNICEF has a proven track record of developing global standards and public goods, including programme guidance and programming tools, including in the areas of violence against children, sexual exploitation and abuse, birth registration, gender-based violence in emergencies, mine/ERW risk reduction education and victim assistance, the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups, monitoring and reporting of grave child rights violations, and unaccompanied and separated children, all of which partnerships played a key role.

As an example of a successful global partnership enabling amplification of results and ramping up the collective development of global standards and public goods, the coordinated work with the World Health Organisation and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children have been catalytic in moving the violence against children agenda forward. Building on the development of INSPIRE, a package of seven violence-ending strategies published in 2016 by the World Health Organization (WHO) in partnership with nine entities including UNICEF, UNODC, and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (Global Partnership), UNICEF continues to work with the Global Partnership, WHO and other international partners to synergize (INSPIRE) work on the ground, which will enable improved links between the health, education, social service and justice sectors and strengthen harmonized approaches within UNICEF and with partners. Such coordinated action contributes to the attainment of SDGs, particularly Goal 16.

As another example of global partnership, UNICEF and UNFPA's collaborative work on accelerating action to child marriage (contributing to SDG Target 5.3) has galvanized the efforts of governments, civil society and development partners around the world which, together, more than 1 million girls have been reached through life skills and school attendance support and 1.6 million individuals have been engaged in dialogue to support adolescent girls. The global programme strategy sets the standards and provides guidance to programming countries to accelerate efforts through harmonized and evidence based approaches. UNICEF has also been implementing the Joint Programme on FGM/C in partnership with UNFPA to support government and other partners in 17 targeted countries. Since launching Phase II of the UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Programme on FGM/C in 2013, globally, 18,431,220 individuals have been involved in public declarations of abandonment. UNICEF's partnership with UNFPA as well as academic institutions on the work around addressing FGM/C is an example of successful partnership that provides synergy and harmonised approach to building and sharing a repository of knowledge, data and analysis on child protection issues. The work with UNFPA and academic institutions is critical in developing a global monitoring and evaluation framework for social norm change resulting from C4D efforts, specifically for

FGM/C. Such learning may serve as a reference for other areas of work, most notably child marriage and violence against children.

In a year marked by a global migrant and refugee crisis, UNICEF's multi-agency partnerships on migration, including with UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and UNICEF National Committees in affected countries have already proven to galvanize the efforts of governments, civil society and development partners around the world. The global programme strategy will contribute to build a concerted effort in achieving measurable results through harmonized approaches.

Evidence shows that regional actions are being translated into national strategies and policy reform, which, in turn, is transforming into improved reach and quality of birth registration services. Setting standards and securing commitments through these regional intergovernmental structures are essential in moving the agenda forward in specific regions. In an effort to increase the level of birth registration within civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems, UNICEF is engaged in key regional CRVS initiatives and partnerships, such as the Accelerated Improvement of CRVS programme in Africa and the Regional Action Plan for the Improvement of CRVS in East Asia and the Pacific. In relation to our engagement around the CCCs, UNICEF, together with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, entered into a partnership with the Peace and Security Department of the African Union in 2013 to better protect children affected by armed conflict. The partnership includes strengthening the child protection capacity as well as monitoring and reporting capacity of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) through a Child Protection Adviser embedded within the African Union Mission.

Nationally, UNICEF will continue its long-standing practice of building capacity through partnerships with national and local governments, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector, including in humanitarian contexts. UNICEF's collaborative relationship with the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, for example, is essential in strengthening the national capacity on social service workforce, which is vital to improving the quality of service delivery and case management.<sup>33</sup> At the global level, UNICEF continues to work in partnership with the Better Care Network to develop a tracking tool to measure the implementation of the alternative care guidelines, due to be tested in 2017.

UNICEF's global, regional, and national partnerships are critical to strengthen efforts around advocacy and policy dialogue, and mobilizing multiple commitments. For example, through the partnership with WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online, UNICEF supports countries to advance legal reform to criminalize all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation in accordance with international human rights standards and adopt national policies and plans to address sexual violence against children.<sup>34</sup> Partnerships with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations, Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action are all critical for influencing policy making. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF will work with various partners including national counterparts, international/national organizations, academic and research institutions at global and national levels, to ensure timely and effective child protection prevention and response interventions. All will be implemented through the relevant inter-agency processes, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster approach, Areas of Responsibilities and integrated missions, where appropriate. UNICEF is the designated lead

---

<sup>33</sup> For example, the Government of Georgia, with UNICEF support, developed a child assessment referral instrument that will be used to identify potential cases of child rights violations and refer them to the respective social workers and which will be piloted.

<sup>34</sup> Seventy countries have also pledged global commitment to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation online through the WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online.



agency for the global Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and for the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, co-chair of the global Paris Principles Steering Group on Children and Associated with Armed Forces/Groups, a lead actor in the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Humanitarian Settings, co-chair of the International Organization's Group of the Call to Action in the GBV Area of Responsibility, co-chair of the International Organization's Group of the Call to Action in the Mental Health and Psychosocial Reference Group, co-chair of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Children and Armed Conflict Technical Reference Group, and the UN Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group. Real-Time Accountability Partnership between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, UNFPA, the International Rescue Committee and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster aims to enhance the ability to collectively address GBV in humanitarian contexts and promotes system-wide accountability and supports better responses to GBViE at the country level.

The catalysing and convening action of UNICEF will be enhanced by building and sharing a repository of knowledge, data and analysis on child protection issues. Globally, UNICEF partnership with Together for Girls supports countries to carry out national Violence Against Children Surveys (VACS) and the partnership with the Know Violence initiative continues to collect and disseminate evidence on what works to address violence in childhood. Regionally, efforts have included mapping of pathways between violence prevention and social protection, in collaboration with UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti. UNICEF will also strengthen its internal capacities and partnerships, including with academia, to generate, share and utilize high quality knowledge, data and analysis on child protection in renewed areas of focus including strengthening Governments' capacity to monitor and report on SDG indicators, promoting and protecting the rights of children on the move, access to justice, and the work around measurement of social norms and behavioral change. On access to justice, UNICEF recognizes that there is great scope for broadening our partnerships to harness the work of others in justice sector reform, multi-sectoral work, and legal empowerment and involvement of civil society. On advancing work around social norms change, strategic partnerships with global media and communication expert agencies as well as academic institutions will be capitalized. External evaluations of innovative initiatives will be critical. The ability of building the evidence base, scrutinizing and applying lessons learned by all child protection and development actors, taking leadership on knowledge management and strengthening and making effective use of partnerships will contribute to addressing social exclusion; integrating child protection into all sectors including health, education and into emergency work; capacity-building of governments and other partners; and working 'upstream' to obtain sustained results. Building on the success of individual partnerships, a broader dialogue with the private sector will be pursued. Efforts will include, for example, encouraging corporate social responsibility for child protection goals in both high-, middle- and low income countries, and in emergencies.

Finally, participation of children and partnering with children will remain an important part of UNICEF's partnership agenda. Participation and partnerships provides children with an opportunity to take action within their own communities, promote dialogue, support key issues among peer groups, and participate in monitoring activities to hold governments accountable for commitments. UNICEF-supported mechanisms such as U-Report, EduTrac, digital/community mapping and others are gaining traction in many countries and will be continued to be implemented.

## Goal Area 4 Theory of Change

### Outcome Statement

Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices and strengthened systems for a clean and safe environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian crisis.

---

### Theory of Change Statement

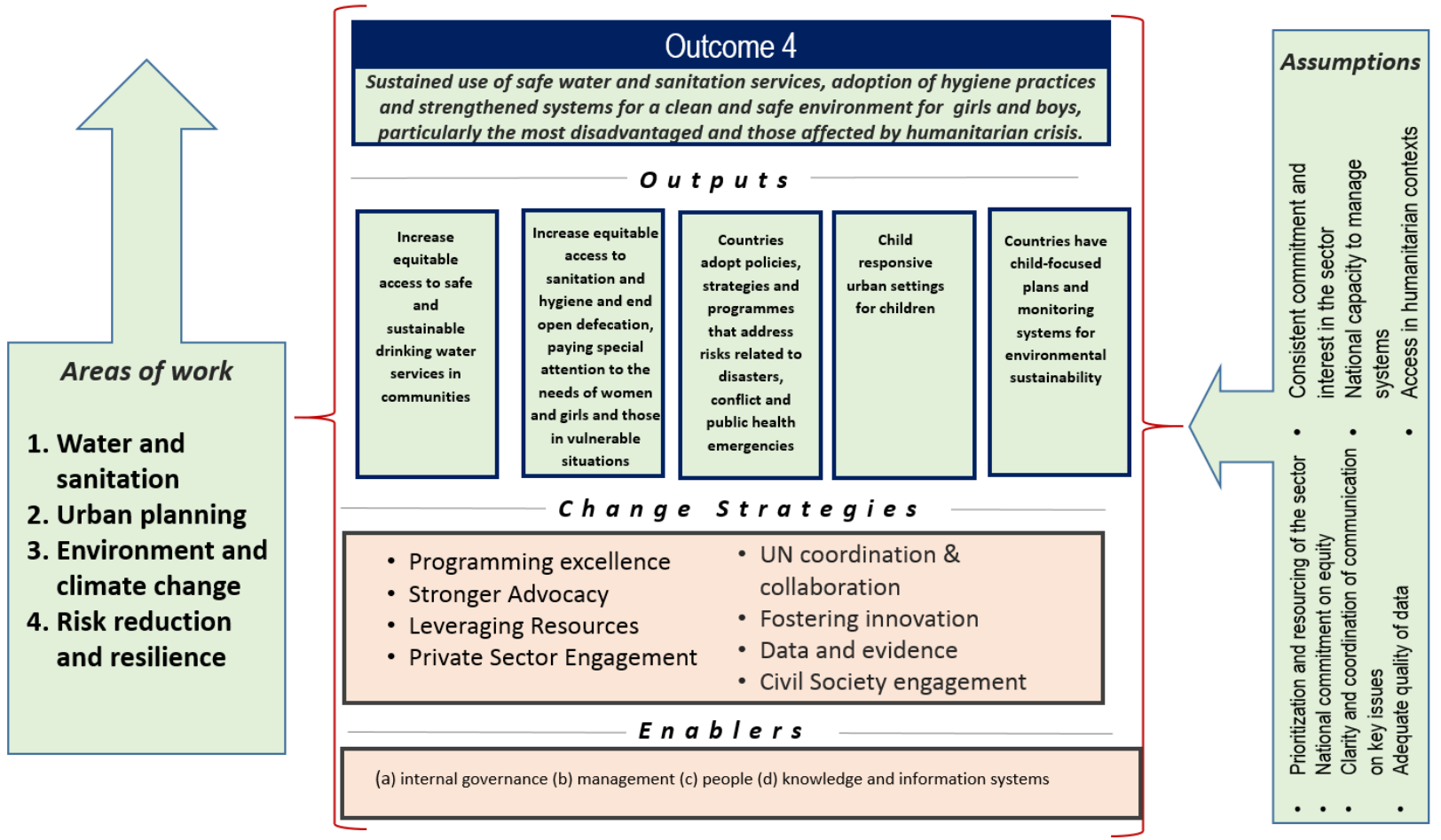
Therefore, if children, their families and communities have access to safe drinking water and if open defecation is ended and people have access to adequate sanitation and hygiene, including in humanitarian situations; if national and local governments seek to anticipate, prevent and mitigate the risk arising from natural disaster or conflict; if urban or local government plans developed in ways that are risk informed and responsive to needs of children; and if countries monitor and plan ahead for a child-friendly sustainable environment, then children will be able to grow and develop in a safe and secure environment.

---

A clean safe and secure environment for children requires (i) that children have access to safe and sustainable drinking water, (ii) that children have access to sanitation and hygiene services, (iii) that policies and programmes exist that address disaster and conflict related risks, (iv) that urban planning and governance is responsive to the needs and rights of children, and (v) that child-focused plans and monitoring systems exist for a sustainable environment. Achievement of this outcome requires actions at global, regional, national and community levels. This involves improving the enabling environment through aligning country policy and strategy with the SDG. It requires increasing sector budget allocation and domestic resources mobilization as well as capacity development, institutional strengthening and partnerships to develop sector planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning for the delivery of high-quality, equitable results at scale.

Achievement of results in increasing access to safe adequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene services, UNICEF's approach will include longer-term investment in national system strengthening, including building flexible delivery systems and services with capacity to respond where risks of disaster, conflict, climate change and shocks are highest. At the same time, in humanitarian situations, approaches will include UNICEF support to direct delivery with a range of implementing partners, where there is imperative to act in humanitarian crises, where capacities and resources are low, and/or the national authorities are unwilling or unable to uphold their responsibilities to affected populations.

# Outcome 4



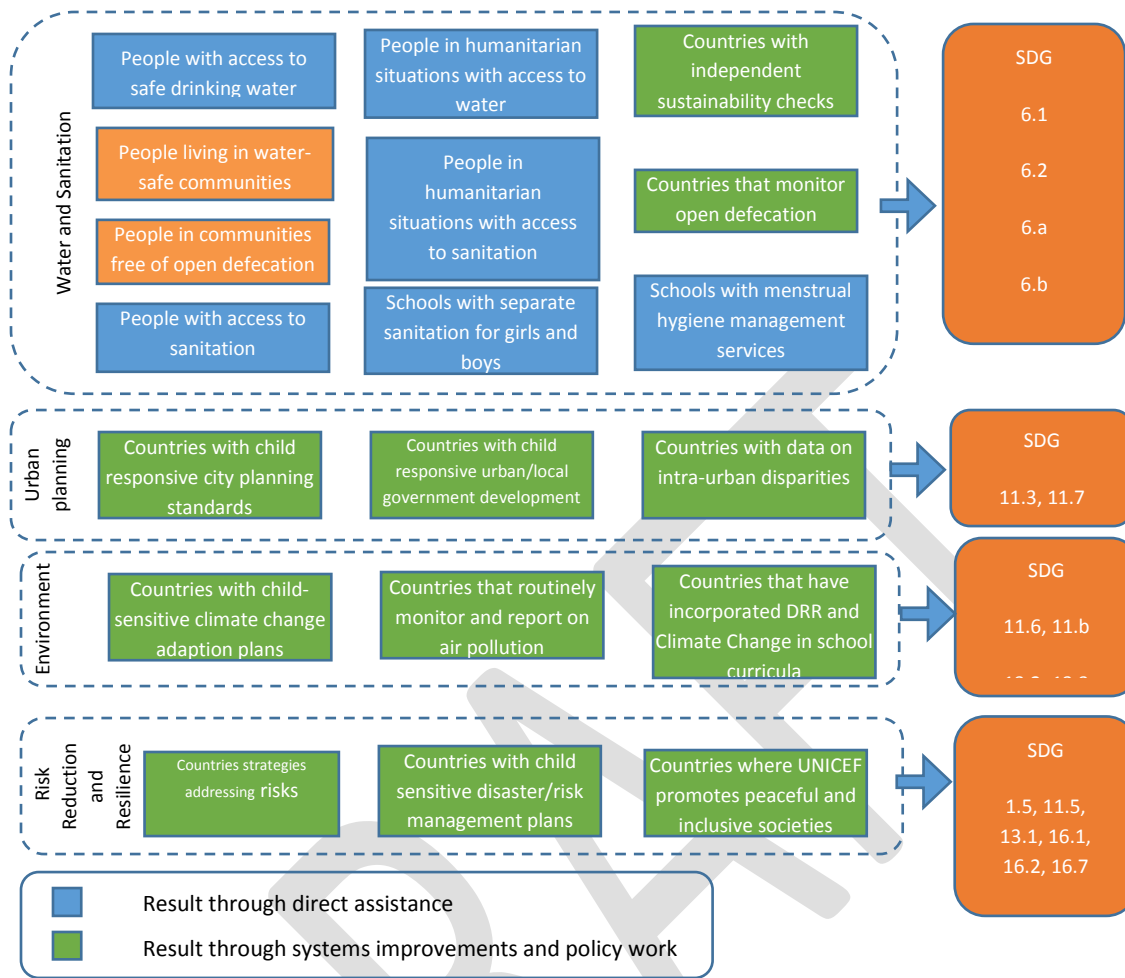
## Link to SDGs and CRC

The Strategic Plan is grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides the foundation for everything UNICEF does. It is also guided by other international human rights treaties and instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Outcome 4 prioritizes a clean, safe and secure environment for children, a right enshrined in article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This outcome contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all); 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable); 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts); and 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). For example, the provision of equitable and sustainable WASH has a significant impact on reducing the burden of disease and stunting, increasing school attendance for children, especially girls, and getting people out of the vicious cycle of reduced productivity and loss of incomes.

The following diagram indicates the UNICEF contributions related to outcome 4 to the relevant SDG targets.

DRAFT



## Context

### Leaving No Child Behind

Millions of children around the world are affected by conflict and fragility, climate change, natural hazards, or unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and air pollution. A safe and clean environment for children is as important as ever. Access to safe water, improved sanitation and proper hygiene is vital to children's well-being. It contributes to good health and nutrition (outcome 1), quality learning (outcome 2), and dignity, especially for women and girls. Recent decades have seen significant advances in expanding access to improved water and sanitation. But the "unfinished business" remains sizeable: an estimated 2.4 billion people are being left behind and still lack access to improved sanitation and 663 million people still lack access to improved drinking water sources.

Significant rural-urban disparities are evident in both sanitation and drinking water coverage. Out of the 2.4 billion people without access to improved sanitation, 7 out of 10 live in rural areas. For drinking water, there are marked differences in both the level of service available to rural and urban residents as well as the absolute numbers of people without access to improved drinking water. Just 32% of the rural population have access to piped water on premises compared to 79% of the urban population; and 8 out of 10 without access to any type of improved drinking water live in rural areas. Intra-urban inequalities and intra-rural disparities in access also exist not only in to developing countries but also apparent among certain ethnic groups in developed nations in spite of limited data.

The environment for children living in cities also has a major impact on their well-being. Today, more than half of the world's children live in cities and by mid-century it will be 70 per cent, with an increased pressure on their environment. It is imperative that city planning is responsive to the rights of children and that children's voices and those of their communities are heard and are part of the urban development process.

### Humanitarian response, risk, and sustainable development

A key determinant of children's well-being today is whether they live in fragile, conflict-affected, or disaster-prone contexts. Such children are twice as likely to lack access to safe water. Approximately 28 million children have been uprooted by violence and conflict, and 300 million children are estimated to be living in slums. Some 28 per cent of the world's children live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, a figure projected to increase to one third by 2030. Climate change and natural disasters also pose grave risks to children: more than half a billion children live in areas with an extremely high flood risk, and nearly 160 million children live in high, or extremely high, drought severity zones. Every year, millions of children around the world are affected by conflict and fragility, and natural hazards such as floods or earthquakes, climate change and environmental hazards including air pollution. Many such risks are on the rise. The children in fragile, conflict affected and disaster prone contexts are more vulnerable; child poverty rates are higher, children are three times less likely to attend school, twice as likely to be without clean water and twice as likely to die before the age of five. Children are also at a greater risk of abuse, exploitation and violence.

Conflict and fragility, and natural hazards not only create an environment that is unsafe for children, but also results in the disruption of life-saving services such as water and sanitation systems. Ensuring a clean and safe environment for girls and boys affected by humanitarian crisis is not only an imperative, but a critical condition to achieving the other SDGs.

## Lessons Learned 2014-17

While the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 builds on its predecessor, it has evolved in several ways. Outcome 4 focuses on the impact of the context and environment on children's survival and development, but builds on lessons from the 2014-17 Strategic Plan on strengthening enabling environments at subnational levels and improving evidence generation for equitable WASH programming. Another key lessons applicable across UNICEF's areas of work is that starting with the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and practical. This is a lesson that will be used to inform programming in outcome 4 as much as in other outcome areas. This will involve a concerted effort to further scale up equity-focused programming and advocacy, including through better targeting of interventions to focus on the most disadvantaged children and those most vulnerable and at risk; working for better linkages between humanitarian and development work; and the strengthening of national and local capacities and systems. The voices of children and their families are critical forces for strengthening accountability in governance. UNICEF will intensify support for initiatives that enable citizens, communities and civil society to share their feedback on actions taken by Governments and partners towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. There is also increased recognition that this not only involves engagement with national governments but also with local government, particularly in urban areas.

In light of the scale, frequency and complexity of humanitarian crises, risk-informed programming and systems strengthening have become vital for prevention, response and early recovery. Emergency preparedness and enhancing the resilience of communities and service delivery systems will be core to the work of UNICEF in all country contexts including as a means of strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus.

Other key lessons learned directly related to Outcome 4 include:

- Due to the success of WASH programming as such CATS (Community Approaches to Total Sanitation), demand for services is growing, but there are few suitable products on the market that people are willing or able to pay for. UNICEF working with partners will need to influence markets, microfinancing and other financial mechanisms for innovative solutions.
- Sustainability of WASH services is another factor that will determine success going forward. UNICEF needs to place an increased emphasis on putting the sustainability of systems at the center of WASH programming through sustainability check surveys, sustainability compacts with host Governments and deeper analysis of the enabling environment that makes services last.
- Delivering on the UNICEF mandate of reaching the most vulnerable children in all situations requires increased involvement in urban WASH in times of both stability and crisis. UNICEF should apply its organizational strengths to selected aspects of urban WASH programming that will result in have the greatest impact.
- Monitoring, documenting and reporting on the equity dimensions of WASH activities is challenging in most countries. UNICEF needs to support governments to strengthen national and subnational level monitoring systems for data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Using a child centered risk assessment serves as an advocacy tool for policy-making and support risk informed development planning at global, regional and national level.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Excerpt from :Building back better: Lesson learned from the response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in terms of long-term development, disaster risk reduction and resilience building in Aceh, Indonesia" UNICEF July 2014

- Improving social cohesion through UNICEF programming requires a good understanding of the underlying social dynamics in conflict and postconflict settings.
- It is acknowledged that UNICEF needs a more structured approach to ensure that all of its programmes are conflict-sensitive, and when appropriate, to design programmes that make an explicit contribution to peacebuilding and strengthening of social cohesion.

## Theory of Change

### Overview

Based on its theory of change and strongly anchored in a rights based approach to programming, UNICEF has identified five main outputs for the 2018-21 Strategic Plan as its contributions to the outcome 4: *“Sustained use of safe water and sanitation services, adoption of hygiene practices, resilient and strengthened systems for a clean and safe environment for girls and boys, particularly the most disadvantaged and those affected by humanitarian crisis.”* Those outputs are as follows:

- Increase equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water services in communities, including in humanitarian situations
- Increase equitable access to sanitation and hygiene and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable and humanitarian situations and at household level
- Countries adopt policies, strategies and programmes that address risks related to disasters, conflict and public health emergencies
- Child responsive urban settings for children
- Countries have child-focused plans and monitoring systems for environmental sustainability

Delivering on these five outputs will significantly contribute to a safer and cleaner environment for children. Achieving each of the outputs will also involve addressing the following four overarching strategic elements:

- Improving the enabling environment (including knowledge management, capacity building, institutional strengthening and partnerships) for the delivery of results at scale, including building flexible delivery systems and services with capacity to respond where risks of disaster, conflict, climate change and shocks are highest;
- Achieving behavioral change and improving demand for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and outcomes and holding duty bearers to account for delivery services that meet demand;
- Delivering sustainable services to the poorest and most marginalized women and children;
- Monitoring to ensure high quality, equitable results that deliver value for money and sustainable outcomes.

As marginalized local authorities and communities struggle with capacity gaps and financing of WASH services, UNICEF has substantially increased its engagement in helping governments to strengthen the enabling environment for sustained services whilst also directly supporting service delivery especially where children are most vulnerable. UNICEF adds value based on its global knowledge and experience of service delivery management systems, including those managed by communities themselves, its efficient procurement systems, and its knowledge on practices, challenges related to sanitation and knowledge of the needs of local communities and their demand for affordable products and services. UNICEF is able to



develop and run major communication campaigns for behavioral change, and the particular needs of women and girls are always a key consideration.

Through its strong country presence, strong programming and technical capacity, global and national partnerships, integrated and multi sectoral approach to programming, UNICEF will continue to work with partners to strengthen national and subnational systems, with particular attention to equity monitoring, sustainability and gender considerations. Improved access to water and sanitation services is very much a question of finance. UNICEF will continue to directly invest in water and sanitation systems and community-level infrastructure, especially in least developed countries with particular consideration of the needs of women and girls.

It will also support sanitation and hygiene, especially focusing on access to toilets, reducing open defecation, and promoting critical hygiene practices. UNICEF will also support initiatives for WASH in schools and health centres, taking into account the specific needs of girls and children living with disabilities. Complementary efforts will focus on community platforms to address behavioural and social barriers to WASH. This capacity will provide an important base in humanitarian crises for scaling up coordinated communications and community engagement to support individual and community life-saving and protection actions as well as participation in and feedback on humanitarian response.

In humanitarian situations, UNICEF leads the WASH cluster, and coordinates activities of the relief community related to water and sanitation of the most vulnerable populations. Because of its field presence, UNICEF is able to anticipate the needs in crisis situations and respond rapidly. UNICEF also has major logistical capacity, which is a significant asset in the acquisition and distribution of water and sanitation supplies. Based on its long experience in water supply and sanitation in crisis situations, UNICEF is able to provide WASH systems and services in humanitarian situations that make use of local capacities and can be kept operational throughout the crisis. UNICEF will provide life-saving access to safe water and will support sanitation and hygiene, with a special focus on access to toilets and promoting critical hygiene practices. In collaboration with sector partners, UNICEF will strengthen national and subnational capacity for emergency coordination, preparedness and response. This also includes providing drinking water, sanitation and hand-washing facilities to schools, early childhood development centers and health care centers, where governments and local communities are unable to do so, directly assisting children and their families.

UNICEF is a key partner of the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) initiative, which connects programme countries with development banks, multilaterals, donor countries, the private sector and other global water organizations. UNICEF has been instrumental in convening the SWA High-Level Meetings to bring together ministers responsible for finance, water and sanitation from programme countries, ministers of development cooperation from donor countries, and high-level representatives from development banks and leading sanitation and water agencies. Partners will continue to be encouraged to raise provision of WASH for the most vulnerable on the political agenda, promote solutions, demonstrate political will, and increase the allocation and impact of resources. In programme countries, UNICEF will continue to demonstrate and provide evidence of the impact of improved WASH services on other health and development indicators of children. UNICEF's Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) has adopted the five building blocks which governments can put in place for the provision of adequate and sustainable WASH services include i) Sector policy and strategies, ii) Institutional arrangements iii) Budget and financing, iv) Planning, Monitoring, and Review, and v) Capacity development.

A systems approach is also used to help urban/local government plans and budgets to be more child responsive. The local level is, after all, where children live. Local governments, particularly in urban contexts, play a decisive role in the lives of children, from planning the physical environment to the

delivery of key public services. It is therefore crucial to ensure that local plans and budgets reflect children's needs and priorities. In this area, UNICEF will continue its work on supporting adolescent and community participation in local decision-making, strengthening social accountability mechanisms, enhancing urban and local government capacity to develop child responsive plans and to deliver public services for children in an equitable manner. In addition, a focus on sufficient and equitable local finance is a pre-condition to ensure that the developed plans translate into local action and results for children, including the most vulnerable

National and local plans and budgets must also be responsive to children (including adolescents) and address the risks that threaten their access to basic services so they are able to fulfil their rights. The increasing need for more sustainable services and the increasing frequency of emergencies make the need for risk-informed planning and management in programming more needed than ever before to ensure an environment where children can be safe and secure. Through risk-informed programming, UNICEF and partners will support countries to make the policies and programmes related to WASH, climate change, disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding that are responsive to the needs of children, and will strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus by supporting systems to better prepare for, respond to and recover from shocks and stresses.

To support governments and partners to achieve resilient development in the context of shocks and stresses including natural hazards, climate, conflict and epidemics, while also meeting commitments to the Sendai Framework and, Paris Climate Agreement, UNICEF is promoting two related approaches: risk informed programming and the promotion of social cohesion and peacebuilding. While the two approaches are related and both require a robust and common context and risk assessment, strategies to address the underlying causes and risk may vary. Risk informed programming is consistent with and also supports explicit work on DRR and CCA. Specifically, UNICEF will continue to strengthen national and local risk assessment, include risk reduction strategies in development plans as well as sector policies and programmes, advocate for a child sensitive disaster and emergency management and support the engagement and participation of adolescents and young people. UNICEF's work on social cohesion and peacebuilding will be consistent with this but will further emphasize interventions that build social cohesion, strengthen national, community and individual capacities to address the causes of conflict constructively; and lay and support foundations for sustainable peace and development.

In conflict-affected contexts, UNICEF undertakes a conflict analysis as part of the broader risk analysis for Risk Informed Programming. Such analysis is usually focused on informing UNICEF programming to ensure its work is conflict-sensitive (do-no-harm), and contributes to peacebuilding (do-more-good) or the strengthening of social cohesion wherever possible. UNICEF's understanding of conflict analysis puts an emphasis on the social dimensions of conflict, the particular impacts on children and young people (and their potential capacities and roles), and, ultimately, on equitable access to social services. Depending on the context and potential sensitivities with regard to the term 'conflict', UNICEF field offices and programmes may use different terminologies to describe such analysis, e.g. social cohesion analysis, context analysis, peace and development analysis, or sustaining peace analysis.

The effectiveness of UNICEF's interventions, the extent to which it is able to ensure that its approaches and outputs are cost effective and have maximum impact on the lives of vulnerable and marginalized children, is reinforced by the deployment of organizational programming strategies (the HOWS). Each of the following strategies are deployed in UNICEF's efforts to ensure that every child lives in a safe and clean environment:

- Programming excellence for at-scale results for children. UNICEF will continue to dedicate itself to developing and implementing high quality programme with robust results management in the work covered by Goal Area 4 and will foster cross-sectoral and multisectoral programming that provides a holistic response to children and to the environment in which they live. UNICEF will also focus on enhancing at-scale capacity for humanitarian action; promoting risk-informed programming to reinforce the humanitarian-development nexus; strengthening gender-responsive programming; and promoting behavior change and demand for services.
- Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public. UNICEF will become an even stronger advocacy, campaigning, fundraising and communications force for children, working with others to build alliances and movements for improvements in the living conditions of girls and boys across both decades of their lives.
- Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children. Under outcome 4 UNICEF will work hard to influence domestic financing and budgeting for the work covered under the outcome, including access to water and sanitation. It will also have a strong focus on mobilizing resources from Governments and the private sector – including individuals, foundations and corporations – to maximize longer-term, flexible and predictable funds in support of UNICEF programmes and advocacy for children.
- Harnessing the power of business and markets for children. UNICEF will continue to leverage the power of private sector partners to improve the lives of children around the world, harnessing their core business and innovation, and advocating for them to uphold child rights.
- United Nations working together. In alignment with the 2016 QCPR, UNICEF will work with other United Nations entities to strengthen system coherence with a view to achieving better results for children and more integrated approaches to the 2030 Agenda. UNICEF will also collaborate with United Nations development system partners to develop system-wide actions for climate change work, much of which is managed under this outcome in the 2018-21 Strategic Plan.
- Fostering innovation for children. This will include a renewed emphasis on the use of technologies to better engage adolescents and communities and enhance social accountability. This change strategy will also involve identifying the most promising innovations for application in different contexts while supporting partners to adopt, adapt and scale up the most successful approaches.
- Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children. Evaluations, research and data are key elements of sound programming, advocacy and leveraging partnerships for children. There will be a strong focus on research, policy analysis and evaluation of what works for children, and an emphasis on the collection and analysis of disaggregated data, while filling research and evaluation gaps on the evolving risks and opportunities for children including adolescents. It will also involve a stronger focus on fragile situations and humanitarian crises, which require a deeper understanding of the specific risks to children and women triggered by different shocks and hazards.

Underpinning these programming strategies and the organization's drive for ever greater effectiveness, UNICEF will also continue to ensure that its programmes are efficiently delivered and cost effective through its four main enablers of organizational performance: (a) internal governance, as UNICEF continues its transformation into a more transparent and accountable organization; (b) management, focused on results, efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration; (c) people, including a workforce that is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile across different contexts and sectors; and (d) knowledge and

information systems that contribute to programmatic results or organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Assumptions, Risks and risk management measures**

UNICEF has identified several risks that have the potential to limit the full roll out of the Strategic Plan, including its work in ensuring that children can live in clean and safe environments. These include: siloed operations and funding arrangements; insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda; unpredictable humanitarian crises and their lasting effects on children; inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies; a varying focus on results for children among United Nations partners working together; inadequate establishment of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together; rapidly evolving technological requirements; and challenges related to results-based budgeting in a decentralized organization. The change strategies and enablers discussed above are explicitly designed to help to mitigate these risks, in particular through their emphasis on flexibility and agility – in systems, human resources, funding and management arrangements – and on partnerships and new technologies.

In addition to these broader risks and assumptions, there are others that are more directly relevant to UNICEF's work under outcome 4 and the application of its associated theory of change. These are presented in the table below along with the related UNICEF measure.

Assumption/Risk	UNICEF measures
It is assumed that there continues to be global interest in financing WASH services in programme countries. There is the risk of reduced funding for WASH, due to waning donor interest	UNICEF will continue to promote global attention to WASH through the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) initiative
It is assumed that there to be global interest in enhancing locally owned and driven public and private financing mechanisms	UNICEF will advocate enhancement of local finance for children, including through local tax revenues and private sector participation.
There is a risk that local development plans will not address drivers of multi-dimensional child poverty particularly in relation to land and housing informality.	UNICEF equity approach will assist in mainstreaming universal coverage at the local level.
It is assumed that donors will continue to finance WASH service delivery through UNICEF. The risk is Direct donor funding to programme countries may not be used in the areas where WASH needs are the greatest	UNICEF will continue to demonstrate its value-for-money in effectively and efficiently delivering WASH service, in both LDC and humanitarian situations. UNICEF will aim to leverage, through in-country sector approaches and partnerships, donor provided WASH funding for the areas of greatest need, including to end open defecation
It is assumed that programme countries are determined to address the WASH related SDG targets. However, there is the risk that WASH - especially as it relates to women and children - is not sufficiently prioritized among a country's development agenda.	UNICEF will seek and additional and contribute to existing global, international and domestic alliances and partnerships, to urge attention to WASH services especially for the most vulnerable groups. UNICEF will also share evidence on the multiple positive effects on health, education and other wellbeing of access to water and sanitation.
It is assumed that the international WASH community, including donors, and the private sector and civil society are consistent in their communications and support to WASH. There is a risk that different donors and partners may send conflicting signals	UNICEF will support WASH sector approaches, where common strategies for the public and private partners are developed, funded and implemented.
There is the risk that available data is not sufficient to assess the magnitude of needed WASH interventions and to develop cohered and agreeable sector strategies	In all countries where UNICEF supports WASH programmes, UNICEF will assist in the strengthening of data systems and WASH monitoring, including through the joint UNICEF-WHO joint monitoring programme. Increased investment in equity measurement through disaggregated data, e.g. on children with disabilities, will also be of critical importance moving forward.
It is assumed that examples and models are available where countries in similar situations have managed to improve WASH services.	UNICEF has a global network of WASH knowledge and expertise.
There is a risk –especially in LDCs - that domestic resources remain insufficient to rapidly expand WASG services for meeting the SDG targets.	External funding will be sought in such cases. In addition, and in concert with the rest of the aid community and other development partners, UNICEF will assist the government in improving planning and execution of domestic WASH budgets. This

	will aim to establish sustainable financing models, use resources more effectively and efficiently, and reduce leakage.
It is assumed that humanitarian access to support the provision of water and sanitation for vulnerable populations can be achieved. There is the risk that access is being denied.	UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities quickly as they arise. Especially where warring parties are immune to international pressure, access might remain unachievable.
It is assumed Government has adequate capacity including financial and human resources to deliver, manage and then to sustain WASH services. However, there is the risk that UNICEF and partners (governments, donors) are unable to invest quality human and financial resources in the WASH programme.	Appropriate and qualified human resources (including partnership with stand-by partners) are deployed to support countries in need. In countries with capacity challenges, UNICEF will promote sector approaches that bring together a common plan, financing and expertise. UNICEF also directly assists governments in planning and follow up.
It is assumed High-level political commitment exists – and expenditure is prioritized - to deliver and sustain WASH services to the unserved/underserved population. However there is the risk that political and cultural barriers undermine UNICEF’s ability to bring about transformational change in delivering WASH services that benefit unserved/underserved populations and, more specifically, the poorest and excluded groups within these populations	Strategic partnerships with key regional and global players in the WASH sector are maximized to support policy, budgeting, financing and advocacy efforts. UNICEF builds capacity of country-based partners on procurement, management, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation at the national, regional and district level
It is assumed enabling environments provides the necessary conditions for service providers (private and/or public) to deliver cost-effective WASH services, and safety-net (social protection) schemes exist to safeguard poorest community members. However, there is the risk that focus on delivering first time access undermines long-term sustainability	High quality evidence is generated and disseminated to scale up best practice, combined with practical, field-tested innovations to develop user-friendly technologies and approaches. Progress towards meeting the results (including impact on women and girls and vulnerable groups) is closely monitored, taking follow-up action promptly as soon as any potential problems are identified
It is assumed that other UN partners coordinating and collaborating with UNICEF will deliver their contributions on areas of collaboration. The risk is that if other partners do not deliver then UNICEF’s collaborative work with those entities may not be as effective or sustainable as planned.	UNICEF will continue to work through the new UNDAF process and other interagency processes and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency or working closely together.

## Key Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to delivering results for children, especially in fragile, conflict-affected and disaster-prone contexts. UNICEF will continue and strengthen its partnerships with the broader UN system, the World Bank (WB), national and local governments, and civil society organizations – particularly local organizations and those representing affected populations including the Red Cross Movement and the Children in a Changing Climate Coalition. UNICEF will also promote common risk analysis including working with the OECD and the EU’s Joint Research Unit, and support joined-up programming at the strategic and technical/sectoral level based on comparative advantage of different partners, including at decentralized or sub-national level.

The World Bank Group and UNICEF have just signed a Partnership Framework bringing together their respective mandates to promote share prosperity and equity recognizing the importance of reducing inequalities of opportunity from the early years of children’s life and in countries with the highest incidence of extreme child deprivation. One of the key engagement areas is investments in Fragility, refugee and migrant children for common analytics, advocacy and programming. These new commitments and the scaling-up of fragility focused interventions create new opportunities to increase investments and deepen collaboration in these areas. Engagement priorities in the Framework are align with strategic priorities of the overall UN World Bank Group Partnership Framework for Crises-Affected Situations. They address common country level analytics and vulnerability assessments, identification of a basic package of services provided in fragile contexts, consolidate and expand resilient development approaches and resilience programming and identify advocacy and partnership opportunities around events attended by senior management of both agencies.

UNICEF is one of the founding members and a key convener of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership (SWA), which aims to coordinate and align support for countries own strategies to reach universal access. With WHO, UNICEF implements the Joint Monitoring Programme, responsible for monitoring progress towards universal access for water supply and sanitation. This leadership role has enabled UNICEF to influence and shape sector thinking with regard to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals. In relation to the Urban context, particular focus will be on continued collaboration with specifically UNDP and UNHabitat, global local government associations such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) as well as the “Development Partners Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance” (DeLoG).

The UNICEF WASH programme will expand its work with allies at all levels, focusing on developing partnership frameworks that address specific needs and can leverage resources for scaling up programmes (including SWA where appropriate). Existing and potential partners include local and national governments, United Nations agencies, bilateral donor agencies, specialist WASH organizations, NGOs, CSOs, funding foundations, research institutes and the private sector. The programme will continue to promote private entrepreneurship, especially at the intermediate and community levels, where there are opportunities for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of programmes. Work will be done with partners to promote the necessary institutional reforms (tax reforms, access to credit, improved communication systems, etc.) to facilitate entrepreneurship. Partners in this area will include latrine artisans/marketers, manufacturers of pumps and pipes, village pump mechanics, spare parts distributors, and media and communication companies.

UNICEF will also expand its relationship with larger companies, moving beyond fund-raising to tap the marketing and technical resources of companies to achieve common goals such as the promotion of

handwashing with soap, household water treatment and low cost borehole drilling. Companies both large and small are key UNICEF partners in the development of appropriate and accessible technologies for a range of programme areas, including water purification and extraction.

The WASH cluster has become the key partnership framework for coordination of humanitarian preparedness and response, and UNICEF will continue to use its position as global cluster lead (and country lead in most large emergencies) to reinforce the role of the cluster and further build capacity. At the country level, where UNICEF enjoys longstanding relationships and legitimacy with governments, the organization is uniquely positioned to link NGOs, community-based organizations and the private sector with governments and facilitate more effective joint initiatives. To this end, UNICEF will continue to work within a variety of national partnership frameworks, including sector coordination forums.

DRAFT



## Goal Area 5 Theory of Change

### Outcome Statement

Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life.

---

#### Theory of Change Statement

If increased number of girls and boys are supported by programmes to overcome gender discriminatory roles, expectations, and practices; and **if** adolescent girls and boys influence decisions affecting their lives and communities; and **if** multidimensional poverty for girls and boys is reduced; and **if** **the** most disadvantaged girls and boys receive social protection support; and **if** girls and boys with disabilities are reached by accessible and inclusive programmes and services, **then** more vulnerable children will have an fair chance in life.

---

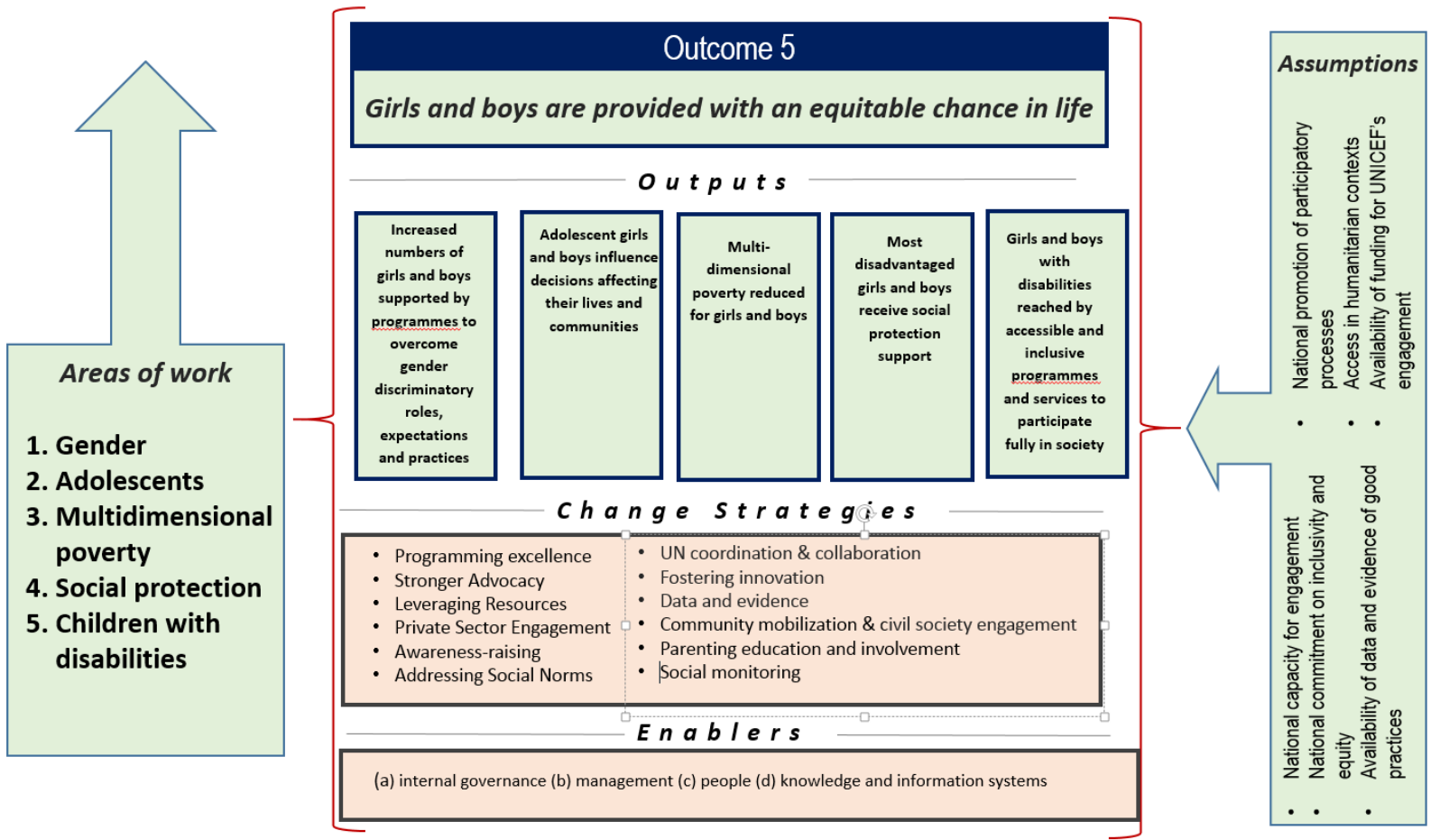
In working to ensure that the most disadvantaged girls and boys receive social protection support, UNICEF supports strengthening social protection systems for better coverage and impact on children. This includes support to various social protection components including government cash transfer programmes (both in development and humanitarian situations) and social welfare services. In working to ensure that girls and boys with disabilities are reached by accessible and inclusive programmes and services to participate fully in society UNICEF supports children with disabilities in accessing assistive devices, supports disability inclusive programmes and services in longer-term development programming and seeks to strengthen this in humanitarian response, and supports countries in implementing the UNICEF/Washington Group data module on child functioning.

For UNICEF, increasing the numbers of girls and boys supported by programmes to overcome gender discriminatory roles means supporting countries with at-scale programmes to address the issue, including building the capacity of the front-line workers that focus on gender inequality and supporting a strategic set of social and behaviour change communication platforms and local partners that can engage and stimulate positive social change amongst key influencers. Increasing the number of adolescent girls and boys who influence behaviours, norms and decisions affecting their lives and communities means expanding and systematizing opportunities to strengthen their capacities and outlets for exchange and communication; facilitating their participation in civic engagement initiatives; and supporting countries to develop national policies and legislation that will provide an enabling environment for adolescent engagement and development. Strengthening engagement of adolescents in countries facing high risk related to disaster, conflict, climate change and other shocks lays an important base for accountability to at and affected people that involves children. UNICEF's focus on multidimensional poverty (including monetary aspects of child poverty) is based around supporting countries with routine and official

measuring and reporting on child poverty, and developing explicit, adequately funded policies and programmes on child poverty in their national plans, including with attention to agility of systems to respond to the impacts of disaster, conflict and other shocks.

DRAFT

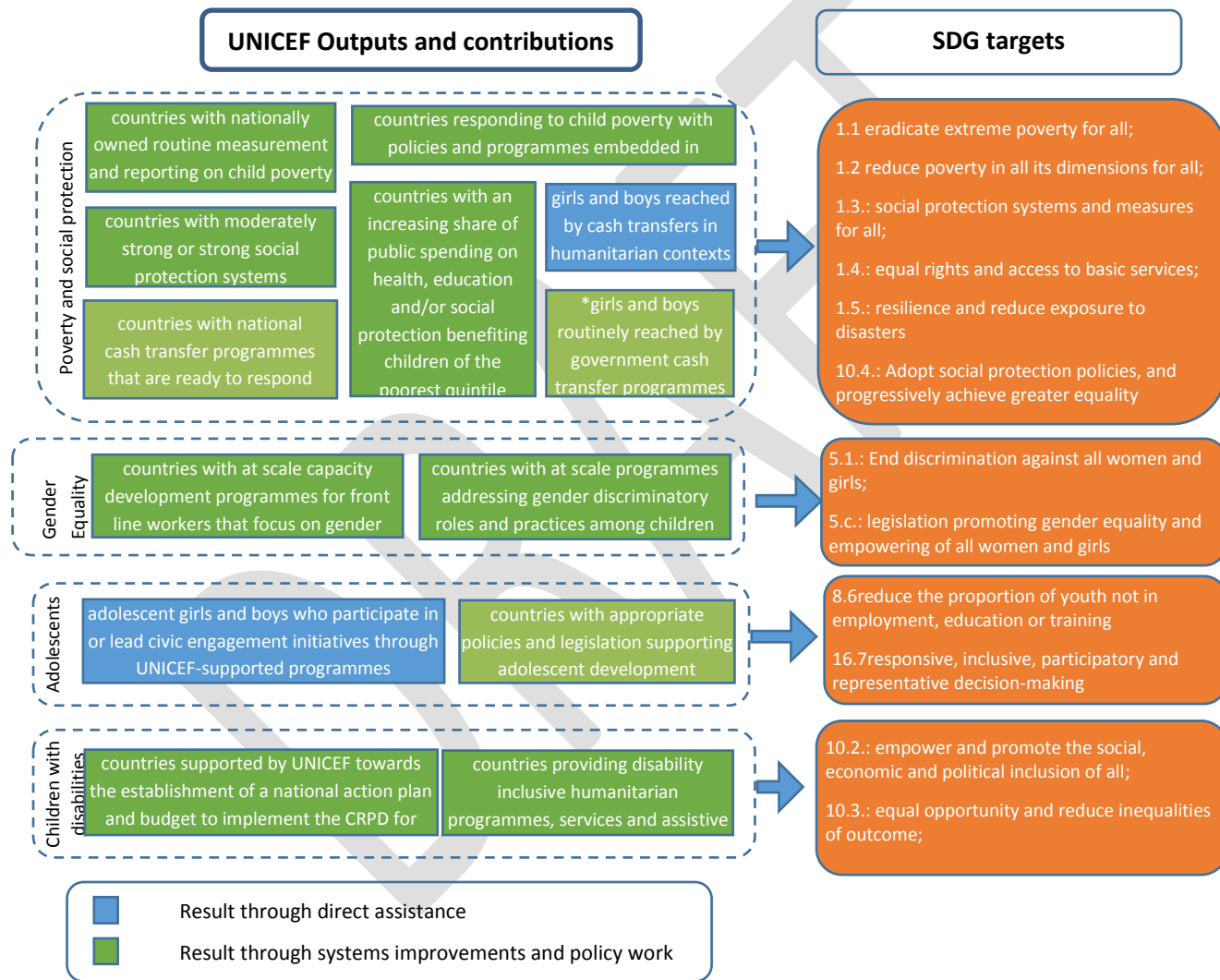
# Outcome 5



## Link to SDGs and CRC

The Strategic Plan is grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides the foundation for everything UNICEF does. It is also guided by other international human rights treaties and instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Outcome 5 aims to address the key dimensions of inequity that prevent children from realizing their rights. It supports the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere); 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls); and 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries); and supports articles 2, 4, 23, 26, 27 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The following diagram indicates the UNICEF contributions to the relevant SDG targets.



## Context

### Leaving No Child Behind

A fundamental principle of the human rights approach is that every child should have an equitable chance in life. Making sure that every child has an equitable chance in life is also the best way to ensure that no child is left behind and that in our ongoing efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda, we reach those children that are furthest behind first. Much of the deprivation experienced by the most disadvantaged children is as a result of their being girls or young women, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, or children from certain ethnic or linguistic groups – or of belonging to more than one of these groups, further exacerbating disadvantage. Regardless into which country or society or family a child is born, systems and environments at national and community level should allow all children to have an education, be healthy and well nourished, grow up free from violence stigma and discrimination, and enjoy the benefit of available public services like anyone else. Equity does not mean that every child receives the same share of national or government resources – it means that those with greater needs may need extra help to be heard and supported so that the outcome for both becomes more fair and balanced. As children may get different support from their families, the systems should make up for the deficits and step in where the family is unable to do so. Ensuring equitable life chances also means providing support for parenting education and strengthening and systematizing community platforms and mechanisms to support engagement and inclusion.

While a desirable principle and outcome, equity is difficult to realize. While 1 billion people have emerged from extreme poverty since 1990, children now account for over half of the 767 million people who remain trapped in its vicious cycle. Put another way, children are twice as likely as adults to be living on under \$1.90 a day. Furthermore, poverty is different for children than for adults. Poverty in childhood, both multidimensional and monetary poverty, can lead to devastating deficits that cannot be overcome later. Because of this, children growing up in poverty often remain poor as adults and child poverty is transmitted across generations. Countries can only break the intergenerational cycle of poverty if they prioritize attention to children living in poverty. Reform of health, education, labour, social protection and other systems is necessary, so that each child has a fair and equal chance to succeed, to receive treatment, to learn and develop – regardless its family or community background. If the ripple effects of living in an income-poor family are offset, and the different elements of multi-dimensional child poverty are mitigated, the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next can be avoided.

While poverty as a whole should decrease, UNICEF is concerned about the number of children who live in income-poor families and who are multi-dimensionally deprived, whether they receive social transfers, and whether health, education and social welfare services ensure equal chances to develop as anyone else. At the heart of this change is making sure that national financing for the policies and programmes to address child poverty is prioritized, adequate, effective and efficient. Adolescents as a group also face many disadvantages. Adolescents have made fewer gains in wellbeing over the past 20 years than 1-4 year olds, and are almost twice as likely to be out of school as primary school aged children. Adolescents have been overlooked in most policies and budget allocations and their views are often not listened to or considered. Disadvantage is also caused by willful or de-facto discrimination – by sex, language, disability status or many other drivers of inequity. In many countries, inequities are further exacerbated by inadequate, inefficient and unfair distribution of public funds, resulting in a failure to reach the most disadvantaged.

Children with disabilities are one of the most excluded and invisible groups in society. It is estimated that there are at least 93 million children with disabilities in the world, but the actual numbers could be much higher. They are likely to be among the poorest members of society. They are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard. Their disabilities place them at a higher risk of physical

and sexual abuse, and often exclude them from receiving proper nutrition or humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

Despite progress since the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995, a range of challenges to gender equality, and especially girls' empowerment, remain. These include girls' unequal access to basic health and education services; social norms and practices such as son preference and child marriage that limit and devalue girls and their contributions and set them on a path of a lifetime of deprivations; and girls' disproportionate burden of work and frequent experience of violence both in and outside the home. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is central to the UNICEF mandate and the organizational focus on equity. Important progress has been achieved in promoting gender equality worldwide, including reductions in maternal mortality, increased gender parity in primary schooling and a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage. Yet much remains to be done. Rates of mortality and morbidity among women and girls in the least developed countries are still high. In many countries, girls continue to be less valued than boys and have fewer opportunities to survive and thrive. Around one quarter of young women were married before the age of 18, and one fifth become mothers before that age.

### Humanitarian response, risk, and sustainable development

In fragile, conflict-affected and disaster-prone contexts, the risk and impact of child poverty is even greater and the specific needs of women and girls are often overlooked, and violations against them – including sexual violence – are commonplace. Adolescent boys, meanwhile, are exposed to specific risks; for example, they are more likely to be recruited into armed groups, or to face detention. Adolescent girls and boys in humanitarian settings face specific risks that are often overlooked, including increased pressures forcing child marriage or child labor to help their families, lacking safe spaces in which to play or interact with others, and exposed to high levels of stress and violence even more where they are unable to go to school, all at a critical time of neurological development which predisposes them to depression and long-term mental health issues.

There is increasing global recognition of the importance of social protection in mitigating and responding to crises. Social protection interventions are intended to build resilience. When social protection systems are able to respond and expand quickly in response to a crisis, providing additional or new support to those who are vulnerable, they can ensure more sustainable, and often government-owned – responses to humanitarian situations. The recent international consensus to make greater use of cash transfers as part of humanitarian response underscores the importance of social protection, the expansion of cash transfers, use of existing systems, and strengthening of social protection to support a more effective, rights based and sustainable response to crises. The Grand Bargain also underscored the centrality of community participation and ensuring provisions engaging affected populations, including adolescents in planning, implementation, monitoring and response regarding humanitarian action.

### Lessons Learned 2014-17

The most important lessons that UNICEF and its partners have learned and that has a direct bearing on its work under outcome 5 is that starting with the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and practical. It is also outcome 5 that speaks most directly to the call for development actors like UNICEF, in working to realize the 2030 Agenda, to develop programmes that explicitly address the issue of leaving no girl or boy behind and prioritizing the needs and rights of those that are currently furthest behind with regard to development progress and rights.

Also very applicable to UNICEF's work under outcome 5 is the finding outlined in the Strategic Plan that the voices of children and their families are critical forces for promoting positive social norms and practices, fostering citizenship and strengthening accountability in governance, and that UNICEF should intensify support for initiatives that enable citizens, communities and civil society to share their engagement in and feedback on actions taken by Governments and partners in policy formulation and service provision more generally and particularly with regard to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This will need to include innovative means of ensuring inclusion of those whose voices are often not adequately heard such as girls, adolescents, the poorest children, and children with disabilities.

Reflecting UNICEF's growing work on social protection and its expertise in generating evidence on social protection and children, UNICEF's Office of Evaluation released a global synthesis of more than 40 UNICEF-supported evaluations of cash transfers, 'Cash Transfer as a Social Protection Intervention: Evidence from UNICEF evaluations 2010–2014', which was presented to the UNICEF Executive Board. The report highlighted proven impacts of cash transfer programmes on a wide set of sectoral outcomes – nutrition and food security, education, health, HIV risk and child protection, economic productivity, resilience and dignity – across a range of country settings and contexts (see the box on key findings from the report). The report also recommended that UNICEF promote the use of cash transfers to enhance results across all Strategic Plan outcome areas and to strengthen programming and evaluation of cash transfers in combination with other social protection programmes and complementary services. This underscores the importance of work to strengthen social protection systems, and the need to expand work in more closely linking with social services.

National governments rather than development partners are by far the most important funders of key services for children, even in the poorest countries. The extent to which their public financial management systems are equitable, efficient and effective directly impacts the access of the most vulnerable children to quality social services, and is a key factor in whether children experience multi-dimensional poverty. The need for close attention to the use of public resources for children is reflected in the commitments made at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in 2015, as well as the Committee on the Rights of the Children General Comment No. 19 on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights (2016). UNICEF has successfully demonstrated capacities to generate evidence to support greater and improved investments in children, empowered citizens and children to take part in the decision-making processes on public spending, and contributed to more equitable fiscal policies through collaboration with key partners like the World Bank, UNDP and others. As a result UNICEF has reserved a seat at the table in discussions with key financial actors, and is much better placed today to play an active role in ensuring public spending enables the realization of children's rights.

UNICEF has also continued to learn some valuable lessons in its work on gender equality, including through the implementation of its Gender Action Plan and these will be outlined in detail in the new UNICEF Gender Action Plan (2).

## Theory of Change

### Overview

Based on its assessment of the challenges facing many of the most vulnerable children and learning lessons from the current Strategic Plan period, and strongly anchored in a rights based approach to

programming, the UNICEF theory of change is based on five outputs contributing to the outcome of “*Girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life.*” Those outputs are as follows:

- Increased numbers of girls and boys supported to overcome gender discriminatory roles, expectations and practices
- Adolescent girls and boys influence behaviours, norms and decisions affecting their lives and communities
- Multi-dimensional poverty reduced for girls and boys
- Most disadvantaged girls and boys receive social protection support
- Girls and boys with disabilities reached by accessible and inclusive programmes and services to participate fully in society

UNICEF’s experience in working on equal opportunities for children has shown that for achieving greater equality and social protection, countries need to strengthen their policies, legislation and systems and actively focus on identifying the most vulnerable girls and boys to include them in the benefits of development. Under outcome 5, UNICEF contributions are primarily based on this approach.

Addressing child poverty is at the heart of UNICEF’s approach towards a world where all girls and boys are provided with an equitable chance in life. UNICEF together with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty has developed a model based on moving through five stages of work on child poverty. The first stage, for countries with no current focus on child poverty, is to build national support and develop a national pathway towards ending child poverty; a crucial second step is routine national measurement of multidimensional and monetary child poverty; this measurement forms the basis of the third step, child poverty analysis, national advocacy and policy engagement; this engagement leads to explicit policy and programmes changes to reduce child poverty; with the final step being an integrated national plan (either stand alone or as part of national development plans) to achieve the SDGs on child poverty. UNICEF’s work on effective and efficient public finance for children is essential in making sure these national policies and plans to address child poverty are adequately funded and sustainable, meaningfully implemented and achieve results – and as such UNICEF’s work on multidimensional poverty and public finance needs to be fully integrated.

Social protection systems are one of the key interventions to reduce child poverty and deprivation. The evidence clearly demonstrates the multiple positive impacts of social protection on the lives of children and their families. However, more children need to be reached by social protection systems in order to maximize this potential at scale. National cash transfer programmes exist in many countries, though their reach is often limited. Similarly, social welfare services vary hugely by region. In some countries, social welfare systems are usually well developed, though still overstretched. Across parts of Africa and Asia ratios can be as low as one government social worker for tens of thousands of people, and data on social work or social outreach services is very limited. Critically, these programmes and services are often not coordinated to effectively address children’s multiple needs. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF advocates for and is increasingly involved in support to vulnerable children – including through cash assistance, with a vision to strengthen the national social protection system in the long-run.

To promote gender equality, UNICEF will address discriminatory policies as well as the socialization processes that define gender roles and practices, and will support girls and boys to transform social narratives and promote social and behaviour change. Initiatives will include parenting education, community and adolescent engagement, and life skills, gender-responsive training for frontline workers, capacity development of a wide range of inter-personal, media and digital based communication for



development platforms and support for legal and policy change. Building on the Gender Action Plan, 2014-2017, as well as system-wide efforts to promote gender equality (gender equality is one of the areas of collaborative advantage identified jointly with UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women), gender results are integrated into each of the five outcomes of the Strategic Plan. These results include quality maternal care; menstrual hygiene management; women's and girls' nutrition; equitable learning and skills for girls and boys; reducing child marriage; and transforming gender discriminatory roles and practices. In addition to gender-equitable outcomes, there is a strong emphasis on addressing some of the barriers to the empowerment of adolescent girls. The Gender Action Plan, 2018-2021 will capture the full scope of actions.

UNICEF will also continue supporting countries to address the many barriers that impede results for children with disabilities, with the aim of providing inclusive services at scale. It will do so firstly by investing in training packages for staff and critical local stakeholders. By training the workforce (community health workers, education managers and teachers, community leaders, social workers and others) and strengthening local partnerships, it is expected that the quality, effectiveness and scale of inclusive programme and service delivery in development and humanitarian contexts will increase. To further accelerate disability inclusive programming and practices, in collaboration with critical partners at country level, UNICEF will invest in early identification of and interventions for children with disabilities; inclusive education; de-institutionalisation and social protection. UNICEF will continue expanding innovation for universal design, accessibility and supporting governments on the provisioning of assistive technology, in a selected number of countries. Furthermore, UNICEF will continue to invest in the generation and use of data on children with disabilities. Also, to "walk the talk" and keep coherence between programmes and practices, UNICEF will continue working towards becoming a fully disability inclusive organization, and enhanced policies and practices on: inclusive employment and work environment for persons with disabilities; support to staff with disabilities and with dependents with disabilities; accessibility of UNICEF premises; accessible ICT and assistive devices; accessible and inclusive communications.

Adolescence is a crucial developmental period that profoundly influences the life trajectories of girls and boys in dramatically different ways. Too often the specific needs of adolescents are not prioritized, yet they have the potential to become powerful agents of positive change. Support for adolescent girls, in particular, has a multiplier effect for intergenerational outcomes. To promote the empowerment of adolescent girls and boys, UNICEF will support national policies, budgets and service delivery systems as well as social, cultural and citizenship related platforms and interventions that are responsive to their needs. Adolescent-focused results have been integrated across all five outcomes of the Strategic Plan including adolescent-responsive health, nutrition and WASH; increased efforts to ensure adolescents complete secondary school and build their skills for learning, personal empowerment, citizenship and employability; and protecting adolescents from violence and harmful practices. UNICEF will also work directly with adolescents, to increase their engagement and participation in affairs that concern them or their communities and impact on their wellbeing. Such engagement requires access to appropriate information, skills and platforms that are tailored to their age. Adolescents and young people are frequently early adopters of new technologies and energized to contest entrenched social norms, discrimination and environmental concerns and with the right skills-building and support they can act as powerful change agents. UNICEF will promote the strengthening and scaling up of communication for development platforms, skills building and appropriate mechanisms for the systematic participation of adolescents in decisions and actions that impact their lives and those of their communities, and will support programmes that nurture them as informed social actors.

Across each of the five outputs UNICEF will address under outcome 5 there are six main cross-cutting approaches which are a reflection of the of the change strategies (the HOWs) in the Strategic Plan and represent their application under this outcome.

*Raising awareness:* Many issues under outcome 5 will be subject to awareness raising by UNICEF during the Strategic Plan. For example, 65 countries are currently not even measuring or discussing child poverty. Also although more than 170 countries having ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in most low income countries children with disabilities are invisible. Some countries have not considered disability as a child rights issue; society and government deal with their needs through charitable approaches, not through legal obligations. Likewise, many countries have not yet formally recognized that adolescents have specific rights and needs. Adolescents are assumed to be in schools and healthy and not in need of appropriate protection or services. UNICEF will also work to raise awareness of the positive human development and economic impacts of social protection, and raise awareness around the concept of multi-dimensional child poverty and the vision that all girls and boys, even if they live in income poor families and/or have a disability, can grow up healthy, well-fed, go to school and learn, and reach their full potential. Awareness raising will also be fostered amongst adolescents themselves, equipping them with information for substantive exchange and advocacy.

*Improving data, research, knowledge:* Once the concept of multi-dimensional child poverty is generally understood, producing national child poverty measures is the first step. Without knowing how many and which children are living in multi-dimensional and monetary poverty, governments cannot assess whether they make progress in reducing poverty, or what the effects of particular policies and programmes on child poverty have been. UNICEF assists countries in setting up systems to measure child poverty – which technically is not difficult, but requires some particular statistical expertise and choosing between different options. UNICEF supports analysis of coverage, implementation and impacts to ensure that social protection programmes work for children and families, and is a leader in generating social protection evidence. Furthermore, UNICEF provides budget related data and evidence for social services aimed at reducing multidimensional poverty (health, education, nutrition and others), as well as social protection systems and cash transfers. Through costing studies and investment cases, UNICEF supports the scaling up of social programmes in view of achieving integrated social protection systems.

Even where adolescent issues are recognized to exist, adults often tend to consider adolescent behaviour as a problem. Perceptions may hold that young people should ‘do as the elders say’ in order to avoid problems; the questioning nature of adolescents is considered problematic instead of an opportunity for innovation and change for the better. Interpersonal violence, early marriage or child bearing, school drop-out or risky behaviours are noticed but not analysed as consequences of unmet needs. UNICEF facilitates dialogue with governments and public discourse on social norms and attitudes towards adolescents and highlights the extent of gaps in adolescent health, learning, protection and participation. Advocacy and support to policy formulation may include analysis of long-term costs of inaction particularly in relation to youth unemployment, non-communicable diseases, teenage pregnancy rates and poor nutrition and help set priorities in national plans.

The lack of reliable data on children with disabilities is a common but critical problem that prevents designing appropriate services and inclusion measures. UNICEF supports governments in collecting and consolidating data on children with disabilities including through surveys like MICS, and administrative data like Education Management Information System (EMIS). Situation analyses prepared for new country

programmes will consider marginalization, including disability across all sectors. Social and cultural norms related to specific marginalized groups including those with disability will be studied, to provide the basis for combatting stigma, discrimination and low expectations towards children from these groups.

Innovative research and high quality data are the foundation for attaining gender results identified in the SP and the SDGs. A number of proposed SP output indicators have identified sex-disaggregated coverage data. It is important to ensure that data collection and monitoring systems are adequately revised and strengthened to ensure that such sex-disaggregated data is routinely collected to track the gender responsiveness of every SP result. On the data side, while SP outcome and impact indicators aligned to the SDGs are often sex-disaggregated, in reality official national data systems are still lagging in sex-disaggregated data collection. It is equally important for documented evidence and research that demonstrates the win-win impact of gender responsive programming on women and girls, and overall programmatic impact (across sectors). Only with explicit focus on generating girl-focused evidence, research and data, and using these data to inform key policy and program decisions, can we effectively track progress towards our commitments to girls and gender equality. UNICEF, as part of the IAEG-SDG, is working towards making tangible improvements in gender statistics and how to use them to guide our actions.

Across all dimensions of exclusion, UNICEF will also be pushing a collaborative approach with partners to address gaps in disaggregated data collection on the situation of children and women in fragile and humanitarian situations -- This includes addressing data gaps in the overall outcomes for girls and boys, with different ages and abilities, in fragile and humanitarian situations. This requires coordinated efforts to strengthen a critical humanitarian-development data continuum, changing approaches to data collection at outcome level across different contexts, to feed into advocacy and programme direction. This will necessarily connect to data system strengthening and working towards agreements with key stakeholders and partners on standards and guidance for applying the right mix of “good enough” methods to fill critical data gaps not covered by MIS and allowing credible aggregation/comparison.

*Addressing public perceptions and creating a sense of urgency:* Where programme countries have begun to produce child poverty data, they must be made widely available and shared. Child poverty has been shown to resonate with both the public and decision makers as a priority issue, so far in about half of all UNICEF programme countries. UNICEF’s ability to communicate the results of child poverty measurements in terms that can be easily understood helps to initiate a public discourse that can push child poverty up the national political agendas, and raise awareness in specific and influential audience groups. UNICEF communication and reach help to instill a sense of urgency about the poverty and deprivations children face; can address prevailing myths that social protection programmes can be misused and breed dependency, and are simply a cost rather than an investment in current and future poverty reduction and growth. UNICEF thus contributes by putting child poverty on the map and addresses misperceptions that inadvertently discriminate against the poor and excluded groups.

UNICEF’s recognized capacity in communication for development is crucial to generate societal support for the inclusion of and equal opportunities for marginalized children including those with disabilities, and fight stigma, by capacitating multiple communication platforms and supporting existing lobbies of parents, experts, human rights advocates, civil society and children and adolescents themselves. UNICEF

will study the cost and impact of exclusion, highlight equity gaps, create alliances and convene civil society and media to create public demand for government to accelerate progress.

*Achieving consensus and policy directions:* Where child poverty is publicly debated, UNICEF can suggest from a menu of policy options, based on its global reach and experience. For example, strong political commitment to social protection is foundational to developing a nationally-owned system. UNICEF can provide international evidence that cash transfers or other social protection measures can make a difference. By highlighting the social and economic benefits or modelling cost effective services, UNICEF helps to convince key financial decision makers to invest in vulnerable children, resulting in overall higher budget priority.

Among countries that have recognized the need to invest in adolescent wellbeing, some may already have adolescent-responsive policies or programmes, though not necessarily of the type that fosters broad engagement of young people in issues that concern them. UNICEF helps to review such policies across sectors and advocate for appropriate legislation and budget allocations that support adolescent health and wellbeing, protection, participation and learning and transition to employment. UNICEF contributes by bringing together those with opposing views, and shares experiences from countries that successfully managed to ensure better outcomes for adolescents. While advocating everywhere for the rights of girls and boys with disabilities, where government has resolved to take action on those rights and requests UNICEF support, UNICEF will help to maintain a public dialogue on inclusion. UNICEF is recognized for being able to facilitate discussions even among those holding different views, to achieve consensus.

*Designing better policies and budgets:* UNICEF offices help government to weigh the options, provide technical analysis and facilitate exchange among specialists, partners and the public to identify the most acceptable policy measures. Relevant policy or programme changes to address aspects child poverty have already been adopted by 35 countries. While this signifies considerable progress, only few countries have so far, with UNICEF's help, managed to either fully consider children in their national poverty action plan, or prepared a child-specific national action plan. Social protection systems need to adjust to changing circumstance and new priorities, and UNICEF continues to technically assist countries to develop and update child-sensitive national policies, refine design and implementation to cover the most vulnerable children and to evaluate implementation.

Even where government committed to improving outcomes for adolescents, dedicated investments compete with other priorities. Mobilizing young people through civil society, and creating positive examples, may lead to greater prioritization of government budgets for the active engagement of young people. The opportunities for wider engagement are also enhanced by the rapid expansion of social media and digital environments which allow more responsive networks to be built quickly and cheaply and with diminished needs for adult support.

While overall social spending has increased in many countries, its efficiency or effectiveness is often compromised by poor expenditure management, lack of results-based budgeting, low budget transparency and a lack of consideration for how the distribution of resources affects the disadvantaged populations. UNICEF is strengthening its own capacity for improving public finance management for children, which is likely to have effects not only on social protection budgets but also other social sectors, or inclusion measures.

*Monitoring Implementation of Policy Measures and Overcoming Bottlenecks:* As part of global interagency task force on financing for development, UNICEF monitors child-related financing commitments. Country offices will also work with sector Ministries to cost and budget planned policy measures. Where

appropriate youth policies and programmes are in place, implementation may be slow as traditional practices and perceptions have to be overcome. UNICEF has long experience in communication for development and maintains good networks with civil society, to test new ideas and give platforms to young people to learn from each other, voice their concerns, build positive relationships and become agents of change – including for overcoming discrimination, reducing violence and contributing to peace.

In helping to reform national health, education and social protection systems to become more inclusive, UNICEF will apply a twin-track strategy of mainstreaming and targeting interventions. Accessibility, information and communication, and the provision of assistive devices will combine to empower marginalized children including those with disabilities as decision-makers over their own fate, both in development and humanitarian contexts. Often, capacity building measures are necessary for policy implementation, especially among local service providers and municipalities. Systems will have to be developed to monitor the reach and assure the quality of policy measures, related to social protection and measures for adolescents and children including those with disabilities.

UNICEF is on the ground and working across development, fragile and humanitarian contexts, and is able to bridge the corresponding requirements on social protection systems. In particular, UNICEF can advise governments on effective mechanisms in humanitarian contexts that can be integrated into national social protection systems, and to assist government in fragile situations to adjust or expand their social protection programmes to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of assistance to people affected by humanitarian crises. This requires governments to make tangible commitments to move chronic humanitarian caseloads of affected populations into social protection programs.

The cross-cutting strategies, a reflection of the change strategies in the Strategic Plan, will continue to increase UNICEF's effectiveness as it works to promote the rights of all children in programming, advocacy and operations. It is these strategies under outcome 5 that will allow UNICEF to effectively deliver the related outputs and contribute to ensuring that no girl or boy is left behind and that we work with partners to reach the furthest behind first by starting with the most deprived, because a focus on equity accelerates progress towards achieving the rights of all children.

Underpinning these programming strategies and the organization's drive for ever greater effectiveness, UNICEF will also continue to ensure that its programmes are efficiently delivered and cost effective through its four main enablers of organizational performance: (a) internal governance, as UNICEF continues its transformation into a more transparent and accountable organization; (b) management, focused on results, efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration; (c) people, including a workforce that is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile across different contexts and sectors; and (d) knowledge and information systems that contribute to programmatic results or organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

### Assumptions, risks and risk management measures

In a changing world, an effective risk management framework that identifies and mitigates risk, while being firmly oriented towards enabling the organization to deliver, is critical. UNICEF has identified several risks that have the potential to limit the full roll out of the Strategic Plan. These include: siloed operations and funding arrangements; insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda; unpredictable humanitarian crises and their lasting effects on children; inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies; a varying focus on results for children among United Nations partners working together; inadequate establishment of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together; rapidly evolving technological requirements; and challenges related to results-based budgeting in a decentralized organization. The change strategies and enablers

discussed above are explicitly designed to help to mitigate these risks, in particular through their emphasis on flexibility and agility – in systems, human resources, funding and management arrangements – and on partnerships and new technologies.

In addition to these broader risks and assumptions, there are others that are more directly relevant to UNICEF’s work under outcome 5 and the application of its associated theory of change. These are presented in the table below along with the related UNICEF measure.

DRAFT

Assumption/Risk	UNICEF measures
It is assumed that UNICEF maintains and increases funding levels for equity, gender equality and social protection measures. The related risk is that there will be inadequate resources for growth in this area of focus.	UNICEF’s mandate and focus is unique, and perhaps not many agencies are as ready, experienced or determined to support governments in making social protection work for children and families. With providing support to social protection in over 100 countries, UNICEF may be the organization with the greatest geographic and thematic breadth of experience in social protection, and UNICEF will aim to demonstrate this comparative advantage and share success stories.
It is assumed that programme countries remain determined to address and achieve SDG targets related to equity, gender equality and social protection. The related risk is that without this commitment UNICEF will struggle for partnerships and operating in a challenging programming environment.	UNICEF will emphasize and continue to demonstrate the importance of attention to equity in global discussions, among donor and programme countries.
It is assumed that programme countries are prioritizing results for children and equity principles. There is the risk that they are prioritizing other issues.	UNICEF and its alliances for children will continue to generate evidence that investments in children – including the most vulnerable - are providing the greatest returns
It is assumed that the international community consistently communicates in support of child related SDG targets or policy measures. There is a risk that issues such as adolescents or children with disabilities do not receive general donor support.	UNICEF will promote and participate sector and multi-donor approaches, including UN wide coherence, that gives due attention - both in terms of financing and policy advocacy – to critical children’s issues, also based on the equity principle back by international conventions.
It is assumed that countries are interested in promoting participation of civil society, including the participation of adolescents. There is evidence that this has been the global trend, though there is the risk that some governments may not be ready to promote adolescent participation except in promoting official ideology.	UNICEF will assess the likelihood of such limitations, and only invest once government committed to real participation of adolescents - while continuing to advocate for the principles enshrined in the CRC
It is assumed that sufficient data is available or can be generated to appreciate the magnitude of the social protection, gender and inclusion issue and develop policy options. There is a risk that some governments may not be open to additional research.	UNICEF has a track record in helping countries to improve data systems and social protection monitoring and evaluation, including through large multiple indicator cluster surveys, and commission and assure the quality of independent research. UNICEF also support countries in their own research agenda and capacities. Increased investment in equity measurement through disaggregated data will also be of critical importance moving forward.
It is assumed that countries that resolve to address child related targets, will have the capacity to manage their reform	Because the organization emphasizes government leadership and ownership of its reforms, UNICEF is a sufficiently trusted and credible partner, whose expertise in supporting the management of policy processes is usually welcomed by host governments.

<p>processes. There is a risk that some countries might be overstretched in managing the full agenda.</p>	
<p>It is assumed that good examples and best practices are available for sharing with host governments. There is a risk that for some rather new engagements, this global experience is unavailable.</p>	<p>UNICEF is part of a global network that also extends to other multilaterals, development banks, to academia and civil society, and UNICEF will undertake to identify good examples or policy solution if they exist elsewhere and actively support South-South and horizontal cooperation. For new challenges and engagements, UNICEF will encourage and support the search for innovations, more efficient use of technology, and experimental or pilot activities under closely controlled and monitored settings</p>
<p>It is assumed that programme countries will make resources available for improved child sensitive social protection, reduction in multi-dimensional child poverty, gender equity, adolescent participation and the inclusion of children with disabilities; where resources are insufficient, it is assumed that countries will leverage part of the received ODA, grants or loans to use them for these purposes.</p>	<p>UNICEF is increasingly engaging in helping countries to improve the management of their public finances, to increase efficiency and effectiveness of their expenditures, and to improve their budget processes. UNICEF also works with ministries to prepare budget submissions that are realistic and show returns. UNICEF continues to work with international parts to leverage part of their resources for a focus on children.</p>
<p>It is assumed that at least some significant public support exists for the results and SDG targets related to equity, poverty reduction and social protection. There is a risk that rising nationalism and populist movements will oppose aspects of the equity agenda and social protection measures for certain minorities.</p>	<p>UNICEF will continue to support civil society movements and media reporting that supports the principles and articles of international treaties. UNICEF has recognized experience in communication for development, and credible media presence both globally and in programme countries. UNICEF will not be shy in publicly defending the UN's overall Human Rights approach, and the equal rights also of the poor, minorities, and marginalized or vulnerable children.</p>
<p>It is assumed that humanitarian access can be achieved for all elements under this goal area. There is a risk that access is being denied.</p>	<p>UNICEF and its closest partners have a good track record in negotiating access. UNICEF is able to rapidly respond and use opportunities quickly as they arise.</p> <p>UNICEF support governments to develop social protection systems that extend social assistance also to people in disaster response or humanitarian crisis situations. Likewise, in all humanitarian situations UNICEF designs its response so as to allow a gradual integration into existing or developing social protection systems and poverty programmes.</p> <p>Especially where warring parties are immune to international pressure, access might remain unachievable.</p>
<p>It is assumed that other UN partners coordinating and collaborating with UNICEF will deliver their contributions on areas of collaboration. The risk is that if other partners do not deliver then UNICEF's collaborative work</p>	<p>UNICEF will continue to work through the new UNDAF process and other interagency processes and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency or working closely together.</p>



with those entities may not be as effective or sustainable as planned.

DRAFT

## Key Partnerships

UNICEF's work on advancing equity requires close internal collaboration across programme areas covered in the Strategic Plan as well as key external partnerships. Internal partnerships will continue to be strengthened to address multi-dimensional poverty and improve the coverage and impact of social protection. A key strategy to reduce multi-dimensional child poverty is to promote the more equitable – as well as more efficient and effective – use of public resources. Collaboration is thus needed with programmes working on health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation and child protection to support improved planning and budgeting and system-strengthening. Likewise, effective, child-sensitive social protection requires systems which ensure that marginalized children can fully access and benefit from social services. Stronger social protection systems can only be built if these links are made, an approach which is increasingly at the heart of UNICEF's work.

The World Bank remains a key external partner for UNICEF's work both on child poverty and social protection. This includes collaboration on measurement and analysis as well as joint work for implementation approaches, on both social protection and public finance. The OECD is another key partner on ensuring our work on child poverty and well-being is globally universal by reaching and influencing high and upper-middle income countries. UNICEF will further strengthen partnerships with IFIs and multilateral organizations (EU, OECD and others) to tackle global public finance management challenges that impede greater investments in child poverty and promote inequity. Regionally, UNICEF's partnership with development banks and regional political entities such as the EU, CARICOM and others will be important to ensure funding for anti-poverty initiatives remains high on the regional development agendas. At the country and subnational levels, UNICEF'S partnerships with decision-makers and influencers at all levels of government and civil society would need to continue and be further strengthened to increase and improve public resources for children.

Social protection is an area in which many UN partners, bilateral and NGO partners as well as the World Bank are actively engaged. UNICEF often plays a leading role in coordination of partners at global, and particularly at country level. UNICEF is a member of the social protection inter-agency coordination board on which all such partners are represented. UNICEF also engages in UN support efforts on the Social Protection Floor. On social protection in humanitarian and fragile contexts, UNICEF is working with the European Commission, World Bank, UNHCR, FAO, WFP, GIZ, DFID and others to bring together key humanitarian and development actors in order to better link actions in preparedness and response to strengthening longer term systems, and vice versa.

Many voices are needed to promote greater attention to child poverty in the wake of its inclusion on the SDGs. With this in mind UNICEF co-founded the End Child Poverty Coalition, bringing together many partners, including Save the Children, UNDP, World Bank and others. UN organizations such as UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP and UNDESA, international financial institutions and other donors are key to delivering comprehensive programmes for and with adolescents. While each organization has its specific areas of expertise in relation to adolescents, having a coordinated approach to adolescent programming at country, regional and global level contributes is essential to strengthened advocacy efforts with governments. Non-governmental organizations, civil society, sports, youth groups, religious groups and parliamentarians are key influencers that contribute to raising the demand on adolescents' rights, creating an enabling environment for adolescent development and demonstrating creative and innovative approaches for outreach and scaling up. Youth also constitute a strategic partner to UNICEF in delivering results for children including adolescents. Not only have youth just graduated from adolescence and have an understanding of what it is to be an adolescent, youth are perceived as role models by adolescents and hence are key in influencing adolescents' attitudes and behaviours. Engagement with the private sector

in the area of adolescents is strategic for both fundraising and non-fundraising objectives. The private sector is increasingly interested in investing in adolescents to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed by the labour market as well as invest in them as being future consumers. On the other hand, UNICEF plays a key role as an advocate for the protection of adolescents' rights with the private sector including with the food, beverages and tobacco industry.

UNICEF's key partners on gender equality will continue to be its sister agencies, including UNDP, UNFPOA and UN Women with whom it has worked during the Strategic Planning process on identifying common indicators and building on gender equality as an area of collaborative advantage for the whole system. Moving forward, it is anticipated that in addition to harnessing 'collaborative advantage' as outlined in the common chapter of the Strategic Plan, UNICEF will continue to partner at country level in joint programmes and joint UNDEF results groups on gender with its sister agencies and will continue to take forward the relevant findings of the 2013 joint evaluation on joint gender programmes.

DRAFT