



**UNICEF**  
**Turkmenistan**  
**Annual Report 2017**  
**Partnerships for Children**

**unicef**  | **for every child**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UNICEF Turkmenistan expresses its gratitude to partners and donors whose contributions supported the office's efforts in delivering on results for children on young child survival and wellbeing, quality and inclusive education and early learning, reducing social inequities, climate change, data availability and quality and protecting child rights. The long-standing and trust-based partnerships helped advance the realization of the rights of children in the country.

In particular, UNICEF Turkmenistan would like to thank the Government of Turkmenistan, Parliament of Turkmenistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Economy and Finance, State Statistics

Committee, National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, universities, mass media, local government authorities, civil society organizations, National Red Crescent Society, Union of Entrepreneurs, United Nations Agencies, United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), Embassy of Israel, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund in Georgia (ASB) and Canada Fund for Local Initiative.





## FOREWORD



As we enter into the second year of our Country Programme (2016–2020), I am pleased to share our accomplishments, challenges and resolve to do effectively better towards our efforts to promote partnerships for children to achieve results for every child. Whoever she is. Wherever he lives. Whatever the circumstances. No matter the obstacles. Leaving No One Behind, thus, continues to be our motto each year, because every child counts.

In year 2017 we witnessed a number of progressive milestones. Turkmenistan was elected to the Executive Board of UNICEF and ECOSOC that presented crucial opportunities for furthering rights of children in Turkmenistan. The year also saw Turkmenistan and the UN jointly celebrating the 25th year of Turkmenistan's membership in the UN. In October 2017, the Council of Elders adopted the new Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on Socio-Economic Development of the Country for 2018–2024, which outlines the national development priorities for the next seven years, including increased investments for the development of infrastructure, education and healthcare. The establishment of the Office of Ombudsperson was yet another landmark that enables monitoring of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the country.

Our engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Training and Methodology Centre provides an opportunity to raise awareness on achieving SDGs for Children. With close co-operation with other UN agencies, our support towards implementation and measurement systems on SDGs and MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) mission helped retain the focus on delivering SDGs for Children.

Together with effective and concerted efforts of our partners, we have been successful in rolling out a number of interesting and impactful initiatives in 2017. Most notably, the dissemination of the MICS 2016 results was a joint effort with the State Statistics Committee. The launch of the State of the World's Children Report reiterated the need to provide all children with affordable access to high quality online connectivity together with digital safeguards.

Turkmenistan youth also expressed their vision for young people by participating in the World Children's Day when they "took over" the role of UNICEF Representative. The assessment of the General Programme of the Government on the development of the juvenile justice system, the evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme was yet another testimony to our long credible partnership with the Government. The same year, the Government ratified the Early New Born Action Plan. Launch of the four-year communication campaign on early childhood development (ECD) and development of the new ECD Strategy, Climate landscape analysis for Children and work towards introducing curriculum on climate change demonstrates our continuous efforts and incremental progress that we would like to see in the lives of children.

The year also threw up challenges that reaffirmed the continued need to strive for data for children through our signature survey MICS, and ground work on baseline assessment for measuring SDGs for children, addressing child health and survival, work on promoting social services cadre, building partnerships with civil society organizations to name a few.

On behalf of my team at UNICEF, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Turkmenistan, partner ministries, public organizations, academia, media and development agencies for their fruitful collaboration moving forward delivering on results for children in the country and helping the country to deliver on the transformative and integrative 2030 Agenda.

**Shaheen Nilofer**  
**UNICEF Representative, Turkmenistan.**

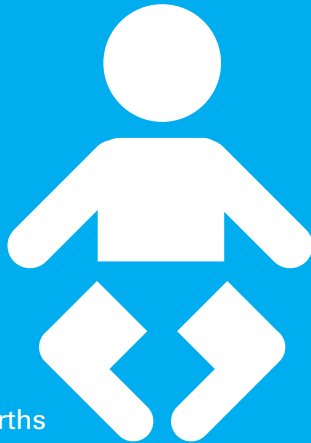
# Turkmenistan at a glance

44



Infant mortality rate

per 1,000 live births



23 +

Neonatal mortality

rate per 1,000 live births



Under-five mortality rate

per 1,000 live births

51

12% Children at low height for age (stunting)



Exclusive breastfeeding

59%



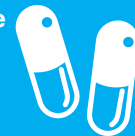
95%



Full immunization coverage

Contraceptive prevalence rate

50%



96% Antenatal care coverage

(at least four visits)



81% Mother's support for early learning



15% Father's support for early learning

46% Children in Grade 1 of primary school who attended pre-school during the previous school year (school readiness)

Literacy rate among young women  
100%



83% Use of improved drinking water sources

6%

Young women (15-19) currently married

Number of children in residential care

4,389

17,300

Number of children receiving a disability allowance



25% Comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention



4%

Public education expenditure as a percentage of GDP

## INTRODUCTION



Turkmenistan is an upper middle-income country located in Central Asia that shares borders with Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the Caspian Sea. Home to more than 5 million people, the nation-state is relatively young—Turkmenistan declared its independence in 1991 and became a United Nations Member State in 1992.

For more than a decade, Turkmenistan has experienced strong economic growth, which has created fiscal space for social development, including efforts to improve the health and well-being of children. The Government of Turkmenistan has used this space as an opportunity—to enact socioeconomic reform, expand the provision of goods and services and improve living standards nationwide.

For the past 25 years, UNICEF has been a strategic and trusted partner of the Government of Turkmenistan, working closely to support child rights and promote equity. Complementing national development priorities, such as the Social and Economic Development Programme and other national policies, UNICEF has provided technical assistance to improve legislation and policies; capacity building of institutions and public agencies; and support for families to better care for their children.

Under the Turkmenistan-UNICEF Country Programme for the period 2016–2020, UNICEF supports the Government of Turkmenistan to accelerate the universal realization of child rights by aligning legal frameworks, policies and practices for children with international standards. Central to this effort will be to protect the rights of young children and children with disabilities to survive and develop, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Reliable data make effective public policy. UNICEF is the Government's strategic partner in generating data on the situation of children and women, such as MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey), CRING (Country Reporting on Indicators for the Goals) and TransMONEE (Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity).



## KEY PROGRAMME APPROACHES

The programme of cooperation encompasses four interconnected programme areas:

- Young child survival and wellbeing
- Quality and inclusive early learning
- Reducing social inequities
- Partnership for child rights

## KEY STRATEGIES

- Mainstream the best interests of the child into national policies and practices
- Facilitate a shift in social norms and a change in attitudes, values and behaviours affecting the lives of children
- Develop sector strategies and inputs to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on Eliminating All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Universal Periodic Review and other human

rights treaty obligations

- Support the translation of policies into concrete actions through the introduction of tailored, replicable, inclusive and Government-funded social services and programmes, particularly for vulnerable children and families
- Share best practices on effective ways to close equity gaps and achieve gender equality
- Build partnerships with social sectors, Parliament, civil society, development partners, academia, media and private sector around the children's equity agenda
- Provide data and evidence generation support to inform evidence based programming
- Launch awareness raising campaigns on child rights and wellbeing issues







## KEY PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

- Support to the implementation of Every Newborn Action Plan to improve newborn survival, health and preventing still-births by 2030
- Strengthening capacities for child health, nutrition and development
- Support in introducing the Guide for Monitoring Child Development, to enable multi-disciplinary approach to early identification of developmental delays
- Support in implementation of the 2016 Law on Breastfeeding and Young Child Policy
- Support in further development and consolidation of the Health Management Information System to inform SDG monitoring

Realization of the State Health Programme “Saglyk” and the National Strategy and Action Plan on Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health in Turkmenistan for 2015-2019 gained momentum in 2017. UNICEF supported the Government in improving the quality of new-born care, early childhood development and early interventions services.







The Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MOHMI) started using perinatal (immediately before or after birth) mortality audit as a key strategy for reducing preventable deaths among mothers and babies. This, in turn, can help health system managers understand the causes and contributing factors of death and take needful actions to improve quality of care. Most of the deaths in

young children are preventable, if the quality gaps in delivering life-saving interventions to young children and their mothers are addressed. Later that year, the Government, with UNICEF’s support, joined efforts with an international community and adapted the global “Every Newborn Action Plan” (ENAP) at the regional and country levels.

In young child feeding, the country has made significant progress in implementing the Law on Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding. The MOHMI endorsed a regulatory document and action plan for 2017-2021 on young child feeding, which addresses one of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The document is in line with the International Code on Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

UNICEF together with the Government conducted the external evaluation of the National Nutrition Programme for 2013 -2017. The evaluation helped define UNICEF’s role in supporting the country in implementing nutrition-related SDG targets and promote management based on results and policy development based on evidence. The report reviewed progress with UNICEF’s specific contributions to system level changes and reduction of barriers in effective nutrition actions. It also documented the important progress with exclusive breastfeeding (breastfeeding without any other food or liquids) rates among children under six months of age increasing from 11 per cent in 2006 to 59 per cent in 2015. UNICEF and WHO assisted in developing a new nutrition programme for 2018-2025.

## FINDINGS FROM TURKMENISTAN NUTRITION PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORT, 2017

	WHA indicator and target	Baseline 2006	Status 2015	Target for 2025	Required average annual rate of change at global level	Country progress towards WHA target
	Stunting: 40% reduction in the number of children under age 5 who are stunted	19% (2006)	11%	40%	3.9% average annual rate of reduction (AARR)	ON COURSE Stunting rate declines at AARR 5%.
	Anemia: 50% reduction of anemia in women of reproductive age	57 % (2011)	N.A	-	-	Impossible to assess progress due to the lack of most recent data
	Low birth weight: 30% reduction in low birth weight	4.2% (2006)	3%	30%	2.74% AARR	OFF COURSE, LOW PROGRESS Average Annual Reduction Rate (AARR) less than target AARR
	Under-5 overweight: No increase in childhood overweight	4.5 % (2006)	6%	<7% NO INCREASE	2.74% AARR	OFF COURSE, LOW PROGRESS Albeit overweight rate is below the 7% threshold, it slightly increased since 2006
	Exclusive breastfeeding: Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%	11% (2006)	59%	UP TO AT LEAST 50%		ON COURSE higher than target, the progress for the indicator is considered as being on course
	Wasting: Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%	7.2 % (2006)	4%	<5%		ON COURSE Current wasting rate < 5%

UNICEF and partners continued development of integrated ECD services with focus on children with disabilities and their families. These services are based on a strong inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach and are part of the National Concept on Developmental Paediatrics and Early Interventions for 2016-2020. ECD services were established in selected two districts (etraps) and three regions (velayats). Application of the International Guide for Monitoring Child Development (GMCD) allowed families and childcare practitioners to monitor children’s development from the start and enable them to reach their fullest potential. GMCD strengthens coordination mechanisms and referrals from local to national levels to provide effective, efficient, and quality services to children with developmental delays and/or disabilities, as well as their families. More than 600 children received early intervention services at national level at ECD centres, after having been referred from local levels. UNICEF also supported the development of regulations for national scale up of newborn screenings and referral pathways for all children in the country.

UNICEF continued strengthening the national capacity in planning for supply needs in line with results-based budgeting principles. UNICEF also assisted in procurement services that included vaccine and cold chain

equipment and their effective delivery and distribution to ultimate beneficiaries within the framework of the existing Memorandum of Understanding.

The quality of mother, newborn and child health care depends on knowledge and skills of parents and caregivers on good child rearing practices. This message was widely promoted by UNICEF jointly with the MoHMI and other partners, including the private sector, public organizations and media during the launch of the four-year national communication campaign on early childhood development called “First 1000 days of a child’s life is the foundation for a happy future”. The campaign aimed at further bolstering good parenting practices that focus on nutrition, play, love, positive and sensitive care, and provides support to fathers and mothers in taking care for their children.





© UNICEF/Turkmenistan. A father and mother are playing with their little daughter.

## EAT, PLAY, LOVE: A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

On the International Child Protection Day, the Government of Turkmenistan and UNICEF launched the four-year communication campaign on early childhood development. The campaign was inspired by the UNICEF global “Early Moments Matter” campaign and has the title “First 1,000 days of a child’s life is the foundation for a happy future”. It aims to further increase understanding, engagement, commitment and investment nationally about the importance of nutrition, stimulation,

protection and love in the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

“It is encouraging to witness that Turkmenistan has excellent potential to build on existing progress in ECD and mobilize further actions in the best interest of the child across the entire country. I commend the fact that issues of children, including their education, care, health and overall wellbeing are taken up at the highest level by the leadership of the country, penetrating all public sectors and holding them accountable for implementation,” emphasized, Ms. Shaheen Nilofer, UNICEF Representative.

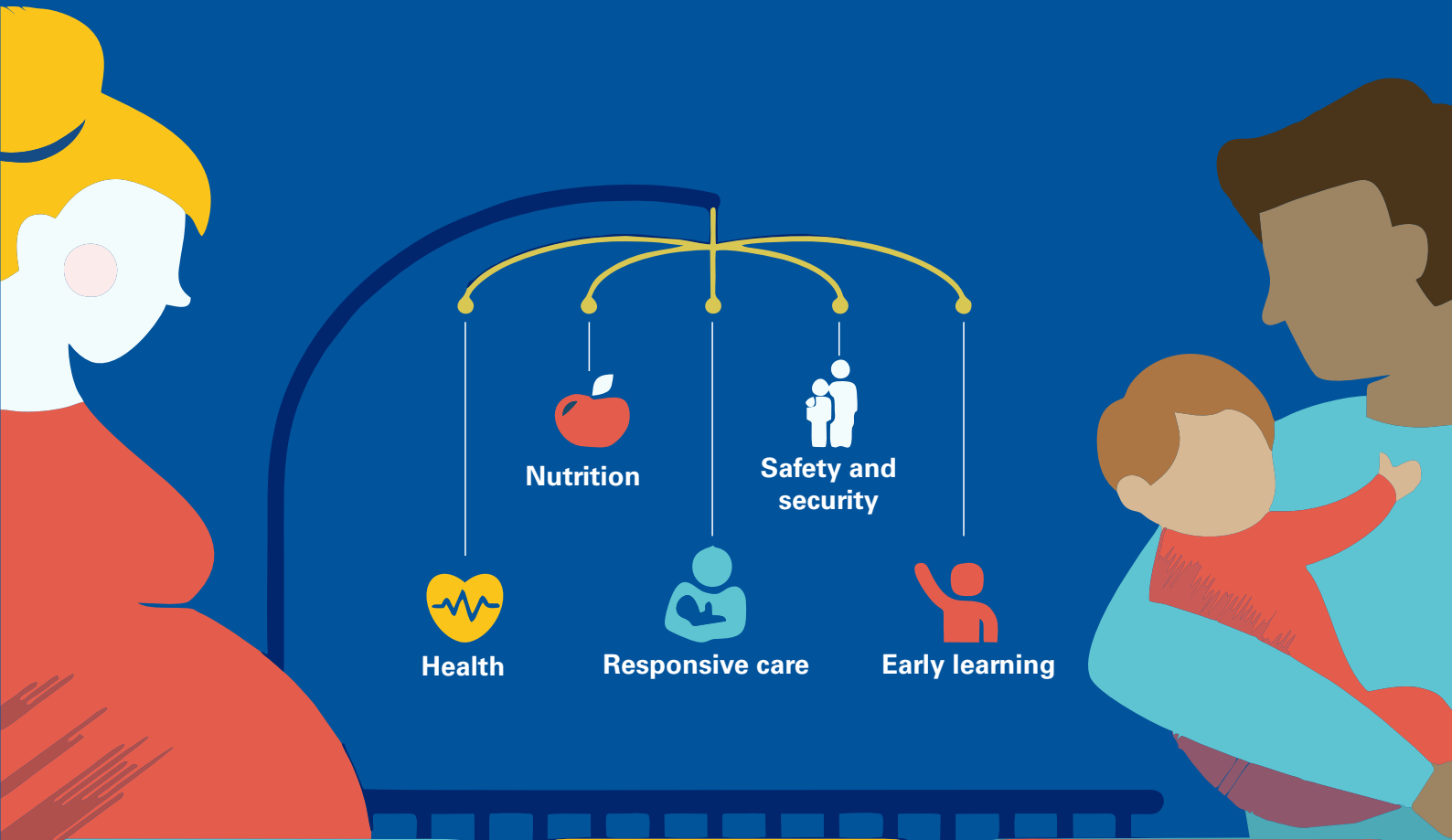
The speakers of the launch acknowledged that the country offers many enabling conditions to advance the ECD agenda. Turkmenistan is formulating a comprehensive system for early years across all sectors, including health, education, and social protection. The Government implemented the National Programme on ECD and School Readiness for 2011-2015. The succeeding National ECD Strategy for 2018-2022 will further enable the country to transform the effectiveness of existing early childhood development policies, services and resources to achieve better outcomes for young children.

“Turkmenistan is one of the countries, which puts a strong focus on early childhood development by applying a systemic and multi-sectoral approach in developing conducive conditions for nurture and care, quality health services and nutrition to boost development and health of young children. The National ECD launch will further bolster good parenting practices that focus on nutrition, play, positive and sensitive care and provide support to fathers and mothers,” highlighted Mr. Nurmuhmet Amannepesov, Minister of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan.

# Every young child deserves to thrive

A child's brain develops fastest in the first 2-3 years

## Nurturing Care:



### Cost of Inaction

About 250 million children under 5 are at risk of not reaching their full potential

About 25% reduction in average adult earning potential

Countries may lose up to 2 or 3 fold what they now invest in health or education

### Early childhood development pays off

Better health and learning capacity

Increased adult earning

Poverty reduction

Fewer inequalities

More peaceful societies

### Nurturing care means supporting parents and caregivers to:

Breastfeed and provide nutritious food

Maintain good health during conception, pregnancy and in the postnatal period

Provide a nurturing and safe environment

Give their children opportunities to explore and learn





## QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EARLY LEARNING

### KEY PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

- Access to and quality of early learning with focus on pre-primary preparation
- Multi-disciplinary support services for young children with disabilities
- Data collection, analysis and management system in education (EMIS)
- Strengthening resilience for climate change adaptation for children

UNICEF continued support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) in promoting access to and quality of early learning for all children with focus on pre-primary education, developing multi-disciplinary support and inclusive learning approaches for children with disabilities, and strengthening disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience for climate change adaptation for children.

Strengthening knowledge and skills of selected pre-school specialists led to the establishment of informal professional network of early childhood educators ready to support the system enhancement for early learning and pre-primary preparation. As part of this network, regional teams are ready to proceed with integration of quality pre-primary curriculum resource, parental empowerment, sports and play for development documents across early learning system in their regions.

Progress in this area was amplified by UNICEF's ongoing policy advocacy and dialogue. Currently, the Government is ready to consider options for financial implications, cost and benefits towards development of an operational plan for introducing one-year quality pre-primary education for all five-year-old children as a foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing.

UNICEF also supported the Government in finalizing the ECD Strategy for 2018-2024 to be endorsed in 2018.

More capacity building activities were carried out on early intervention services. Selected childcare professionals will soon start applying multi-disciplinary support services across the network of Rehabilitation Centres for children with disabilities and ECD Centres. The multi-disciplinary approach will help to include children with disabilities into mainstream education, as well as deinstitutionalize and promote social inclusion of children with disabilities and their families.

Turkmenistan is highly vulnerable to environmental risks and damage. Climate change and environmental degradation may have a negative impact on children's wellbeing across Turkmenistan. UNICEF re-positioned its work on climate change and children. The Government and UNICEF conducted a Climate Landscape Assessment for Children (CLAC) to better understand the linkages between children, climate change, and environment and energy issues and to

identify priority areas for UNICEF's support. UNICEF launched a joint initiative with the Ministry of Education to strengthen resilience for climate change adaptation for children, which includes better integration of the environment and climate change-related issues into the school curriculum. The initial work started and the revised curriculum will be adopted in 2018, enabling children and teachers of Turkmenistan to think critically about sustainability, enhancing awareness and building resilience to climate change.

The Government with UNICEF and UNDP support initiated the development of the National DRR Strategy with special emphasis on the most vulnerable to disasters, such as women, children, and persons with disabilities. When endorsed, the DRR Strategy will strengthen the commitment of the Government to implement the Sendai Framework 2015-2030. The Government is also committed to ensure school safety. Technical evaluation groups trained by UNICEF conducted safety assessment of 180 schools throughout the country. The Government has committed to strengthen resilience of population with specific attention to persons with disabilities, including children. The Government tapped into the international expertise in disability inclusive and child sensitive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) with the aim to introduce standards of the DiDRR in kindergartens and rehabilitation centres across the country. With UNICEF support the capacity of national education specialists and representatives of the civil society based organizations on DiDRR was strengthened.





©UNICEF/Turkmenistan. Children of the Rehabilitation Centre of Ashgabat learn to protect themselves during emergencies.

## PROMOTING DISABILITY INCLUSIVE AND CHILD SENSITIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: PARTNERSHIP WITH ARBEITER-SAMARITER-BUND

UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) Georgia to promote knowledge exchange and learning and provision of technical assistance in introduction of standards of DiDRR to pre-school institutions and rehabilitation centres in the country.

The objective of this partnership was to contribute towards building an inclusive culture of safety and resilience as per the new global framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030). The replication of a DiDRR programme, developed and implemented by the ASB in Georgia, was carried out in 2017 together

with UNICEF Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan. A series of capacity building and technical meetings for national education specialists and representatives of the civil society based organizations were carried out within the framework of the MoU.

The training of the trainers on DiDRR aimed at mainstreaming and institutionalizing DiDRR throughout the education sector. Subsequent cascade trainings, carried out by the national trainers to introduce DiDRR practices in pre-schools and rehabilitation centres across the country, were based on learning materials developed by the ASB and adapted to the national context.



## REDUCING SOCIAL INEQUITIES

### KEY PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

- Supporting the Parliament and the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Support to the State Statistics Committee (SSC) to generate data through Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
- Technical assistance to the Ministries of Education and Health and Medical Industry to improve the quality of administrative data
- Conducting SDG baseline assessment and systems for SDG monitoring
- Capacity development of the Government, and particularly the office of the Ombudsman to improve independent monitoring of child rights violation
- Child and gender-sensitive social protection, social work curriculum, training materials and a detailed action plan for introduction of the social work profession

.....

In 2017, the Government made one more step towards nationalisation of the SDG indicators approved in 2016 and adopted a monitoring framework. UNICEF contributed through technical assistance to two MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) missions, support to joint UN Rapid Assessment and advocacy for the SDGs through meetings and workshops. An SDG baseline for child related indicators was conducted.

With UNICEF's support, the Government continued the process of alignment of its social and child protection policies and legislation with the CRC and CRPD. UNICEF provided technical expertise to introduce social services, such as services for families with children at risk of abandonment, social work curriculum to produce competent work force to support families with children, as well as policies compliant with international standards.

To promote and address equity issues, UNICEF strengthened knowledge management, generation and analysis of data on realization of the rights of children in remote areas and children with disabilities. UNICEF supported the State Statistics Committee to conduct the 2015-2016 Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey, which provided data on children and women - a key public source for establishing baselines for SDGs. The next round of MICS will commence in 2019. UNICEF championed the discussions on leaving no one and no child behind. The baseline assessment for 55 child-related SDG indicators started in 2017 with an attempt to operationalize the SDG monitoring system at the national and provincial levels.



An important assessment of the General Programme of Turkmenistan on the Development of the Juvenile Justice System (2012-2016) was initiated together with UNICEF. Findings of the assessment will contribute to developing or amending policies with regards to this important area. The country is steadily fulfilling the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, such as harmonizing the age of children throughout its legislation and access to juvenile detention facilities, amongst many others. One of the significant areas to be fulfilled is the adoption of the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC). NPAC would provide effective entry points for further promotion and realization of child rights in the country.

The Government adopted the Law on Ombudsman. UNICEF supported the newly established office of Ombudsman through an exposure to the work of similar institutions in the region, and discussed the prospects of establishing a child rights monitoring mechanism within the office of Ombudsman. UNICEF together with OSCE and UNDP discussed strategic areas for support and established a channel to coordinate assistance to the Ombudsperson office.

UNICEF continued advocating for the adoption of the third protocol to the CRC on Communications and actively participated in the development of the UN Country Team reports for Universal Periodic Review and Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

“We, children, are happy to learn that the State cares about its young people, including their all-inclusive development and continues to advance conditions for our better lives, quality education and health. We also trust that these advancements will lead to the fulfilment of the new Sustainable Development Goals and maintain peace and prosperity.” Hudaynazar Bayev, young participant of the Conference on child rights in May 2017.



©UNICEF/Dankov. Young people from all regions of the country discuss how to promote child rights within their schools.

## YOUNG SPEAKERS INSPIRE AUDIENCE ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF TURKMENISTAN

A group of children aged 11 through 18 years, including children with disabilities, had an unprecedented opportunity to visit Mejlis (Parliament) and interact with the Speaker and members of the Parliament representing all committees by asking questions about Turkmenistan’s Constitution and the work of the respective Committees and how it changes the lives of citizens.

Some of these children underwent consultations on child rights and shared their opinions and perceptions related to participation, education and social inclusion.

Children also visited the United Nations House to participate in the UNICEF’s orientation about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and learnt how the rights are exercised in their everyday lives and why child participation matters. They interacted with UNICEF Representative and shared their dreams and aspirations for the future.

“I am particularly delighted to see children who visited Mejlis and interacted with parliamentarians. They will remember this moment forever in their young minds with deep sense of pride and renewed sense of responsibility towards nation building. This paves a way for a more inclusive parliament that listens and defends the rights of children,” said UNICEF Representative Shaheen Nilofer.

The Conference provided an exceptional platform for young people to have their views heard and acted upon and the realization of the provisions related to children and the youth, including those with disabilities enshrined in the Constitution.

The young participant, Hudaynazar Bayev, said at the conference, “We, children, are happy to learn that the State cares about its young people, including their all-inclusive development and continues to advance conditions for our better lives, quality education and health. We also trust that these advancements will lead to the fulfilment of the new Sustainable Development Goals and maintain peace and prosperity.”





## PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILD RIGHTS

### KEY PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

- Mobilize partnerships with the Government, civil society, academia, media and private sector to prioritize and act upon and share a common agenda for child rights
- Leverage resources within the country and beyond to scale up and maximize the impact of existing and new interventions

UNICEF Turkmenistan maximized on potential opportunities within the country and internationally to mobilize partnerships both for financial and non-financial resources to deliver results for children. Strategic partnerships for children gained deeper roots through the support of the Government in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and advocating for the newly emerging areas for children.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to tap into the international expertise in disability inclusive disaster risk reduction, provided by Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund in Georgia (ASB).

High-profile partnerships were maintained with the Food Fortification Initiative and Iodine Global Network to provide international

technical expertise to ensure continued sustainability and strengthening quality control mechanisms for universal flour fortification and salt iodization in the country.

UNICEF initiated contacts with the newly-established Ombudsperson's office, with the Ombudsperson participating in the ENOC (European Network of Ombudsmen for Children) and UNICEF capacity building workshop for new Ombudspersons in Sofia, Bulgaria.

UNICEF made efforts to enlarge the strategic engagement with civil society organizations, such as the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs as the private sector partner. This resulted in a public discourse around the theme of early childhood development under the ongoing public communication campaign on the child's first 1,000 days of life. In the framework of the campaign, the Government and UNICEF submitted a communication plan that included exposure to the global documentary film "The Beginning of Life" about ECD, organization of the Father's Day event at Berkarar Shopping Centre in Ashgabat, and building the capacity of parents in positive parenting practices through national broadcast and print media.





©UNICEF/Dankov. Together with their children, fathers participate in the Super Dad campaign in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

## EVERY DAD IS A SUPER DAD: UNICEF AND PARTNERS CELEBRATE THE FATHER'S DAY

As more than 90 countries marked the Father's Day, prominent figures in sports and entertainment have joined 'Super Dad' campaign launched by UNICEF that celebrated fathers' essential role in a child's early development.

The purpose is to remind the public about the important role of fathers in the early development of the child, and to inspire fathers and families to spend more time with children and nurture a stimulating environment for them. In Turkmenistan, only 15 percent of fathers are involved in children's learning and development.

The Super Dad initiative, a part of UNICEF's #EarlyMomentsMatter global campaign and

the National "First 1,000 days of the child's life is the foundation for a happy future" campaign, aimed at increasing understanding of how positive experiences in early childhood can have the greatest impact on their child's future – on his/her health, education, well-being and earning potential as an adult.

The edutainment event took place in Berkarar shopping and entertainment mall. The event was live and vibrant with a concert for parents and kids, and specialists working with young children (primary healthcare practitioners, pre-school education specialists), ministries and national agencies, public organizations working on children's issues, embassies and international organizations, academia, as well as the public and media.

The event was organized by the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry and Ministry of Education with support of the National Red Crescent Society and Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan.

UNICEF partnered with UNFPA to engage children through the Y-Peer Network to mark the World Children’s Day and share children’s voices with MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) Mission members during their second visit to the country to discuss opportunities for effective implementation of SDGs. UNICEF also established initial links with the newly established SDG centre of Turkmenistan.



## ON THE WORLD CHILDREN’S DAY, TURKMENISTAN’S #KIDSTAKEOVER

On the World Children’s Day with a theme #KidsTakeOver and the anniversary day of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Turkmenistan’s youth took over the adult spaces, as they gathered at the United Nations building voicing their support for thousands of their peers to shine a light on the most pressing issues that matter for their generation. Young people, as part of #KidsTakeOver initiative, enjoyed taking over the role of UNICEF Representative taking turns to share their plans and how they would

©UNICEF /Turkmenistan. Children «took over» the role of UNICEF Representative on the World’s Children’s Day.

undertake their responsibility of advancing child rights mandate delivering on Sustainable Development Goals.

Through fun activities, children from the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-Peer) supported by UNFPA delivered serious messages to the United Nations experts, who provide advice to the Government of Turkmenistan on the best ways to maximize the implementation of the SDGs adopted by the Government on issues that concern them most and ensuring all children benefit from the resources and opportunities thus created.

“Today is a day for children and by children. We, children, want to see that all children can equally achieve the best potential in life and enjoy their rights in Turkmenistan. Almost half of our population are children and young people under 25. We would like to call for sustained actions for all of us in areas of health, education and social protection,” said children at the event.

“As we celebrate the World Children’s Day, it is wonderful to let the #KidsTakeOver important platforms around the world. We, as UNICEF, celebrate children everywhere; we celebrate their hopes and their dreams and we want them to be counted. Children have an amazing sense of reaching out to all other children embracing diversity. It is a chance for all of us to listen to what children and young people have to say, the world they want, the change they would like to see,” resonated Shaheen Nilofer, UNICEF Representative in Turkmenistan.

Children shared their vision on the role they would like to play in implementing SDGs in Turkmenistan. Among children’s recommendations inclusive barrier free spaces for people with disabilities, climate change initiatives at schools, equal opportunities in education, increased public investments for children’s programmes, and more importantly, affordable and universal essential services for all children were prominent.

Children and young people called UN agencies and experts to reach out to policy makers in realizing their rights. Young people marked the celebration by doing special signature moves to the tune of the World Children’s Day music video that symbolize actions for children around the globe.



Besides the World Children’s Day, young people communicated critical messages during the 25th anniversary of Turkmenistan’s accession to the United Nations event, UN Debates, and launch of the State of the World’s Children’s (SOWC) report. The launch of the “Children in Digital Age” SOWC report spotlighted digital opportunities for children and communicated the main message – to ensure open access to digital spaces for children’s learning and development.

## CHILDREN IN DIGITAL AGE: INCREASE ONLINE ACCESS TO BENEFIT THE MOST DISADVANTAGED

“Internet accompanies modern youth everywhere: in communication, leisure, studies, all aspects of everyday life. And we, the younger generation, also want to contribute to the development of the Internet in our country,” said young people from Turkmenistan universities at the launch of the UNICEF flagship State of the World’s Children report that focused on “Children in a digital world”.

Providing all children and youth with affordable high-quality online resources was a key message at the report launch event organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNICEF.

The report presented UNICEF’s first comprehensive look at the different ways digital technology is affecting children’s lives and life chances, identifying opportunities as well as dangers. It argues that governments and the private sector have not kept up with the pace

of change, exposing children to new risks and harms and leaving millions of the most disadvantaged children behind.

“We commend the Government of Turkmenistan’s willingness to invest into the universal Internet access that will lead to digital transformation, over-all growth and knowledge economy in years to come. In a digital world, our dual challenge is how to mitigate the harms while maximizing the gains of the responsible internet access for every child,” said UNICEF Representative Shaheen Nilofer.

The report explores the benefits digital technology can offer the most disadvantaged children, including those growing up in poverty or affected by humanitarian emergencies. These include increasing their access to information, building skills for the digital workplace, and giving them a platform to connect and communicate their views. But the report shows that millions of children are missing out. Around one third of the world’s youth – 346 million – are not online, exacerbating inequities and reducing children’s ability to participate in an increasingly digital economy.

---

### THE REPORT CALLS FOR IMPLEMENTING PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO HELP GUIDE MORE EFFECTIVE POLICYMAKING AND MORE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES TO BENEFIT CHILDREN. RECOMMENDATIONS ARE TO:

- Provide all children with affordable access to high-quality online resources
- Protect children from harm online – including abuse, exploitation, trafficking, cyberbullying and exposure to unsuitable materials
- Safeguard children’s privacy and identities online
- Teach digital literacy to keep children informed, engaged and safe online
- Leverage the power of the private sector to advance ethical standards and practices that protect and benefit children online
- Put children at the centre of digital policy



unicef



unicef



## WORKING TOGETHER AS ONE UN



©UNICEF/Dankov. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in the UN House in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, June 2017.

In the framework of the Turkmenistan-UN Partnership for Development 2016-2020 (UNPFD), our collective and concerted efforts were anchored in terms of supporting the Government towards quality advisory, technical, policy, implementation and progress measurement support. In 2017, UN agencies, including UNICEF, moved to the new UN House building provided by the Government of Turkmenistan. UN House's facilities allowed the UN agencies to host a number of joint events and strengthened

interagency knowledge sharing practices and improved working conditions. One of the major highlights of UN inter-agency support was towards the MAPS mission, which helped identifying accelerators for SDG implementation. The UN retreat highlighted the need for working together effectively on the Common Chapter of the recently approved strategic plans of respective UN agencies to further leverage agencies' collaborative advantages in strengthening the national capacity for SDG implementation.

Of the five Results Groups based on the five Outcomes of the PFD, UNICEF is the Co-Chair of the Result Group on “Data Quality and Progress Monitoring” and continues to play its active role as part of its membership in other Results Groups, Human Rights Group, Gender and Youth Group and Communications Group as well. As a UN country team member, UNICEF continues to stay engaged on the deliberations related to UN reforms, contributed towards shaping up of the SDG Training Centre, and inputting to the periodic reporting of the CEDAW, UPR, CERD and CRPD. The visit of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in June 2017 and the High Level UN-Government meetings, thereby, provided an opportunity for advocating for Child Rights and approval of the National Plan of Action for Children.

The joint efforts with UNFPA and WHO towards perinatal audit in two velayats (provinces) led to comprehensive emergency obstetric and neonatal care. Together with UNDP, we further contributed to the draft National disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy to focus on children, women and people with disabilities. The year also saw that UN together with the State Statistics Committee ensured officials at the Velayat level were aware of the SDG commitments made by the government

and to better understand the monitoring and measurement of SDG indicators for children.

Turkmenistan has presence of ten UN entities: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women, WHO, IOM, UNDSS, UNRCCA and the World Bank. Besides, there are three non-resident agencies - OHCHR, UNESCO, UNHCR. Out of the ten UN agencies, eight operated from UN House in 2017. The UNCT through its Operations Management Team (OMT) implements the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) that seeks to enhance the cost-effectiveness and quality of joint business operations. The BOS is a UN multi-agency framework guiding UN operations collaboration at the country level. Under this framework, UNICEF contributes to the cost sharing towards common facility (including premises) and security.



## EFFECTIVE USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO DELIVER RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

Regardless of the sources or categories of income, UNICEF is committed to maximizing the impact of every dollar to improve children's lives and help them realize their rights.

UNICEF utilized funds based on core (regular) resources of 14 percent, other resource (OR) of 2 percent, other resources for emergency programmes (ORE) of 2 percent and procurement on behalf of the Government which made up 82 percent of the overall expenditure. Strong support from institutional donors and governments has allowed UNICEF to move the agenda for children forward.

**Delivering results for children from UNICEF core resources for 2017 amounts to US\$ 1.023 million, OR – US\$120 thousand, ORE – US\$ 129 thousand, and from Government procurement related resources -US\$ 5,930 million apart from high quality technical assistance towards programme and policy support.**

Essential supplies and services are key to realizing children's rights. On behalf of the Government of Turkmenistan, the total value of supplies and procurement services for vaccines and premix for flour fortification by UNICEF for 2017 stood at US\$ 6 million.

Building on previous supply efforts, UNICEF focused on generating greater value for money. The organization provided support and technical assistance to help governments build their supply chain and procurement capacity, and to move towards securing financial sustainability, accelerating supply availability, securing supplies at lower prices and generating significant savings for countries and donors.

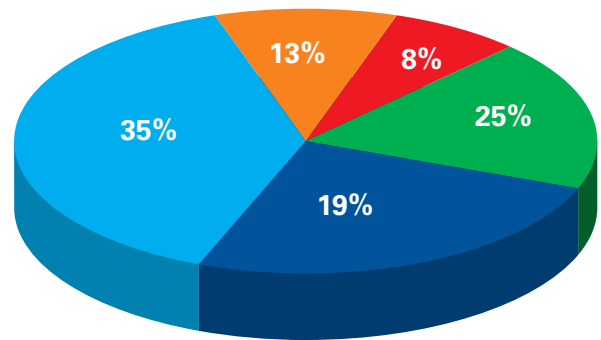
UNICEF would like to express its appreciation for the support extended by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), Canada Fund for Local Initiative and Embassy of Israel.

UNICEF also extends its gratitude to all partners who supported the organization's work in 2017. Your contributions made the progress described in this report possible. Together, we have come closer to achieving our shared goal of giving every child a fair chance.

Together with our partners and donors, UNICEF is making the most efficient use of funds to impact the lives of the children in greatest need and at greatest risk.

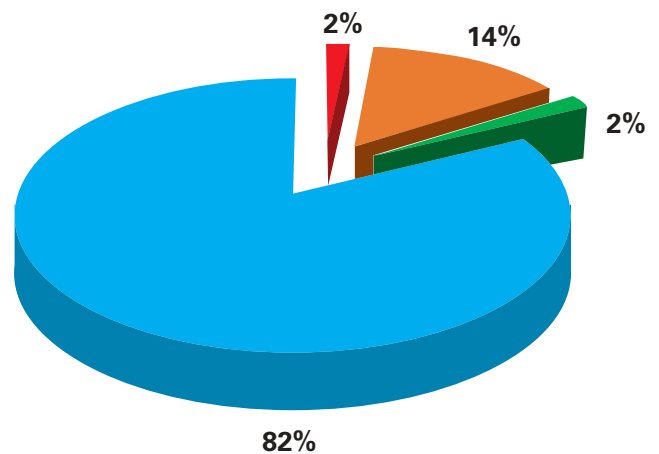
## FUNDS UTILIZATION BY PROGRAMME, 2017

- Young Child Survival and well-being (Health and Nutrition)
- Quality and Inclusive Early Learning (Education & DRR)
- Child Rights Monitoring and Data for Children
- Cross-sector Partnerships for Child Rights
- Office Management & Operations/Programme Effectiveness



## FUNDS UTILIZATION BY TYPE OF RESOURCES, 2017

- Other resources (OR)
- Regular resources (RR)
- Other resources for emergency (ORE)
- Procurement services for the Government





## THE WAY FORWARD

**In 2018, UNICEF will continue advocating with the Government of Turkmenistan on adopting the National Plan of Action for Children, National Nutrition Programme and Early Childhood Development Strategy. We will also undertake a baseline assessment for child-related SDG indicators and situation analysis on children and women of the country that will inform the, remaining years of the country programme via Strategic Moment of Reflection as we hit midterm of the current country programme. The country office will advocate with partners the following key priorities:**

### YOUNG CHILD SURVIVAL AND WELLBEING:

- Development and endorsement of an “essential free care package” with sufficient state budget and essential drugs list included both at the primary and hospital levels.
- Adoption of the Nutrition Programme for 2018-2025, focused on reduction of double burden of malnutrition and hosting of the first Central Asia and Caucasus Regional Nutrition Capacity Development and Partnership Platform in Turkmenistan.
- Supporting parents with relevant information and services through effective communication for development interventions, health care and counselling for pregnant women, as well as fathers and mothers.

### QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EARLY LEARNING:

- Universal access to quality pre-primary preparation: proposing to the Government an investment case and operational plan for universal pre-primary education.
- Data collection, analysis and management

system in education (EMIS): advocacy for introduction of EMIS in the country.

- Strengthening resilience for climate change adaptation for children: advocacy for nationwide climate change awareness raising initiatives and resilience building for children and communities.

### REDUCING SOCIAL INEQUITIES:

- Data analysis and evidence-based decision making: advocacy for use of data in policy making and budgetary allocations.
- Creation of a social service workforce: advocacy for the support of families with children in need and ensuring essential social services are institutionalized by the government.
- Advocacy for introduction into the legislation of the concept of social service provision, a definition of disability that reflects a “social model” based on rights, social inclusion, and empowerment of families and children.

## ENDNOTES

Mortality estimates are from the 2015 report of the Inter-agency Group on Mortality Indicators; Data on children in residential care, number of children with disabilities receiving disability benefits and education expenditure are from the TransMONEE database for 2015; All other data are from the 2015-2016 Turkmenistan MICS

## CREDITS

Coordination: Shaheen Nilofer, Representative  
Gulyalek Soltanova, Communication Officer  
Production: UNICEF in Turkmenistan  
Photography: ©UNICEF, ©UNICEF/  
Pudlowski, ©UNICEF/Dankov

©UNICEF Turkmenistan 2018



**United Nations Children's Fund  
UNICEF Turkmenistan Country Office  
UN House, 21 Archabil Shayoly  
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 744036  
Tel: +993-12 488352  
Fax : +993-12 488350  
Email: [ashgabat@unicef.org](mailto:ashgabat@unicef.org)  
[www.unicef.org/turkmenistan](http://www.unicef.org/turkmenistan)  
[www.facebook.com/unicef.turkmenistan](http://www.facebook.com/unicef.turkmenistan)  
<http://vk.com/uniceftm>**