

West and Central Africa

Update on the context and trends

Countries in West and Central Africa region (WCAR) have achieved significant progress for children in past decades. Under-five mortality rates fell from 168 per thousand live births in 2000 to 91 in 2021. [1] But due to recent and expanding shocks (Sahel crisis and other conflicts, COVID-19 and other public health crises, inflation, and ongoing impact of climate change), the region faces enormous challenges to protect past gains and accelerate results. Children in WCAR bear a disproportionate share of the global burden of child rights deprivations. The region is home to 12 per cent of the world's children, but accounts for a disproportionate share of child rights violations: over one third of deaths of children under-five, close to one third of children and adolescents out-of-school and one fifth of stunted children. Seven of the 10 countries with the world's highest prevalence of child marriage are in WCAR, and the region is home to nearly 60 million child brides. Twelve per cent of women aged 20-24 married before reaching age 15: totalling over 20 million[2] Finally, the Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI) reveals that children in 17 of the region's 24 countries face the world's highest levels of vulnerability and risk from climate change. In 2022 UNICEF's Regional Office for West and Central Africa (WCARO) redoubled efforts to support WCAR countries to develop and implement child-centered public policies and strengthen national, sub-national and community systems to provide more resilient, child-centred social services and accelerate progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. **Economic trends**

- **Economic growth began rising in 2022, but the war in Ukraine led to significant downward projections.** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) GDP growth forecast for 2022 was 4.06 per cent in West Africa and 3.61 per cent in Central Africa, compared to the 3.69 per cent average in 2021. Economies are struggling to recover from the impact of COVID-19.
- **High inflation linked to the war in Ukraine limited the purchasing power of households, companies and governments.** Consumer prices were rising before the war began, but since then have doubled in most WCAR countries, increasing poverty and food insecurity.
- **In 2022, government revenue rose slightly, and debt levels decreased slightly, suggesting that governments prioritized debt reduction over social sector investment.** The IMF raised the alarm over growing public debt, suggesting fiscal adjustment to stabilize debt via boosting revenue mobilization, prioritizing spending and improving the efficiency and efficacy of public spending.

Humanitarian trends

- **Over 69 million children in the region required humanitarian assistance.** UNICEF and humanitarian partners issued 11 'Humanitarian Action for Children' appeals during 2022.
- Conditions for children worsened, particularly in the **Sahel**, where armed conflict in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger started spilling across borders, creating displacement and emergency needs in neighbouring countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo). Cross-border tensions also intensified near the Great Lakes and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which already hosts one third of WCAR's 15 million displaced people (third highest number of IDPs in the world). The combined effects of armed conflict, extreme poverty, and food insecurity; climate change; COVID-19; recurrent epidemics (cholera, Ebola, measles, polio and yellow fever); and inflation led to continued high humanitarian need in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin countries and Central African Republic (CAR).
- Institutional **fragility** remained high throughout WCAR, exacerbating the impact of these emergencies on the most vulnerable children. Following unconstitutional changes in power in 2021 (Chad, Guinea, Mali), Burkina Faso experienced two military coups in 2022.

Demographic trends

- **Population growth outpaced efforts to expand social service coverage and promote child-**

friendly social norms and behaviours. For example, the proportion of stunted children under age 5 declined from 41.1 per cent in 2000 to 32.5 per cent in 2020, but the *absolute number* of stunted children rose by 6.5 million during the same period, reaching 29.3 million.

- UN population estimates project that by the final year of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, more than 500 million **children under 18 years of age will live in WCAR**, making it home to 20 per cent of the world's children.
- **Urbanization trends continued in 2022**, creating both risks and opportunities for children. Some 41 per cent of Africa's population lived in cities in 2017, but by 2050 this proportion could rise to over 60 per cent.
- In 2022, WCAR was further away from achieving the promise of **gender equality** envisioned by the SDG than any other region; gender inequality has long been the norm in most countries despite some progress in Benin and Senegal. Discrimination against women and girls occurs through formal and informal laws, attitudes and practices at all levels of society. Violence, instability, gender-regressive politics and a shrinking space for civil society threaten to reverse gains. Breaking these cycles and empowering girls and women could unlock demographic dividends for the region at large.

Environmental trends

- **The region is highly susceptible to climate change.** Seventeen WCAR countries are among the top 30 globally for children's risk, and vulnerability and five countries with the highest risk levels are in WCAR (CAR, Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria). Yet WCAR hosts pristine forests with great potential for offsetting climate change.
- The rainforest in Congo Basin is the largest rainforest in Africa, with 300 million hectares compared to 800 million hectares in Amazon. Because of its size and diversity, many experts have characterized the basin's forest as important for mitigating climate change because of its role as a carbon sink. However, deforestation and degradation of ecosystem by the impacts of climate change may increase stress on the forest biodiversity, in turn making the hydrology of the basin more variable.
- From 2010–2020, over 166 million people were reportedly affected by **climate-related hazards and extremes** across Africa, including heat waves, droughts and extreme rainfall, a trend projected to accelerate rapidly.
- The proportion of the **population exposed to flooding** expected to continue rising as climate change advances. During 2022 Chad, Mauritania and Sierra Leone recorded heavy rainfall, causing deaths and widespread damage.

[1] https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Mortality-rate-among-children-and-youth-age-5-to-24_2023.xlsx[2] <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Child-Marriage-in-West-and-Central-Africa-UNICEF-English.pdf>

Major contributions and drivers of results

During 2022 WCARO worked with the 24 Country Offices towards achievement of eight 'Key Results for Children' (KRCs), contributing to UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025, the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063. The KRCs are embedded in all WCAR country programmes which are aligned with United Nations (UN) cooperation frameworks and national development priorities.

In summary, five KRCs (#s 2, 4, 5 and 6) are on a positive trajectory for meeting targets; progress on two (KRCs 3 and 7) was insufficient and will be prioritized in 2023; and progress toward KRCs # 1 and 8 will be further clarified by the receipt of final 2022 data.

Goal Area 1: Every Child Survives and Thrives (KRCs 1 and 2)

KRC 1 target: Ensure that 76 per cent of children aged 0–11 months in WCAR are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases. Nine of 24 countries achieved 80 per cent DPT3 coverage, and five reached 90 per cent over the past five years. However, coverage stagnated at 67 per cent between 2020

and 2021; 2 per cent below 2019. The number of under-vaccinated children rose to 6.76 million in 2021, including 4.4 million zero-dose children, mainly in Nigeria (2.24 million) and DRC (734,000).

Nineteen per cent of WCAR's population completed their first round of COVID-19 vaccinations in 2022, up from 6 per cent in 2021.

The Regional Office (RO) worked closely with social-behaviour-change (SBC) teams to support the 'Polio-Plus' approach in five countries with elevated risk, using polio vaccination as an entry point for other childhood immunization as well as Vitamin A and reaching 58,224 zero-dose or under-immunized children and 8,114 children lacking birth certificates. The RO supported 22 countries to develop new funding proposals, resulting in additional US\$2.9 million for polio and other immunizations. RO joined a new partnership agreement with the Africa CDC to strengthen immunization services and community health programmes

Polio campaigns in 15 countries, contributed to 48 per cent reduction in vaccine-derived polio compared to 2021 (including an 81 per cent reduction in Nigeria). Significant UNICEF investment in logistics and cold chain equipment contributed to countries' capacity to safely store vaccines.

In Guinea, WCARO supported a national forum on multiple, simultaneous epidemics, or 'multidemics'. Participants approved a public health emergency roadmap and contingency plan for multi-sectoral accountability in such emergencies, and the government committed to finance preparedness and response.

KRC 2 target: Prevent stunting among 85 million girls and boys under age five through high-impact nutrition services. The RO played a critical role in securing nutrition programme continuity in WCAR— despite global production and transport crises, by utilizing its stockpile of therapeutic foods, strengthening coordination and mobilizing air-bridge partnerships. More than 80 million children aged 6–59 months received two doses of vitamin A in 2022, following pandemic-related declines in 2020 and 2021.

Nevertheless, nutrition status in the Sahel and Nigeria remains worrying. A trend toward wasting among young children is emerging, and malnutrition is above the emergency threshold (15 per cent) in some regions of Mauritania, Niger, northeast Nigeria and Senegal. In 2022 over 1.8 million children aged 6–59 months were treated for severe acute malnutrition in nine Sahel countries. Although a 'Match-Funding' initiative incentivized four WCAR governments to allocate US\$2.4 million for therapeutic foods from domestic resources, overall, national and international funding is insufficient to meet needs.

The nutrition situation in WCAR remains of concern. During 2022 WCARO collaborated with the Economic Community of West African States to encourage small/medium-size businesses to produce sustainable local supply of safe, nutritious and affordable complementary foods for young children. With other nutrition partners, RO advocated for the development of norms and standards to ensure that the complementary foods are safe.

Goal Area 2: Every Child Learns (KRCs 3 and 4)

KRC 3 target: Reduce the region-wide proportion of out-of-school primary and secondary school-age children from 29 to 27 per cent. The rate declined by only 1 per cent and fewer children than targeted completed lower-secondary school (46 per cent; target 49 per cent). However, the proportion of second and fifth/sixth grade children achieving minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics surpassed the 41 per cent target, rising from 36 to 43 per cent.

WCAR countries have gradually strengthened access to equitable, inclusive education. Region-wide, 5.5 million children (2.5 million girls, 3.2 million in humanitarian contexts and more than 610,000 migrant children) attended pre-primary through secondary education during 2022.

To bridge persistent social inequalities, RO prioritized support for inclusion of children with disabilities, adolescent girls and children attending Koranic schools. To accelerate **disability-inclusive education**, RO published a first-ever report in 2022, based on data and evidence from nine WCAR countries.

Strategic partnerships have been forged between UNICEF, UNHCR, NRC, Plan International and Save The Children in a consortium for **increasing resources for education in emergencies/building resilience** in Central Sahel with support from the ‘Education Cannot Wait’ Fund.

KRC 4 target: Reach 41 per cent of all pre-primary to lower-secondary students with interventions to improve skills and learning outcomes. Classroom size affects learning outcomes. WCARO and the Innocenti Centre supported a seven-country study of equity in teacher allocation and two papers on education finance that fed into the UN Secretary-General’s ‘Transforming Education Summit’ (TES).

Insufficient **education finance** is another key bottleneck impeding children’s right to learn. In response to the high-level policy advocacy at the TES, African leaders committed to increase resources for education in emergencies and resilience-building. WCARO and the AU Commission held a **Transforming Education in Africa side-event** that led to a commitment by African Heads of State to make 2024 the ‘Year of Education in Africa.’ WCARO also led a continent-wide survey, gathering opinions from nearly 612,000 young people, which informed the ‘African Youth Manifesto’ adopted by African leaders.

The RO assisted 19 COs in scaling up early childhood, foundational and digital learning innovations, including teaching at the right level and the ‘Learning Passport’. RO teams collaborated to support launch of the US\$57 million Airtel partnership in six countries with high out-of-school rates, bringing education to millions of children via digital connectivity, provision of devices/other tools.

Goal Area 3: Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation (KRCs 5, 6 and 7)

KRC 5 target: Reduce the percentage of women aged 18-to-29 who experience sexual violence before age 18 to 7 per cent. Findings and recommendations from 2022 assessments of the social service workforce (SSW) in six countries will inform advocacy for greater recognition of and investment in the SSW’s vital role in preventing sexual violence.

Violence prevention and response also advanced through the Safe to Learn (STL) ‘Call to Action’. The RO led a multi-country STL project (January 2020–March 2022), which yielded positive individual/system-wide results (e.g., a new law in Togo to sanction gender-based violence and increase school safety) and resulted in production of a compendium of promising practices, regional mapping of STL interventions and global learning webinar.

In September 2022 rights-based Joint Regional Guidelines on case management for children-on-the-move₂ were finalized/released, resulting from WCARO/International Organization for Migration collaboration.

KRC 6 target: Reduce child/adolescent marriage in WCAR to 39 per cent. Critical foundations for achieving KRC 6 were laid in 2022. Regionwide and country-specific statistics were revealed on the Day of the African Child, focused on ending child marriage.[1]

KRC 7 target: Increase the percentage of children under one year of age whose birth is formally registered from 64 per cent (2021) to 71 per cent. Progress towards KRC 7 (SDG 16.9: universal legal identity) advanced in 2022; registration rates for children under five rose from 53 to 59 per cent across the region.

Additionally, 16 countries strengthened the interoperability between civil registration and health services, implementing the ‘one-stop-shop’ approach that UNICEF has identified as the most effective (see: *Universal birth registration by 2030*[2]).

Goal Area 4: Every Child Lives in a Safe and Clean Environment (KRC 8)

KRC 8 target: Reduce the proportion of WCAR’s population practising open defecation from 119 million (2020) to 109 million. In partnership with the African Minister’s Council on Water (AMCOW) and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), RO sought to improve the enabling environment for sanitation to accelerate uptake and end open defecation. Sierra Leone completed its strategy update using African Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG); updates are underway in five other countries. Country engagement in updating sanitation policies led to renewal of the BMGF partnership through 2026.

The World Water Forum provided an advocacy platform for sanitation investment and engaging young people on the often-taboo topic of ending open defecation. WCARO participated in the Forum’s first-ever ‘Sanitation Village’ and collaborated with AMCOW and government representatives from Cameroon and Sierra Leone to disseminate the ASPG as a key tool for meeting SDG goals.

With RO support, Ghana and Nigeria continued to refine market-based sanitation and financing models, while DRC and Niger launched market-based sanitation programmes. The RO also led efforts to generate evidence on the potential for scaling-up the innovative ‘sanitation revolving fund’ model in Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. For populations facing humanitarian crises, WCARO supported COs to ensure the availability of adequate sanitation; in 2022 some 1.3 million had access to basic sanitation services.

To promote climate-resilient sanitation services, RO supported COs in CAR, Chad and Mauritania to develop a rationale for climate action, scan financing opportunities, develop WASH climate proposals and explore solar-powered water systems through the Regional Solar Hub.

Goal Area 5: Every child, including adolescents, has access to inclusive social protection and lives free from poverty.

Target: Increase the number of children and adolescents with access to inclusive, shock-responsive social protection and the capacity to escape poverty. WCARO’s social policy team supported COs to strengthen child and shock-responsive social protection systems and support the delivery of social protection and cash-transfer programmes, including in humanitarian contexts.

The flagship UNICEF/World Food Programme (WFP) ‘Joint Programme for Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Sahel’ was awarded an additional €70 million for a third phase, given previous success with inclusive ‘cash-plus’ approaches to reach those most in need. The RO facilitated analysis under the programme’s system-strengthening component and provided recommendations for making social registries more disability-inclusive.

WCARO co-chaired the Regional Social Protection Platform with the International Labour Organization and World Bank and worked with the WFP World Bank, ‘adaptive social protection in the Sahel’, with support from German development cooperation.

The RO supported social policy teams across the region to advocate for increased funding for social sector budgets and more efficient budgeting/spending. RO technical support contributed to existing evidence of the impact of national budgets on service delivery for children. In 2022 WCARO and other UN entities organized a well-attended, continent-wide workshop to advance budget transparency and link it to the broader issue of development financing, leading to production of national integrated national financial framework (INFF)_ plans supported by the UN.

Gender equality

During 2022, RO developed a five-point strategy to guide its support to COs for adopting an ‘intentional focus’ on adolescent girls across programme activities.

The RO supported five COs to strengthen gender integration in programme design and facilitated a gender retreat for UNICEF Côte d’Ivoire to enhance gender mainstreaming. WCARO also supported UNICEF Ghana to orient staff and partners on the ‘gender transformative accelerator’ tool developed by UNICEF and the UN Population Fund.

WCARO partnered with its counterpart (ESARO) and UNICEF HQ to assess programming on women’s nutrition, health and HIV in 21 African countries, resulting in development of a conceptual model for strengthening gender-transformative approaches.

Adolescents and young people

WCARO considers **adolescents to be rights holders, agents of change, and key contributors** to innovative solutions for children/adolescents. During 2022, RO increased support to COs for bolstering youth participation in their communities (e.g., mobilizing for vaccination of emergency response) and sharpening the focus on adolescent girls. It also supported participation by young West and Central Africans at major events (e.g. World Water Forum, TES, COP 27) to engage with leaders/decision-makers, form networks and make their voices heard to increase their agency in co-creating solutions. .

In partnership with the UN Development Programme, RO conducted a mapping of youth employability and entrepreneurship strategies in the Sahel and contributed to the identification of young Sahelian leaders to share their journeys to change the narrative around young people from one of the negative connotations to opportunity.

Humanitarian preparedness and response

The number of children requiring protection in countries affected by conflict was estimated at over 12.9 million in 2022—11 per cent higher than 2021. As armed conflict intensified in some areas, RO supported capacity-building to monitor grave violations of children’s rights in Lake Chad Basin countries.

WCARO provided timely, quality humanitarian assistance to millions of children in 2022 through support for enhanced CO preparedness, response and monitoring.

- 10.7 million children received individual learning materials (89 per cent of target)
- 9.9 million children were vaccinated against measles (170 per cent of target)
- 3.5 million people gained access to safe drinking water (61 per cent of target)
- 2.4 million children were treated for severe acute malnutrition (89 per cent of target)
- 2.2 million children received psychosocial support (86 per cent of target)

As humanitarian need increased in northern Benin and Togo, RO mobilized additional resources, opening two new field offices and reinforcing two others.

Additionally, WCARO worked with COs to implement the ‘**triple H&D&P nexus’ approach** by focusing on the socio-economic dimensions of peace—strengthening social cohesion and resilience by promoting equitable access to essential services, gaining community trust and strengthening capacity to adapt and respond to emergencies.

In 2022, RO supported four countries (Cameroon, CAR, Guinea, Niger) to develop child risk and impact analyses and hold workshops on **risk-informed programming** in partnership with governments and development partners leading to identification of concrete risk-reduction options for all UNICEF supported programmes. WCARO also supported countries to address the risk of conflict spill-over of violence from Central Sahel to strengthen local capacity and improve emergency preparedness.

In 2022, RO led a **global mobilization around the Sahel, the short and long-term impact on children of the Central Sahel reality and its potential spill-over to coastal countries**. This led to **enhanced** visibility of the socio economic dimensions of the conflict , leveraging additional finances and greater engagement and mobilization by UNICEF. As lead of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel resilience pillar, RO coordinated the multi-agency resilience working group, supported multi-stakeholder’ discussions on water’ and was designated to co-lead development and adoption of an action plan on water in the Sahel.

- **KRC accelerators**

The RO supported capacity-building of over 250 staff in the region in basic **knowledge management (KM)** processes (e.g., knowledge-sharing and collaboration with technology teams). A compendium of good practices to accelerate progress toward KRC 8 was developed for regional advocacy and accelerated action on ending open defecation.

To guide the shift from ‘communication for development’ to **social behaviour change (SBC)** communication,’ RO and 10 COs produced an ‘SBC Intro Guide’ outlining human rights-based approaches to SBC.

WCARO also launched an ‘SBC Certification’ process offering five lessons on SBC, familiarizing CO staff with the approach and enabling them to design SBC training for key counterparts/partners. To date, 103 staff were certified and nine COs adapted the lessons for partners.

Influencing global/regional discourse and policy

The AU ‘**Transforming Education in Africa**’ side-event supported by WCARO, with participation of 500 people, was presided over by the Chair of the Africa Union, attended by nine African Heads of State, three UN agencies Principals, the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships and others, leading to a high-level Declaration supporting a ‘whole of society approach to transform education, with adolescents at the centre of solutions.

During **World Immunization Week**, content on COVID-19 developed by RO reached over 4.4 million people in WCAR, with a 25 per cent engagement rate—five times higher than average.

WCARO finalized an advocacy strategy for the Sahel and priorities for addressing the crisis in close collaboration with HQ . The RO also held a side-event on malnutrition for governments, regional bodies, donors, CSOs and the private sector at the AU’s ‘**Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit**’ in May in Malabo, stressing the need for greater investment of domestic resources to prevent child malnutrition.

UNICEF’s shared-value US\$50 million partnership with Airtel is bridging Africa’s digital divide, seeking to transform the lives of over 1 million children by expanding access to quality education by 2027. Six WCAR COs are collaborating with Airtel to facilitate access to digital learning, end digital inequity and make it possible to bring quality educational content to every child.

Internal efficiencies and climate action

WCARO supported reviews of global bids on solar panels to help COs reduce energy consumption. Three COs implemented solar panel projects, four COs and 11 sub-offices requested smart-energy meters, RO and 71 per cent of COs switched to energy-efficient lighting and 91 per cent of WCAR vehicles were equipped with fuel management systems.

The RO reviewed and analysed a sample of 700 assurance reports to support efficient management of implementing partnerships (IPs), providing each CO with a mapping of recurring risks related to IPs,

along with standard mitigation measures. The RO also supported COs to conduct fraud vulnerability analysis and identify appropriate mitigation measures.

As of 2023, a new strategy will position UNICEF's Supply component as a strategic contributor to programme results, with initial focus on developing innovative nutrition products and encouraging local production of therapeutic foods.

Duty of Care

WCARO's commitment to fully discharge its duties to personnel and promote a positive organizational culture—a key enabler of results for children—remained a priority in 2022, with emphasis on gender equality, psychological safety and standards of conduct.

The Global Staff Survey revealed that staff satisfaction on 'personnel empowerment' rose to 75 per cent (up 3 per cent). Among UNICEF regions, WCAR earned the highest GSS scores in seven critical categories.

RO staff counsellors focused on building systemic initiatives to strengthen a preventative approach to mental health/wellbeing and trained 76 new volunteers. The team also provided 64 briefings for staff deployed to emergency duty stations and 12 wellbeing missions to support CO.

[1] Child-Marriage-in-West-and-Central-Africa-UNICEF-English (14).pdf

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Creation of regional repository for KRC accelerating practices

WCARO was influential in orchestrating cross-fertilization of innovations and practices in Cos through knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer learning sessions. The RO plans to create a single regional repository for KRC acceleration practices particularly those with potential for creating transformational change.

Strengthen monitoring and reporting of child protection violations

To achieve **KRC# 5 Protect children from Sexual Violence**): it is vital to continue strengthening systematic monitoring, reporting and disaggregation of results by types of child protection violations, including sexual violence. Such efforts are critical for SDG tracking (notably target 16.2.3). They also serve as a proxy for availability and uptake/use of quality and accessible services for survivors. Integrated case management and information-sharing between the justice sector and social services remains challenging. Long-term work on child protection information monitoring systems should be part of wider support to the data collection and analysis capacity of government partners.

Resource gaps constitute a key constraint for advancing work on violence prevention and response. An investment case was developed with inputs from countries with KRC5 related programmes. In addition to seeking to mobilize external financial resources, WCARO is exploring opportunities across both humanitarian and development programming to leverage funds from within child protection and other sectors that play a role in preventing violence to strengthen resilient systems with effective referral pathways and that function across humanitarian and development contexts.

Collaboration to advance birth registration

While UNICEF has invested heavily in consolidation of evidence on the effectiveness of interoperability between civil registration and health, a critical challenge to further advance KRC7, is

to move towards results at scale. To this end, child protection is seeking support from other sections (tech, data, monitoring and reporting, social policy) for better and more strategic use of data to improve planning and budgeting for scale.

Innovative methods for data collection

Both in crisis and regular programmes, insufficient funding from donors and govts make it difficult to use current tools (surveys etc) and requires innovative methods to collect key indicators in hotspots and reduce reliance on large surveys. Efforts to support government capacity to strengthen routine data collection should also be intensified while increasing efforts to raise and leverage funds for data work.

Looking forward to 2023

In 2023, WCARO will take forward the lessons mentioned in this report and build on the achievements of 2022. The key guiding principle underpinning these efforts will be optimization of WCARO's strategic contribution to accelerating progress towards the KRC-focused Regional Office Management Plan 2022–2025 and UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022–2025, in alignment with the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063.

Strategic and holistic support to country offices, with a focus on child rights advocacy, leveraging public/private partnerships, generating evidence on policy options that bring positive results for children, nexus, resilience and adaptive programming, and high-level advocacy and policy dialogue with regional institutions will remain WCARO's key strategies to support the progressive realization of children's rights in the region.