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# Formative Evaluation of the Child Rights Monitoring Programme in Uzbekistan 2016-2018

## EVALUATION REPORT



21 December 2018

Coram International at Coram Children's Legal Centre



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Awaz Raoof, Charlotte Baker and Professor Dame Carolyn Hamilton from Coram International. Research was carried out by Coram International and national expert, Regina Safarova.

The authors would like to thank all the participants from the following bodies who devoted their time to take part in this study: Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations; Ministry of Public Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Women’s Committee at the national level; the National Human Rights Centre; the Office of the Ombudsman; the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics; the Oila Centre at the national level; Higher Judicial Council; the Deputy Khokims of Ferghana, Jizzakh and Khorezm regions; the Deputy Chairperson of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; Departments of Health in Ferghana, Jizzakh, Khorezm and Republic of Karakalpakstan; Department of Public Education in Jizzakh; Department of Pre-School Education in Khorezm region; Department of Public Education of Bagdod District, Ferghana; Monitoring Groups in Ferghana, Jizzakh, Khorezm and the Republic of Karakalpakstan; ‘Project Teams’ in Ferghana, Jizzakh, Khorezm and the Republic of Karakalpakstan; the Association for Support of Families and Children at the national level and in the Republic of Karakalpakstan; the National Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of Uzbekistan; the Republican Centre for the Social Adaptation of Children; SOS Children’s Village; You Are Not Alone Foundation; Youth Union; Westminster International University, Tashkent; UNICEF; UNDP; UNFPA; the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and international experts.

Most importantly, the authors would like to thank the child participants from Uzbekistan for their valuable time and contributions to this evaluation.

The contents of this evaluation report are the sole responsibility of the evaluators and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of UNICEF.

**Title:** Formative Evaluation of the Child Rights Monitoring Programme in Uzbekistan 2016-2018.

**Date of the report:** The evaluation was undertaken between October and December 2018 and covers the period from 2016 to 2018, and taking into account key child rights monitoring activities implemented between 2014 and 2016.

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**Date:** 21 December 2018 (final).

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1. Object, Objectives, Purpose and Primary Users .....	6
1.2. Methodology .....	6
1.3. Key Findings .....	7
1.3.1. Relevance.....	7
1.3.2. Effectiveness.....	8
1.3.3. Efficiency.....	10
1.3.4. Sustainability .....	11
1.3.5. Impact.....	12
1.3.6. Cross-Cutting Issues.....	12
1.4. Conclusions.....	12
1.4.1. Relevance.....	12
1.4.2. Effectiveness.....	13
1.4.3. Efficiency.....	14
1.4.4. Sustainability .....	14
1.4.5. Impact.....	15
1.4.6. Cross-Cutting Issues.....	15
1.5. Lessons Learned.....	15
1.5.1. Bottom-Up or Top-Down Approach? .....	15
1.5.2. CRM in UNICEF Programming.....	16
1.6. Recommendations.....	16
<b>2. Background</b> .....	<b>18</b>
2.1. Object of the Evaluation .....	18
2.2. Theory of Change.....	19
2.3. Positioning of the CRM Programme within UNICEF .....	20
2.4. Programme Budget.....	21
2.5. Context.....	21
2.5.1. International Standards on CRM .....	21
2.5.2. Political, Socio-Economic and Legal Context .....	22
2.5.3. Key CRM Mechanisms .....	24
2.5.4. UNICEF CRM Programming from 2010-2016 .....	27
<b>3. Objectives, Purpose and Scope</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>4. Methodology</b> .....	<b>30</b>
4.1. Conceptual Framework.....	30
4.2. Evaluation Criteria .....	30
4.3. Evaluation Questions .....	30
4.3.1. Relevance.....	30
4.3.2. Effectiveness.....	31
4.3.3. Efficiency.....	31
4.3.4. Sustainability .....	31
4.3.5. Impact.....	31
4.3.6. Cross-Cutting Issues.....	31

4.4. Method of Enquiry.....	31
4.5. Data Sources, Collection Methods and Sampling.....	32
4.6. Data Analysis.....	34
4.7. Gender Equity and Human Rights-Based Approach.....	35
4.8. Ethics.....	35
4.9. Risks and Limitations.....	37
4.10. Work plan.....	39
<b>5. Evaluation Findings.....</b>	<b>40</b>
5.1. Relevance.....	40
5.2. Effectiveness.....	48
5.3. Efficiency.....	62
5.4. Sustainability.....	64
5.5. Impact.....	68
5.6. Cross-cutting Issues.....	70
<b>6. Conclusions and Lessons Learned.....</b>	<b>71</b>
6.1. Conclusions.....	71
6.1.1. Relevance.....	71
6.1.2. Effectiveness.....	72
6.1.3. Efficiency.....	73
6.1.4. Sustainability.....	73
6.1.5. Impact.....	74
6.1.6. Cross-Cutting Issues.....	74
6.2. Lessons Learned.....	74
6.2.1. Bottom-Up or Top-Down Approach?.....	74
6.2.2. CRM in UNICEF Programming.....	75
<b>7. Recommendations.....</b>	<b>75</b>
7.1. Coordination Council.....	75
7.2. IWGs and Monitoring Groups.....	76
7.3. Knowledge and Skills-Based Training.....	76
7.4. Developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks.....	76
7.5. NHRI.....	77
7.6. Awareness-Raising.....	77

## Volume 2 - Annexes

### List of Tables and Charts:

**Table 1: Forecast budget allocation and budget expenditure (as at 29 November 2018) towards CRM programme activities for the years 2016 to 2018**

**Chart 1: UNICEF's CRM Programme Budget Expenditure Between 2016 and 2018 (as at 29 Nov 2018) by Category of Expenditure**

## Acronyms

ASFC	Association for Support of Families and Children
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEDAW Committee	UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Coordination Council	Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council on Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
Country Programme	Country Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Uzbekistan and UNICEF 2016-2020
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRC Committee	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRM	Child rights monitoring
CSO	Civil society organisation
CWD	Children with disabilities
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GEROS	Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System
Goskomstat	State Committee of Uzbekistan on Statistics
IWG	Inter-agency working group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOHSSE	Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education
MOIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOPE	Ministry of Public Education
NANNOUz	The National Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of Uzbekistan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Centre
NHRI	National Human Rights Institutions
NPA	National Plan of Action on the implementation of CRC Committee recommendations based on Uzbekistan's combined third and fourth periodic report, approved by the Government of Uzbekistan in December 2017
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Paris Principles	Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 48/134 on 20 December 1993
Roadmap	Action-Oriented Roadmap on Further Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United Nations System for 2017-2020
RoK	Republic of Karakalpakstan
TOC	Child Rights Monitoring and Evaluation Theory of Change 2017-2020
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNICEF's Ethical Charter	International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children developed by UNICEF and others
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	US Dollars

## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1. Object, Objectives, Purpose and Primary Users

UNICEF Uzbekistan has engaged Coram International as consultants to conduct an independent evaluation of UNICEF's child rights monitoring (CRM) programme in Uzbekistan from 2016 to September 2018, with due consideration being given to key related CRM activities implemented between 2014 and 2016. The terms of reference (TOR) for this consultancy are enclosed in **Appendix 8.1**.

During the evaluation period, UNICEF implemented six CRM projects, which form part of the object of this evaluation. These projects include supporting: (i) the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council on Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Coordination Council); (ii) the development of the content of the National Plan of Action on the implementation of CRC Committee recommendations based on Uzbekistan's combined third and fourth periodic report (NPA); (iii) the development of the draft law on the establishment of the Children's Ombudsperson; (iv) strengthening the work of the monitoring groups in Jizzakh, Khorezm, Ferghana and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (RoK); (v) the development of an 'Analytical Report on the Results of Monitoring Legislation of Uzbekistan on Children's Property Rights' by the National Human Rights Centre (NHRC); and (vi) the analysis of the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) by the NHRC.

In addition, the evaluation considers the following related CRM projects implemented between 2014 and 2016: capacity-building of civil society organisations (CSOs); and the operationalisation of the monitoring groups and inter-agency working groups (IWGs) in Jizzakh, Khorezm, Ferghana and the RoK. These projects are detailed in **Appendix 8.2**.

UNICEF's current approach to CRM is reflected in its draft 'Child Rights Monitoring and Evaluation Theory of Change 2017-2020' (TOC), which also forms part of the object of this evaluation. The draft TOC consists of 15 'strategic interventions', seven outputs, and three outcomes, all of which are intended to achieve the following impact by 2020: *girls and boys of Uzbekistan, especially the most vulnerable, progressively realise their rights in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*. Details of these strategic interventions, outputs and outcomes are summarised in the extract of the draft TOC, which is enclosed in **Appendix 8.3**.

This evaluation assesses the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and, to the extent possible, the likely impact of UNICEF's CRM programme. The purpose of this evaluation is to produce recommendations, knowledge and insights for UNICEF, the Government of Uzbekistan, the NHRC, Women's Committee, the IWGs and monitoring groups in Ferghana, Jizzakh, Khorezm and the RoK, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other key stakeholder groups, to inform the development of the Country Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Uzbekistan and UNICEF for the period 2016-2020 (Country Programme).

### 1.2. Methodology

The conceptual framework for this evaluation is rooted in the CRC and international child rights standards. The criteria for this evaluation (relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; sustainability; and likely impact) are based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee's Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance. In addition, as per the TOR and in light of the objectives of the evaluation, a sixth criterion has been added: mainstreaming a human rights-based approach and equity considerations as a cross-cutting issue across the CRM programme.

This evaluation responds to the following research questions:

- **Relevance:** to what extent are the CRM programme and underlying theory of change relevant to the policies and priorities of UNICEF and key CRM stakeholders, and needs of children in Uzbekistan, particularly of those from marginalised groups or who are vulnerable to discrimination?
- **Effectiveness:** to what extent is the CRM programme contributing to the establishment of a fully functioning, well-governed and coordinated CRM system at the national and local levels?
- **Efficiency:** are the financial, human and material resources allocated to the CRM programme sufficient to meet the intended outcomes of the programme?
- **Sustainability:** to what extent are the results of the CRM programme likely to sustain after the programme period?
- **Impact:** to what extent is the CRM programme likely to contribute to boys and girls in Uzbekistan, particularly those from vulnerable groups, progressively realising their rights under the CRC and CEDAW?
- **Cross-cutting issues:** to what extent does the CRM programme adopt a human rights-based approach and integrate gender and other equity-based considerations relevant to boys and girls in Uzbekistan?

In light of the object and objectives of the evaluation and the research questions, this evaluation adopted a non-experimental design and primarily utilised qualitative data collection techniques. The consultants also drew upon mixed sources and types of data, including secondary quantitative data, to support the triangulation and interpretation of qualitative findings.

The consultants adopted the following methods to conduct the evaluation: a desk review of documents; a virtual inception meeting with UNICEF; 48 semi-standardised interviews with 89 participants in five research sites (Tashkent; Ferghana; Jizzakh; Khorezm; and the RoK); focus group discussions (FGDs) with 12 children (five boys and seven girls); a virtual debriefing with UNICEF; and a consultation and validation meeting key stakeholders on 18 December 2018 and exchange of written comments from key stakeholders on a draft of this report before its finalisation.

### 1.3. Key Findings

#### 1.3.1. Relevance

The TOC and CRM programme activities are in line with the Country Programme, particularly Outcome 3 of its results framework, which sets the goal for authorities at all levels and CSOs having increased capacity to effectively contribute to CRM and reporting by 2020. The CRM programme similarly fits within the broader United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and its 'Action-Oriented Roadmap on Further Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United Nations System for 2017-2020' (Roadmap), which is framed around the Sustainable Development Goals. The Roadmap provides that UNICEF will provide technical support to the Government, NHRC, Coordination Council and CSOs to monitor, review, implement and report on the progress of the recommendations of the CRC, to which all of UNICEF's CRM activities are relevant. The Roadmap also provides that UNICEF will support the drafting of the law on the Children's Ombudsperson, as per UNICEF's CRM programme.

The draft TOC and CRM programme aim to (amongst other things) strengthen inter-sectoral coordination between key stakeholders at the national and local levels in monitoring children's rights, the lack of which has been identified as a barrier to the development of an effective CRM system. The TOC also rightly includes a

focus on strengthening the capacity of CRM stakeholders to collect, analyse and use accurate data to address child rights issues, given the recommendations of international human rights monitoring bodies on this topic.<sup>1</sup>

Given the historic limitations on civil society operations in Uzbekistan, UNICEF's focus on building the capacity of CSOs and building collaboration between CSOs and Government to monitor children's rights is highly relevant. Output 5 of the TOC focuses on ensuring that CSOs have sufficient financial and technical capacity to implement programmes to advance children's rights through the delivery of capacity-building interventions. Such activities comprised a significant part of UNICEF's CRM programme between 2014 and 2016, most notably through CSO capacity-building trainings. Outcome 1 of the TOC relating to strengthening stakeholder coordination also contemplates building CSO involvement in CRM, which has been reflected in UNICEF's projects with the Women's Committees in Jizzakh, Ferghana, the RoK and Khorezm to establish and operationalise the monitoring groups to work with the IWGs in monitoring children's rights.

The TOC notes that the barriers to the demand for CRM include weak public accountability for non-implementation of children's rights, a general lack of understanding and ownership of CRM, and a 'punitive' culture towards the non-implementation of children's rights as opposed to a culture of evaluation and learning. However, the draft TOC does not focus on addressing these barriers. As reinforced by the findings under 'Effectiveness', below, there is a need to strengthen *public* awareness of the notion of children as rights holders and the corresponding duties of duty bearers, as well as developing the knowledge and understanding of duty bearers within different Government line Ministries and departments of their collective CRM responsibilities, which would go some way to addressing these normative barriers.

### 1.3.2. Effectiveness

#### *National Level*

The data highlights UNICEF's integral involvement in the revival of the Coordination Council, particularly by providing technical assistance to the Cabinet of Ministers (via the Deputy Prime Minister/ Chairwoman of the Women's Committee). Participants in the data collection also generally viewed UNICEF as an important influence in the establishment of the Coordination Council. Importantly, the Coordination Council brings together Government and NGOs in a formal way at the national level, and several participants considered that the Coordination Council is an effective, or at least has the potential to be an effective, CRM mechanism.

Despite the significant achievement in the re-establishment of the Coordination Council, there remain several challenges to its effectiveness. Several participants from Government line Ministries and public bodies, including long-term appointees, were not aware of the Coordination Council or its mandate, despite their organisation's membership on this mechanism. Further, several key CRM stakeholder bodies are not represented on the Coordination Council, such as the Office of the General Prosecutor, or the Supreme Court. At present, the Coordination Council is not operating pursuant to a costed, results-based monitoring action plan, as contemplated in UNICEF's draft TOC, which is a gap in its operational framework. Government line Ministries, public agencies and CSOs also generally reported having limited human, financial and material resources, restricting their ability to carry out their CRM activities. These challenges inevitably impede the work of the Coordination Council, which does not have its own separate budget and relies on the resources of its members.

#### *Regional Level*

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<sup>1</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations 2013, para 7(b); Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan*, CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, November 2015, para 35.

Participants in the regions generally considered that UNICEF's CRM projects strengthened inter-sectoral coordination in the regions. There is also evidence that UNICEF programming has strengthened links between IWGs and monitoring groups between the regions, providing opportunities for dialogue and the sharing of good practices. Data indicates that recommendations developed by the monitoring groups and shared with the IWGs as part of the CRM programme have, to varying degrees, been adopted and integrated into Government programmes at the regional levels.

Whilst the monitoring groups have had some success in having their recommendations adopted by regional Government, as outlined further under Sustainability, the limited financial resources of the monitoring groups are impacting upon their ability to perform their CRM functions on an on-going basis, resulting in them taking an increasingly ad hoc and informal approach to CRM activities. Further, whilst there is some evidence of collaboration between the coordination mechanisms in the target regions, and national level stakeholders in conducting CRM activities, there are no formal mechanisms connecting the IWGs in the regions with the Coordination Council, and this has not been a focus of the CRM programme to date.

### *Civil Society*

During the data collection, stakeholders generally spoke extremely positively about the effectiveness of UNICEF's capacity-building project for CSOs. Participants from civil society indicated that this training developed their skills in project development and implementation, and contributed to delivering positive outcomes for their beneficiaries. Further, participants in this training formed the pool of candidates who were subsequently appointed to the monitoring groups, and were therefore able to use and build upon their technical skills developed during this project in subsequent projects with the IWGs.

Despite these important achievements, high level participants from the NGOs would occasionally send a delegate (another employee or volunteer) to attend the trainings on their behalf, which 'affected the quality of perception of educational material,' as each module was intended to build upon the knowledge gained by participants during previous trainings.<sup>2</sup> In addition, participants from NGOs generally considered that they would benefit from further capacity building assistance from UNICEF to improve their technical skills.

### *Children's Ombudsperson*

The CRM programme is playing an integral role in the process of establishing a Children's Ombudsman in Uzbekistan, in line with international standards. Through this, the CRM programme is making good progress towards strengthening public oversight mechanisms to monitor children's rights. Since 2017, UNICEF has facilitated the establishment of and participated in an inter-agency working group of key stakeholders to draft the law establishing the Children's Ombudsperson, which is currently under discussion with Parliamentary stakeholders.

Some key issues concerning the mandate and structure of the Children's Ombudsman remain outstanding, which could have a significant impact on its future effectiveness as an independent CRM mechanism for children. To date, the draft law provides for the establishment of an 'Ombudsman for Children and Youth Rights' which would cover the rights of persons up to 30 years of age.<sup>3</sup> This arrangement risks diluting and eroding the effectiveness of this mechanism as a specialist monitoring body for children's issues, though this ultimately depends on how the body is structured, financed and resourced.

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<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on NGO Capacity-Building, November 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Participant from international organisation [details withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

Data suggests that awareness of the Ombudsman and of children's rights more generally is limited amongst children, particularly in the regions and rural areas of Uzbekistan. The participant from the Office of the Ombudsman acknowledged this challenge and considered that UNICEF support would be valuable in raising awareness of child rights and the Ombudsman in these areas.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Participants involved in UNICEF's CRM skills capacity-building projects generally spoke positively about these interventions and considered that they had strengthened their technical capacities to collect, analyse and use data to address inequities in children's rights. Importantly, participants from the monitoring groups reported that through the provision of financial assistance, UNICEF helped to build their capacities in other areas, such as budgeting, book keeping, and financial reporting.<sup>4</sup>

However, challenges remain in collecting accurate and reliable data at the regional levels through the monitoring groups and IWGs, partly stemming from a continuing need to strengthen stakeholder skills capacities in this area. More fundamentally, there are differing understandings amongst participants of what it means to 'monitor' children's rights. There was a tendency amongst participants to equate the monitoring of children's rights with the delivery of services or the 'protection' or 'implementation' of children's rights more generally. Further, there was some unawareness amongst Government focal points of the difference between Uzbekistan's international duty to establish a CRM mechanism within the State structure and an independent CRM mechanism.

The data highlights several practical challenges to the collection, analysis and use of data concerning children. These include differing data collection methods and indicators between agencies, resulting in challenges in comparing statistical data, and developing a holistic understanding of the situation of children; cumbersome and time-consuming administrative processes in collecting data from the community level and sharing these up the chain to the national level; lack of institutional independence of data collection agencies, and limited transparency in their data collection methods, which in turn creates difficulties in sharing and verifying data on children, as well as barriers to establishing public trust in official statistics; and perceptions of an inhibitive culture of blame, which continues to hinder the free exchange and use of data.

### **1.3.3. Efficiency**

The Country Programme and Multi-Year Work Plan 2016-2017 for Child Protection, under which several CRM programme activities were implemented, each provide combined budget forecasts for CRM and other activities. As it was not possible to identify forecast budgets for the CRM activities alone, it was not possible to conduct a full assessment of the financial efficiency of the CRM programme. However, project partners generally considered the CRM programme budget to be sufficient for covering the planned activities, with only some minor budgetary adjustments being required.

A closer look at the breakdown of the budget expenditure indicates that there was relatively little financial support for the Coordination Council at the national level. UNICEF's expenditure towards the Coordination Council was 3 per cent (USD 7,654) of the total CRM programme expenditure.<sup>5</sup> Approximately half of this expenditure was spent on direct cash transfers, with the other half on 'other' expenses such as events, travel, and translation. Given the barriers and challenges concerning the effectiveness of the Coordination Council, above, this finding suggests that, to date, insufficient financial resources have been allocated to building the

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<sup>4</sup> Monitoring Groups, Regions 1 and 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Excluding the expenditure on the CRM programme evaluation. Figures are as at 29 November 2018.

skills capacities and operational framework of the Coordination Council (e.g. through the provision of international or national technical assistance).

Participants reported that, on the whole, project activities were implemented on time. UNICEF provided essential material support to project partners, for example, by providing computers to monitoring group members, and materials and handouts for use during trainings, seminars and roundtables. Participants did not report any issues concerning the quality or quantity of material resources provided by UNICEF to support project implementation. Participants from UNICEF noted some challenges in the numbers of UNICEF personnel allocated to the CRM programme, particularly for UNICEF's project with the Women's Committee to establish and operationalise the monitoring groups in the programme regions, for which no more than two UNICEF personnel (a staff member and a consultant) were assigned to work on this project at any one time.

### **1.3.4. Sustainability**

#### *Financial Resources*

A significant proportion of the CRM programme budget was spent on maintaining the financial sustainability of the monitoring groups and Coordination Council. The vast majority (approximately 60 per cent / USD 104,697) of the budget spent on the monitoring groups was by way of direct cash transfers. Similarly, almost 50 per cent (USD 3,946) of the budget spent on the Coordination Council was by way of direct cash transfers. Participants from the monitoring groups generally reported that, since the conclusion of the CRM projects, they have been conducting monitoring group activities on a voluntary basis alongside their full-time jobs, and covering associated expenses themselves. The Coordination Council's working group has also reportedly disbanded with the expiry of UNICEF financial assistance.

Further, participants generally reported that there are insufficient State funds to support CRM activities within line Ministries, Government departments and public agencies. As a result, the activities of the IWGs were seen by some Government participants as "voluntary" activities alongside their full-time jobs. None of the Government line Ministries and departments reported having a dedicated budget for CRM.

Despite positive reports from NGO participants that the CRM programme had improved their ability to write successful funding proposals, and increased collaboration between Government and NGOs leading to small-scale collaborations and grants, they generally reported a lack of funding as a barrier to them performing their CRM activities.

#### *Human Resources*

Despite the commitment of monitoring group members, the absence of a secure budget and financial incentives for its members creates uncertainty over the sustainability of these mechanisms, particularly if there is a change of personnel. However, the CRM programme has played an integral role in building the capacities of and bringing together CRM stakeholders from different sectors via the monitoring groups, which is a highly significant achievement given the historically restrictive context for civil society activities. Monitoring group participants generally considered this to be a sustainable achievement, and one that was leading to small-scale collaborations in children's rights outside the framework of the CRM programme, funding permitting.

The high turnover of personnel within State institutions is a significant challenge to the development of CRM skills within this sector, particularly in light of recent Government reorganisations and restructurings. UNICEF's CRM capacity-building interventions have not been integrated into the institutional framework, which is a significant risk to the sustainability of this aspect of the CRM programme. However, with the recent Government reorganisation, opportunities are arising for placing CRM skills-development on a more institutional footing, particularly through the Oila Centre.

### **1.3.5. Impact**

Due to the barriers and challenges outlined above, it cannot be said that child rights are being monitored on a systematic basis at the national or regional levels. However, the CRM programme is making important progress towards achieving this goal. The CRM programme has played an important role in supporting the establishment of the governance and coordination framework for the CRM system via the revival of the Coordination Council. Despite the challenges facing the effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of this Council, there are reports that it is using monitoring data to address children's issues.

The analysis also indicates that the CRM programme has played an important role in building the skills capacities of monitoring groups and IWGs in programme regions, and facilitating the development of essential collaborative links between Government, public agencies and CSOs in identifying and addressing children's issues. Further, there are reports of recommendations from the CRM programme capacity-building activities being implemented by regional Governments, delivering concrete benefits to children. The CRM programme also appears to be contributing towards developing a conducive culture of 'accountability' for shortfalls in the realisation of child rights.

### **1.3.6. Cross-Cutting Issues**

The TOC adopts a human rights-based approach and integrates gender and other equity-based considerations relevant to the Uzbek context. By referencing '*girls and boys in Uzbekistan, especially the most vulnerable, progressively realise their rights in accordance with the CRC and CEDAW*', the intended impact of the CRM programme pays specific attention to gender-specific vulnerabilities. The CRM outputs and strategic interventions are framed in terms of strengthening the monitoring of the implementation of the full range of rights set out in the CRC.<sup>6</sup> Outcome 3 of the TOC also focuses upon strengthening the demand for and analysis and use of disaggregated data to advance equity issues concerning children in policy-making.

The CRM activities implemented during the evaluation period have adopted a human rights-based approach and focused upon addressing inequities in child rights. The four regions selected to take part in the CRM programme were selected based upon equity-based criteria. The projects also focused on monitoring equity issues of particular concern in the region.

In practice, inconsistent data collection procedures across State bodies, and the lack of disaggregated indicators in data collection methodologies and tools, creates challenges for monitoring the rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups of children. Children also reported that they thought that the rights of some children are protected more than others, most notably the rights of children from wealthy socio-economic backgrounds or children with parents in positions of authority.

## **1.4. Conclusions**

### **1.4.1. Relevance**

The CRM programme and the TOC are highly relevant to the policies, priorities and needs of UNICEF, key stakeholder groups and boys and girls in Uzbekistan. The focus on strengthening the CRM governance framework, particularly international and regional coordination mechanisms, establishing an independent national human rights institution (NHRI) for children, and developing skills capacities for conducting CRM, directly addresses the conclusions and recommendations of the CRC Committee and other international

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<sup>6</sup> E.g. Output 1 and its related strategic interventions relate to the establishment of platforms and mechanisms for critical partnerships with results-based and costed action plans for the implementation of the CRC.

human rights monitoring bodies. The CRM programme and TOC are also firmly in line with the agendas of the Government, UNICEF, and the UN more broadly.

Recent Presidential declarations for democratising and strengthening civil society engagement in Uzbekistan sets the tone for strengthening public accountability mechanisms and the quality, accuracy and transparency of official data collection processes and outputs. The findings of this evaluation have also shown that there is still a need to strengthen technical, material and financial capacities of NGOs, such that the focus on developing the capacities of CSOs in the TOC remains extremely relevant and timely.

Until this CRM programme, UNICEF had not focused on building institutional capacities for conducting CRM from the 'top-down,' though this is contemplated in the TOC. The recent reorganisation of State agencies and the appointment of new personnel within line Ministries and Government departments brings with them new opportunities for collaboration in this area. As the conclusions under Part 1.4.2 (Effectiveness) indicate, this is an area in which UNICEF's technical expertise and advocacy would be particularly valuable.

The TOC rightly refers to the normative barriers to developing the *demand* for CRM, which continue to present challenges to the development of a culture of accountability rooted in evaluative reflection and learning. At present, the draft outcomes, outputs and strategic interventions in the TOC do not address these barriers directly. There is therefore room to strengthen the TOC by including interventions focusing on increasing public awareness of the concept of child rights, CRM and the corresponding responsibilities of duty bearers, the notion of children as agents and right's holders, and of access to public accountability mechanisms, with a view to addressing these normative barriers.

#### **1.4.2. Effectiveness**

To date, the CRM programme has had made significant achievements in strengthening the CRM system, particularly with regard to the development of inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms and the concrete steps towards establishing an NHRI for children. The revival of the Coordination Council, and the establishment and operationalisation of the IWGs and monitoring groups have brought together and strengthened the skills capacities of regional Government and NGO counterparts in the programme regions which, given the historic challenges surrounding civil society operations, is a highly significant development.

As the next logical step in the development of the coordination mechanisms, there is a need to strengthen understanding, skills, methodologies and processes for conducting CRM within Government line-Ministries and public agencies from the top-down, and connecting this to the operations of the coordination mechanisms at both the national and local levels. These steps are essential for operationalising the CRM coordination mechanisms, which depend on the participation of Government bodies, and their awareness of their primary responsibility under international standards to monitor children's rights. By integrating the work of the coordination mechanisms into the working procedures of its constituent members, they are less likely to be viewed as an 'additional' workload and more as a facilitating mechanism for coordinating CRM functions. In order to achieve this, the Council's members would benefit from sustained technical capacity-building support, and a clear governance framework in order to conduct their CRM activities effectively.

It is acknowledged that the CRM programme had planned to support national partners in these areas, for example, through the development of the NPA and tailored indicators to measure implementation of the CRC, though these activities did not materialise in full. This was partly due to limited financial resources in partner institutions and some reluctance amongst national bodies, noting the normative barriers mentioned above. However, given the impetus of the Government to improve the quality and accuracy of data in line with international standards, and the upcoming periodic review before the CRC Committee, there may be new opportunities for collaboration in this area.

The establishment of an independent Children's Ombudsperson in line with the recommendations of the CRC Committee and international standards<sup>7</sup> should continue to be a focus in the CRM programme as this is essential for developing public accountability mechanisms. In this connection, the evaluation findings suggest that there is limited knowledge and awareness amongst children, particularly in rural areas and in the regions, of the concept of child rights, and of the existence and role of the Office of the Ombudsman, the existing mandate of which includes monitoring children's rights. These challenges will inevitably have implications on the new NHRI for children, regardless of whether it is established as an independent institution or integrated into the existing Office of the Ombudsman. Addressing the barriers to the 'demand' for CRM in the TOC, as explained under Part 1.4.1 (Relevance) above, will go some way to addressing these challenges.

### **1.4.3. Efficiency**

Based on the data available, the budget and materials allocated to the CRM programme during the evaluation period were generally sufficient, and the activities were implemented within budget. Programme activities have also generally been implemented on time. Although one planned activity (the development and customization of CRC indicators) was not implemented (see above), this was not due to there being insufficient funds. Whilst the allocation of UNICEF's human resources to some programme activities appears to have been limited, this did not impede the overall implementation of the CRM programme.

Given that the draft TOC is a work in progress, and that the aim of this evaluation is to inform future CRM programming, it is unsurprising that it does yet have a results framework outlining planned activities, budget allocation, timing, key targets, baseline data, indicators and methods for measuring progress. However, the development of such a framework is essential for monitoring and evaluating the efficiency, and indeed the other aspects of the CRM programme going forward, particularly as it consists of several smaller projects each with their own monitoring and evaluation processes.

The inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms at the national and regional levels have largely depended on UNICEF's financial support in order to function and incentivise individual members. A significant proportion (approximately 40 per cent) of UNICEF's CRM programme funding was spent on direct cash transfers for this purpose. Whilst this financial allocation was essential for operationalizing the coordination mechanisms at their initial stages, in order to support the development of the coordination mechanisms going forward, consideration should be made to reallocating a portion of these funds, as explained further under Part 1.4.4 (Sustainability) below, to support stakeholders in developing their knowledge, skills capacities and operational frameworks for conducting CRM, and thereby facilitating the sustainability of the coordination mechanisms.

### **1.4.4. Sustainability**

The biggest challenge facing the CRM programme to date concerns its sustainability. As noted above, UNICEF's financial assistance has played a pivotal role in funding and incentivising the work of the national and regional coordination mechanisms. Whilst the monitoring groups continue to exist today, this is largely due to the commitment of its individual members and small-scale collaborations with Government in the field of child rights in the programme regions. The Coordination Council's working group has also disbanded upon the expiry of UNICEF financial support.

Without a secure source of funding or strategy for applying for funds, and without formal recognition of the monitoring groups at the national level, there is a real risk that the coordination mechanisms will not continue

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<sup>7</sup> Most notably, the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 48/134 on 20 December 1993 (Paris Principles).

to function over the medium to long-term. This would be a significant step backwards given the progress made to date. As noted under Part 1.4.3 (Efficiency) above, reallocating a portion of the funding under the CRM programme from direct cash transfers to providing the required technical assistance, capacity-building and awareness-raising, as identified in Part 1.4.2 (Effectiveness) above, would support the sustainability of the coordination mechanisms going forward. However, given the importance of the direct cash transfers in sustaining these mechanisms, such support should not be completely withdrawn but, rather, gradually reduced as the technical capacities and institutionalisation of the coordination mechanisms are strengthened.

Despite the efforts by UNICEF and project partners to address challenges associated with 'brain drain', frequent staff turnover is affecting the sustainability of UNICEF's capacity-building initiatives. One gap has been the non-integration of UNICEF's capacity-building initiatives into existing training curricula (e.g. for civil servants). In this connection, opportunities for tailoring and integrating such trainings into the activities of existing training bodies should be explored.

#### **1.4.5. Impact**

Although child rights are not yet being monitored on a systematic basis in Uzbekistan, the CRM programme is making important progress towards achieving this goal. The establishment of coordination mechanisms at the national and local levels, and capacity-building activities, have led to proposals developed by the monitoring groups being adopted at the regional and even national levels. This is resulting in child rights reforms being adopted in non-programme regions, which is a **positive but unintended consequence** of the CRM programme. Whilst there is some evidence of a developing culture of accountability, the normative and operational barriers outlined above are hindering its progress. However, these are expected challenges given that the CRM system is in a process of development. As the conclusions suggest, the CRM programme should continue to work closely with stakeholders to sustain the outputs and outcomes achieved to date.

#### **1.4.6. Cross-Cutting Issues**

Although both the TOC and the CRM programme activities implemented during the evaluation period have adopted a human rights-based approach and have integrated gender and other equity-based considerations relevant to the Uzbek context, the CRM mechanisms are still in the process of development. As a result, at the present time, the rights of girls and boys, particularly those from marginalised or vulnerable groups, are not yet being monitored on a systematic basis. Challenges to ensuring a systematic monitoring system stem partly from inconsistent data collection procedures across State bodies, and some lack of disaggregated indicators in methodologies and tools for the collection of official statistics. Feedback from children also indicated that discriminatory attitudes and practices towards particularly vulnerable groups of children, such as children with HIV or AIDS, children with disabilities (CWD) and children from poorer socio-economic circumstances, remain, lending further support to conclusion above on the need for the TOC to address the barriers to creating a 'demand' for CRM directly.

### **1.5. Lessons Learned**

#### **1.5.1. Bottom-Up or Top-Down Approach?**

The evaluation highlights an important lesson learned in terms of UNICEF's approach to engaging with CRM stakeholders. UNICEF programming has primarily focused on building the capacities of and facilitating inter-sectoral collaboration from the bottom-up. This was reflected in the capacity-building of NGOs and in the establishment and operationalisation of monitoring groups to support the IWGs in CRM at the community levels. However, recognising that key policy decisions regarding CRM activities are made at the national level, and the limitation in the ability of regional CRM mechanisms to address structural and policy barriers to inequities in child rights, UNICEF has resumed its focus on working with national-level stakeholders to develop the institutional and governance framework for the CRM system. This is mainly reflected in its support to the

Deputy Prime Minister/ Chair of the Women's Committee in re-establishing and operationalising the Coordination Council, and to the NHRC to develop the draft law for establishing the Children's Ombudsman.

The evaluation findings reinforce the importance of continuing to engage with stakeholders at the national level in order to mainstream and sustain CRM developments. This is reflected in the need for formal recognition of the monitoring groups at the national level, integration of capacity-building initiatives into existing curricula and training frameworks, and the mainstreaming of CRM procedures within Government bodies and public agencies in order for them to feed into departmental practices at the lower levels.

### **1.5.2. CRM in UNICEF Programming**

Whilst it is too soon to conduct a full assessment of the effectiveness of the recent move of the CRM programme from under UNICEF's Child Protection programme section to the Monitoring and Evaluation programme section, this evaluation indicates that this move, in itself, has not resulted in the integration of CRM across all UNICEF programme sections. The CRM programme is currently implemented as a standalone programme. Further, the TOC does not indicate where and how CRM activities, outputs and outcomes will be mainstreamed across all UNICEF programme areas. Whilst the repositioning of the CRM programme is a logical and coherent move in light of the cross-cutting nature of CRM, its efficacy ultimately depends upon how it is implemented in practice, and whether UNICEF programme section teams collaborate in ensuring an integrated approach to meeting the objectives of the programme. This lesson learned is particularly important given that this internal approach to CRM programming is being rolled out by UNICEF offices throughout the region.

## **1.6. Recommendations**

### **1.6.1. Coordination Council**

In the short term, it is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other constituent members of the Coordination Council to build the financial and institutional sustainability of this coordination mechanism. In line with international standards, it is recommended that this should include the provision of technical support to build the capacities of Government line Ministries and other public bodies to develop 'child rights-based' budgets or, at least to cost and allocate sufficient funds from their existing budgets, towards their CRM activities (see Part 1.6.3 below). Steps to support the institutional sustainability of the Coordination Council could include advocating for assignment of one or more full-time personnel from the Secretariat of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to support the administrative functions of the Council; and
- Advocate for the inclusion of key bodies currently unrepresented on the Coordination Council, including the Office of the General Prosecutor, Supreme Court and Oila Centre.

In the medium term, it is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Advocate and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other constituent bodies of the Coordination Council to develop a new, costed national action plan for the Coordination Council's activities over a five-year period. The framework or action plan should be rooted in the CRC, its Optional Protocols and, ideally, the recommendations of the CRC Committee from Uzbekistan's upcoming periodic review. This should take place in conjunction with the capacity-building activities, below, and adopt a results-based management approach to monitoring;
- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to revive the working group, as resolved by the Coordination Council at its inaugural meeting.

### **1.6.2. IWGs and Monitoring Groups**

It is recommended that the IWGs and monitoring groups adopt a similar approach to the Coordination Council and its working group at the national level. Therefore, in the short term, is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Khokims in the programme regions to develop operational protocols connecting the work of the IWGs to the Coordination Council, with direct reporting lines between the Deputy Khokim and Deputy Prime Minister. In parallel, there should be direct reporting lines between other members of the IWGs with their counterparts at the national level (where applicable), particularly between Government departments and line Ministries;
- Advocate for the inclusion of key bodies currently unrepresented on the IWGs, including a focal point from the regional finance department, prosecution service, judiciary and Oila Centre;
- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Khokim and other constituent members of the IWGs to build the financial and institutional sustainability of this coordination mechanism. In line with international standards, it is recommended that this should include the provision of technical support to build the capacities of Government authorities and other public bodies to develop 'child rights-based' budgets or, at least to cost and allocate sufficient funds from their existing budgets, towards their CRM activities (see Part 1.6.3 below). Steps to support the institutional sustainability of the IWGs could include advocating for the assignment of one or more full-time personnel from the Secretariat of the Office of the Deputy Khokim to support the administrative functions of the IWG and monitoring bodies.

Similarly, in the medium term, it is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Advocate and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Khokim and other constituent bodies of the IWG to develop a new, costed regional action plan for the IWG's activities. The framework should be based on the national action plan developed and monitored by the Coordination Council, above. It should also be rooted in the CRC, its Optional Protocols and the recommendations of the CRC Committee from Uzbekistan's upcoming periodic review. Again, this should take place in conjunction with the capacity-building activities, below, and adopt a results-based management approach to monitoring;
- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Cabinet of Ministers at the national level to pass a resolution recognising the role of the monitoring bodies in supporting the IWGs to implement their CRM functions. It is recommended that the resolution clarifies that the role of the monitoring bodies is not to replace or supplement the role of Government in monitoring children's rights but, rather, is to provide a mechanism for operational specialists from the IWG's constituent members to work together to implement the IWG's monitoring functions. Therefore, the composition of the monitoring bodies should reflect the composition of the IWG, as initially intended when the monitoring groups were established.

### **1.6.3. Knowledge and Skills-Based Training**

It is recommended that UNICEF considers providing technical assistance to relevant training bodies to develop a knowledge and skills-based training-of-trainers course, focusing on a broader education on children's rights; the aims, objectives and purpose of CRM and the CRM coordination mechanisms; child rights budgeting; and the effective use of data to monitor child rights, with a view to integrating this course into on-going training programmes provided to Government civil servants and staff of public agencies. Consideration should also be made to supporting the integration of the CRM capacity-building trainings for NGOs into existing training programmes, which may be offered to NGO staff periodically.

### **1.6.4. Developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks**

In the medium to long-term, it is recommended that **UNICEF's Monitoring and Evaluation programme section, in collaboration with UNICEF's other programme sections**, work with Government counterparts to strengthen national systems for data collection, verification, analysis and use, to establish a harmonised data collection system for CRM bodies with the inclusion of indicators rooted in the CRC and disaggregated according to gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographical location, migrant status, and disability status. These activities should be coordinated with the CRM framework developed in collaboration with the

Coordination Council and should take place in parallel with the development and delivery of the knowledge and skills-based training, above.

#### 1.6.5. NHRI

It is recommended that that UNICEF should, in the short to medium term, continue to provide technical assistance to the NHRC, working group and other stakeholders to develop the legal and institutional framework for the establishment of an independent Children's Ombudsperson, in line with international standards. In doing so, UNICEF should continue to advocate for the allocation of sufficient human, financial and materials resources to the NHRI to ensure that, if the new body is mandated to monitor the rights of *youth* as well as children, it will have sufficient capacity to focus on children's issues.

#### 1.6.6. Awareness-Raising

It is recommended that UNICEF integrates an awareness-raising component in its TOC to strengthen public knowledge and understanding of child rights over the long-term. The awareness-raising activities should pay particular attention to the rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups of children with a view to addressing discriminatory attitudes and perceptions and inequities in the realisation of their rights. These initiatives should include outreach initiatives targeting children and communities in rural and remote areas, and involve the participation of children in the design and implementation of such projects. As UNICEF's programme sections already conduct campaigns of this nature, consideration should be made to integrating these campaigns into the CRM programme (and vice versa), thereby encouraging synergies between the CRM programme and programmes sections, and overall mainstreaming of CRM as a cross-cutting issue.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Object of the Evaluation

UNICEF Uzbekistan has engaged Coram International as consultants to conduct an independent evaluation of UNICEF's child rights monitoring (CRM) programme in Uzbekistan from 2016 to September 2018, with due consideration being given to key CRM activities implemented pre-2016 which are integral to UNICEF's existing CRM programme. UNICEF's current approach to CRM is reflected in its draft Child Rights Monitoring and Evaluation Theory of Change 2017-2020 (TOC), which will form part of the object of the evaluation. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for this consultancy are enclosed in **Appendix 8.1**.

**Refining the TOR:** The TOR stipulates that the object of evaluation will be UNICEF's CRM programme for the period from 2014 to 2017. However, given that the overall objective of this formative evaluation is to assess the approach to CRM under the revised TOC and the Country Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Uzbekistan and UNICEF 2016-2020 (Country Programme) in order to inform their future development, it would be more coherent to mirror the Country Programme period (2016 to 2020), focusing on activities implemented under the Country Programme to date. Further, an assessment has already been carried out into the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt from the CRM Programme 2010-2015 such that it would not be cost efficient to repeat this analysis.

During the evaluation period, UNICEF implemented six CRM projects, which form part of the object. These projects include supporting: (i) the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council on Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Coordination Council); (ii) the development of the content of the National Plan of Action on the implementation of CRC Committee recommendations

based on Uzbekistan's combined third and fourth periodic report (NPA); (iii) the development of the draft law on the establishment of the Children's Ombudsperson; (iv) strengthening the work of the monitoring groups in Jizzakh, Khorezm, Ferghana and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (RoK); (v) the development of an 'Analytical Report on the Results of Monitoring Legislation of Uzbekistan on Children's Property Rights' by the National Human Rights Centre (NHRC); and (vi) the analysis of the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) by the NHRC. These activities are detailed in **Appendix 8.2**.

A preliminary desk review indicates that there is no strict dividing line between some of UNICEF's CRM activities pre- and post-2016 and that consideration should be made to certain CRM activities implemented between 2014 and 2016 in order to understand and evaluate the existing programme. Therefore, due consideration will be given to two related CRM projects implemented between 2014 and 2016: capacity-building of civil society organisations (CSOs); and the operationalisation of the monitoring groups and inter-agency working groups (IWGs) in Jizzakh, Khorezm, Ferghana and the RoK. These projects are detailed in **Appendix 8.2**.

## 2.2. Theory of Change

The TOC for the CRM programme consists of 15 'strategic interventions', seven outputs, and three outcomes, all of which are intended to achieve the following impact by 2020: *girls and boys of Uzbekistan, especially the most vulnerable, progressively realise their rights in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by 2020.*

The CRM programme in the draft TOC is national in scope, although activities implemented to date have focused on the national level, the regions of Ferghana; Jizzakh and Khorezm, and the RoK (see further below).

The indirect beneficiaries of the programme are girls and boys of Uzbekistan (i.e. all under 18s), 'especially the most vulnerable', although these vulnerable groups are undefined in the TOC. The draft TOC does not include a results framework with target indicators or a clear list of direct beneficiaries. However, based on the general 'stakeholder' analysis which forms part of the draft TOC, the research team have been able to identify the following list of eight stakeholder groups/ sectors which appear to be the direct beneficiaries of the CRM programme:

- (i) Parliament; (ii) line Ministries at the national level working on children's rights (including the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Public Education (MOPE) and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA)); (iii) regional level Government bodies, including Deputy Khokims, departments of health, education and justice; (iv) public bodies active in the field of children's rights and/or CRM, including the Women's Committee at the national and regional levels, the NHRC, the State Committee of Uzbekistan on Statistics (Goskomstat), the Office of the Ombudsman; (v) if established, the Ombudsman for Children; (vi) CSOs active in the field of children's rights; (vii) independent experts and academia; (viii) international organisations, including UNICEF.

The draft TOC is summarised further below, with a more detailed extract of the TOC enclosed in **Appendix 8.3**.

### **Outcome 1: Key stakeholders coordinate effectively on the implementation of child rights**

- **OUTPUT 1:** Platforms and mechanisms for critical partnerships with results based and costed action plans for the implementation of the CRC are established;
- **OUTPUT 2:** Technical assistance in developing systems for monitoring progress of implementation of child rights

**Strategic interventions:** Establishment of the Coordination Council and working group on the implementation of the CRC; establishment of coordination mechanisms between the Coordination Council at the national level, and IWGs and CSOs on the implementation of the CRC; development of a strategy for the sustainability and ownership of the Coordination Council and IWGs based on lessons learnt from previous interventions; and the provision of technical assistance and advocacy in the development of costed national and regional level action plans for the implementation of the CRC.

#### **Outcome 2: Public oversight systems are strengthened to respond effectively to child rights issues**

- **OUTPUT 3:** Ombudsman for Children is established and has sufficient technical, human and financial resources;
- **OUTPUT 4:** National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) have enhanced technical capacity to advance progress on the implementation of recommendations issued by the CRC Committee;
- **OUTPUT 5:** CSOs have sufficient financial and technical capacity to implement programmes that advance child rights.

**Strategic interventions:** Advocacy and endorsement of the law on the establishment of a separate Ombudsman for Children with adequate resources; provision of technical assistance and information on international best practice and standards on key legislative reforms; capacity-building and technical assistance on developing CRC indicators and conducting analyses for the purposes of reporting and conducting advocacy on the implementation of the CRC; supporting advocacy and discussion forums on CRC Committee recommendations which have not been formally accepted by the Government of Uzbekistan; provision of support in seeking financial resources and technical assistance in building the capacity of CSOs to implement programmes to advance child rights.

**Direct beneficiaries:** (new) Ombudsman for Children; NHRC; Office of the Ombudsman; CSOs active in the field of children's rights.

#### **Outcome 3: Decision-makers demand, analyse and use disaggregated data to advance equity issues relating to children in policy-making**

- **OUTPUT 6:** Relevant (non) Government stakeholders have increased capacity and commitment to generate and analyse quality and disaggregated data; and
- **OUTPUT 7:** Relevant (non) Government stakeholders have increased capacity and commitment to share and use quality and disaggregated data.

**Strategic interventions:** Capacity-building and technical assistance to Goskomstat and its Training and Research Centre, sectoral monitoring systems, think tanks, academia and research centres and the UN to generate quality and disaggregated data; capacity-building and technical assistance to national and local Governments and CSOs to develop their capacity to carry out equity-based analyses of child rights in collaboration with UNICEF programmes; assessing the effectiveness of CRM interventions and developing the strategic direction for UNICEF support; technical assistance and advocacy to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination on data in collaboration with UNICEF, other UN organisations and other stakeholders; continuously updating and implementing an advocacy strategy on data.

The CRM programme is mid-way through its implementation. A list of 'strategic interventions'/ activities implemented between 2016-2018 (including details on the nature of UNICEF's contributions and identification of implementing partners) is enclosed in **Appendix 8.2**.

### **2.3. Positioning of the CRM Programme within UNICEF**

The CRM programme is an integral part of the Country Programme. The results framework for the Country Programme includes the following CRM-related output, 'by 2020, authorities at all levels and CSOs have increased capacity to effectively contribute to child rights monitoring and reporting,' which corresponds to Outcome 3 of the Country Programme on achieving 'increased access by boys and girls to prevention and response services to address violence, abuse and neglect.'<sup>8</sup> Monitoring is also included in the Country Programme as a cross-cutting outcome more generally, though it primarily relates to the monitoring of Country Programme results.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.4. Programme Budget

The Country Programme does not have a dedicated CRM budget. The total planned budget for the Country Programme 2016-2020 is US\$19,295,000 (from regular resources) and US\$13,500,000 in other resources, although actual expenditure is likely to depend on fundraising of other resources from donors.

However, with a view to achieving Outcome 3 of its Country Programme (on preventing and responding to violence against children), UNICEF entered into the Multiyear Work Plan 2016-2017 for Child Protection with (amongst others) the NHRC and Women's Committee. One of the expected outputs of the Work Plan was that 'by 2020, authorities at all levels and CSOs have increased capacity to effectively contribute to child rights monitoring and reporting.' The total budget allocated to the Multiyear Work Plan 2016-2017 was USD1,655,00 (USD655,000 in Year 1; and USD1,000,000 in Year 2). The Multiyear Work Plan did not have a budget specifically allocated to 'CRM' activities.

Further, UNICEF adopted two Annual Work Plans for 2018, one with the NHRC and the other with the Women's Committee, both of which aim to achieve Outcome 3 of the Country Programme, focusing on CRM in its own right. The total forecast budget for CRM programme activities under the 2018 Annual Work Plan with the NHRC was USD38,700, and the total forecast budget for the CRM component of the 2018 Annual Work Plan with the Women's Committee was USD154,000. A breakdown of the forecast budget is enclosed in **Appendix 8.4**.

## 2.5. Context

### 2.5.1. International Standards on CRM

For the purposes of this evaluation, 'child rights monitoring' or 'CRM' means the proactive method of collecting, verifying, analysing and using data to address child rights issues with the ultimate goal of improving the realisation of children's rights. This definition is based on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' description of *monitoring* which, though developed in the context of international human rights, can be used as the basis for producing guidance on monitoring in domestic contexts.<sup>10</sup>

International standards obligate States to establish two different types of monitoring mechanisms: 1) a *well-coordinated governmental mechanism* of monitoring that lies within the State structure; and 2) an independent monitoring mechanism. Uzbekistan's obligations to establish these mechanisms stem from Article 4 of the CRC<sup>11</sup> which requires States Parties to '*undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative,*

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<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, *Draft Country Programme Document: Uzbekistan*, E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20, 15 June 2015, p 15/16.

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF, *Draft Country Programme Document: Uzbekistan*, E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20, 15 June 2015, p 15/16.

<sup>10</sup> OHCHR, *Manual on Human Rights Monitoring*, 2011 revised edition, p. iii and viii.

<sup>11</sup> Uzbekistan acceded to the CRC on 29 June 1994.

*and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention.*' As highlighted by the CRC Committee, general measures of implementation for these purposes include, *'the establishment of coordinating and monitoring bodies - governmental and independent.'*<sup>12</sup> The CRC Committee continues to state that *'[r]igorous monitoring of implementation is required, which should be built into the process of government at all levels but also independent monitoring by national human rights institutions, NGOs and others.'*<sup>13</sup>

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action<sup>14</sup> and the 'Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights' (Paris Principles)<sup>15</sup> are the main international documents providing guidance on the establishment and operation of independent human rights monitoring mechanisms.<sup>16</sup> The CRC Committee's General Comments No. 2 on the 'role of independent national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child'<sup>17</sup> and No. 5 on 'General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child'<sup>18</sup> also promote the importance of establishing effective CRM mechanisms to meet CRC obligations and contain guidance on the mandate, structure and functioning of these mechanisms. These international standards form the basis of the conceptual framework for the evaluation, ensuring the adoption of a human rights-based approach to the process and outcomes of the project (see Part 4.1 below).

### **2.5.2. Political, Socio-Economic and Legal Context**

Uzbekistan declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and was admitted as a member of the UN on 2 March 1992. Today, it is classified as a lower-middle income country by the World Bank with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$48.7 billion and GDP per capita of US\$1,504.<sup>19</sup> Following the Presidential elections of 4 December 2016, the country has taken steps to liberalise the economy and has set goal of achieving upper-middle income status by 2030.<sup>20</sup>

Uzbekistan adopted a National Development Strategy 2017-2021, which focuses on development in five priority areas: (i) the State system, including the reform of the systems of public administration and management, incorporating the development of civil society institutions to enhance their social and political activism; (ii) rule of law and judicial system, including guarantees for the protection of citizens' rights; (iii) economic development and liberalisation; (iv) social development; (v) security, religious tolerance, inter-ethnic harmony and foreign policy. Given the cross-cutting nature of CRM and need to integrate robust data collection, verification, analysis and use across all sectors, the National Development Strategy 2017-2021 provides a robust basis for a CRM reform agenda.

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<sup>12</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 5 (2003) on General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, CRC/GC/2003/5, 27 November 2003, para 9

<sup>13</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 5 (2003) on General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, CRC/GC/2003/5, 27 November 2003, para 27

<sup>14</sup> Vienna Declaration, World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14 - 25 June 1993, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.157/24 (Part I) at 20 (1993)

<sup>15</sup> Adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 48/134 on 20 December 1993.

<sup>16</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 48/134, 48 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 252, U.N. Doc. A/48/49, 20 December 1993.

<sup>17</sup> The role of independent national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child (Thirty-second session, 2003), U.N. Doc. CRC/GC/2002/2 (2002), reprinted in *Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies*, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.6 at 289 (2003).

<sup>18</sup> General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Thirty-fourth session, 2003), U.N. Doc. CRC/GC/2003/5 (2003).

<sup>19</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank in Uzbekistan: Country Snapshot*, April 2018, p 1; World Bank, *Data for Uzbekistan, Lower Middle Income*, retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/?locations=UZ-XN> on 27 September 2018.

<sup>20</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank in Uzbekistan: Country Snapshot*, April 2018, pp 1-2.

Uzbekistan has an estimated population of over 33 million people,<sup>21</sup> approximately 37 per cent of whom are aged 0 to 19.<sup>22</sup> Government statistics also indicate that the population is multi-ethnic. As at 1 January 2017, approximately 83.8 per cent of the population were Uzbek, 4.8 per cent were Tajik, 2.5 per cent were Kazakh, 2.3 per cent were Russian, and 2.2 per cent were Karakalpaks.<sup>23</sup> The remaining 4.4 per cent consisted of Kyrgyz, Tatars, Turkmens, Koreans, Ukrainians and others. An estimated 49.4 per cent of the population live in rural areas.<sup>24</sup> The official language of Uzbekistan is Uzbek.<sup>25</sup>

The Constitution of Uzbekistan is the supreme law of the State. The Constitution stipulates that Uzbekistan is 'sovereign democratic republic' with the *Oliy Majlis* (Supreme Assembly/ Parliament) and President of the Republic elected by the people.<sup>26</sup> The Oliy Majlis is divided into two chambers: the Senate (upper house) and Legislative Chamber (lower house). The work of the Legislative Chamber is supported by the work of committees of members which are a key stakeholder in CRM. The responsibilities of the committees include drafting legislation, discussing draft laws, preparing discussions on legal issues for debate in the Legislative Chamber including proposals to amend the law, and hearing reports from State authorities on the implementation of laws.<sup>27</sup> The committees may also create working groups to review proposed legal projects, with the involvement of State representatives and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), experts and others.<sup>28</sup>

Uzbekistan is made up of 12 regions, the RoK, and the City of Tashkent, which are further divided into districts and towns. Local governments are established at the regional, district, city and town levels. The *Kenghashes* (Councils) of People's Deputies are the representative government bodies in the regions and are headed by the *Khokim*.<sup>29</sup> The Khokim is also the head of the local executive branch, the *Khokimiyat*.<sup>30</sup> The RoK has an independent Constitution, which was adopted on 9 April 1993. Its legislative body (Parliament) is the *Jukorgy Kenges*. The highest executive body in the RoK is the Council of Ministers, which is headed by the Chairman. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers is proposed by the Chairperson of the *Jukorgy Kenges*, although the appointment must be approved by the President of Uzbekistan.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Website of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Demographic Situation*, retrieved from <https://stat.uz/en/press-center/news-committee/4907-demographic-situation-5> on 22 October 2018.

<sup>22</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank in Uzbekistan: Country Snapshot*, April 2018, pp 1-2; the State Committee on Statistics, *Demographic Situation in Uzbekistan*, retrieved from <https://www.stat.uz/en/official-statistics/demography-and-labor/statistical-tables/435-analitcheskie-materialy-en1/2075-demographic-situation-in-the-republic-of-uzbekistan> on 28 September 2018.

<sup>23</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, *Demographic Situation*, Table 2 – Ethnic Structure, retrieved from <https://stat.uz/en/435-analitcheskie-materialy-en1/2075-demographic-situation-in-the-republic-of-uzbekistan> on 27 September 2018.

<sup>24</sup> [Website](#) of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *The number of urban and rural population by region*, retrieved from <https://stat.uz/en/official-statistics/demography-and-labor/statistical-tables/219-ofytsyalnaia-statystyka-en/demografiya-i-trud-en/4317-the-number-of-urban-and-rural-population-by-region> on 22 October 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Constitution of Uzbekistan, Article 4.

<sup>26</sup> Constitution of Uzbekistan, Articles 1 and 10.

<sup>27</sup> Committees of the Oily Majlis, retrieved from the website of the Oily Majlis (<http://parliament.gov.uz/en/structure/committee/>) on 4 October 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Committees of the Oily Majlis, retrieved from the website of the Oily Majlis (<http://parliament.gov.uz/en/structure/committee/>) on 4 October 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Constitution, Article 99

<sup>30</sup> Constitution, Article 102

<sup>31</sup> Information retrieved from <http://www.karakalpak.com/stangov.html> on 22 October 2018.

Civil society is not yet vibrant in Uzbekistan. In 2005, NGOs were required to re-register, which led to a significant reduction in their presence in the country.<sup>32</sup> Whilst acknowledging recent positive steps to improve consultation between Government and civil society, in 2013, the CRC Committee remained concerned that the current registration system leads to a lack of independence of NGOs, particularly in relation to finances and policy.<sup>33</sup> In 2015, the UN Human Rights Committee also expressed concern, commenting on ‘unreasonable, burdensome and restrictive requirements for registering.... public associations, as well as about termination of registration of international human rights organizations or other obstacles to the work of human rights [NGOs]’.<sup>34</sup>

However, recent political developments have the potential to create a more conducive environment for civil society to flourish in the country. In 2018, a Presidential Decree was adopted on fundamentally increasing the role of civil society institutions in the process of the country’s ‘democratic renewal.’ This decree acknowledges systemic challenges affecting the active participation of NGOs and sets out a number of steps to be taken to address these problems.<sup>35</sup> Further, the Government has reported the exemption of NGOs from 10 types of taxes, the removal of restrictions for NGOs to open bank accounts and the introduction of electronic registration to facilitate their establishment.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.5.3. Key CRM Mechanisms

The **NHRC** was established on 31 October 1996 by Presidential Decree UP-1611 and is an inter-departmental, non-profit, State body.<sup>37</sup> The NHRC has wide powers under the law to monitor human rights, including developing a national action plan and strategy to implement human rights set out in the Constitution, domestic law and ‘universally recognised norms of international human rights law; developing cooperation between human rights organisations in Uzbekistan and internationally; preparing national reports on the extent to which human rights are respected and protected in Uzbekistan; establishing an information database on the implementation and promotion of human rights and freedoms; providing recommendations for public authorities to enhance respect for and protection of human rights; requesting line Ministries and State departments to provide it with information on the promotion, implementation and protection of human rights.’<sup>38</sup> The NHRC is responsible for coordinating the preparation of Uzbekistan’s State Report to the CRC Committee’s periodic review process.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Website of the International Centre for Non-Profit Law, *Civil Freedom Monitor: Uzbekistan*, retrieved from <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/uzbekistan.html> on 11 October 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations: Uzbekistan*, CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, 10 July 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Human Rights Committee, *Concluding Observations on the fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan*, CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, August 2015, para 25.

<sup>35</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, Presidential Decree on measures of fundamentally increasing the role of civil society institutions in the process of democratic renewal of the country, 24 May 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Report of the Working Group of the UPR, A/HRC/39/7, 9 July 2018, para 9.

<sup>37</sup> Presidential Decree of the President of Uzbekistan on the Establishment of the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan, 31 October 1996, Arts 1 and 2; Regulations of the NHRC, para 6, Annex No. 1 to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan on the Organisation of Activities of the NHRC No. 399, 13 November 1996.

<sup>38</sup> Presidential Decree of the President of Uzbekistan on the Establishment of the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan, 31 October 1996, Arts 1, 2 and 8.

<sup>39</sup> The State report for its fifth periodic review was due on 28 January 2018, but was not published on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the time of writing: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=UZB&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=UZB&Lang=EN), retrieved on 23 November 2018.

**The Office of the Ombudsman** is Uzbekistan's NHRI and was established in 1995 upon initiative of the President.<sup>40</sup> The legal basis of the office was secured upon passage of the Law 'On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)' on 24 April 1997, which was subsequently amended on 27 August 2004 and in August 2017.<sup>41</sup> The Ombudsman is elected by both houses of Parliament, after being nominated by the President<sup>42</sup> for a term of five years. The Office of the Ombudsman is funded by the State budget, in which it appears as a separate cost item.<sup>43</sup>

The Ombudsman is mandated to '*ensure parliamentary control over compliance of [organisations and officials] with legislation on human rights and freedoms*'.<sup>44</sup> A main role of the Ombudsman is to consider individual inquiries submitted by citizens of Uzbekistan, foreign citizens and stateless persons residing in Uzbekistan, and third parties including NGOs, '*on violations of rights, freedoms and legitimate interests*'.<sup>45</sup> Minors may submit their complaints through a legal representative.<sup>46</sup>

To date, neither the NHRC nor Ombudsman has applied to the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRIs) for accreditation in light of the Paris Principles.

**The Women's Committee** is a public association mandated to provide full support to women, protect their rights, ensure the full participation of women in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country, and ensure the spiritual and intellectual development of women and youth.<sup>47</sup> On 2 February 2018, the Women's Committee's mandate was expanded through Presidential Decree 5325 to include the identification and undertaking of targeted work with particularly vulnerable women and families.<sup>48</sup> This Decree also approved the restructuring of the Women's Committee to include a specialist working with women and families at the community level.<sup>49</sup> The decree further approved the establishment of a Public Fund for women and families.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Website of the Ombudsman, *About the Ombudsman*, retrieved from <http://ombudsman.uz/en/about/ombudsman/> on 4 October 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)*, Act of 24 April 1997, No. 4–5; and Government of Uzbekistan, *On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)*, Act of 27 August 2004, No. 669-II

<sup>42</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)*, Act of 27 August 2004, No. 669-II, Article 3

<sup>43</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)*, Act of 27 August 2004, No. 669-II, Article 21

<sup>44</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)*, Act of 27 August 2004, No. 669-II, No. 669-II

<sup>45</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)*, Act of 27 August 2004, No. 669-II, Article 10

<sup>46</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *On Human Rights Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman)*, Act of 27 August 2004, No. 669-II, Article 11. Its other activities include promoting international cooperation on issues of human rights, entailing participating in the preparation of reports on the implementation of international treaties; fostering bilateral cooperation with the Ombudsman Offices of other nations; participation in international forums; welcoming visits of foreign delegations; and reviewing any appeals made by international organisations regarding the protection of human rights in Uzbekistan; Kofler B. (2008) Uzbekistan. In: Kucsko-Stadlmayer G. (eds) *European Ombudsman-Institutions*. Springer, Vienna; website of the Ombudsman, *International Collaboration*, retrieved from <http://ombudsman.uz/en/international/> on 4 October 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Charter of the Women's Committee, paras 1.1 and 2.1; Decree of the President on Strengthening the Role of Women in State and Public Construction of Uzbekistan, para 1.

<sup>48</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, Presidential Decree 5325: About Measures on Radical Enhancement of Activities in the Sphere of Promotion of Women and Strengthening of the Family, Article 2, 2 February 2018.

<sup>49</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, Presidential Decree 5325: About Measures on Radical Enhancement of Activities in the Sphere of Promotion of Women and Strengthening of the Family, Article 4, 2 February 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, Presidential Decree 5325: About Measures on Radical Enhancement of Activities in the Sphere of Promotion of Women and Strengthening of the Family, Article 13, 2 February 2018.

**The Coordination Council** is an inter-sectoral body established in 2017 pursuant to a Protocol approved by the Deputy Prime Minister. The Coordination Council brings together CRM stakeholders from Government line Ministries, public institutions, civil society and international organisations at the national level.<sup>51</sup> The Coordination's Council's regulations state that it has four goals: to coordinate measures by Ministries, departments, public and international organisations, and CSOs in observing child rights; participate in formulating public policies to ensure implementation of the basic principles of the CRC; establish priorities in realising public policies on the implementation of the CRC; and identify programmes that require priority funding and technical support from international organisations.<sup>52</sup>

Besides its coordinating function, the Coordinating Council's objectives include collecting and analysing data on child rights by conducting situational analyses in partnership with national and international specialists; providing support in strengthening the capacity of public authorities in the implementation of the CRC; using data to submit recommendations to the Government on improving public policies concerning child rights as well as developing proposals for public policy, strategy and legislation on child rights itself; and developing a proposal to establish a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the CRC.<sup>53</sup>

**IWGs and monitoring groups:** On 14 October 2011, the Cabinet of Ministers passed Resolution No. 280 which adopted a National Plan of Action for Children 2011-2013, and mandated all regions of Uzbekistan to adopt corresponding Regional Plans of Action and establish IWGs at the national and regional levels to coordinate and monitor their implementation.<sup>54</sup> The IWGs consisted of members from Government departments dealing with issues of health, education and justice, and were responsible for developing Regional Action Plans for the implementation of CRC Committee recommendations.<sup>55</sup> In Ferghana, Jizzak, Khorezm and the RoK, with UNICEF assistance (see UNICEF programming below), 'monitoring groups' were also established as subsidiary bodies of the IWGs to gather and report data to the IWGs to inform the development of the Regional Action Plans.<sup>56</sup> The chairwomen of the regional Women's Committee (who is also the Regional Deputy Khokim), leads the IWGs and provides a link between the IWGs and Khokim.<sup>57</sup> It is noted that Resolution No. 280 also provided for the establishment of a national level IWG although this stopped functioning in 2014<sup>58</sup> and was later revived in the form of the existing Coordination Council.

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<sup>51</sup> Its members include the Deputy Prime Minister (who is also Chair of the Women's Committee); Director of the NHRC; First Deputy Ministers from the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and MOHSSE; Deputy Ministers from the MOH, Ministry of Finance and MOPE; Senior Officer at the Main Directorate for Crime Prevention of the MOIA; First Deputy Chair of the Goskomstat; Vice Chair of the Women's Committee; Deputy Chair of the State Committee for Physical Education and Sports; Deputy Director of the Centre for Secondary Special and Vocational Education; Director of the Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children; Deputy Chairperson of the Public Youth Movement, Kamolot; Deputy Chairperson of the Mahalla Foundation; Deputy Director of the Republican Public Children's Fund, Sen Yolgiz Emassan; and the Representative of the Cabinet of Ministers. Regulations on the Interdepartmental Coordination Council on Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Uzbekistan, para 1, Annex 2 to the Protocol of the meeting of the Coordination Council, approved by the Deputy Prime Minister on 14 September 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Regulations on the Interdepartmental Coordination Council on Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Uzbekistan, para 3.

<sup>53</sup> Regulations on the Interdepartmental Coordination Council on Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Uzbekistan, para 4

<sup>54</sup> UNICEF, *Report on the CRM Programme 2017*, September 2017, p 3.

<sup>55</sup> UNICEF, *Report on the CRM Programme 2017*, September 2017, p 3.

<sup>56</sup> UNICEF, *Report on the CRM Programme 2017*, September 2017, p 3.

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF, *Report on the CRM Programme 2017*, September 2017, p 7.

<sup>58</sup> UNICEF, *Report on the CRM Programme 2017*, September 2017, p 14.

**Oila Centre:** Formerly under the Women’s Committee, the Oila Centre is an applied science research centre which was moved under the Committee of Ministers at the national level in 2018.<sup>59</sup> Its mandate includes a CRM function, including conducting research into ‘development problems’ of modern families, inter-family and interpersonal relationships and developing recommendations to strengthen the ‘family institution’; working with Government and public bodies to identify (and work with) troubled families on conflict resolution and strengthening family relations; coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Concept and Road Map on Strengthening the Family Institution, set forth in Presidential Decree No. 3808 of 2018; cooperating with other stakeholders including civil society, foreign experts, international organisations and others on best practices for strengthening the family unit.<sup>60</sup> The Road Map on Strengthening the Family Institution contemplates the provision of assistance to Goskomstat ‘developing new statistical forms and gathering information on the social-economic situation of families’ (with the deadline of December 2018); establishing a ‘unified interagency database for getting information on the status and needs for different services of families in difficult life conditions and social risk-groups (with the deadline of 1 December 2019); and ‘developing a system of professional supervision for specialists, working with families to help them with methodologies, consultations and practical assistance.’<sup>61</sup>

#### **2.5.4. UNICEF CRM Programming from 2010-2016**

UNICEF has been working with national partners in Uzbekistan to develop the CRM system for over 10 years. A 2015 UNICEF report documented the implementation of the CRM Programme from 2010 to 2015 to identify the achievements, challenges, and innovative approaches used, with a view to informing the development of future CRM programming.<sup>62</sup> The CRM programme 2010-2015, which was positioned as a component of UNICEF’s Social Policy programme, focused on six regions (Fergana; Namangan; Khorezm; Kashkadarya; Surkhandarya; and the RoK).<sup>63</sup> The CRM programme aimed to: (i) strengthen the legal mandate of a national body to take the lead for and coordinate the child rights agenda among Government and non-government stakeholders; (ii) enhance the capacity of NGOs working on children’s and women’s wellbeing; and (iii) build child rights knowledge and CRM skills among duty bearers. Key programme partners included: the office of the Deputy Prime Minister; the NHRC; the National Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of Uzbekistan (NANNOUz); the Association for Support of Families and Children (ASFC); the Women’s Committee; and regional Khokimiyats.<sup>64</sup>

The CRM programme 2010-2015 was reported to have several achievements. These included facilitating the passing of Cabinet of Ministers’ Resolution No. 280 in 2011 establishing the IWGs, and the establishment of the monitoring groups.<sup>65</sup> Technical assistance and support was provided for the development and adoption of the National Plan of Action on Child Wellbeing 2011-2013, and the development of Regional Action Plans for the RoK, Khorezm and Bukhara. Further, several capacity-building trainings to IWG members and CSOs were delivered, and technical support provided to partners on developing reports on the situation of children in the country.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Presidential Decree No. 5325 of 2018 on ‘Measures on the Fundamental Improvement of Activities in the Sphere of Supporting Women and Strengthening the Family Institution.’

<sup>60</sup> Presidential Decree No. 5325 of 2018; and Decree No. 3808 of 2018 on the Concept of Strengthening the Family Institution in Uzbekistan.

<sup>61</sup> Road Map, attachment to Presidential Decree No. 3808 of 2018.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on the Documentation of the Implementation of the Child Rights Monitoring Programme 2010-2015, May 2015.

<sup>63</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on the Documentation of the Implementation of the Child Rights Monitoring Programme 2010-2015, May 2015.

<sup>64</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on the Documentation of the Implementation of the Child Rights Monitoring Programme 2010-2015, May 2015.

<sup>65</sup> UNICEF, *Report on the CRM Programme 2017*, September 2017, p 3.

<sup>66</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on the Documentation of the Implementation of the Child Rights Monitoring Programme 2010-2015, May 2015.

During this period, the CRC Committee's Concluding Observations of 2013 highlighted several areas requiring further development. In addition to the adoption of Regional Action Plans, the CRC Committee recommended that Uzbekistan should adopt a comprehensive policy and strategy to implement the CRC, particularly in rural areas, ensuring that they are responsive to needs at the local levels and integrated with other plans of action relating to children.<sup>67</sup> To implement this policy and strategy effectively, Uzbekistan was urged to 'provide all the necessary human, technical and financial resources' as well as to conduct 'broad and transparent consultations, including with civil society, to assess the effectiveness of their implementation.'<sup>68</sup>

More generally, the CRC Committee recommended that Uzbekistan should improve its data collection system to provide 'regular and independently verifiable' disaggregated data that is cross-comparable, analyse the data collected to assess progress in the realisation of children's rights, and design evidence-based policies and programmes to implement the CRC. In this connection, the CRC encouraged Uzbekistan to seek technical support from UNICEF.<sup>69</sup>

Further, the CRC Committee specifically called upon Uzbekistan to strengthen the Office of Ombudsman in line with the Paris Principles, taking into account its General Comment No. 2, to provide the Ombudsman with adequate human and financial resources to perform this function, and to establish a Children's Ombudsman.<sup>70</sup> This recommendation was echoed by the UN Human Rights Committee in its Concluding Observations in 2015, in which it stated that neither the NHRC nor the Ombudsman complied with the Paris Principles, and called upon Uzbekistan to strengthen their independence in law and practice in line with these international standards.<sup>71</sup>

In late 2015 to 2016, UNICEF repositioned CRM from the sphere of social policy to its child protection programme.<sup>72</sup> The shift coincided with the development of the new Country Programme under which UNICEF's existing CRM programme – the object of the evaluation - falls.

### 3. Objectives, Purpose and Scope

The **objectives** of this evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and, to the extent possible, provide insights into the likely impact of the CRM programme;
- Identify good practice, challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of the CRM programme so far;
- Develop recommendations for UNICEF and programme partners to strengthen CRM in Uzbekistan under the Country Programme, paying particular attention to gender and other equity issues relating to children in the State.

The overall **purpose** of this evaluation is to produce recommendations, knowledge and insights for UNICEF, the Government of Uzbekistan and other national partners to use to inform the development of the CRM components of the Country Programme to ultimately achieve the following impact: girls and boys of Uzbekistan, especially the most vulnerable, progressively realise their rights in accordance with the CRC and the CEDAW.

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<sup>67</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, 10 July 2013, para 10.

<sup>68</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, 10 July 2013, para 11.

<sup>69</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, 10 July 2013, para 7(b).

<sup>70</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, 10 July 2013, para 7(c).

<sup>71</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on the fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 2015, para 5.

<sup>72</sup> For example, the Multiyear Work Plan 2016-2017 for Child Protection includes the following expected outcome: 'By 2020, authorities at all levels and CSOs have increased capacity to effectively contribute to child rights monitoring and reporting.'

This evaluation is taking place at a critical point in time as it coincides with the mid-term review of the Country Programme, as well as at the initial stages of UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Further, given the Government's agenda to democratise Uzbekistan and strengthen collaboration with civil society (see Part 5.1 below), this is an opportune moment to take stock of how UNICEF can best support its national partners in strengthening CRM within this political climate. It is intended that the recommendations, knowledge and insights produced will be used by UNICEF and partners to inform their discussions, plans and programming under the Country Programme and Strategic Plan 2018-2021, together with the outcomes of the broader mid-term review. This evaluation also plays a broader role in encouraging the development of an evaluative culture amongst child rights duty bearers, with the overall vision of strengthening collaborative learning, building upon good practices, and learning from lessons of the past to ensure the full realisation of children's rights.

The **intended primary users and uses** of this evaluation are as follows:

- UNICEF - to inform the development of the CRM component of the Country Programme and strategic direction for supporting stakeholders in developing CRM reforms in the country more generally;
- The Government of Uzbekistan at the national level, most notably the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and line Ministries (particularly the MOH, MOPE, MOIA, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education (MOHSSE), and Ministry of Emergency Situations) - to inform the strategic direction for CRM reforms in the country and the activities under the Country Programme, with particular attention being paid to developing effective coordination and collaboration between sectors and between stakeholders at the national and local levels;
- Local Governments, particularly in the regions of Ferghana, Jizzakh and Khorezm and in the RoK, though other regions may also utilise the evaluation, to develop programmes and policies to strengthen CRM at the local levels, with particular attention being paid to ensuring inter-regional and inter-sectoral collaboration, and coordination with national level stakeholders;
- The NHRC, Ombudsman and, if relevant, a new Children's Ombudsman - to inform its CRM activities and collaborations with other stakeholders in the field;
- State bodies such as Goskomstat and public associations such as the Women's Committee at the national and local levels, to inform their CRM activities, particularly with regard to the operations of the inter-agency working groups and monitoring groups conducting CRM activities in the regions;
- CSOs involved in CRM to provide them with knowledge, data and guidance to support the development of their capacity to conduct CRM and influence the development of CRM policies, programmes and functions in Uzbekistan;
- Academia, to raise their awareness of the importance of CRM, with a view to generating their interest in incorporating these issues in their faculty programmes, conducting research into these areas and leading to a scientifically-informed public debate on CRM and child rights in the country;
- Members of the public, who may access this evaluation online or be informed of it via the media, raising their interest and awareness of the CRM situation in the country, the importance of child rights and CRM, which may in turn enhance demand for an effective CRM system.

**Secondary or indirect** users of the evaluation include children, parents, professionals and practitioners who work with children and members of the public who may benefit from the use of the evaluation as outlined above.

Despite the national scope of the CRM programme under the TOC, the programme documentation indicates that, since 2014, UNICEF has been focusing its CRM activities in four locations (Ferghana, Jizzakh and Khorezm regions and the RoK) and at the national level. This, together with the limitations of resources, has meant that the focus of the evaluation has centred on the national level (predominantly Tashkent) and these four other locations.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this evaluation is rooted in the CRC and standards relating to CRM outlined in Part 2.1 above. In order to implement international CRM standards in the Uzbek context, an effective CRM system should be able to foster an environment in which State and non-State actors are able to:

- Collect quality quantitative and qualitative data on the situation of children in Uzbekistan, including those who are particularly marginalised or vulnerable to discrimination, such as children with disabilities (CWD);
- Analyse and monitor trends in the data to determine the extent to which child rights are being realised;
- Use the data to develop evidence-based policies and programmes;
- Promote and enhance the accountability of CRM duty bearers for the realisation of child rights through the findings generated;
- Promote and strengthen the effectiveness of inter-sectoral coordination amongst CRM stakeholders at the national and local levels; and
- Promote an environment in which children are recognised as rights holders.

The development of the evaluation questions and indicators/standards/benchmarks to measure their achievement are therefore rooted in this conceptual framework.

### 4.2. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation framework has been developed based on the criteria set out in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance: **relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; and sustainability**. As this is a formative evaluation of a CRM programme, which is mid-way through its implementation period, it will not be possible to evaluate its long or medium term **impact**. However, to the extent possible, this evaluation will seek to produce knowledge and insights to develop recommendations as to how UNICEF interventions/initiatives may be developed so as to achieve the desired **impact**.

In addition, as per the TOR and in light of the objectives of the evaluation, a sixth criterion has been added: **mainstreaming a human rights-based approach across all of the CRM programme components**. This criterion is necessary in light of inequities in the realisation of children's rights in Uzbekistan and the limitations of the existing CRM system in monitoring these in practice. This criterion also responds to standards set by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UNICEF as well as the UN Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS).<sup>73</sup>

### 4.3. Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions have been developed in direct response to the objectives and criteria of the evaluation. These questions are based on the research questions in the TOR, with adjustments being made in light of the evaluability of the CRM mechanisms and UNICEF interventions, and findings arising from the desk review and inception consultations.

#### 4.3.1. Relevance

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<sup>73</sup> See in particular, UN Evaluation Group, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, August 2014.

To what extent are the CRM programme and underlying theory of change relevant to the policies and priorities of UNICEF and key CRM stakeholders, and needs of children in Uzbekistan, particularly of those from marginalised groups or who are vulnerable to discrimination?

- To what extent are the CRM programme and theory of change relevant to advancing CRM in Uzbekistan?
- To what extent is the CRM programme relevant to UNICEF's policies and priorities in Uzbekistan, and in the region more generally?
- To what extent is the CRM programme relevant to the policies and priorities of key CRM stakeholders?
- To what extent does the CRM programme aim to address the identified gaps and challenges in the CRM system at the national and local levels, particularly with regard to children from marginalised groups or who are vulnerable to discrimination?

#### **4.3.2. Effectiveness**

To what extent is the CRM programme contributing to the establishment of a fully functioning, well-governed and coordinated CRM system at the national and local levels?

- To what extent has the CRM programme strengthened inter-sectoral coordination of CRM activities amongst stakeholders at the national and local levels?
- To what extent has the CRM programme strengthened the technical and financial capacities of public oversight mechanisms to conduct CRM?
- To what extent has the CRM programme strengthened the analysis and use of disaggregated data by decision-makers to address inequities in children's rights?
- Is UNICEF's internal approach to CRM programming effective?

#### **4.3.3. Efficiency**

Are the financial, human and material resources allocated to the CRM programme sufficient to meet the intended outcomes of the programme?

#### **4.3.4. Sustainability**

To what extent are the results of the CRM programme likely to sustain after the programme period?

- Do CRM stakeholders and coordination mechanisms have sufficient human, technical and financial capacity to continue their CRM activities after the programme period?
- What are the opportunities for and risks to the sustainability of the CRM programme in the short to long term?

#### **4.3.5. Impact**

To what extent is the CRM programme likely to contribute to boys and girls in Uzbekistan, particularly those from vulnerable groups, progressively realising their rights under the CRC and CEDAW?

#### **4.3.6. Cross-Cutting Issues**

To what extent does the CRM programme adopt a human rights-based approach and integrate gender and other equity-based considerations relevant to boys and girls in Uzbekistan?

### **4.4. Method of Enquiry**

In light of the object and objectives of the evaluation and the proposed research questions, it was necessary to collect contextual and explanatory data to understand the nature of the CRM activities implemented so far

and their interaction with or influence over CRM stakeholders and coordination mechanisms. This evaluation therefore adopted a **non-experimental design** and utilised primarily **qualitative** data collection techniques. Qualitative data also has greater interpretative and explanatory potential than quantitative approaches, and provide better opportunities for exploring the interaction of CRM programme interventions with CRM stakeholder bodies, understanding the barriers and bottlenecks to the functioning of the CRM system, and why these arise, all of which allow for critical reflection of the CRM programme and the development of recommendations to further inform UNICEF programming.

The limitation with adopting a qualitative method is that this approach may not enable the research team to measure the outcomes and (likely) impact of the CRM system quantifiably. However, given the formative character of this evaluation, its focus on recent activities of the CRM system (i.e. since 2016, with due consideration being given to CRM activities implemented between 2014 and 2016), a comprehensive and accurate measurement of the outcomes and impact of the CRM system or UNICEF programming is not a priority at this stage. However, the Research Team will draw upon mixed sources and types of data, including secondary **quantitative** data, to collect objective and measurable data to support the **triangulation** and interpretation of qualitative findings.

#### **4.5. Data Sources, Collection Methods and Sampling**

As outlined in more detail in the **Evaluation Matrix in Appendix 8.5**, the Research Team used the following techniques to collect the data necessary to answer the research questions.

**Desk review:** The Research Team conducted a desk review of documents and literature relating to UNICEF's CRM programme and the CRM system including: programme strategies and action plans; minutes and records of meetings, roundtable workshops, and other activities; evaluation forms from capacity-building interventions (to the extent available); constituent laws and policies of the CRM mechanisms; reports submitted by the CRM mechanisms; conclusions and recommendations of international CRM bodies, particularly the CRC Committee, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) and UPR (Universal Periodic Review). The outcomes of the desk review informed the development of this evaluation framework and the findings of this Report. A bibliography of the documents reviewed is included in **Appendix 8.6**.<sup>74</sup>

**Virtual inception meeting:** To ensure a participatory evaluation process, the Consultants conducted a virtual inception meeting with UNICEF focal points, followed up with electronic communications, to discuss the approach to the evaluation; identification and plan of action for obtaining missing desk review documents; the methodology and suggested amendments to the TOR (see above); and stakeholder availability during the data collection, sampling strategy and ethical protocol for the field research, all of which informed the finalisation of the inception report.

**Key informant interviews:** The Research Team conducted 48 semi-standardised interviews with 89 participants during the data collection visit which took place between 5 and 16 November 2018<sup>75</sup> and via Skype interviews which took place in November and December 2018. The interviews allowed the collection of in-depth qualitative information and secondary quantitative data relevant to develop an understanding of the

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<sup>74</sup> Documents or literature highlighted as necessary for review during the course of the evaluation will be added to the bibliography, which is an evolving document.

<sup>75</sup> A total of 17 days' data collection was carried out (5 by International Researcher 1; 10 by International Researcher 2; and 2 by the national expert.

nature, outputs and outcomes of the implemented and planned CRM activities. Most of the interviews were conducted on an individual basis (i.e. one researcher, one interpreter (where relevant) and the participant), to allow the participants to engage with the researcher in a private and confidential setting where they were likely to feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and views than they would have been in a group setting. A semi-standardised approach was adopted to allow for response-directed interaction. Where appropriate, group interviews were held for participants from similar stakeholder bodies although special attention was paid to ensuring that individuals are not grouped with supervisors or others who may have inhibited their ability or willingness to speak freely. Particular care was also taken to phrase potentially sensitive questions in a way which avoided personalisation and minimised any risk of stress.<sup>76</sup> Where possible, group interviews were capped at three participants, to provide opportunity for all to contribute to the research questions relevant to them.

The majority of CRM stakeholders at the national level were based in Tashkent, which formed one of the **research sites**. In order to gain a broader understanding of the CRM programme and operations of the CRM system at the local level, the Research Team consulted with UNICEF and national stakeholders to select Ferghana, Jizzakh, Khorezm and the RoK as the research sites for conducting local-level interviews. These research sites were selected due to UNICEF programming presence, geographical diversity of the locations;<sup>77</sup> the presence of rural/urban communities;<sup>78</sup> wealth/poverty levels;<sup>79</sup> ethnicity and other demographics, with a view to facilitating a comparison of findings along these lines.

Due to official Government procedures for conducting interviews with State bodies, and UNICEF's in-depth knowledge of its counterparts in its CRM programming, participants were recruited directly by UNICEF through official channels via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (for State bodies) and targeted electronic communications and letters. Due to the targeted nature of the research questions, participants were selected primarily according to the relevance of their role and responsibilities to CRM and the CRM programme. However, to the extent possible, consideration was made to selecting participants according to the following criteria: with regards to officials and professionals, the level of training/experience and level of seniority within the stakeholder body; gender; and ethnicity. The semi-standardised interview tools and list of interviews are enclosed in **Appendices 8.7** and **8.8**, respectively.

**Focus group discussions (FGDs) with children:** In order to collect data on children's views on how well their rights are looked after in Uzbekistan and their suggestions for developing CRM monitoring mechanisms, the researchers initially intended to hold two FGDs in each of the research sites, each with 5 to 8 children selected on the basis of age (12-14 years of age; 15-18 years of age), gender, disability status, ethnicity and school enrolment/attendance, to ensure a diversity of views and comparison of findings along these lines. However,

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<sup>76</sup> E.g. relating to skills capacity, by asking what training could 'further strengthen' the capacity of the participants and/or their teams in conducting CRM.

<sup>77</sup> Tashkent and Ferghana in the east; Jizzakh towards the centre; Khorezm on the southern border; and RoK in the west.

<sup>78</sup> The populations of Tashkent and Ferghana predominantly live in urban areas, whereas the majority of people in Jizzakh, Khorezm and the RoK live in rural areas; Website of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *The number of urban and rural population by region*, retrieved from <https://stat.uz/en/official-statistics/demography-and-labor/statistical-tables/219-ofytsyalnaia-statystyka-en/demografiya-i-trud-en/4317-the-number-of-urban-and-rural-population-by-region> on 10th October 2018.

<sup>79</sup> Total income per capita varies significantly across the regions: 10251300 soums in Tashkent City; 5216700 soums in Greater Tashkent; 4241600 soums in Khorezm; 3622600 soums in Ferghana; 3420000 soums in Jizzakh; and 3193500 soums in the RoK, which has the lowest average annual income per capita in the country (2016 figures); Website of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Analysis of the Development of Living Standards and Welfare of the Population in the Republic of Uzbekistan*, retrieved from <https://stat.uz/en/press-center/news-committee/435-analicheskie-materialy-en1/2078-analysis-of-the-development-of-living-standards-and-welfare-of-the-population-in-the-republic-of-uzbekistan-on-22-October-2018>.

due to barriers in obtaining authorisation from relevant national authorities for carrying out these FGDs, the researchers adopted an alternative approach by holding four FGDs in Tashkent City with children recruited by UNICEF from amongst the child beneficiaries of its programmes (see below). Two FGDs for girls and two FGDs for boys were planned for children from the following age groups for each gender: 12-14 years of age; and 15-18 years of age. The FGDs were divided along these lines to create a conducive environment for boys and girls to discuss potentially gender-sensitive topics relevant to their age-group, which may otherwise have been inhibited in a mixed gender forum with children of significantly different ages.

Due to the barriers in obtaining authorisation from relevant national authorities to recruit children for the FGDs, UNICEF conducted the recruitment from amongst the children participating in its existing programmes. This meant that children were recruited from beneficiaries of day care centres for children living with HIV; CWD involved in communication and public advocacy campaigns supported by UNICEF; and adolescents from various socio-economic background who are part of the UNICEF-supported initiative, 'YOUTH TALKS.'<sup>80</sup> UNICEF focal points issued an open call for participation in the FGDs via their closed communication groups (e.g. on Facebook, Telegram). Children who responded to the call were selected on a 'first come, first served' basis up to a maximum of 8 children per FGD. A total of **12 children (five boys and seven girls)** responded to the call with differing availabilities. As this number was fewer than anticipated, the FGDs were delivered in the manner of five separate discussions depending on the children's availability. Please see Part 4.6 below on the limitations associated with this approach to sampling and recruitment, and associated mitigation strategies. The FGD tool is enclosed in **Appendix 8.9** and the template Informed Consent Form which was signed by the child and his/her parent/guardian in advance of the discussion is attached as **Appendix 8.10**.

**Debriefing:** Following the data collection, the researchers conducted a virtual debriefing call with UNICEF focal points to: discuss the progress of the data collection; address any key gaps in the data collection (e.g. by planning any final Skype interviews with relevant stakeholders or identifying any final desk review documents); discussing preliminary observations (to the extent possible) from the data collection; and receiving feedback and inputs from UNICEF in order to inform the analysis, and assist with interpretation of the data.

**Consultation and validation meeting:** The researchers circulated a draft version of this report to UNICEF for comments by it and stakeholder bodies. A consultation and validation meeting was held with the stakeholders listed in **Appendix 8.11** at UNICEF's premises on 18 December 2018, which was facilitated by the national expert, Regina Safarova, and a UNICEF focal point in Tashkent, and attended by the international researchers via Skype. The researchers presented the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study and discussed participants' comments on their accuracy, relevance and practicality, using these to inform the finalisation of this report. This is elaborated in Part 7 and **Appendix 8.11**.

#### **4.6. Data Analysis**

The data analysis process was driven by the research questions and evaluation framework, including the specific indicators outlined in the Evaluation Matrix. The qualitative data was transcribed (where relevant) and coded using Nvivo software to enable a thematic analysis of the data and identification of key themes, patterns and relationships relevant to the research questions. Qualitative and secondary quantitative data were triangulated to identify any inconsistencies in the information. Where inconsistencies were identified, the researchers considered whether they were due to biases or inaccuracies in the interpretation of data, or a complexity that required further exploration and analysis. The data analysis process was highly consultative and participatory, as indicated by the de-briefing with UNICEF focal points and the consultation and validation meeting explained above.

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<sup>80</sup> This programme provides a platform for adolescents and young people to have their voices heard regarding the issues affecting their lives.

#### 4.7. Gender Equity and Human Rights-Based Approach

The development of the methodology, including the evaluation questions, indicators, and data collection plan, were guided by international human rights standards (particularly the CRC and CEDAW) and gender equity and human rights criteria.<sup>81</sup> As indicated in Part 4.5 above, the researchers also worked with UNICEF to ensure the participation of, to the extent possible, the full range of stakeholder bodies, including boys and girls from particularly marginalized backgrounds, in the evaluation.

The data collection tools were designed to be participatory, interactive and age-appropriate, in order to collect rich, authentic data from stakeholders and beneficiaries and – particularly important for children – in a way that was engaging, and not intimidating or harmful. For stakeholders/ beneficiaries from minority groups who did not speak the official language, or participants with unique vulnerabilities (for instance, those with disabilities or special needs), the researchers called upon the provision of professional interpretation/ translation assistance made available by UNICEF. Enquiries were made into whether participants required any particular communication or physical access needs in order to participate in the interviews, although such needs arose in practice.

In developing the evaluation framework and tools, the researchers adopted a participatory approach, seeking feedback from UNICEF Country Office and CRM stakeholders (via UNICEF) during the inception phase to ensure that the methodology and data collection plan was realistic, relevant and culturally appropriate. Following the data collection, the researchers held a virtual debriefing with UNICEF to provide an update on the progress of the research, making requests for documents to fill any key gaps in the data and consulting upon any preliminary findings. The consultation and validation workshop (see above) with key stakeholder also served to refine the findings, conclusions and recommendations, as well to reinforce stakeholder buy-in and ownership of the process and results.

#### 4.8. Ethics

Strict ethical procedures were put in place to ensure the dignity and diversity, confidentiality, and safety of the participants, particularly children. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children developed by UNICEF and others<sup>82</sup> (UNICEF's Ethical Charter), Coram International's Ethical Protocol which is in line with UNICEF's Ethical Charter, and the UNEG's Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. These ethical standards provided clear guidelines on the handling of child protection disclosures, ensuring child safety in accordance with the principles of 'doing no harm' and acting in the child's best interests. The ethical standards also demand that the researchers respect the human rights, diversity and dignity of all research participants, including by obtaining their prior informed consent, ensuring their anonymity (*vis-à-vis* third parties who are not involved in conducting or organising the research), and protecting their privacy.

In advance of each interview with adult participants, the researchers explained the information outlined in the 'informed consent wording' in **Appendix 8.12** and only commenced the interview with the participant's express verbal consent and noted this on the research notes. With regard to child participants, the prior *written* informed consent of the child and their parent/ legal guardian was obtained by them completing a translated version of the template enclosed in **Appendix 8.10** and handing this to the international researcher

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<sup>81</sup> For example, the UNEG's 2014 Manual, 'Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations' and the 'UN System-wide Action Plan for the Implementation of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination UN System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2012.'

<sup>82</sup> UNICEF et al., International Charter on Ethical Research Involving Children, retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/eric-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf> on 16 May 2017.

in advance of the FGD. The Informed Consent Forms were kept in the custody of the International Researcher, and thereafter on the premises of Coram International, and will be destroyed after the finalisation of this Report. The Informed Consent Forms were not attached to the research notes in any way, such that it would not be possible to link the child's name to the child's responses.

FGDs took place in a conference room on UNICEF's offices in Tashkent and interviews with adults in stakeholder offices, with only the researcher and interpreter present in the room. During interviews and FGDs, the researchers took comprehensive written or typed notes on Coram International's official laptops and did not take down the participants' names. Children were advised that they may use pseudonyms for the purposes of the FGDs. Due to the nature of UNICEF programming, the researchers made a note of the level of role held by adult participants on the interview notes/ transcripts as this was necessary to inform the analysis. The researchers maintained custody of the research notes during the data collection. After the data collection was complete, written notes were transcribed electronically (and translated into English by the national expert in respect of her notes), and were kept securely on Coram International's office premises in London or on Coram International's internal computer system. At no point were/will these notes be shared with any person outside the research team.

Further, when citing sensitive data obtained from the interviews in the report, where appropriate, the authors have taken added precautions to withhold details of participants' professional titles, institutions and/or locations to avoid the risk of identification.

Raw data and notes held by the national expert were destroyed immediately after their transfer to the researchers after the data collection. Interview notes (without the inclusion of professional titles) will be held by Coram International on its password-protected internal computer system for a period of 7 years after the completion of the project and destroyed thereafter according to Coram International's data handling procedures.

No payments or compensation were offered to the research participants. However, to thank the children for their time and contributions during the FGDs, UNICEF (which was responsible for arranging the logistics of holding the FGD) provided refreshments during the FGDs.

Several additional steps were taken by the Research Team to ensure the independence, impartiality and credibility of the evaluation, avoid a conflict of interest, and promote accountability for their work, in line with the UNEG's Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation:<sup>83</sup>

- The inception report for the evaluation was submitted to UNICEF's Ethical Review Committee, the comments from which were used to refine the methodology and tools before their finalisation. The ethical clearance is enclosed in **Appendix 8.13**;<sup>84</sup>
- The researchers piloted the data collection tools together in Tashkent during the first day and second morning of the data collection mission to ensure that the tools were relevant, targeted and fit for purpose, and that there was a shared understanding amongst the researchers of the content and

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<sup>83</sup> UNEG, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, March 2008, retrieved from [file:///c:/corsrvfile/CCLC%20Users\\$/awaz.raoof/Downloads/UNEG\\_FN\\_ETH\\_2008\\_EthicalGuidelines.pdf](file:///c:/corsrvfile/CCLC%20Users$/awaz.raoof/Downloads/UNEG_FN_ETH_2008_EthicalGuidelines.pdf), on 15 November 2017

<sup>84</sup> The Ethical Review Board's standards and procedures for ethical review are set out in the 'UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis'; Dated 1 April 2015, retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT\\_IV-UNICEF\\_Procedure\\_for\\_Ethical\\_Standards.PDF](https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF), on 5 September 2017.

approach to carrying out the data collection. The tools were adjusted in advance of further data collection in light of the outcomes of the pilot;

- Particular care was taken to ensure the selection of a national expert with no direct involvement in the object of the evaluation, and particular attention was made to ensuring that she did not interview participants with whom she is well acquainted or related;
- The researchers adopted a participatory approach to the evaluation<sup>85</sup> to obtain feedback from key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries, with the aim of: (i) ensuring that the evaluation remains relevant, targeted, necessary, and efficient; (ii) ensuring the accuracy of the research findings; and (iii) promoting stakeholder ownership and buy-in of the process and results;
- Clear and efficient reporting lines were established between the researchers and UNICEF focal points as well as within the research team itself. The researchers reported to the Team Leader, the Director of Coram International, which retained overall oversight of the quality of the deliverables and conduct of the evaluation by the research team, ensuring compliance with UNEG Norms and Standards, UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards and the GEROS Quality Assessment System.

#### **4.9. Risks and Limitations**

The evaluation focused on recent CRM activities and an on-going CRM programme. This meant that a comprehensive and accurate measurement of the outcomes and impact of the CRM programme was not possible. However, the research team explored, where possible, the extent to which the CRM programme is likely to achieve its intended impact, paying particular attention to children from marginalised groups or who are vulnerable to discrimination.

The Country Programme and Multi-Year Work Plan 2016-2017 each provide combined forecast budgets for CRM and other activities, such that it is not possible to identify the forecast budget for CRM activities alone. Further, a breakdown of the CRM activities planned for the remaining Country Programme period have not yet been developed (noting that this evaluation is intended to inform their development). This meant that it was not possible to conduct a full assessment of the financial efficiency of the CRM component of the Country Programme or Multi-Year Work Plan 2016-2017. However, dedicated budgets to the CRM components of the Annual Work Plans for 2018 were available. The researchers focused on assessing the financial allocation of these CRM interventions, and using these findings to draw insights and to inform recommendations on the financial efficiency of future CRM interventions.

During the inception phase, the research team prepared a list of all stakeholder groups who they would like to interview as part of the data collection. However, some stakeholders were not accessible, able or willing to participate in the evaluation, particularly as some key CRM activities took place up to five years ago, with key individual focal points no longer working for the relevant stakeholder body. This challenge was exacerbated by recent reorganisations of Government line-Ministries and State agencies, which resulted in further changes to the workforce. To mitigate this limitation, where the research team could not arrange an interview with the relevant individual focal point, the research team drew upon other data sources, such as existing literature or documentation developed by absent stakeholders, to fill key data gaps. To the extent possible, Skype interviews were also held with stakeholders who were unavailable to meet with the researcher during the data collection visit.

Based on existing research and monitoring activities (e.g. the Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee), it was understood at the outset of the project that the ability of the CRM system to generate reliable,

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<sup>85</sup> Via the exchange of draft reports with UNICEF for review and comments by stakeholders; virtual inception meetings and debriefing; a consultation and validation meeting; FGDs with children to ensure that their voices are heard in this project which ultimately aims to improve their lives; and the participation of project stakeholders in the data collection interviews.

disaggregated data is limited, and that this would, in turn, limit the researchers' ability to collect data (particularly statistical data) on CRM to inform this evaluation. To mitigate this limitation, the researchers cooperated with UNICEF and national stakeholders to gain access to a diverse range of stakeholders and beneficiaries as well as desk review documents to fill these gaps. Further, this limitation is in itself a key issue which was factored into the research analysis itself.

Due to the inability to obtain authorisation from relevant national bodies for the researchers to recruit children directly and hold FGDs in each region as intended, recruitment of children was only possible via UNICEF's existing programmes. This meant that it was not possible to invite children along the full range of criteria initially intended (e.g. ethnicity and school enrolment/attendance). Instead, recruitment had to be carried out via an open call using UNICEF's existing online networks, which hindered access to children without electronic means of communication (e.g. children from particularly poor backgrounds). Further, the backgrounds of the children depended, to a large extent, on the nature of the UNICEF programmes in operation. There was also a risk that the children recruited would be more sensitised to 'child rights' than children who are not involved UNICEF programming, a potential bias, which was taken into account throughout the data analysis. To mitigate this, to the extent possible, the researchers asked stakeholders who work with children on their perceptions of children's views, and paid particular attention to existing research reports on the situation of children, in order to gain a better understanding of their views and needs.

There was a risk that during the FGDs, a child participant would disclose that they are at risk of or have suffered serious harm. To mitigate this risk, the international researcher who carried out the FGDs had been trained in Coram International's strict Ethical Protocol (**Appendix 8.14**), which is in line with the UNICEF's Ethical Charter,<sup>86</sup> to ensure child safety and best interests. The Ethical Protocol includes handling child protection disclosures, obtaining prior informed consent from research participants, and ensuring the anonymity of participants vis-à-vis third parties who are not involved in conducting or organising the research project. Based on this Ethical Protocol, and in line with UNICEF's practice of handling child protection disclosures, a tailored protocol for handling child protection disclosures during the data collection was also developed (**Appendix 8.15**). In addition, UNICEF (which was responsible for engaging the interpreters for this project) engaged an interpreter who was experienced in providing translation for data collection activities involving children, and who had completed UNICEF's online training on 'Introduction to Ethics in Evidence Generation.'

The International Researchers had the assistance of an interpreter during the data collection. Therefore, there was a risk that participants, the interpreter or the researchers would misinterpret questions/responses. To mitigate this risk, all deliverables under this project were subject to stakeholder consultation and validation, which aimed to ensure accuracy of the data, strengthen stakeholder ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations, and ensure their contextual appropriateness. Further, the international researchers were experienced in carrying out interviews with professionals, practitioners and Government officials and FGDs with children with the assistance of an interpreter. They were therefore accustomed to working around barriers in communication. Data was also triangulated to the extent possible based on the desk review, semi-structured individual/group interviews, FGDs and secondary statistical data, to further ensure accuracy of findings.

The national expert provided Coram International with her interview transcripts in English, which entailed some risk of mistranslation. Therefore, the same mitigation steps were taken in relation to the data collected by the national expert to ensure that this risk was minimised. In addition, the researchers piloted the data collection tools in advance of the data collection to ensure that there was a shared understanding amongst

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<sup>86</sup> UNICEF et al., *International Charter on Ethical Research Involving Children*, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/eric-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf> retrieved on 16 May 2017

the researchers of the content of the tools and the approach to be taken in conducting the interviews, as well as to provide an opportunity to test and, if necessary, adjust the tools to ensure that they are clear, easy to use by all members of the research team, and fit for purpose.

#### **4.10. Work plan**

The evaluation was carried out according to the work plan in **Appendix 8.17**.

## 5. Evaluation Findings

### 5.1. Relevance

**To what extent is the CRM programme and its underlying theory of change relevant to the policies, priorities and needs of UNICEF, key CRM stakeholders and boys and girls in Uzbekistan, particularly children from marginalised groups or who are vulnerable to discrimination?**

*To what extent are the CRM programme and TOC relevant to advancing CRM in Uzbekistan?*

The CRM programme activities implemented during the evaluation period are highly relevant to advancing CRM in Uzbekistan. **Appendix 8.2** lists the CRM programme activities. All these activities incorporate elements of capacity building for conducting CRM, developing the legal, policy and institutional framework for CRM mechanisms, and strengthening the knowledge base on the situation of children in Uzbekistan. More specifically:

- **Projects 1 to 3<sup>87</sup>** involved advocating for and providing technical, financial and logistical assistance for the development of the legal, policy and institutional framework governing inter-sectoral CRM mechanisms and an independent NHRI for children at the national level;
- **Projects 4, 7 and 8<sup>88</sup>** focused on strengthening the knowledge and skills capacities of NGOs, IWGs and monitoring group members to collect, verify, analyse and use data to protect children’s rights in four target regions (Ferghana; Jizzakh; Khorezm; and the RoK), and strengthening the knowledge base of the situation of children in these locations; and
- **Projects 5 and 6<sup>89</sup>** focused on providing technical, financial and logistical assistance to the NHRC to support it in strengthening the knowledge base on the situation of children, and its skills in coordinating the collection, analysis and verification of data for this purpose, particularly for the purpose of reporting to the CRC Committee.

The TOC is also highly relevant to advancing CRM in Uzbekistan. The intended impact of the CRM programme (i.e. that girls and boys in Uzbekistan, especially the most vulnerable, progressively realise their rights in accordance with the CRC and CEDAW) is relevant, given that the goal of CRM is to identify and address inequities in the realisation of children’s rights. The outcomes<sup>90</sup> are particularly relevant, focusing on the development of the legal, policy and institutional framework governing CRM mechanisms and well as the capacities of CRM stakeholders across key sectors (Government, public agencies, civil society and academia) for collecting, verifying, analysing and using data to protect children’s rights.

Some aspects of the TOC are in need of refinement, although it is acknowledged that the TOC is a working draft. Outcome 3, which focuses on strengthening the demand for, and use and analysis of data to advance

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<sup>87</sup> Advocating and providing technical assistance for the establishment of the Coordination Council; provision of technical advice on the content of the current NPA; advocating and providing technical assistance for developing the draft law on the establishment of the Children’s Ombudsperson.

<sup>88</sup> Capacity building to CSOs, IWG and monitoring group members on conducting CRM.

<sup>89</sup> Development of an ‘Analytical Report on the Results of Monitoring Legislation of Uzbekistan on Children’s Property Rights’ with the NHRC; and analysis of the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child with the NHRC.

<sup>90</sup> Key stakeholders effectively coordinate implementing child rights; public oversight mechanisms are strengthened to effectively respond to child rights issues; and decision-makers demand/use and analyse disaggregated data to advance equity issues for children in policy-making.

equity issues solely through policy-making, excludes references to advancing equity issues through the development of legal frameworks, programmes and practices. Further, Outcomes 1 and 2,<sup>91</sup> Outputs 1 and 5,<sup>92</sup> and certain of the strategic interventions,<sup>93</sup> focus on the *implementation* of children's rights and *responding* to children's issues, rather than *monitoring* their implementation which is a broader concept, encompassing the proactive and systematic identification and use of data to hold duty bearers to account for shortfalls in the realisation of children's rights, *and thereby* improving implementation.

The needs of children who are particularly vulnerable to discrimination are referenced in the TOC. The intended impact refers to the rights of girls and boys, paying particular attention to gender equity issues. Outcome 3 focuses on the analysis and use of disaggregated data, which is essential for identifying and understanding the situation of potentially hidden or marginalised groups of children. The CRM programme activities implemented to date have focused heavily on addressing issues relating to vulnerable groups of children, and are detailed further in Part 5.6 below (Cross-cutting Issues).

***To what extent does the CRM programme aim to address the identified gaps and challenges in the CRM system at the national and local levels, particularly with regard to children from marginalised groups or who are vulnerable to discrimination?***

### **Inter-Sectoral Coordination**

The draft TOC aims to (amongst other things) strengthen inter-sectoral coordination between key stakeholders at the national and local levels in monitoring children's rights (Outcome 1; Outputs 1, 2 and 7), the lack of which has been identified as a barrier to the development of an effective CRM system. In 2013, the CRC Committee urged the Government of Uzbekistan to 'establish a body at the inter-ministerial level...with a clear mandate and sufficient authority to coordinate all activities related to the implementation of the Convention'.<sup>94</sup> This need was also echoed by stakeholders from across sectors at the national and regional levels during the data collection:

*'The CRM system in the country is very fragmented. The agencies and Ministries collect data but they do not coordinate with each other.'*<sup>95</sup>

*'The basic problem is around a lack of coordination.'*<sup>96</sup>

*'Not many people would know each other and everyone was doing this work independently.'*<sup>97</sup>

*'[What are the main challenges to effective CRM in Uzbekistan?] Coordination. Unfortunately, it is more about competition, a lot of organisations overlap.'*<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Key stakeholders effectively coordinate on implementation of child rights; and public oversight systems are strengthened to effectively respond to child rights issues.

<sup>92</sup> Platforms and mechanisms for critical partnership with results-based and costed action plans for CRC implementation are established; and CSOs have sufficient financial and technical capacity to implement programmes that advance child rights.

<sup>93</sup> Provision of assistance to strengthen inter-agency coordination on the implementation of the CRC at the national and local levels, and to develop and implement action plans at the national and regional levels to implement the CRC; and capacity-building of CSOs to implement programmes on advancing children's rights.

<sup>94</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations 2013, para 7(a).

<sup>95</sup> Participant from International Organisation [details withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>96</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>97</sup> Participant from Monitoring Group in Region 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>98</sup> Participant from NGO 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

The TOC does not explicitly refer to the strengthening of coordination and collaboration between civil society and Government, though this is implicit in Outcome 1, which relates to ‘key stakeholders’ effectively coordinating the implementation of child rights, and in the related strategic interventions focusing on ‘inter-agency’ coordination. Given the restrictive context from which NGOs are emerging (see Part 2.5.2 above), and the recommendation of the CRC Committee for Uzbekistan ‘to build a climate of trust and cooperation with civil society, and to systematically involve communities as well as civil society, including [NGOs]....in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes related to child rights’,<sup>99</sup> strengthening collaboration between Government and civil society could be emphasised further in the TOC.

In line with the TOC, the CRM activities implemented during the evaluation period have focused on strengthening inter-sectoral CRM mechanisms in the target regions and, more recently, at the national level. UNICEF’s projects with NGOs and the Women’s Committees in the target regions between 2014 and 2017 focused on strengthening inter-sectoral coordination through the establishment and strengthening of the monitoring groups and their collaboration with the IWGs, bringing together CRM stakeholders from Government, State agencies and civil society (Projects 4, 7 and 8 in **Appendix 8.2**). More recently, UNICEF has worked with the Women’s Committee, NHRC, NGOs, key line Ministries and other stakeholders at the national level to advocate for and operationalise the Coordination Council (Projects 1, 2 and 6). UNICEF’s activities have focused less on connecting and strengthening links between national and regional CRM mechanisms. As elaborated in Part 5.2 below (‘Effectiveness’), there is a need for such interventions.

### **Quality of Data on Children**

The TOC rightly includes a focus on strengthening the capacity of CRM stakeholders to collect, analyse and use accurate data to address child rights issues, given the recommendations of international human rights monitoring bodies on this topic. In 2013, the CRC Committee recommended that Uzbekistan ‘[f]urther improve its data collection system to provide regular and independently verifiable data that is cross-comparable, and to analyse the data collected as a basis for assessing progress achieved in the realization of child rights and for designing policies and programmes to implement the [CRC]’.<sup>100</sup> This need was reinforced by stakeholders during the data collection visit at both the national and local levels, who identified the lack of reliable data as a barrier to effective CRM in Uzbekistan, partly stemming from varying methods of data collection and analysis across different bodies (discussed in more detail in Part 5.2 below).<sup>101</sup>

The focus on disaggregated data in Outcome 3 of the TOC and its related outputs and strategic interventions are particularly relevant. In 2015, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern about ‘the general lack of updated statistical data, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background’ on women and girls.<sup>102</sup> The CRC Committee had highlighted similar concerns in 2013, and recommended that ‘the data should be disaggregated by age, sex, geographic location, ethnicity and socioeconomic background to facilitate analysis of the situation of all children, particularly with regard to all forms of child labour.... children with disabilities, children from ethnic minorities, quality of teaching and learning outcomes, school attendance, quality of maternal and child health services, HIV rates, adolescent needs, and the impact of social protection’.<sup>103</sup>

The TOC and CRM activities implemented during the evaluation period have focused primarily on strengthening the skills of individuals from Government departments and NGOs, particularly in the target

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<sup>99</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations 2013, para 19.

<sup>100</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations 2013, para 7(b)

<sup>101</sup> Participants from Government Ministry 2; Ministry 3; NGO 2; State Agency 2; Interviews with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>102</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan*, CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, November 2015, para 35.

<sup>103</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations 2013, para 7(b)

regions, to collect, analyse and use primary data and develop results-based monitoring frameworks. For instance, Project 8 involved the capacity-building of monitoring groups (comprised of focal points from Government departments, public agencies and NGOs) in the RoK, Ferghana, Jizzakh and Khorezm to collect, analyse, and use data to protect children's rights in a specific area of concern, which was built upon during Project 4 in the same regions. These projects focused heavily on addressing inequities in the realisation of the rights of particularly margined groups of children (CWD; children from single parent families; early childhood education; the health of pre-school children; and optimum feeding practices for breast-feeding mothers – see **Appendix 8.2** for more details), responding to the gaps highlighted by the CRC and CEDAW Committees, above.

It is worth noting that the draft TOC contemplates the delivery of similar capacity-building assistance to stakeholders at the national level, including line Ministries, Goskomstat, amongst others. As elaborated further in Part 5.2 below, there is a need for such activities in order to contribute to the development of an effective CRM system.

### **CRM by Civil Society**

Given the historic limitations on civil society operations in Uzbekistan (see 'Context' above), UNICEF's focus on building the capacity of CSOs and building collaboration between CSOs and Government entities to monitor children's rights is highly relevant. Output 5 of the TOC focuses on ensuring that CSOs have sufficient financial and technical capacity to implement programmes to advance children's rights through the delivery of capacity-building strategic interventions. Such activities comprised a significant part of UNICEF's CRM programme pre-2016, most notably through CSO capacity-building trainings (see Project 7 in **Appendix 8.2**).<sup>104</sup> Outcome 1 of the TOC relating to strengthening stakeholder coordination also contemplates building CSO involvement in CRM, which has been reflected in UNICEF's projects with the Women's Committees in Jizzakh, Ferghana, the RoK and Khorezm to establish and operationalise multi-sector monitoring groups to work with the IWGs in monitoring children's rights, focusing on particularly vulnerable groups of children (Projects 4 and 8 in **Appendix 8.2**).

The Government's drive to deepen democratic reforms in Uzbekistan<sup>105</sup> has the potential to open up the political space for CSOs to function, raising the question as to whether a focus on civil society under the CRM programme will continue to be relevant. Indeed, it was noted in the report of the Working Group on Uzbekistan's third UPR that greater space had been accorded to civil society.<sup>106</sup> However, the recent conclusions of the UPR highlighted that restrictions on the registration of NGOs and 'burdensome programme approval regulations' remained.<sup>107</sup> As CSOs emerge from this context, UNICEF's work in facilitating collaboration between Government and civil society and building the capacities of CSO staff to conduct CRM remains relevant.

### **Demand for CRM**

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<sup>104</sup> The trainings covered five areas: (i) the role of NGOs in the community; (ii) project development skills; (iii) planning and implementation of the project; (iv) project monitoring and evaluation; and (v) strategic planning. The project aimed to strengthen CRM by civil society actors in two ways: (i) building knowledge and skills capacities of civil society actors in order for them to function and contribute towards the production of knowledge on children's rights, as well as the collection, analysis and use of data, in order to inform CRM discourses within society; and (ii) develop M&E skills to ensure the development and delivery of projects resulting in concrete benefits for child beneficiaries; UNICEF, Final Report on NGO Capacity Building, 2015.

<sup>105</sup> Strategy of Actions on Five Priority Areas for the Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021

<sup>106</sup> Report of the Working Group on the UPR: Uzbekistan, A/HRC/39/7, 9 July 2018, paras 27, 61, 85.

<sup>107</sup> Report of the Working Group on the UPR: Uzbekistan, A/HRC/39/7, 9 July 2018, paras 27, 61, 85 and 101.116.

The strategic interventions and outputs in the TOC focus heavily on strengthening the supply of CRM, by strengthening the governance framework and capacities of institutions which conduct CRM. The focus on strengthening public oversight mechanisms in Outcome 2, and CSO capacities in Outcome 3 goes some way to strengthening the *demand* for CRM by developing ‘public oversight’ mechanisms. However, as noted in the TOC, barriers to the demand for CRM include weak public accountability for non-implementation of children’s rights, a general lack of understanding and ownership of CRM, and a ‘punitive’ culture towards the non-implementation of children’s rights as opposed to a culture of evaluation and learning.<sup>108</sup> As reinforced by the findings in Part 5.2 below (Effectiveness), there is a need to strengthen *public* awareness of the notion of children as rights holders and the corresponding duties of duty bearers, as well as developing the knowledge and understanding of duty bearers within different Government line Ministries and departments of their collective CRM responsibilities. At present, the TOC does not focus on addressing these normative barriers and could be developed to include an outcome, outputs and strategic interventions framed around these issues.

***To what extent is the CRM programme relevant to UNICEF’s policies and priorities in Uzbekistan and more generally?***

The CRM programme is highly relevant to UNICEF’s policies and priorities in Uzbekistan. It is line with the Country Programme. The Country Programme aims to accelerate progress towards the realisation of the rights of all children in Uzbekistan by tackling structural determinants of inequities in the realisation of children’s rights, particularly for those in rural areas of disadvantaged regions, CWD, children in institutions, and children living with HIV and AIDS.<sup>109</sup> The Country Programme recognises the strengthening of national monitoring and evaluation systems through sectoral and inter-sectoral approaches as part of this agenda, as it states that the ‘features of national monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms’ are ‘a critical bottleneck to the equitable realisation of children’s rights.’<sup>110</sup> Further, the Country Programme recognises strengthened ‘data collection and analysis for child rights monitoring... to support cross-sectoral linkages’ as cross-cutting issue.<sup>111</sup> Mirroring this approach, the CRM programme was repositioned from within UNICEF’s Child Protection programme section to the Monitoring and Evaluation programme section, where it now also serves as a cross-cutting issue across all of UNICEF’s programme sections.<sup>112</sup>

The results framework for the Country Programme includes a CRM-related output (by 2020, authorities at all levels and CSOs have increased capacity to effectively contribute to child rights monitoring and reporting’) in relation to ‘Outcome 3’ on increased access by boys and girls to prevention and response services to address violence, abuse and neglect.<sup>113</sup> UNICEF’s Multiyear Work Plan 2016-2017 and Annual Work Plans for 2018 with the NHRC and Women’s Committee, under which the CRM programme activities fall, all aim to achieve Outcome 3 of the Country Programme, which reinforces their relevance to UNICEF’s policies and priorities in the country.

The CRM programme fits within the broader United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which includes the following CRM-related outcome: ‘by 2020, the quality of public administration is improved for equitable access to quality public services’ (UNDAF Outcome 7). UNDAF Outcome 7 is measured by assessing the extent to which public institutions provide, use and assess quality data for evidence-based policy-

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<sup>108</sup> TOC (Appendix 8.3)

<sup>109</sup> UNICEF, *Draft Country Programme Document: Uzbekistan*, E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20, 15 June 2015, para 15.

<sup>110</sup> UNICEF, *Draft Country Programme Document: Uzbekistan*, E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20, 15 June 2015, paras 48 and 49.

<sup>111</sup> UNICEF, *Draft Country Programme Document: Uzbekistan*, E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20, 15 June 2015, para 43.

<sup>112</sup> Participants from UNICEF, Interview with Coram International, November 2018

<sup>113</sup> UNICEF, *Draft Country Programme Document: Uzbekistan*, E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20, 15 June 2015, p 15/16.

making and the extent to which data is accessible, including through open Government/open national data mechanisms, and used by media and CSOs for public oversight.<sup>114</sup> The Multiyear Work Plans and Annual Work Plans governing the CRM activities during the evaluation period all aim to achieve Outcome 7. The outcomes and outputs of the TOC also track the language of UNDAF Outcome 7 closely, by focusing on strengthening public oversight mechanisms (Outcome 2) and capacities for data collection, analysis and use for evidence-based policy-making (Outcome 3), reflecting the CRM programme's relevance to the UN's strategy in Uzbekistan.

The alignment of the CRM programme with the Action-Oriented Roadmap on Further Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United Nations System for 2017-2020 (Roadmap), which is framed around the UNDAF and Sustainable Development Goals, reinforces the CRM's programme's relevance to UNICEF's agenda (and indeed the agenda of the UN and Government) in the country. The Roadmap provides that UNICEF will support national monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>115</sup> with which its CRM programme inevitably overlaps. The Roadmap also suggests that UNICEF should support the Government in implementing Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 'providing statistically sound, internationally comparable and disaggregated data on a range of women and child-related indicators'.<sup>116</sup> Although the MICS has not been implemented to date, participants from UNICEF reported that they are planning implementation of this project. The Roadmap states that UNICEF will provide technical support to the Government, NHRC, Coordination Council and CSOs to monitor, review, implement and report on progress of the recommendations of the CRC, to which all the CRM projects in **Appendix 8.2** are relevant, albeit to varying degrees.<sup>117</sup> The Roadmap also provides that UNICEF will support the drafting of the law on the Children's Ombudsperson,<sup>118</sup> to which Project 3 is directly relevant.

More broadly, the CRM programme is relevant to UNICEF's Global Strategic Plan 2018-2021. For example, 'Change Strategy 8' of the Strategic Plan focuses on 'using the power of evidence to drive change for children', including the 'promotion of the use of evaluations, research and data about child well-being to catalyse change for the most vulnerable children'.<sup>119</sup> Outcome 3 and Outputs 6 and 7 of the TOC as well as Projects 4 to 8, which focus on strengthening CRM skills capacities and developing the evidence base, are directly relevant to Change Strategy 8.

***To what extent is the CRM programme relevant to the policies and priorities of key CRM stakeholders?***

#### **Policies and Strategic Priorities of Key CRM Stakeholders:**

*Data:*

The CRM programme is relevant to the policies and priorities of key CRM stakeholders. The improvement of the quality and accuracy of data and data collection methodologies is a key priority for the Government. In addition to this being a key part of the Roadmap (mentioned above), On 31 July 2017, Uzbekistan adopted

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<sup>114</sup> UNICEF, *Draft Country Programme Document: Uzbekistan*, E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20, 15 June 2015, p 12/16; UNICEF, *Report on the CRM Programme 2017*, September 2017, p 14.

<sup>115</sup> Action-Oriented Roadmap on Further Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United Nations System for 2017-2020 (Roadmap), Activity 1.

<sup>116</sup> Roadmap, Activity 2.

<sup>117</sup> Roadmap, Activity 99.

<sup>118</sup> Roadmap, Activity 110.

<sup>119</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021*, E/ICEF/2017/17/Rev.1, August 2017.

Presidential Decree No. 3165 on the improvement of Goskomstat's activities, including improving the transparency and harmony of its data with international standards. This was also acknowledged by participants during the data collection: *'I know there is a very strong will by the President to push to produce meaningful data'*.<sup>120</sup>

The building of stakeholder capacities in this area is also very timely given the reports by numerous stakeholders of their plans to develop integrated databases on children's issues. As mentioned above, the functions of the new Oila Centre include working with stakeholders to establish an interagency database on families in difficult life situations and social risk-groups.<sup>121</sup> In addition, several participants in the data collection reported that their agencies/departments are developing, or planning to develop, integrated databases with a view to improving the quality of data on children's issues and facilitating their exchange between agencies:

*'We are also planning on establishing inter-agency information exchange on information based on the human rights convention and this data will include information on children'*.<sup>122</sup>

*'We have decided to create this database [on domestic violence]...this has been supported by our managers'*.<sup>123</sup>

*'We have a plan to create a single database on families that face difficulties'*.<sup>124</sup>

*'We raised it in Tashkent – about creating a single database for children with disabilities'*.<sup>125</sup>

More broadly, the enhancement of the State system is one of five priority areas for the Government.<sup>126</sup> It includes the reform of the public administration system, consisting of (among other things) 'ensuring transparency of public authorities and management' and the 'introduction of modern forms of the provision of information concerning the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of individuals and legal entities'.<sup>127</sup> This further reinforces the relevance of Outcome 3 of the TOC which focuses on developing the capacity of Government and public bodies to collect, analyse and use accurate data to protect children's rights.

#### *Civil society:*

The enhancement of the public management system, including the 'development of civil society institutions' and 'their social and political activism', forms part of the Government's agenda for strengthening the State system, as reflected in the National Strategy of Actions on the Five Priority Areas for the Development of Uzbekistan 2017-2021. Further, in May 2018, a Presidential Decree was passed that intends to fundamentally increase the role of CSOs in the democratic renewal of the country.<sup>128</sup> Outcome 1 of the TOC on strengthening inter-sectoral coordination in CRM, and Outcome 2 on strengthening public oversight systems, particularly through strengthening the technical and financial capacities of CSOs in CRM, are therefore highly relevant.

#### *Children's Ombudsperson:*

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<sup>120</sup> Participant from Academia, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>121</sup> Road Map, attachment to Presidential Decree No. 3808 of 2018.

<sup>122</sup> Participant from State Agency 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>123</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>124</sup> Participant from Public Association 5, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>125</sup> Participant from Monitoring Group Region 4, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>126</sup> Strategy of Actions on the Five Priority Areas for the Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021.

<sup>127</sup> Strategy of Actions on the Five Priority Areas for the Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021.

<sup>128</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, Presidential Decree on measures of fundamentally increasing the role of civil society institutions in the process of democratic renewal of the country, 24 May 2018.

As noted above, the development of the draft law on the establishment of the Children's Ombudsperson is explicitly included in the Roadmap between the Government and UN agencies. The Government's 'Programme of Events Dedicated to the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' also includes 'the study of the establishment of the Institution of the Ombudsman for Child and Youth rights protection'.<sup>129</sup> UNICEF's support in this task is therefore directly relevant to the Government's agenda.

#### *Capacity-building:*

To date, UNICEF has worked closely with CRM stakeholders to develop CRM capacity-building activities, most notably through Projects 4 and 8 (see **Appendix 8.2**), during which UNICEF delivered capacity-building trainings to IWGs and monitoring groups to collect, analyse and use quantitative and qualitative data on the situation of children in order to address inequities in the realisation of their rights. Participants from the monitoring groups generally considered these projects to be highly relevant and aligned with their own priorities, goals and needs.<sup>130</sup> As one participant remarked:

*".....We are very much impressed by the training conducted by UNICEF on both the monitoring group and working group levels. What we noticed was that the training and agenda of the training was very much relevant to what we were doing – that was very inspiring as it was close to what we were doing at the time."* (Monitoring Group Participant, Region 2)

For one participant, though the activities did not match with their organisation's priorities initially, the participant expressed that they were still relevant to the needs of children in their area: '*UNICEF came up with proposals on areas we tend to forget, but they make us realise how important those areas are*'.<sup>131</sup>

#### **Participation of Key CRM Stakeholders:**

UNICEF's CRM programme includes the participation of a number of key CRM stakeholders in Uzbekistan, most notably, the Women's Committee and the NHRC, with whom UNICEF has entered into Multiyear and Annual Work Plans to implement its CRM activities. The Women's Committee plays a key strategic role in influencing CRM given its mandate to protect the rights of women and children; the role of its Chairwoman as Deputy Prime Minister at the national level; the role of its regional Chairwomen as Deputy Khokims/Chairwoman in the regions/ROK, which are high level Government focal points. This is reinforced by the findings under Part 5.5 (Impact) which reflect the strategic importance of the Women's Committee in facilitating the implementation of CRM findings. Similarly, the NHRC is a key CRM stakeholder given its role as a human rights research institution and coordinator of the preparation of Uzbekistan's State report to the CRC Committee.

To date, UNICEF has not partnered directly with the Ombudsman on CRM, although the Ombudsman is a member of the working group to develop the draft law for the establishment of the Children's Ombudsperson. Pending the establishment of this new body, CRM is carried out by the existing Ombudsman's Office, primarily via its individual complaints mechanism, ad hoc visits to children's institutions, and requests to the General Prosecutor's Office to conduct investigations into alleged crimes based on the Ombudsman's findings.<sup>132</sup> Despite the reported intentions of the drafters to establish the Children's Ombudsperson as a standalone

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<sup>129</sup> Presidential Decree No. 5434, 5 May 2018, Annex 1, Activity 15.

<sup>130</sup> Participants from Monitoring Groups in Regions 2, 3, and 4, Interviews with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>131</sup> Participant from [details withheld] Region 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>132</sup> Participant from the Office of the Ombudsman, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

institution,<sup>133</sup> there is the possibility that it may be integrated into the existing Ombudsman's Office. Even if the Children's Ombudsperson is established as a separate institution, one participant considered that this would not affect the Ombudsman's mandate to deal with children's rights, and would continue to handle any individual complaints concerning children that may be submitted to it, although it would do so in cooperation with the new body.<sup>134</sup> This feedback reinforces the need for close collaboration with the Ombudsman's Office in the CRM programme, and should be made explicit in the TOC.

Since the development of the draft TOC, the Oila Centre has been moved from the Women's Committee to under the Committee of Ministers at the national level, with the mandate of conducting research and trainings for specialists working on family issues.<sup>135</sup> As elaborated further in Part 5.4 below, there may be opportunities to provide skills-based capacity-building trainings to civil servants and other CRM actors via the Oila Centre.<sup>136</sup> Further, as outlined under 'Context' above, the Oila Centre is mandated to play a significant role in CRM, by coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Road Map on Strengthening the Family Institution, and working with stakeholders to establish an interagency database on the status and needs of families in difficult life situations and social risk-groups.<sup>137</sup> The participation of the Oila Centre should therefore be considered when developing future CRM programme activities.

## 5.2. Effectiveness

**To what extent is the CRM programme contributing to the establishment of a fully functioning, well-governed and coordinated CRM system at the national and local levels?**

***To what extent has the CRM programme strengthened inter-sectoral coordination of CRM activities amongst stakeholders at the national and local levels?***

### **National Level**

The data highlights UNICEF's integral involvement in the revival of the Coordination Council. Via Project 6 (which concerned the review of the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the CRC Committee), UNICEF and the NHRC referred to the CRC Committee's recommendation on establishing a national-level coordinating body to advocate for the re-establishment of this mechanism.<sup>138</sup> As part of this effort, the analysis prepared under Project 6 was submitted to key line Ministries and other relevant public agencies, particularly the Chairwomen of the Women's Committee, who now chairs the Coordination Council.<sup>139</sup> UNICEF also provided technical assistance to the Cabinet of Ministers, via the Deputy Prime Minister/ Chairwoman of the Women's Committee, to develop the objectives and mandate of the Coordinating Council, which were outlined and adopted at its inaugural meeting on 14 September 2017.<sup>140</sup> Further, UNICEF facilitated the arrangements for holding the Coordination Council's meetings (14 September 2017; 10 July 2018).<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Independent expert, Interview with Coram International, December 2018.

<sup>134</sup> Participant from Office of the Ombudsman, Individual interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>135</sup> Monitoring Group, Region 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018; Participant from [international organisation], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>136</sup> Monitoring Group, Region 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>137</sup> Road Map, attachment to Presidential Decree No. 3808 of 2018.

<sup>138</sup> NHRC, Implementation Status of the Recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (63 session) 2017, p 1

<sup>139</sup> Participant from UNICEF, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>140</sup> UNICEF, Interview with Coram International, November 2018; Protocol of the First Meeting of the Coordination Council.

<sup>141</sup> UNICEF, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

In support of this finding, participants in the data collection generally viewed UNICEF as an important influence in the establishment of the Coordination Council. For example, a participant from a public body spoke of the re-establishment of the Coordination Council as a joint initiative of the Women's Committee and UNICEF. This participant also viewed UNICEF's role as crucial in developing the capacities of the Coordination Council's working group to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the CRC Committee, by providing technical expertise and sharing best practices.<sup>142</sup> Another participant remarked, "UNICEF in any case has helped us step by step and is trying to unite us all to direct all our efforts to protect child rights."<sup>143</sup>

The Coordination Council has commenced its operations, having met twice since its re-establishment, and has reportedly collected data from its members on a quarterly basis on their implementation of the National Programme on Implementation of the Recommendations of the CRC Committee 2017-2021 for discussion at its biannual meetings.<sup>144</sup> Several participants considered that the Coordination Council is an effective, or at least has the potential to be an effective, CRM mechanism, by providing stakeholders with a forum for discussing children's issues and involving high ranking Government officials who have the authority to adopt initiatives to address issues identified by the Council's CRM activities:

*"Personally, I think that the fact it exists is a positive move. I do think that the work of the [Coordination Council] will have a positive impact – taking into account [the fact that] recommendations are taken directly to the Government."*<sup>145</sup>

*"We do consider their work to be effective.... because this Council is providing very good monitoring of the situation – they are able to identify those children that need protection... The Council is contributing a lot and doing a good job in identifying and categorising this group of people."*<sup>146</sup>

Importantly, the Coordination Council brings together Government and NGOs in a formal way at the national level.<sup>147</sup> NGO participants who were familiar with the work of the Council generally regarded the Council to be an effective inter-sectoral mechanism between Government and civil society:

*"We feel this effectiveness [of the Coordination Council] because we represent civil society – there is a psychological factor and we can talk openly during round tables and ask when they can implement, realise our proposals during these meetings. That psychological factor is very important in that sense.... Organisations lack access, [so] this [the Coordination Council] is very important."*<sup>148</sup>

*"We have had meetings with the [Coordination] Council – we do have close contact with the Council about monitoring the situation of children as our functions are based on the CRC. We are invited to the roundtables that they organise – we also invite members of the Council to our meetings."*<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Participant from the Women's Committee at the national level, Interview with Coram International, 5 November 2018.

<sup>143</sup> Participant from State Agency5, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>144</sup> Participant from the Women's Committee at the national level, Interview with Coram International, 5 November 2018.

<sup>145</sup> Participant from NGO 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>146</sup> Participant from Public Association 4, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>147</sup> The NGO members of the Coordination Council are: *Sen Yolgiz Emassan* (You Are Not Alone Foundation); the Mahalla Foundation; the Youth Union (formerly, Kamolot); the Republican Centre for the Social Adaptation of Children; the Centre for Secondary and Vocational Education; and the Women's Committee.

<sup>148</sup> Participant from Government Supported NGO 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>149</sup> Participant from Public Association 4, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

However, this view was not shared by all civil society participants. For example, one NGO participant highlighted the extensive overlap of mandates of stakeholders and the tendency of 'competition' rather than 'coordination' on issues relating to child rights.<sup>150</sup>

Despite the significant achievement in the re-establishment of the Coordination Council, there remain several challenges to its effectiveness, which should be factored into future CRM programming. Several participants from Government line Ministries and public bodies were not aware of the Coordination Council, despite their membership on this mechanism.<sup>151</sup> However, this may be explained in whole or in part by the ongoing reorganisation of State bodies and the fact that many participants from these bodies were newly appointed with limited knowledge of their agency's institutional history. Despite this, even in agencies with long-term appointees, awareness of the Coordination Council was not trickling down to personnel at the lower tiers, who acknowledged that their supervisors were on the Council but had very little knowledge of the Council's mandate or activities.<sup>152</sup>

In this connection, when asked about the activities of the Coordination Council, several participants referred to other inter-agency working groups at the national level, raising the question as to whether there is good coordination between these mechanisms, the functions of which appear to overlap. For instance, one Government participant spoke about an inter-agency working group on adolescents including representatives from the MOH, MOPE, MOIA, MOHSSE and Youth Union which collects and reports on data concerning adolescents.<sup>153</sup> Reports were also made of an inter-agency coordination body under the MOJ which had been operating since 2008 and which met every quarter to review State reports prior to their submission to UN treaty bodies, but which had undergone restructuring in 2018 and was no longer performing all these functions.<sup>154</sup> Further, participants referred to the inter-agency Committee on Minors operating under the General Prosecutor's Office which monitors child rights in the areas of child justice and crime prevention.<sup>155</sup>

Several key CRM stakeholder bodies are not members of the Coordination Council, such as the Office of the General Prosecutor, or the Supreme Court, which is the main data collection and analysis body for statistics concerning children in the justice system. Further, given the reorganisation of the Oila Centre in February 2018 and its mandate to research into issues relating to children and families, this is also a notable absence on the Coordination Council.

At present, the Coordination Council is not operating pursuant to a costed, results-based monitoring action plan, as contemplated in UNICEF's draft TOC, which is a gap in its operational framework. Commenting on its CRM programme pre-2015, UNICEF observed that its capacity-building interventions for central (and regional) Governments on results-based management principles did not lead to participants developing a National Plan of Action for Children and corresponding Regional Plans of Action rooted in this approach (see further below for further analysis).<sup>156</sup> Further, UNICEF's offers to stakeholders to provide technical assistance for the development of the NPA were only responded to after the NPA's adoption, which limited the scope of UNICEF's ability to provide technical assistance for the development of the content of this umbrella document. The NPA does not integrate a results-based approach to monitoring and evaluation, as it only provides a list

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<sup>150</sup> Participant from NGO 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>151</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>152</sup> Participant from State Agency 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018; Participant from Government Ministry 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>153</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>154</sup> Participant 2 from State Agency 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>155</sup> Participant from Government-Supported NGO 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>156</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on Documentation of the Child Rights Monitoring Programme Implementation in CPAP 2010-2015

of CRC Committee recommendations, implementation activities, rough deadlines, and long lists of responsible bodies.<sup>157</sup> However, Uzbekistan's fifth periodic review before the CRC Committee is due,<sup>158</sup> and is therefore an opportune time for UNICEF and the Coordination Council to work together to plan the development of a results-based, costed, overarching NPA rooted in the next round of CRC Committee comments.

As elaborated in Part 5.4 below, Government line Ministries, public agencies and CSOs generally reported having limited human, financial and material resources, restricting their ability to carry out their CRM activities. These challenges inevitably impede the work of the Coordination Council, which does not have its own separate budget and relies on the resources of its members. UNICEF has recognised this challenge, and worked with the Deputy Prime Minister to establish a working group (as resolved by the Coordination Council at its inaugural meeting)<sup>159</sup> comprised of skilled staff from each agency on the Coordination Council.<sup>160</sup> UNICEF provided a one-off financial contribution to working group members to support them in carrying out their functions, particularly as these members carried out this role alongside their full-time jobs. The working group ceased to operate in June 2018 due in part to a lack of funding and limited financial and human resources of the Women's Committee which has been the chairing institution,<sup>161</sup> such that the Coordination Council is now without operational support.<sup>162</sup>

### **Regional Levels**

Recognising that the IWGs required support in implementing CRM monitoring activities in the field, UNICEF supported the Women's Committees and IWGs in establishing a total of four inter-sectoral monitoring groups (one in each target region) to collect, verify and analyse data on the situation of children (Projects 4 and 8). Under these projects, the monitoring groups would report their findings, together with recommendations for addressing the issues, to the IWG, which would have the authority to adopt policies and programmes to address these concerns. These monitoring groups continue to exist today, as do the IWGs, and bring together stakeholders from Government departments, public agencies and NGOs (see **Appendix 8.18** for their memberships). Despite reported challenges in encouraging high level involvement from Government departments in the activities of the IWGs,<sup>163</sup> participants in the regions generally considered that these CRM projects strengthened inter-sectoral coordination in the regions:

*"One achievement was establishing good information exchange – previously not many people would know each other and everyone was doing this work independently. Information exchange and that was due to the assistance of UNICEF in establishing this work style."* (Monitoring Group, Region 2)

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<sup>157</sup> A results-based monitoring framework would normally include defined outcomes and outputs; ensuring adequate resources to achieve objectives; quantitative and qualitative indicators and targets to measure progress; baseline data; specific deadlines; assumptions and risks; and division of responsibilities between the responsible stakeholders; UN Development Group, *Results-Based Management Handbook*, 24 March 2010, retrieved via <https://www.un.org/files/undg%20RBM%20Handbook.pdf> on 9 December 2018.

<sup>158</sup> The State Report, which was due on 28 January 2018, has reportedly been submitted to the CRC Committee (Participant from Public Agency, Interview with Coram International, November 2018) although it was not published on the website of the OHCHR at the time of writing.

<sup>159</sup> Protocol of the meeting of the Coordination Council, approved by the Deputy Prime Minister on 14 September 2017.

<sup>160</sup> Participant from Government-Supported NGO 6; participant from UNICEF; interviews with Coram International; November 2018.

<sup>161</sup> Given that the Chair of the Council (the Deputy Prime Minister) is also the Chair of the Women's Committee.

<sup>162</sup> Participant from Government-Supported NGO 6, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>163</sup> Reportedly due to the punitive blame culture at the time, and a focus on short-term results; UNICEF, Report on the Assessment of the Activities of the Monitoring Groups between 2016 and 2017, p 3.

*"[The UNICEF programme] succeeded to improve coordination between Government and NGOs – both within our group and more generally in the region. In our own example as representatives of NGOs, it helped us seriously to improve and extend our knowledge and helped us develop skills on how to cooperate with Government. One remarkable thing is that our contribution is being felt – our initiatives are reflected in State and regional programmes and they have started to provide us with additional support as an NGO to implement these programmes." (Monitoring Group, Region 3)*

*"Because of this [UNICEF] project, we developed very good coordination between Government and NGOs. In the past, Government would know that there were some NGOs doing some work but as part of this work we developed good communication/coordination links between ourselves. This has developed into a sort of social partnership....."During the 4 years of implementing these projects, we could say that we have improved the inter-agency coordination. Due to this project, the Women's Committee has managed to unite all the separate agencies and developed good communication between them and this is still on-going these days." (Monitoring Group, Region 4)*

There is evidence that UNICEF programming has also strengthened links between IWGs and monitoring groups between the regions, providing opportunities for dialogue and the sharing of good practices:

*"Another advantage that we received from this project is that it allowed us to share experience with other regions. We visited other regions and saw how they were working and doing implementation activities. These visits were facilitated under the budget provided by UNICEF – we chose to visit [Region 1] and [Region 3]." (Monitoring Group, Region 4)*

Data indicates that recommendations developed by the monitoring groups and shared with the IWGs as part of UNICEF Projects 4 and 8 have, to varying degrees, been adopted and integrated into Government programming at the regional levels, demonstrating the effectiveness of these CRM activities. A UNICEF assessment into the work of the monitoring groups between 2016 and 2017 found that, "[f]or the first time, in the framework of cooperation on children's issues, decisions were taken based on concrete facts."<sup>164</sup> For example, in **Ferghana**, the 13 recommendations developed by the monitoring group as part of its situational analysis of single mothers and their children were reportedly incorporated into paragraphs 96 and 97 on 'Child Welfare' in the 2018 Regional Plan of Actions on Implementation of the Five Priority Directions in the Year of Support of Effective Business, Innovation Ideas and Technology.<sup>165</sup> Whilst the participants from **Jizzakh**, **RoK** and **Khorezm** were not able to quantify the number of recommendations incorporated/ accepted by the regional Governmental authorities, the monitoring group participants considered that the results of their monitoring under the UNICEF projects influenced Government policies and programmes:

*"UNICEF correctly focused and selected targets for our work. The evidence for that is that after the analysis, we decided to include 12 chapters into the regional programme that was based on the inputs and recommendations of UNICEF." (Monitoring Group, Jizzakh)*

*"What I would like to say is that the majority... basically all of our recommendations have been approved at the higher level as a result of roundtable decisions where we raised our comments. I can't say exactly how many have been adopted but I can say that the situation has improved significantly." (Monitoring Group, RoK)*

*"The analysis of the monitoring group was reported during IWG sessions. The IWG, having heard the monitoring group's results, approved some proposals.... Some of the issues were referred to the*

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<sup>164</sup> UNICEF, Report on the Assessment of the Activities of the Monitoring Groups between 2016 and 2017, p 7.

<sup>165</sup> Participant from the Monitoring Group of Ferghana Region, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

*Governor's level as the Heads of Departments know the competency framework. For example, one of the reasons of low [pre-school] enrolment was the lack of financing, so when this was communicated to the Finance Department, they sought permission to use more budget from the Governor. This was improved and that money was allocated...." (Monitoring Group, Khorezm)*

However, the 2018 UNICEF assessment into the work of the monitoring groups concluded that *"the monitoring group, and on the whole the IWG, remain weak as institution. The regional authorities have not recognized them as a regularly operating body yet, that can provide them with reliable information based on which decisions can be made."*<sup>166</sup> The data from this study supports this finding. Whilst the monitoring groups have had some success in having their recommendations adopted by regional Government, as outlined further under Part 5.4 below (Sustainability), the lack of financial resources of the monitoring groups is impacting upon their ability to perform their CRM functions on an ongoing basis, resulting in them taking an increasingly ad hoc and informal approach to CRM activities. For example, when describing their current activities, participants from one monitoring group participants described identifying children's issues based on their ad hoc observations in the field or discussions with community members, and lobbying contacts within the regional Government to address these issues, focusing more on identifying and providing support to individual cases<sup>167</sup> than working with the IWGs to monitor child rights more broadly on a systematic basis:

*"What do your activities [i.e. of the monitoring group] involve today? One of the main activities is... we try to help [category of beneficiaries] with possible employment opportunities and train them so that they can get employed. There are such families which do not have birth certificates and they do not have this so we help them get birth registration. How do you help them – do you refer these people to another organisation or does your organisation help them? As soon as we locate such problems, we take them to the local Women's Committee and they dedicate their employees to help [them]. How do you identify those in need? These cases are mainly identified during general round table meetings when we go to rural places and organise meetings with the Women's Committees in rural areas and [beneficiaries] come up to us and ask us for advice....." (Monitoring Group, Region 1)*

### **Connecting Regional and National Levels**

There is some evidence of collaboration between the coordination mechanisms in the target regions, and national level stakeholders in conducting CRM activities. As part of Projects 4 and 8, UNICEF worked with the IWGs and the monitoring groups to develop two sets of recommendations, one for stakeholders in the target regions, and one for stakeholders at the national levels.<sup>168</sup> UNICEF also arranged a conference in Tashkent for the IWGs and monitoring groups to report and discuss their findings and recommendations with the national Women's Committee. Participants from monitoring groups reported that some of their recommendations had been adopted at the national level, with implications for regions which were not included in the CRM programme, which not only demonstrates the effectiveness of these mechanisms, but also an **unintended but positive outcome** of the CRM programme:

*"We came up with summary report on [CRM project in Region 1].... In our reporting document, we included three proposals which we sent to the national level. At the beginning of this year when the [a high level Government official] visited [Region 1], the [high level Government official] already knew that we were doing this work... and [we] handed these proposals to [the official]... The [official] liked this report... that the conclusions that were provided were very much substantiated, [and the official]*

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<sup>166</sup> UNICEF, Report on the Assessment of the Activities of the Monitoring Groups between 2016 and 2017, p 7.

<sup>167</sup> Participant from Monitoring Group, Region 1, November 2018.

<sup>168</sup> UNICEF, Interview with Coram International, November 2018; UNICEF, Report on the Assessment of the Activities of the Monitoring Groups between 2016 and 2017, p 3.

*decided to submit this to the national level coordination group, and decided/proposed that these proposals should be extended to the whole country.” (Participant from Public Association 6, Region 1)*

*“Some issues were in the realm of national levels, for example, pre-school fees, so they couldn’t be handled at the regional level. The IWG... collected all this information and... submitted the proposals that they couldn’t decide upon to the Governor’s level. The proposal for fees was reported to the national level and the next year the price was cut in half. Then the Women’s Committee spread this to other districts [in Region 2] and found the same problems. At that time, the Chair of the Women’s Committee was a senator as well as Deputy Khokim, so she benefitted from her position and sent issues to the Senate to alter legislation. They sent an enquiry to the Senate and we sent an official letter from the monitoring group to the Minister of Public Education and the Women Committee’s chair raised this problem in national level Women’s Committee meetings. Based on these meetings, the chair of the national Women’s Committee has given an assignment to all Women’s Committees in regions to work on this issue. Findings show all regions in the country have the same problems. I think we have to give credit to the project work as due to [its] findings, this problem has been raised to the national level.” (Monitoring Group, Region 2)*

Despite this, there are no formal mechanisms connecting the IWGs in the regions with the Coordination Council, and this has not been a focus of the CRM programme to date. As the examples above demonstrate, to date, initiatives are being raised to the national level through ad hoc links between the IWGs, Women’s Committees and monitoring groups to focal points at the national level.

***To what extent has the CRM programme strengthened the technical and financial capacities of public oversight mechanisms to conduct CRM?***

### **Civil Society Organisations**

The outputs and outcomes of UNICEF’s CSO capacity-building project between 2012 and 2014 are documented in previous evaluation reports and are therefore only summarised here. A total of four x four-day trainings and one x two-day trainings were held in Tashkent between October 2012 and October 2014 to a total of 42 representatives from 22 NGOs across seven regions (Ferghana, Namangan, Jizzakh, Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya, and Khorezm and the RoK).<sup>169</sup> Further, between 2012 and 2014, an additional 27 x two-day trainings were delivered to a total of 204 female and 113 male participants from 201 NGOs across these regions.<sup>170</sup> As part of these trainings, NGOs were trained to develop project proposals for funding from the Government’s Public Fund. According to UNICEF’s Final Report on this project, a total of 14 NGOs developed project proposals relating to the protection of children’s rights, seven of which were granted funding for the amounts of UZS 11,600,000 to USZ 14,700,000, although some applications were still pending.<sup>171</sup>

During the data collection, stakeholders generally spoke extremely positively about the effectiveness of the CSO capacity-building project. Participants from civil society indicated that this training developed their skills

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<sup>169</sup> I.e. 20 directors, 9 specialists (coordinator, operator, social worker, etc.), 12 volunteers, and 1 chairperson of board of directors. From the 19 NGOs remaining by the end of the project, representatives of 12 NGOs participated in all 5 trainings, representatives of 5 NGOs participated in 4 trainings and representatives of 2 NGOs organizations participated in 3 trainings.

<sup>170</sup> The Expert Council constituted for this project (see above) selected participants from a pool of applications submitted by NGOs in response to an open call advertised by NANNOUz and the ASFC (UNICEF’s project partners).

<sup>171</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on NGO Capacity-Building Programme, 2015.

in project development and implementation, and contributed to delivering positive outcomes for their beneficiaries. For example:

*“We were trained on fundraising, developing proposals. We benefitted a lot.... **How did you benefit from this training?** For example, [we learnt] how to prepare projects, how to discover problems. Our regional departments developed projects specific to their region.... We developed questions, advocacy, we worked with the [MOH]....[description of concrete projects].<sup>172</sup> Beneficiaries see concrete results. **You attribute the achievements here partly to UNICEF training? Naturally.**”<sup>173</sup>*

*“It was a five-day training and we found out there are some difficult points in order to make detailed applications for such grants. Did this training help in trying to find funding? Specifically for me, it helped because before, I didn’t manage to get grants and after that, I managed to get two grants for two projects.”<sup>174</sup>*

Further, participants in this training formed the pool of candidates who were subsequently appointed to the monitoring groups, and were therefore able to use and build upon their technical skills developed during this project in subsequent projects with the IWGs<sup>175</sup> (see above).

Despite these important achievements, UNICEF observed that high level participants from the NGOs and NGOs would occasionally send a delegate (another employee or volunteer) to attend the trainings on their behalf, which ‘affected the quality of perception of educational material,’ as each module was intended to build upon the knowledge gained by participants during previous trainings.<sup>176</sup> In addition, participants from NGOs generally considered that they would benefit from further capacity building assistance from UNICEF to improve their technical skills, particularly as, as one participant put it, “as NGOs gain capacity and influence in the political sphere, they should be doing more independent work supported by UNICEF.”<sup>177</sup>

The financial, human and technical resource capacities of CSOs are discussed in detail under ‘Efficiency’ and ‘Sustainability’ below.

### **Children’s Ombudsman**

The CRM programme is playing an integral role in the process of establishing a Children’s Ombudsman in Uzbekistan. Through this, the CRM programme is making good progress towards strengthening public oversight mechanisms to monitor children’s rights. In 2017, UNICEF facilitated the establishment of an inter-agency working group including the NHRC, key Government line Ministries (including the MOJ), the Legislative Chamber of Parliament, the Ombudsman, and NGOs including ‘You Are Not Alone’, the ASFC and the Republican Centre for the Social Adaptation of Children.<sup>178</sup> On 10 July 2017, UNICEF arranged the logistics for a virtual meeting between the working group and an international expert to discuss possible institutional forms which the Children’s Ombudsman could take and to make recommendations on their applicability to

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<sup>172</sup> Not detailed to avoid identification.

<sup>173</sup> Participant from Public Association 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2015.

<sup>174</sup> Participant from Monitoring Group in Region 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2015.

<sup>175</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on the Documentation of the CRM Programme 2015; Participant from Monitoring Group in Region 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>176</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on NGO Capacity-Building, November 2015.

<sup>177</sup> Participant from Monitoring Group in Region 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>178</sup> Participant 1 from State Agency 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

Uzbekistan.<sup>179</sup> A further five working group meetings, roundtable discussions and Parliamentary committee hearings were held to discuss and adopt the concept for the establishment of the Children's Ombudsman, and to develop and discuss a draft law for its establishment.<sup>180</sup> UNICEF's role throughout this process included providing technical assistance on the content of the law including through the engagement of international experts, participating in working group meetings, providing financial and logistical support in holding meetings and roundtables, and preparing materials (e.g. handouts) for use at these events.<sup>181</sup> At the time of writing, the NHRC and UNICEF planned to hold a final round table (in December 2018) including the involvement of an international expert to finalise the wording of the draft law before submitting it to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval and entry into the formal legislative process.<sup>182</sup>

Some key issues concerning the mandate and structure of the Children's Ombudsman remain outstanding, which could have a significant impact on its future effectiveness as an NHRI for children. To date, the draft law provides for the establishment of an 'Ombudsman for Children and Youth Rights' which would cover the rights of persons up to 30 years of age.<sup>183</sup> This arrangement risks diluting and eroding the effectiveness of the mandate of the NHRI as a specialist monitoring body for children's issues, though this ultimately depends on how the body is structured, financed and resourced. Further, the institutional structure of the Children's Ombudsman has not yet been decided. Though Government focal points have expressed an intention to establish it as a standalone, independent institution,<sup>184</sup> this may change during negotiations. There is therefore a continuing need for UNICEF's technical advice into the discussions regarding the draft law, in order to support the establishment of this (new) institution in line with the Paris Principles.

Should the Children's Ombudsman be integrated into the existing Ombudsman's Office, consideration should be made as to how UNICEF can best support the Ombudsman in developing as an NHRI. Both the CRC Committee and Human Rights Committee have called upon Uzbekistan to strengthen the Office in line with the Paris Principles, including with regards to its institutional independence.<sup>185</sup> It is noted that the Office of the Ombudsman is reportedly conducting an assessment of its activities with UNDP, after which consideration will be made to applying to the GANHRI for accreditation (of which the Ombudsman has been an observer since 2017).<sup>186</sup>

Indeed, data indicates a need to strengthen access by children to the existing individual complaints mechanism. The Annual Report for the Ombudsman's activities for 2016 was not available for review. However, the participant from the Ombudsman's Office estimated that, in 2017, 100 individual complaints concerning children's issues were submitted to the Office, although children reportedly "seldom" submit individual complaints themselves.<sup>187</sup> This is supported by the FGDs; none of the child participants had heard of the Ombudsman (or the NHRC). Further, none of the children responded that they would report a violation of their rights to the authorities. Instead, children who indicated that they would report to someone said that

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<sup>179</sup> Participant 1 from State Agency 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>180</sup> On 21 August 2017, 25 August 2017, 17 November 2017, 12 December 2017, and in July 2018; Participant 1 from State Agency 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018;

<sup>181</sup> Participant 1 from State Agency 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>182</sup> Participant 1 from State Agency 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>183</sup> Participant from international organisation [details withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>184</sup> Independent Expert, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>185</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on the fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 2015, para 5; CRC Committee, Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, 10 July 2013, para 7(c).

<sup>186</sup> Participant from the Office of the Ombudsman, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>187</sup> Participant from State Agency 4, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

they would tell their parents, relative or *“maybe UNICEF.”*<sup>188</sup> Stigma associated with reporting and ‘airing dirty laundry’ appears to be a key barrier. For instance, when asked about what they considered the consequences would be if they reported a rights violation, one girl responded: *“My mother would support me but she would tell me that society isn’t supporting us on these issues so it’s better to soothe it down.”*

Whilst a key role of an NHRI is to ‘promote’ children’s rights, there is little evidence of any such initiatives by the Ombudsman’s Office, and this is one area in which the participant from the Office welcomed UNICEF support.<sup>189</sup> Indeed, child participants of all ages and genders demonstrated limited knowledge and awareness of the concept of ‘child rights’, and the corresponding obligations imposed on the State to protect these, which may also be contributing to the low levels of reporting. For example, when asked about what ‘child rights’ mean to them, one child responded, *“it’s about parents and helping parents.”*<sup>190</sup> When asked who they think is responsible for protecting their rights, only one child (from a FGD of older children, aged 15 to 17) mentioned the Government, whereas other children referred to themselves, their parents or, when in school, their teachers.<sup>191</sup>

Data suggests that awareness of the Ombudsman and of children’s rights is particularly limited in the regions and rural areas of Uzbekistan. In one FGD, the children believed that there is an organisation checking to ensure that children’s rights are protected but could not name the organisation, and believed that it focused more *“on central cities and not on the regions.”* The participant from the Office of the Ombudsman acknowledged this challenge and considered that UNICEF support would be valuable in raising awareness of child rights and the Ombudsman in these areas.

### **NHRC and the Women’s Committee**

UNICEF has provided technical and financial assistance to the NHRC to support it in carrying out its CRM functions through the following projects: the development of the draft law to establish the Children’s Ombudsman (see further below), an ‘Analytical Report on the Results of Monitoring the Legislation of Uzbekistan on Children’s Property Rights’, and an analysis of the status of implementation of the recommendations of the CRC Committee from 2013 (Projects 3, 5 and 6 in **Appendix 8.2**, respectively). UNICEF’s role involved providing orientation workshops on how to conduct the assessments and research, develop tools for analysis, develop letters requesting data from line Ministries, providing technical input in conducting the desk review, data analysis and development of recommendations, and providing assistance in developing advocacy messages.<sup>192</sup>

Participants from the NHRC spoke extremely positively about their collaboration with UNICEF, and considered UNICEF’s financial and technical assistance to be essential in completing the projects above. Also, as noted above, the analysis of the implementation of the CRC Committee’s recommendations was used to advocate for the re-establishment of the Coordination Council. Further, this exercise supported the NHRC in preparing for the development of the State’s fifth periodic report to the CRC Committee which was due in January 2018.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Boy, 14 years old, FGD with Coram International, November 2018; Child, 11 years old, FGD with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>189</sup> Participant from the Office of the Ombudsman, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>190</sup> Female, 11 years of age, FGD with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>191</sup> Boy, 14 years old, FGD with Coram International, November 2018; Female, 11 years old, FGD with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>192</sup> Participant from UNICEF, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>193</sup> Participant from the NHRC, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

UNICEF's activities have focused heavily on building the technical capacity of the IWGs and monitoring groups. Through these initiatives, UNICEF has supported the Women's Committee's technical capacity as the chairing body of these oversight mechanisms. These initiatives are discussed further above in terms of UNICEF's support in strengthening inter-sectoral coordination, and in the paragraph below in terms of strengthening the analysis and use of disaggregated data to address children's issues.

***To what extent has the CRM programme strengthened the analysis and use of disaggregated data by decision-makers to address inequities in children's rights?***

UNICEF's project to build the capacities of the IWGs and monitoring groups (Project 8 in **Appendix 8.2**) included two components: a coordination component; and a project implementation component. The first component aimed to build the capacities of IWG and monitoring group members to collect, analyse and use data concerning children to inform initiatives adopted by the IWG in the field of children's rights. The second component required the members to implement these skills in a case study project on a priority issue in respective regions (pre-school education in Ferghana; nutritional health of children under 2 years of age in the RoK; child health in pre-school education in Jizzakh; and early childhood development and pre-school education in Khorezm). The outputs of Project 8 included the following:

- The provision by UNICEF of logistical, administrative and financial support for holding meetings of the IWGs and monitoring groups (quarterly meetings of the IWGs and monthly meetings for the monitoring groups);
- The delivery of three or four knowledge and skills-building trainings or seminars (lasting two or three days each) for the IWGs and monitoring group members in each region on the 'results-based monitoring and evaluation system',<sup>194</sup> 'principles of organising and conducting monitoring', and 'writing skills and the effective presentation of reports of findings';
- A three-day training session for IWG and monitoring group members in each region on monitoring the priority issue selected for that region;
- Meetings between the IWGs and monitoring groups from the regions to exchange experiences and practices; and
- Research reports for each region on the situation of children in the priority area, including recommendations for stakeholders, particularly the IWGs, on how to improve children's well-being based on their findings.<sup>195</sup>

UNICEF continued to help build the technical and material capacities of the IWGs and monitoring groups in the same target regions and in a similar manner through Project 4 in **Appendix 8.2**, which culminated in the development of four reports on the situation of children in another priority area in each region (single mothers and their children in Ferghana, and children with disabilities (CWD) in Jizzakh, the RoK and Khorezm).

Further, the CSO capacity-building training which concluded in 2014 (Project 7 in **Appendix 8.2**) covered five areas: (i) the role of NGOs in the community; (ii) project development skills; (iii) planning and implementation of the project; (iv) project monitoring and evaluation; and (v) strategic planning. The project aimed to strengthen CRM by civil society actors in two ways: (i) by building knowledge and skills capacities of civil society actors in order for them to function and contribute towards the production of knowledge on children's rights,

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<sup>194</sup> In the RoK, this was delivered as a two training on 'result-oriented management' and two-day training on 'results-oriented management skills';

<sup>195</sup> Report on the Implementation of Phase 1 of the project 'Monitoring of the well-being of children in Fergana region in the State program, 'Year of the 'Healthy Child'; Report on the Implementation of Phase 2 of the project 'Monitoring of the well-being of children in Fergana region in the State program, 'Year of the 'Healthy Child'; Analytical Report on Child Well-being Monitoring in the Jizzakh Region, 2015; Analytical Report on Child Well-being Monitoring in the RoK, 2015;

as well as the collection, analysis and use of data, in order to inform CRM discourses within society; and (ii) developing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) skills to ensure the development and delivery of projects resulting in concrete benefits for child beneficiaries. The results of this project (in terms of the numbers of participants and number of NGOs whose applications for funding succeeded) are already outlined above.

Participant evaluation forms were reportedly used for Project 4 and intermittently for Project 8, although these were not all available for review. Given the passing of time since these trainings, it has not been possible to quantify the outcomes or impacts these trainings have had on participants' skills capacities. However, participants who were involved in these projects generally spoke positively about these interventions and considered that they had strengthened their technical capacities to collect, analyse and use data to address inequities in children's rights:

*"... during these trainings, they [UNICEF] educated us on how to deal with and communicate with [research participants] in order to not to offend dignity, to build conversation, how this monitoring group should work and build their environment in the communities. First, it was very useful and a practical training. It was a full five day training and they provided us with accommodation. They informed us how to work with focus groups.... Also, in one of the trainings, they trained us on how to conduct detailed interviews with persons. Thanks to one of these trainings, we learnt a bit about stenography in order to put recordings on paper – it was very useful for our work." (Monitoring Group, Region 1)*

*"I was very pleased because we could identify the realistic baseline problems that would lead to problems such as children developing worms or HIV. We cooperated together. We have finally succeeded in learning the conditions of children in reality....We are very much impressed by the training conducted by UNICEF on both the monitoring group and working group levels....Knowledge that we gained through training and working with such people – this knowledge has helped us in our practical work." (Monitoring Group, Region 2)*

*"Since we streamlined and systematised data collection through these streams led by the chair of the district-level Women's Committee reporting up, the data collection was very easy.... Since the monitoring group started to work, they started to coordinate activity among members which were members of relevant institutions – that has seriously helped to improve coordination and the quality of information received." (Monitoring Group, Region 3)*

Importantly, participants from the monitoring groups reported that through the provision of financial assistance, UNICEF helped to build their capacities in other areas, such as budgeting, book keeping, and financial reporting.<sup>196</sup>

However, despite these important developments, challenges remain in collecting accurate and reliable data at the regional levels through the monitoring groups. For instance, one participant reported that the members of the monitoring groups are not M&E specialists in their full-time jobs (despite this being the initial intention), which they carry out in addition to their work on the monitoring groups and, given the juggling of roles, have not been able to practice and build upon their new technical skills.<sup>197</sup> Further, as touched on above, these projects did not result in the development of regional action plans based on a results-based management approach, one of the reasons being that further capacity-building is required. As one Government participant

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<sup>196</sup> Monitoring Groups, Regions 1 and 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>197</sup> Participant from [name of body withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

explained, “we are still learning, so we didn’t usually put the maximum indicator we should reach. We’ve been doing such a project for the first time, and it was a learning process.”<sup>198</sup> Participants from the monitoring groups therefore welcomed further capacity-building training in this specialist area.<sup>199</sup>

More fundamentally, there are differing understandings of what it means to ‘monitor’ children’s rights. There was a tendency amongst some participants from both Government and non-Government bodies to equate the monitoring of children’s rights with the delivery of services or the ‘protection’ or ‘implementation’ of children’s rights more generally.<sup>200</sup> Further, there was some unawareness amongst Government focal points of the difference between Uzbekistan’s international duty to establish a CRM mechanism within the State structure and an independent CRM mechanism:

*‘As a government authority we should ensure control over the situation generally but for the purposes of impartiality it is better that [monitoring the implementation of the CRC] would be conducted by a children’s ombudsman with sufficient mandate and power.’<sup>201</sup>*

UNICEF programming has not focused on building the technical capacities of personnel in Government line ministries at the national level in the same way as the target regions, though this is rightly contemplated in the draft TOC. Participants who were involved in capacity-building trainings at the regional levels considered that Government focal points at the national level would benefit from similar trainings:

*“Because, Ministries and agency specialists have never gone through these sorts of trainings.... More or less NGOs are part of these trainings but for Government officials, this is something new. Sitting in offices, Government officials have certain boundaries where trainings provide an environment where they can express their thoughts and think differently. I think these trainings were so efficient at training the opinions of those at departmental levels, I think that ministers should be involved in these trainings as they are the decision makers – I think they would benefit a lot.”* (IWG member, Region 4)

The data collection highlighted several challenges to the development of effective collection, analysis, and use of data within line Ministries, which may be used to inform UNICEF support programmes in this area. First, participants from across Government, public agencies and international organisations highlighted challenges with Ministries and public organisations having their own methods (including indicators) for collecting and analysing data, resulting in difficulties in comparing statistical data, and developing a holistic understanding of the situation of children:<sup>202</sup>

*‘Data collection is challenging. Each ministry has their own competency, and is collecting and analysing data. Maybe it’s easier to get information on certain categories but when we talk about general categories it is difficult.’<sup>203</sup>*

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<sup>198</sup> Participant from Government department, Region 1, November 2018

<sup>199</sup> Participant from Monitoring Group, Region 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>200</sup> Participant from [Government department in Region 1], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>201</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>202</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018; Participant from State Agency 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018; Participant from International Organisation [details withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018; Participant from Government-supported NGO 6, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>203</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

*'Another problem is the collection of statistical data, continuously stressed by UN committees. Each organisation has their own methods of compiling statistics, which so not necessarily match each other all the time'*<sup>204</sup>

Second, participants reported that the process of data collection from the community levels to the national level involves the sharing of data across multiple tiers of Government administration before it gets to the national level, which in itself is a cumbersome administrative process.<sup>205</sup> This challenge is compounded by short timelines imposed by line Ministries to collecting the data, such that when data is passed from district to regional to national level, *"it is usually late."*<sup>206</sup> Further, data collection is carried out manually (i.e. without a computerised database for storing and sharing data) which is a further operational challenge.<sup>207</sup>

Third, participants from across State agencies, NGOs and international bodies reported challenges stemming from a lack of institutional independence of data collection agencies, and limited transparency in their data collection methods, which in turn creates difficulties in sharing and verifying data on children, as well as barriers to establishing public trust in official statistics. For example, as one participant remarked:

*"[There is a] need [for] properly trained professionals that work in this field. [We] also need transparency, and need better interaction between actors working in this field. Also getting the appropriate and needed information – data is difficult to obtain."*<sup>208</sup>

Fourth, perceptions of an inhibitive culture of blame continues to hinder the free exchange and use of data. Some stakeholders considered that UNICEF's plans under the CRM programme to support stakeholders in developing tailored indicators for monitoring implementation of the CRC did not materialise for this reason.<sup>209</sup>

Participants from Goskomstat reported plans on establishing an inter-agency mechanism of sharing data based on human rights conventions, including children's rights, for which the support of international organisations would be welcomed in order to incorporate best practices and finance the project, although plans were still very much in the preliminary stages.<sup>210</sup>

### ***Is UNICEF's internal approach to CRM programming effective?***

The repositioning of the CRM programme as a cross-cutting issue across UNICEF Uzbekistan's thematic programme areas (Child Protection; Health; Education; Social Policy; Communication for Development; and Operations) is a logical move, given the cross-cutting nature of CRM. It can provide broader opportunities for more focused interventions with key CRM stakeholder bodies, such as the Coordination Council, Children's Ombudsman (when established), the existing Ombudsman, NHRC and Women's Committee. Further, this approach can help reinforce the message that 'children's rights' go beyond issues of child protection, social protection, education and health, capturing a broader range of inter-connecting and overlapping issues.

However, at the same time, participants noted some challenges to this new approach. According to some participants, the repositioning of CRM in this way has not led to the mainstreaming of the CRM programme

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<sup>204</sup> Participant from State Agency 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>205</sup> Participant from Government Ministry 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>206</sup> Participant 1 from Government Ministry 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>207</sup> Participant 2 from Government Ministry 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>208</sup> Participant from [agency type withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>209</sup> [Details withheld.]

<sup>210</sup> Participant from Goskomstat, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

components across all UNICEF programme areas. For example, one participant observed that over recent years, the CRM programme has engaged more with Child Protection than the Health and Education programmes.<sup>211</sup> Further, there is no indication in the TOC of how the CRM activities will be integrated into UNICEF's thematic programmes.

### 5.3. Efficiency

#### ***Are the financial, human and material resources allocated to the CRM programme sufficient to meet the intended outcomes of the CRM programme?***

At present, the draft TOC does not have a results framework outlining planned activities, budget allocation, timing, key targets, baseline data, indicators and methods for measuring progress. Further, the Country Programme and Multi-Year Work Plan 2016-2017, each provide combined budget forecasts for CRM and other activities. As it was not possible to identify forecast budgets for the CRM activities alone, it is not possible to conduct a full assessment of the financial efficiency of the CRM component of the Country Programme or Multi-Year Work Plan 2016-2017. This section therefore focuses on assessing how finances were allocated towards the CRM activities, and whether this funding was sufficient, in order to draw insights on the financial efficiency of the CRM programme to date.

Table 1 outlines the forecast budget for the CRM activities (where identified) for the years 2016 to 2018, and the CRM programme expenditure for those years.

**Table 1: Forecast budget allocation and budget expenditure (as at 29 November 2018) towards CRM programme activities for the years 2016 to 2018\* (Source: UNICEF)**

Year	Total Planned Budget under the Work Plan	CRM programme Expenditure for that Year
2016	USD 655,000*	USD 128,926
2017	USD 1,000,000*	USD 110,976
2018	USD 38,700 (Work Plan with the NHRC)  USD 154,000, including the CRM programme evaluation budget; USD 69,000 excluding the CRM programme evaluation budget (CRM component of the Work Plan with the Women's Committee)	USD 31,564  USD 73,931 including the CRM programme evaluation budget; USD 8,371 excluding the CRM programme evaluation budget
<b>TOTAL (including evaluation budget)</b>	USD 1,847,700	USD 345,397
<b>TOTAL (excluding evaluation budget)</b>	USD 1,762,700	USD 279,837

\* In 2016 and 2017, CRM fell under the auspices of UNICEF's child protection programme and had not yet been repositioned as a cross-cutting issue across all programme areas. Therefore, there was no separate CRM budget for those years. The total planned budget for 2016 and 2017 therefore includes CRM programme activities and other child protection programme activities.

Between 2016 and 2018, UNICEF spent a total of USD 279,837 on the CRM programme (excluding the CRM programme evaluation budget), suggesting that the CRM programme was implemented within budget.

<sup>211</sup> Participant from [agency type withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

Without a breakdown of the amount remaining for other programme activities under the Multiyear Work Plan 2016 to 2017, it is not possible to make an accurate assessment of whether the amounts spent on CRM activities were disproportionate compared to the amounts spent on other activities under that Work Plan, though at approximately 15 per cent of the amount spent under the Multiyear Work Plan 2016-2018, that would not appear to be the case. Given that UNICEF intends to implement CRM activities under its programme with the NHRC in December 2018, the fact that expenditure under the Work Plan with the NHRC as at 29 November 2018 was USD 7,136 less than forecasted, is to be expected.

A notable amount (USD 80,069) of the forecast budget in the 2018 Annual Work Plan with the Women's Committee was unutilised and allocated towards other UNICEF programme activities. This was due to the non-implementation of the development and customization of CRC indicators (see above).<sup>212</sup>

Project partners generally considered the programme budget to be sufficient for covering the planned activities, with only some minor budgetary adjustments being required. Monitoring groups from two of the target regions considered that the budget for travel expenses to remote regions could have been higher, taking into account fuel costs, and the need to buy refreshments for meetings with community members in remote areas, so as to facilitate a good rapport and dialogue and not "come with empty hands."<sup>213</sup> The monitoring group from one of these regions also considered the budget for "outreach activities" incorporated into the project to be insufficient, as they ended up spending more days than planned for this task.<sup>214</sup> Further, UNICEF participants noted that for some activities under the Work Plan with the NHRC, the provision of international technical assistance would have been beneficial although the budget could not cover this. However, there is no indication that these challenges impeded the overall progress of the CRM programme.

A closer look at the breakdown of the budget expenditure indicates that there was relatively little financial support for the Coordination Council at the national level. Between 2016 and 2018, the expenditure towards the Coordination Council was 3 per cent (USD 7,654) of the total CRM programme expenditure.<sup>215</sup> Approximately half of this expenditure was spent on direct cash transfers, with the other half on 'other' expenses such as events, travel, and translation. Given the barriers and challenges concerning the effectiveness of the Coordination Council, above, this finding suggests that, to date, insufficient financial resources have been allocated to building the skills capacities and operational framework of the Coordination Council (e.g. through the provision of international or national technical assistance). However, this was reportedly partly due to limited technical and human capacities of UNICEF's national partner in leading the project on the stakeholder side.<sup>216</sup>

Participants reported that, on the whole, project activities were implemented on time. One participant remarked that administrative hurdles in recruitment meant that there was a significant delay (11 months) in recruiting a UNICEF consultant for the purposes of UNICEF's Work Plan with the NHRC, although this was not identified by any other participant and does not appear to have had a significant effect on the overall progress of the CRM programme. There were some reports of delays to the implementation of certain project activities although these appear to have been minor. Project partners in the capacity-building project with CSOs (Project 7 in **Appendix 8.2**) faced challenges in submitting timely progress and financial reports to UNICEF, primarily

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<sup>212</sup> UNICEF, e-mail correspondence with Coram International, 6 December 2018.

<sup>213</sup> Monitoring Groups, Regions 2 and 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>214</sup> Monitoring Group, Region 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>215</sup> Excluding the expenditure on the CRM programme evaluation. Figures are as at 29 November 2018.

<sup>216</sup> Written comments to Coram International from [stakeholder body withheld] on the draft report, 19 December 2018.

due to insufficient human resources and transient staff (see Sustainability, below, for details).<sup>217</sup> Monitoring groups faced similar challenges in Projects 4 and 8, though these minor delays (by up to 1.5 months) were caused by administrative barriers in receiving authorisation from the Government's Grant Commission for the transfer of money to the Women's Committee/ Deputy Khokim and monitoring groups, which in turn effected the timely submission of the quarterly financial reports due to UNICEF.<sup>218</sup> This Grant Commission has reportedly been abolished and so participants did not envisage this barrier arising again in future projects.

UNICEF provided essential material support to project partners, for example, by providing computers to monitoring group members, and materials and handouts for use during trainings, seminars and roundtables.<sup>219</sup> Participants did not report any issues concerning the quality or quantity of material resources provided by UNICEF to support project implementation. One monitoring group reported having requested a vehicle to support them during the project which UNICEF declined to provide, although the participants were able to arrange an alternative and did not report this having hindered the progress of the project.

Whilst project partners and national stakeholders did not report any issues with the number of UNICEF personnel allocated towards the CRM programme, participants from UNICEF noted some challenges in this area, particularly for Project 8 with the IWGs and monitoring groups. No more than two UNICEF personnel were reportedly assigned to work on this project (one full-time staff member and one national consultant) which, for a project covering four regions, was reported as a challenge.

#### **5.4. Sustainability**

***Do CRM stakeholders and coordination mechanisms have sufficient human, technical and financial capacity to continue their CRM functions after the programme period?***

##### **Financial Resources**

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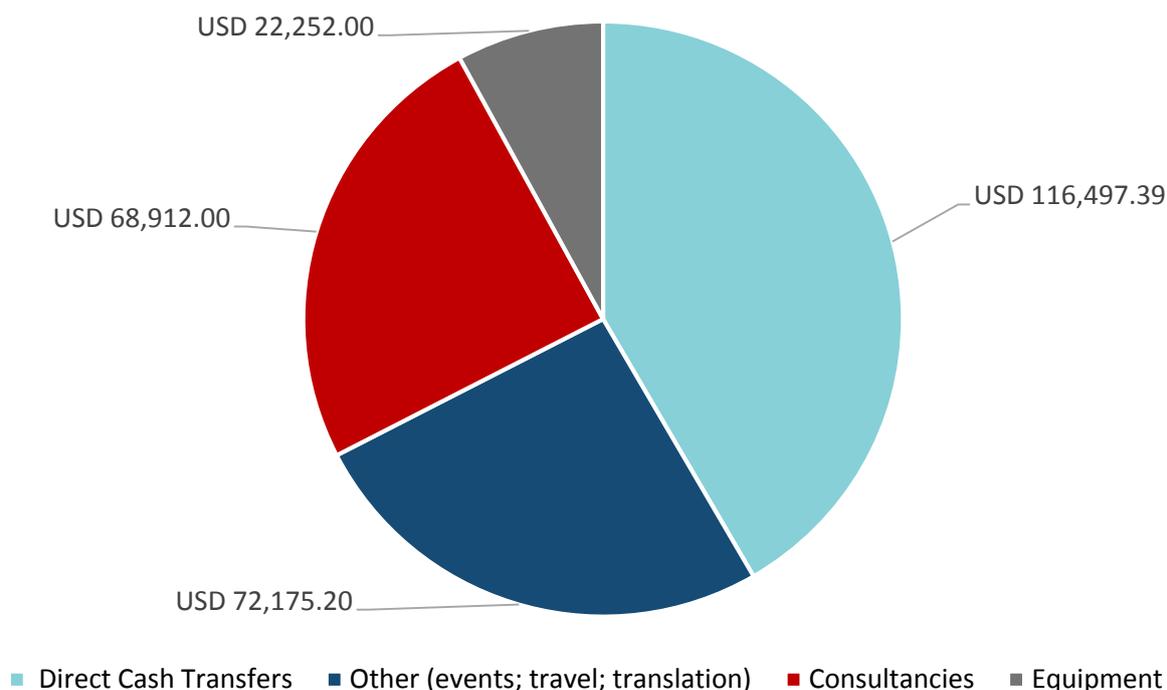
<sup>217</sup> UNICEF, Final Report on the NGO Capacity Building Project, 2015.

<sup>218</sup> Monitoring Groups, Regions 1 and 2, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>219</sup> Monitoring Group, Region 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

The financial data shows that a significant proportion of the CRM programme budget has been spent on maintaining the financial sustainability of the monitoring groups and Coordination Council. Without this financial support, there is a real risk that these bodies will not continue to function. As Chart 1 indicates, approximately 40 per cent of the CRM programme budget was spent on direct cash transfers to project partners, followed by ‘other’ expenses (such as events, travel and translation), consultancies (mainly the provision of technical assistance), and equipment.

**Chart 1: UNICEF's CRM Programme Budget Expenditure Between 2016 and 2018 (as at 29 Nov 2018) by Category of Expenditure**



Further, the breakdown of the budget expenditure (in **Appendix 8.19**) indicates that the vast majority (approximately 60 per cent / USD 104,697) of the budget spent on the monitoring groups was by way of direct cash transfers. Similarly, almost 50 per cent / USD 3,946) of the budget spent on the Coordination Council was by way of direct cash transfers. These direct cash transfers have been sustaining the activities of the coordination mechanisms. For instance, UNICEF provided direct cash transfers to support the functioning of the Coordination Council’s working group, which has reportedly disbanded with the expiry of these funds.<sup>220</sup>

Participants from the monitoring groups generally reported that, since the conclusion of Projects 4 and 8, they have been conducting monitoring group activities on a voluntary basis alongside their full-time jobs, and covering associated expenses themselves.<sup>221</sup> This lack of funding may partly explain why the activities of one monitoring group appears to be evolving from CRM to the identification, referral and provision of support to women and children in individual cases, as the members try to fit monitoring group activities around their organisation’s existing services (see Part 5.2 on ‘Effectiveness’ above).

<sup>220</sup> Participant from Public Association 6, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>221</sup> Monitoring Groups, Regions 1 and 3, Interviews with Coram International, November 2018.

These findings are supported by the reports of stakeholders that there are insufficient State funds to support CRM activities within line Ministries, Government departments and public agencies.<sup>222</sup> As a result, the activities of the IWGs were seen by some Government participants as “voluntary” activities alongside their full-time jobs.<sup>223</sup> None of the Government line Ministries and departments reported having a dedicated budget for CRM.

As explained in Part 5.2 above (Effectiveness), there were reports from participants in Project 7 (CSO capacity-building) that the training had improved their ability to write successful funding proposals,<sup>224</sup> contributing to their financial sustainability. Participants also spoke of an increased collaboration between Government and NGOs in the field of children’s rights as a result of the CRM programme, which has led to small-scale collaborations and grants:

*“As a result of strengthening relations between Government and NGOs [through the UNICEF projects] and if the Government institutions come across child-related problems, they would immediately seek the cooperation of NGOs. In order for NGOs to be able to help, Government has provided some grants, for example, [Monitoring Group NGO Member] conducted over 40 training workshops in [selected]... districts dedicated to the prevention of anaemia among children.”<sup>225</sup>*

Despite these positive reports, some NGO participants continued to report a lack of funding as a barrier to them performing their CRM activities.

### **Human Resources**

Despite the commitment of monitoring group members, the absence of a secure budget and financial incentives for its members creates uncertainty over the sustainability of these mechanisms, particularly if there is a change of personnel. As one participant remarked, *“of course, if there is a budget then you could provide salaries and release members from other positions and work would move faster. It is a part-time job now – it is now an additional burden.”<sup>226</sup>*

However, the CRM programme has played an integral role in building the capacities of and bringing together CRM stakeholders from different sectors via the monitoring groups, which is a highly significant achievement given the historically restrictive context for civil society activities. Monitoring group participants generally considered this to be a sustainable achievement, and one that was leading to small-scale collaborations in children’s rights outside the framework of the CRM programme, funding permitting:<sup>227</sup>

*“The monitoring group that went through these trainings now know how to conduct monitoring, analysis, and create reports. Those NGOs in the monitoring group also now conduct smaller scale research, so speaking from a soft component perspective, it is quite sustainable. But still we have some challenges and problems that we need to take into account: so the monitoring group itself has not been institutionalised but there are good sustainable and strong relations among the members of the group despite it not being a separate structure. There are also sustainable relationships between Government agencies and NGOs – these relations are represented in agreeing new smaller programmes.”* (Monitoring Group, Region 1)

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<sup>222</sup> Participant from Government, Region 2; Public Association 6; State Agency 3; Interviews with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>223</sup> Participant from [institution withheld], Region 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>224</sup> Monitoring Group Participant, Region 1; Public Association 1; Interviews with Coram International, November 2018;

<sup>225</sup> Participant from the Monitoring Group in Region 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>226</sup> Participant from Public Association 6, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>227</sup> Monitoring Groups, Regions 1, 2 and 3; Interviews with Coram International, November 2018.

*“We have gained skills to carry on to other projects. They are sustainable as I am already using these skills in my own work. I learned a lot myself and developed my knowledge. It improved the exchange of information. Both Government and NGOs benefitted. We have created a network of cooperation. The handouts we received during trainings are used as a handbook.”* (Monitoring Group, Region 3)

*“Together with [NGO] we developed this project and then we submitted this proposal to the grant fund under Oliy Majlis – this was successful and we have already finished this training among parents and now we are supposed to monitor and report outcomes. We benefitted from what UNICEF gave us but continued without their support in a sustainable way.”* (Monitoring Group, Region 4)

The risk of ‘brain drain’ was reportedly identified by UNICEF and partners at the time of the projects’ implementation, such that agencies were requested to assign two people to the monitoring group, in case one of them left.<sup>228</sup> In practice, however, the heads of the monitoring groups still faced challenges in ensuring continuity in its membership, due to the high turnover of staff within the participating agencies.<sup>229</sup>

The high turnover of personnel within State institutions is also a significant challenge to the development of CRM skills within this sector, particularly in light of recent Government reorganisations and restructurings:<sup>230</sup>

*“Personnel turnover is unpredictable – sometimes international partners... agree with people in the Government and then the people move on to other positions. It is important that cooperation happens between the organisations rather than between individuals.”* (State Agency 2)

*“When we came, we realised there are so many gaps that we need to address and we are working on that. [We asked ourselves] Where are the indicators? We understand we need to improve all these things... Disaggregated data and breaking down to identify interventions is not here yet.... The team is new, the reforms are huge, the results should be fast but we are trying to address it. I am sure it will be there once we have a stable layer after the reforms.”* (Government Ministry 4)

UNICEF’s capacity-building activities have not been integrated into the activities of its national partners, such that capacity built during the CRM programme risks being transferred out of the institutions with the change of personnel. Participants from all sectors also generally welcomed further capacity-building training from UNICEF in order to continue developing their skills to monitor children’s rights.<sup>231</sup>

The CRM programme has contributed to addressing the limitation in human resources at the regional level by establishing and operationalising the monitoring groups to support the IWGs in its CRM activities. However, human resources are particularly limited in certain key CRM stakeholder bodies, particularly the Women’s Committee at the national level. Indeed, this was reported as a reason why UNICEF was unable to implement its plans to develop tailored CRC indicators in partnership with this body.<sup>232</sup> Participants in Government line Ministries and other public agencies also generally reported challenges in having limited human resources to conduct CRM activities.

### ***What are the risks to and opportunities for the sustainability of the outcomes of the CRM programme in the short to long-term?***

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<sup>228</sup> Participant from Monitoring Group, Region 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>229</sup> UNICEF, Report on the Assessment of the Activities of the Monitoring Groups between 2016 and 2017, p 4.

<sup>230</sup> Participant from State Agency 5, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>231</sup> Participants from Public Associations 1, 2, Public Association 6; Interviews with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>232</sup> UNICEF, email correspondence with Coram International, 6 December 2018.

The risks to the sustainability of the outcomes of the CRM programme are detailed above, the primary risk in the medium to long-term being the absence of a secure funding stream for the activities of the Coordination Council, IWGs and monitoring groups. Several participants from the monitoring groups were in favour of institutionalising this mechanism (e.g. through a resolution of the national Committee of Ministers, as is the case for the IWGs),<sup>233</sup> on the basis that this would ensure the regular allocation of financial resources to support their activities and its future sustainability.<sup>234</sup> In the same vein, given UNICEF's focus on supporting the IWGs and monitoring groups 'from the bottom-up', participants considered that there are opportunities to take a similar approach 'from the top-down', and that this would be necessary to institutionalise the CRM mechanisms in a sustainable way:

*"I think that the budget should be allocated not from the region but from the national level.... If it came from national level, it would be easier to take issues to the higher level. Generally, it would be easier to communicate through the national level in terms of finding better solutions to funding issues. The function of the monitoring group should not be [as a] supervising agency but should identify these problems and coming up with solutions. The inclusion of the Department of Finance on the [IWG and monitoring group] would mean that it would be easier to convince it that the finance issues are real."<sup>235</sup>*

This argument is particularly persuasive in light of some indication of a lack of political will in the regions to grant the monitoring groups formal recognition:

*"At the moment, we have neither the will nor proposal for this to be institutionalised. This would have to be proposed by UNICEF, when they say they are willing to finance this."* (Participant [category of institution withheld], Region 3)

However, as highlighted above, the State budget is limited and without a dedicated CRM budget for Government or State bodies, it is unlikely that institutionalisation in itself will lead to a secure funding stream for the monitoring groups.

Also, as identified above, UNICEF's CRM capacity-building interventions have not been integrated into the institutional framework, which is a significant risk to the sustainability of this aspect of the CRM programme. However, with the recent Government reorganisation, opportunities may be arising for placing CRM skills-development on a more institutional footing. Given the recent revisions to the mandate of the Oila Centre (see 'Context'), it may emerge as a possible body through which compulsory skills-based capacity-building training could be delivered to CRM stakeholders (though without interfering with their mandate to conduct CRM).<sup>236</sup>

## 5.5. Impact

Due to the barriers and challenges outlined under Parts 5.1 to 5.4 above, it cannot be said that child rights are being monitored in Uzbekistan on a systematic basis at the national or regional levels. This was echoed by some children participating in the FGDs. For example, when asked about whether they thought children's rights are being protected and respected in Uzbekistan, or whether they considered whether anyone is checking to make sure children's rights are protected, one child stated:

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<sup>233</sup> Resolution No. 280 of the national Council of Ministers from 14 October 2011

<sup>234</sup> For example: Participant, Region 3; Participant from Public Association 6, Region 4; Participant from Public Association 1, Region 4; Participant from Monitoring Group, Region 1; Interviews with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>235</sup> Participant from Government [detailed withheld], Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>236</sup> Monitoring Group, Region 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

*"I don't think that many rights are protected. I live in [location withheld] and can see what happens in other regions. I see on Instagram and Facebook that some children don't have places to live and some have to live with grandparents because their parents have migrated to get money.....**Do you think anyone is checking up or making sure that child rights are protected in Uzbekistan?** I don't think they have time because there are so many poor children....."*

However, UNICEF and their national partners are making important progress towards achieving this goal via the CRM programme. The analysis above indicates that UNICEF has played an important role in supporting the establishment of the governance and coordination framework for the CRM system via the revival of the Coordination Council. Despite the challenges facing the effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of this Council, there are reports that it is using monitoring data to address children's issues. For example, according to one participant:

*'One of the results that we know of could be [that] the birth certification procedure was improved upon the discussions of the [Coordination Council] and now new-borns are provided with birth certificates on a timely based and an electronic system was introduced. The programme was adopted by the Coordination Council and the stakeholders in this procedure have certain responsibilities and they do the work. The Coordination Council has power to make change themselves and enact programmes, including drafting laws if this is necessary..... I would categorise this Council as an effective body.'*<sup>237</sup>

The analysis also indicates that the CRM programme has played an important role in building the skills capacities of monitoring groups and IWGs in target regions, and facilitating the development of essential collaborative links between Government, public agencies and CSOs in identifying and addressing children's issues. Further, there are reports of recommendations from projects 4, 7 and 8 (all of which are connected), being implemented by regional Governments, delivering concrete benefits to children, for example:

*"...three proposals/recommendations were submitted to the national level and another 13 were submitted to the regional level under this report, and two paragraphs of the regional programme included these 13 regional recommendations – they included these recommendations but they generalised these recommendations in a form that are specified in paragraphs 96 and 97, titled 'child welfare'. The regional programme has had a very serious supervision on these articles. One of the facts of implementing these recommendations [is that] we helped provide single mothers with birth certificates to their children as they failed to get them initially. We have also created a database on such children that were living without birth certificates. When we talk about this database, at the regional level we also created a database for single mothers."* (Monitoring Group, Ferghana)

*"Remoteness was another reason for low enrolment rates [in pre-school] as access was difficult. One of the decisions following the [CRM] project was to build new facilities nearer to communities and have money to repair/maintain these facilities. We see these changes as a result of the project. Most importantly this work was done before the Resolution of the President to split the two ministries of education and cut the prices of pre-school. In the beginning, our objective was to increase the enrolment rate by 3 per cent upon completion of the project but it increased by 8 per cent in the three target districts."* (Monitoring Group, Khorezm)

These findings are reinforced by the results of UNICEF's assessment into the work of the monitoring groups between 2016 and 2017 which found that, *"according to the results of the MG analysis: (i) The work of the*

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<sup>237</sup> Participant from State Agency 1, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

*prosecutor's office was activated in Fergana and, as a result, the payments of alimony increased; (ii) in Khorezm, the regional authorities allocated funds to repair 6 preschools in 3 districts of the region; (iii) in Jizzakh, water and sewerage were installed in a preschool.*"<sup>238</sup>

The CRM programme also appears to be contributing towards developing a conducive culture of 'accountability' for shortfalls in the realisation of child rights. According to one participant from a Coordination Council member body, the Coordination Council is able to "*criticise Ministries and agencies who didn't fully complete implementation of child rights*" with the result that, "*now Ministries are improving*".<sup>239</sup>

Several of the developments supported by the CRM programme are aligned with the recommendations of the CRC Committee, CEDAW Committee and UN Human Rights Committee, indicating the programme's contributions to Uzbekistan's progress in meeting international standards. As indicated above, these developments include establishing a national level coordinating body responsible for monitoring child rights; facilitating consultations between Government and civil society in CRM; developing the draft law to establish the Children's Ombudsperson; and building the capacities of staff from regional Government departments, public agencies, and NGOs to collect, analyse and use accurate data to address inequities in the rights of children through evidence-based policy-making, focusing upon vulnerable groups of children (e.g. children CWD), through Projects 4, 7 and 8.<sup>240</sup>

## 5.6. Cross-cutting Issues

***To what extent does the CRM programme adopt a human rights-based approach and integrate gender and other equity-based considerations relevant to boys and girls in Uzbekistan?***

The TOC adopts a human rights-based approach and integrate gender and other equity-based considerations relevant to the Uzbek context. By referencing '*girls and boys in Uzbekistan, especially the most vulnerable, progressively realise their rights in accordance with the CRC and CEDAW*', the intended impact of the CRM programme pays specific attention to gender-specific vulnerabilities. The CRM outputs and strategic interventions are framed in terms of strengthening the monitoring of the implementation of the full range of rights set out in the CRC.<sup>241</sup> Outcome 3 of the TOC also focuses upon strengthening the demand for and analysis and use of disaggregated data to advance equity issues concerning children in policy-making.

The CRM activities implemented during the evaluation period have also adopted a human rights-based approach and focused upon addressing inequities in child rights, most notably through Projects 4 and 8 (technical, financial and capacity-building assistance to IWGs and monitoring groups in selected regions). The four regions selected to take part in this project were selected based upon their geographic diversity (Khorezm and the RoK in the South; Ferghana in the East; and Jizzakh towards the Centre), and their socio-economic vulnerabilities (for example, the RoK and Khorezm were identified as amongst the poorest of the regions, Jizzakh faced challenges in terms of the underdevelopment of its water and sanitation systems; whilst Ferghana was identified as having a dense population and high flow of migration to the region).<sup>242</sup> The projects also focused on monitoring equity issues of particular concern in the region, most notably, single mother

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<sup>238</sup> UNICEF, Report on the Assessment of the Activities of the Monitoring Groups between 2016 and 2017, p 7.

<sup>239</sup> Participant from a State Agency represented on the Coordination Council, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

<sup>240</sup> CRC Committee, Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, 10 July 2013, paras 7(b)-(c) and 11; UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on the fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan, 2015, para 5; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan*, CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, November 2015, para 36.

<sup>241</sup> E.g. Output 1 and its related strategic interventions relate to the establishment of platforms and mechanisms for critical partnerships with results-based and costed action plans for the implementation of the CRC.

<sup>242</sup> Participant from UNICEF, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

families in Ferghana and CWD in Jizzakh, Khorezm and the RoK during Project 4; early childhood education and child protection programming in Ferghana; the spread of helminthiasis among children in pre-schools in Jizzakh; pre-school education in Khorezm, and breast-feeding practices for mothers and children aged 0 to 2 in the RoK during Project 8.

In practice, there remain some challenges to identifying, and assessing the situation of, particularly vulnerable groups of children, which should be factored into future CRM programming. These challenges are caused in part by inconsistent data collection procedures across State bodies, and the lack of disaggregated indicators in data collection methodologies and tools. For example, one participant from a Government line Ministry explained that official statistics are collected using standard templates which may not ask for sufficiently disaggregated data, although the national level may ask regional level authorities for disaggregated figures on an ad hoc basis when needed.<sup>243</sup> These barriers are explained in more detail under 'Effectiveness' above.

Further, whilst there is evidence of the outcomes of Projects 4 and 8 being used to inform the development of laws, policies and practices at the regional and national levels to address equity issues in the realisation of child rights, and duty bearers being held to account for short-falls in the realisation of children's rights, this is not yet occurring on a systematic basis (see Part 5.5, 'Impact', above). These findings are supported by the feedback from child participants during the FGDs. All of the children reported that they thought that the rights of some children are protected more than others, most notably the rights of children from wealthy socio-economic backgrounds or children with parents in positions of authority:

*"I think, for example, strong or rich children are protected more.... Children are left in shadow. If they don't have attention they cannot do anything like university. Rich children, even if they don't learn, get attention and can pay for university with money. If everyone was the same, that wouldn't happen."*

*"When we talk about the children of [persons in position of authority], their rights are more protected..... Because every child is a child, whether he or she is an orphan or child of the [person in a position of authority], everyone's rights should be protected equally."*

Similarly, when asked what they thought would happen to the violator of their rights if the child reported it, one child considered that it depended on who the violator was, and that there would be no repercussions for a person from an "influential family".

Children also considered that CWD are not treated equally. For example:

*"P3: I want to add one thing. There is one girl in my school who wants to study but they won't let her. She is being discriminated against. **Why won't they let her study?** P3: She is disabled. P1: It is the same situation in our school – they differentiate between those with and without disabilities. This must be improved, these children are mocked. P2: They also laugh at the appearance of disabled children."*

## 6. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

### 6.1. Conclusions

#### 6.1.1. Relevance

The CRM programme and the TOC are highly relevant to the policies, priorities and needs of UNICEF, key stakeholder groups and boys and girls in Uzbekistan. The focus on strengthening the CRM governance framework, particularly international and regional coordination mechanisms, establishing an NHRI for

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<sup>243</sup> Participant 2 from Government Ministry 3, Interview with Coram International, November 2018.

children, and developing skills capacities for conducting CRM, directly addresses the conclusions and recommendations of the CRC Committee and other international human rights monitoring bodies. The CRM programme and TOC are also firmly in line with the agendas of the Government, UNICEF, and the UN more broadly.

Recent Presidential declarations for democratising and strengthening civil society engagement in Uzbekistan sets the tone for strengthening public accountability mechanisms and the quality, accuracy and transparency of official data collection processes and outputs. The findings of this evaluation have also shown that there is still a need to strengthen technical, material and financial capacities of NGOs, such that the focus on developing the capacities of CSOs in the TOC remains extremely relevant and timely.

Until this CRM programme, UNICEF had not focused on building institutional capacities for conducting CRM from the 'top-down,' though this is contemplated in the TOC. The recent reorganisation of State agencies and the appointment of new personnel within line Ministries and Government departments brings with them new opportunities for collaboration in this area. As the conclusions under Part 6.1.2 (Effectiveness) indicate, this is an area in which UNICEF's technical expertise and advocacy would be particularly valuable.

The TOC rightly refers to the normative barriers to developing the *demand* for CRM, which continue to present challenges to the development of a culture of accountability rooted in evaluative reflection and learning. At present, the draft outcomes, outputs and strategic interventions in the TOC do not address these barriers directly. There is therefore room to strengthen the TOC by including interventions focusing on increasing public awareness of the concept of child rights, CRM and the corresponding responsibilities of duty bearers, the notion of children as agents and right's holders, and of access to public accountability mechanisms, with a view to addressing these normative barriers.

### **6.1.2. Effectiveness**

To date, the CRM programme has had made significant achievements in strengthening the CRM system, particularly with regard to the development of inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms and the concrete steps towards establishing an NHRI for children. The revival of the Coordination Council, and the establishment and operationalisation of the IWGs and monitoring groups have brought together and strengthened the skills capacities of regional Government and NGO counterparts in the programme regions which, given the historic challenges surrounding civil society operations, is a highly significant development.

As the next logical step in the development of the coordination mechanisms, there is a need to strengthen understanding, skills, methodologies and processes for conducting CRM within Government line-Ministries and public agencies from the top-down, and connecting this to the operations of the coordination mechanisms at both the national and local levels. These steps are essential for operationalising the CRM coordination mechanisms, which depend on the participation of Government bodies, and their awareness of their primary responsibility under international standards to monitor children's rights. By integrating the work of the coordination mechanisms into the working procedures of its constituent members, they are less likely to be viewed as an 'additional' workload and more as a facilitating mechanism for coordinating CRM functions. In order to achieve this, the Council's members would benefit from sustained technical capacity-building support, and a clear governance framework in order to conduct their CRM activities effectively.

It is acknowledged that the CRM programme had planned to support national partners in these areas, for example, through the development of the NPA and tailored indicators to measure implementation of the CRC, though these activities did not materialise in full. This was partly due to limited financial resources in partner institutions and some reluctance amongst national bodies, noting the normative barriers mentioned above. However, given the impetus of the Government to improve the quality and accuracy of data in line with international standards, and the upcoming periodic review before the CRC Committee, there may be new opportunities for collaboration in this area.

The establishment of an independent Children's Ombudsperson in line with the recommendations of the CRC Committee and Paris Principles should continue to be a focus in the CRM programme as this is essential for developing public accountability mechanisms. In this connection, the evaluation findings suggest that there is limited knowledge and awareness amongst children, particularly in rural areas and in the regions, of the concept of child rights, and of the existence and role of the Office of the Ombudsman, the existing mandate of which includes monitoring children's rights. These challenges will inevitably have implications on the new NHRI for children, regardless of whether it is established as an independent institution or integrated into the existing Office of the Ombudsman. Addressing the barriers to the 'demand' for CRM in the TOC, as explained under Part 6.1.1 (Relevance) above, will go some way to addressing these challenges.

### **6.1.3. Efficiency**

Based on the data available, the budget and materials allocated to the CRM programme during the evaluation period were generally sufficient, and the activities were implemented within budget. Programme activities have also generally been implemented on time. Although one planned activity (the development and customization of CRC indicators) was not implemented (see above), this was not due to there being insufficient funds. Whilst the allocation of UNICEF's human resources to some programme activities appears to have been limited, this did not impede the overall implementation of the CRM programme.

Given that the draft TOC is a work in progress, and that the aim of this evaluation is to inform future CRM programming, it is unsurprising that it does yet have a results framework outlining planned activities, budget allocation, timing, key targets, baseline data, indicators and methods for measuring progress. However, the development of such a framework is essential for monitoring and evaluating the efficiency, and indeed the other aspects of the CRM programme going forward, particularly as it consists of several smaller projects each with their own monitoring and evaluation processes.

The inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms at the national and regional levels have largely depended on UNICEF's financial support in order to function and incentivise individual members. A significant proportion (approximately 40 per cent) of UNICEF's CRM programme funding was spent on direct cash transfers for this purpose. Whilst this financial allocation was essential for operationalizing the coordination mechanisms at their initial stages, in order to support the development of the coordination mechanisms going forward, consideration should be made to reallocating a portion of these funds, as explained further under Part 6.1.4 (Sustainability) below, to support stakeholders in developing their knowledge, skills capacities and operational frameworks for conducting CRM, and thereby facilitating the sustainability of the coordination mechanisms.

### **6.1.4. Sustainability**

The biggest challenge facing the CRM programme to date concerns its sustainability. As noted above, UNICEF's financial assistance has played a pivotal role in funding and incentivising the work of the national and regional coordination mechanisms. Whilst the monitoring groups continue to exist today, this is largely due to the commitment of its individual members and small-scale collaborations with Government in the field of child rights in the programme regions. The Coordination Council's working group has also disbanded upon the expiry of UNICEF financial support.

Without a secure source of funding or strategy for applying for funds, and without formal recognition of the monitoring groups at the national level, there is a real risk that the coordination mechanisms will not continue to function over the medium to long-term. This would be a significant step backwards given the progress made to date. As noted under Part 6.1.3 (Efficiency) above, reallocating a portion of the funding under the CRM

programme from direct cash transfers to providing the required technical assistance, capacity-building and awareness-raising, as identified in Part 6.1.2 (Effectiveness) above, would support the sustainability of the coordination mechanisms going forward. However, given the importance of the direct cash transfers in sustaining these mechanisms, such support should not be completely withdrawn but, rather, gradually reduced as the technical capacities and institutionalisation of the coordination mechanisms are strengthened.

Despite the efforts by UNICEF and project partners to address challenges associated with 'brain drain', frequent staff turnover is affecting the sustainability of UNICEF's capacity-building initiatives. One gap has been the non-integration of UNICEF's capacity-building initiatives into existing training curricula (e.g. for civil servants). In this connection, opportunities for tailoring and integrating such trainings into the activities of existing training bodies should be explored.

### 6.1.5. Impact

Although child rights are not yet being monitored on a systematic basis in Uzbekistan, the CRM programme is making important progress towards achieving this goal. The establishment of coordination mechanisms at the national and local levels, and capacity-building activities, have led to proposals developed by the monitoring groups being adopted at the regional and even national levels. This is resulting in child rights reforms being adopted in non-programme regions, which is a **positive but unintended consequence** of the CRM programme. Whilst there is some evidence of a developing culture of accountability, the normative and operational barriers outlined above are hindering its progress. However, these are expected challenges given that the CRM system is in a process of development. As the conclusions suggest, the CRM programme should continue to work closely with stakeholders to sustain the outputs and outcomes achieved to date.

### 6.1.6. Cross-Cutting Issues

Although both the TOC and the CRM programme activities implemented during the evaluation period have adopted a human rights-based approach and have integrated gender and other equity-based considerations relevant to the Uzbek context, the CRM mechanisms are still in the process of development. As a result, at the present time, the rights of girls and boys, particularly those from marginalised or vulnerable groups, are not yet being monitored on a systematic basis. Challenges to ensuring a systematic monitoring system stem partly from inconsistent data collection procedures across State bodies, and the lack of disaggregated indicators in data collection methodologies and tools. Feedback from children also indicated that discriminatory attitudes and practices towards particularly vulnerable groups of children, such as children with HIV or AIDS, CWD and children from poorer socio-economic circumstances, remain, lending further support to conclusion above on the need for the TOC to address the barriers to creating a 'demand' for CRM directly.

## 6.2. Lessons Learned

### 6.2.1. Bottom-Up or Top-Down Approach?

The evaluation highlights an important lesson learned in terms of UNICEF's approach to engaging with CRM stakeholders. UNICEF programming has primarily focused on building the capacities of and facilitating inter-sectoral collaboration from the bottom-up. This was reflected in the capacity-building of NGOs and in the establishment and operationalisation of monitoring groups to support the IWGs in CRM at the community levels. However, recognising that key policy decisions regarding CRM activities are made at the national level, and the limitation in the ability of regional CRM mechanisms to address structural and policy barriers to inequities in child rights, UNICEF has resumed its focus on working with national-level stakeholders to develop the institutional and governance framework for the CRM system. This is mainly reflected in its support to the Deputy Prime Minister/ Chair of the Women's Committee in re-establishing and operationalising the Coordination Council, and to the NHRC to develop the draft law for establishing the Children's Ombudsman.

The evaluation findings reinforce the importance of continuing to engage with stakeholders at the national level in order to mainstream and sustain CRM developments. This is reflected in the need for formal recognition of the monitoring groups at the national level, integration of capacity-building initiatives into existing curricula and training frameworks, and the mainstreaming of CRM procedures within Government bodies and public agencies in order for them to feed into departmental practices at the lower levels.

### 6.2.2. CRM in UNICEF Programming

Whilst it is too soon to conduct a full assessment of the effectiveness of the recent move of the CRM programme from under UNICEF's Child Protection programme section to the M&E programme section, this evaluation indicates that this move, in itself, has not resulted in the integration of CRM across all UNICEF programme sections. The CRM programme is currently implemented as a standalone programme. Further, the TOC does not indicate where and how CRM activities, outputs and outcomes will be mainstreamed across all UNICEF programme areas. Whilst the repositioning of the CRM programme is a logical and coherent move in light of the cross-cutting nature of CRM, its efficacy ultimately depends upon how it is implemented in practice, and whether UNICEF programme section teams collaborate in ensuring an integrated approach to meeting the objectives of the programme. This lesson learned is particularly important given that this internal approach to CRM programming is being rolled out by UNICEF offices throughout the region.

## 7. Recommendations

The recommendations below were developed by the researchers in close collaboration with UNICEF and key stakeholders according to the process outlined in Part 4.5, most notably the consultation and validation conference on 18 December 2018 with the stakeholders listed in **Appendix 8.11**, and the circulation of a draft of this report to stakeholders for their written feedback. Comments and suggestions received during this process were used to refine and finalise these recommendations, ensuring their appropriateness and practicality to the Uzbek context (also elaborated in **Appendix 8.11**). Given that the aim of this evaluation is to inform UNICEF's CRM programme, which concludes in 2020, the prioritisation of recommendations according to timescale is not wholly suitable, though this is noted below where possible.

### 7.1. Coordination Council

In the short term, it is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other constituent members of the Coordination Council to build the financial and institutional sustainability of this coordination mechanism. In line with international standards, it is recommended that this should include the provision of technical support to build the capacities of Government line Ministries and other public bodies to develop 'child rights-based' budgets or, at least to cost and allocate sufficient funds from their existing budgets, towards their CRM activities (see Part 7.3 below). Steps to support the institutional sustainability of the Coordination Council could include advocating for assignment of one or more full-time personnel from the Secretariat of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to support the administrative functions of the Council; and
- Advocate for the inclusion of key bodies currently unrepresented on the Coordination Council, including the Office of the General Prosecutor, Supreme Court and Oila Centre.

In the medium term, it is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Advocate and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other constituent bodies of the Coordination Council to develop a new, costed national action plan for the Coordination Council's activities over a five-year period. Funds provided by the State budget to the Coordination Council should be based primarily on the activities and allocations outlined in the action plan. The framework or action plan should be rooted in the CRC, its Optional Protocols and, ideally, the recommendations of the CRC Committee from Uzbekistan's upcoming periodic review. This should take place in conjunction with

- the capacity-building activities, below, and adopt a results-based management approach to monitoring;
- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to revive the working group, as resolved by the Coordination Council at its inaugural meeting.

## 7.2. IWGs and Monitoring Groups

It is recommended that the IWGs and monitoring groups adopt a similar approach to the Coordination Council and its working group at the national level. Therefore, in the short term, is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Khokims in the programme regions to develop operational protocols connecting the work of the IWGs to the Coordination Council, with direct reporting lines between the Deputy Khokim and Deputy Prime Minister. In parallel, there should be direct reporting lines between other members of the IWGs with their counterparts at the national level (where applicable), particularly between Government departments and line Ministries;
- Advocate for the inclusion of key bodies currently unrepresented on the IWGs, including a focal point from the regional finance department, prosecution service, judiciary and Oila Centre;
- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Khokim and other constituent members of the IWGs to build the financial and institutional sustainability of this coordination mechanism. In line with international standards, it is recommended that this should include the provision of technical support to build the capacities of Government authorities and other public bodies to develop 'child rights-based' budgets, or, at least to cost and allocate sufficient funds from their existing budgets, towards their CRM activities (see Part 1.6.3 below). Steps to support the institutional sustainability of the IWGs could include advocating for the assignment of one or more full-time personnel from the Secretariat of the Office of the Deputy Khokim to support the administrative functions of the IWG and monitoring bodies.

Similarly, in the medium term, it is recommended that **UNICEF** should:

- Advocate and provide technical assistance to the Office of the Deputy Khokim and other constituent bodies of the IWG to develop a new, costed regional action plan for the IWG's activities. The framework should be based on the national action plan developed and monitored by the Coordination Council, above. It should also be rooted in the CRC, its Optional Protocols and the recommendations of the CRC Committee from Uzbekistan's upcoming periodic review. Again, this should take place in conjunction with the capacity-building activities, below, and adopt a results-based management approach to monitoring;
- Advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Cabinet of Ministers at the national level to pass a resolution recognising the role of the monitoring bodies in supporting the IWGs to implement their CRM functions. It is recommended that the resolution clarifies that the role of the monitoring bodies is not to replace or supplement the role of Government in monitoring children's rights but, rather, is to provide a mechanism for operational specialists from the IWG's constituent members to work together to implement the IWG's monitoring functions. Therefore, the composition of the monitoring bodies should reflect the composition of the IWG, as initially intended when the monitoring groups were established.

## 7.3. Knowledge and Skills-Based Training

It is recommended that UNICEF considers providing technical assistance to relevant training bodies to develop a knowledge and skills-based training-of-trainers course, focusing on a broader education on children's rights; the aims, objectives and purpose of CRM and the CRM coordination mechanisms; child rights budgeting; and the effective use of data to monitor child rights, with a view to integrating this course into on-going training programmes provided to Government civil servants and staff of public agencies. Consideration should also be made to supporting the integration of the CRM capacity-building trainings for NGOs into existing training programmes, which may be offered to NGO staff periodically.

## 7.4. Developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

In the medium to long-term, it is recommended that **UNICEF's M&E programme section, in collaboration with UNICEF's other programme sections**, work with Government counterparts to strengthen national systems for data collection, verification, analysis and use, to establish a harmonised data collection system for CRM bodies with the inclusion of indicators rooted in the CRC and disaggregated according to gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographical location, migrant status, and disability status. These activities should be coordinated with the CRM framework developed in collaboration with the Coordination Council and should take place in parallel with the development and delivery of the knowledge and skills-based training, above.

### **7.5. NHRI**

It is recommended that that UNICEF should, in the short to medium term, continue to provide technical assistance to the NHRC, working group and other stakeholders to develop the legal and institutional framework for the establishment of an independent Children's Ombudsperson, in line with international standards. In doing so, UNICEF should continue to advocate for the allocation of sufficient human, financial and materials resources to the NHRI to ensure that, if the new body is mandated to monitor the rights of *youth* as well as children, it will have sufficient capacity to focus on children's issues.

### **7.6. Awareness-Raising**

It is recommended that UNICEF integrates an awareness-raising component in its TOC to strengthen public knowledge and understanding of child rights over the long-term. The awareness-raising activities should pay particular attention to the rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups of children with a view to addressing discriminatory attitudes and perceptions and inequities in the realisation of their rights. These initiatives should include outreach initiatives targeting children and communities in rural and remote areas, and involve the participation of children in the design and implementation of such projects. As UNICEF's programme sections already conduct campaigns of this nature, consideration should be made to integrating these campaigns into the CRM programme (and vice versa), thereby encouraging synergies between the CRM programme and programmes sections, and overall mainstreaming of CRM as a cross-cutting issue.



21 December 2018