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Table of Contents

Foreword	2
1. Key developments in Georgia	4
2. UN development system support to national development priorities through the Cooperation Framework	6
Outcome 1: By 2025, all people in Georgia enjoy improved good governance, more open, resilient and accountable institutions, rule of law, equal access to justice, human rights, and increased representation and participation of women in decision-making	8
Outcome 2: By 2025, all people in Georgia have equitable and inclusive access to quality, resilient and gender-sensitive services delivered in accordance with international human rights standards	11
Outcome 3: By 2025, all people without discrimination benefit from a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy in Georgia	15
Outcome 4: By 2025, conflict-affected communities enjoy human rights, enhanced human security and resilience	19
Outcome 5: By 2025, all people, without discrimination, enjoy enhanced resilience through improved environmental governance, climate action and sustainable management and use of natural resources in Georgia	23
3. Support to partnerships and financing the 2030 Agenda	27
4. Working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency	30
5. Resource mobilization and financial overview	34
6. UN key focus in Georgia for 2022	38

Foreword

I am happy to present the Annual Progress Report 2021 of the United Nations in Georgia, which gives an account of the first year of implementation of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the period from 2021 to 2025. The present report highlights our joint efforts to support the national development priorities of Georgia in building a peaceful, just, thriving, inclusive and resilient society where no one is left behind.

Throughout the year we witnessed the growing political polarization in Georgia, which was further exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, we in the UN family concentrated our work on supporting Georgia in mitigating the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while supporting the first steps towards recovery without losing sight of the Sustainable Development Goals. We provided technical assistance and capacity-building to national and local authorities, social partners, civil society and the private sector, and delivered support to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged persons and communities, including the conflict-affected people, in these challenging times. During 2021, we channeled 59 million USD for the implementation of UNSDCF objectives.

We strengthened our close cooperation with the Government of Georgia and many other partners across the regions of Georgia as part of the SDG localization efforts in support of the national decentralization reform. The UN Country Team jointly visited the regions of Guria, Imereti and Samegrelo and explored with the local stakeholders the best ways for the UN to support development needs in each of these regions.

We also continued to advance the UN reform on the ground, strengthening our joint and coherent action. The UN Country Team in Georgia is currently implementing nine joint programmes, including two new initiatives launched in 2021. As of this year, we work jointly on minimizing the negative impact of COVID-19 through telemedicine and digital health



solutions with support of the European Union, and on disability-inclusive development in Georgia with the funding from the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We have also stepped up our joint advocacy – both as one UN and together with other development partners – on human rights, gender equality and other cross-cutting Agenda 2030 and UNSDCF priorities.

Moreover, we fostered coherence between development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actions, not least through the ongoing work of the Abkhazia Strategic Partnership, which brings together UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations working in the conflict-affected communities. We continued to support vulnerable population in these communities, including in addressing the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UN remains a committed partner to the Government and all partners in working towards sustainable development that genuinely benefits all people in Georgia and includes and empowers the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the society.

Dr. Sabine Machl

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Georgia

UN Country Team



Key development partners of the UN development system in Georgia



01



Key developments in Georgia

In 2021, the COVID-19 virus continued to affect Georgia's public health, with the spread of new virus variants increasing its devastating effects. Political instability persisted throughout the year as a result of an ongoing dispute over the results of the 2020 parliamentary elections and continued polarization around the local elections held in October 2021. Tbilisi saw violence as dangerous crowds gathered to oppose and obstruct the LGBTIQ+ pride planned on 5 July 2021, which was eventually cancelled over safety concerns as mobs vandalized civil society activists' offices and physically assaulted media workers. In the fall, the conduct of local elections led to opposition protests, which slowly subsided. In the face of persisting political polarization of the society, finding ways to start healing these divisions remains one of the major challenges for the country. The situation in and around Abkhazia and South Ossetia continues to pose political, military, economic, and security risks, including to regional stability, and represents a serious obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind.

The economy started to recover in 2021, reaching 10% annual GDP growth after an almost 7% contraction in 2020. However, instability and risks of further marginalization of the vulnerable persons persisted due to reduced tourism revenues, increased transport costs, reduced foreign direct investment flows and challenges in linking growth to job creation and reduction of inequalities. Data showed that 21.3% of Georgia's population lived under the absolute poverty line in 2020, up from 19.5% in 2019. Young people, especially women, of ethnic minorities have limited access to education and salaried employment and are especially vulnerable to the negative impact of the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 758,605 children have been affected by preschool and school closures. The shift to online learning disproportionately affected vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, as well as exacerbated learning inequalities due to gaps in access to technology, and skills and capacities of teachers. A 2020 UN report showed that 15% of school-age children in Georgia did not have internet connection in their homes. The digital divide is further marginalizing 50,400 children whose lack of access to digital tools and internet connectivity puts them at risk of falling behind.

In terms of natural risks, the country is vulnerable to earthquakes, floods, droughts, and landslides and climate change is expected to put further pressure on water resources and yield a greater frequency of extreme weather events.

At the end of 2021, Georgia continued efforts to shield its people from the worst impact of COVID-19 pandemic and to start the road towards recovery in conditions of great uncertainty about the future. To tackle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Georgia needs to not only sustain its economic growth but find pathways to ensure this growth is inclusive, with decent work and better livelihood opportunities and social protection support for those currently left behind.

02

UN development system support to national development priorities through the Cooperation Framework





Photo: Valishvili/UNO

Sustainable Development Goals provide a blueprint for a better and more sustainable future, thus helping navigate complex challenges by maintaining strategic focus on concrete, measurable and interconnected targets on poverty reduction, gender equality, education, health, decent work, climate action, peace, justice, strong institutions and other areas. In its development efforts, the UN strives to protect and empower those who have so far been often left behind in Georgia's development pathway: specific categories of children, youth, informal sector workers, older persons, migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees, members of conflict-affected communities and family farmers, specific categories of women, national and religious

minorities, persons of non-dominant sexual orientation or gender identity, and persons with disabilities.

In 2021, the UN in Georgia started the implementation of the new five-year UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which is aligned with the national development priorities. The implementation of the current UNSDCF will continue until 2025 with one overarching objective: enhanced human wellbeing, capabilities and social equality in Georgia. This section describes joint UN results achieved in 2021 under each of the five UNSDCF Outcomes.

Outcome 1:



Contributing UN Entities



By 2025, all people in Georgia enjoy improved good governance, more open, resilient and accountable institutions, rule of law, equal access to justice, human rights, and increased representation and participation of women in decision-making



Photo: Valishvili/UNDP



Expenditures in 2021:

11 210 096 \$

In 2021, the UN supported Georgia in strengthening its governance system through fostering the national public administration reform. The UN helped establish a framework for uniform policy development processes across the government agencies, improve

quality control of public services and their delivery to vulnerable persons, and enhance human resources management standards in Georgian civil service. The UN also assisted in sustaining the decentralization reform.



Photo: Zedginidze/UNDP

Creating space for everyone

Nona Gudulidze, a fifty-year-old nurse from Georgia's mountainous Racha region, never imagined that she would be unable to walk or even to find work. Her life changed forever when a 2020 car accident left her in a wheelchair. The lack of accessible public infrastructure and disability-friendly jobs left her "sitting at a window and looking at life passing by," she recalls. Now, a new multifunctional centre for social inclusion is opened in her hometown Ambrolauri, where Nona and dozens of other people with disabilities will gain a much-awaited chance to reclaim their professional and social lives. "Finding a job these days is a challenge for everyone, let alone a person with a disability. But I get to feel accomplished again!" says Nona, who is eagerly taking up duties as the facility's new librarian.

The Centre for Social Inclusion in Ambrolauri is the first institution in Georgia to provide up to 50 persons with disabilities with space for social activities, professional skills development and equal employment opportunities. The centre will also serve as a social space for the elderly and local youth.

The centre was established by in the framework of the UN joint programme *Transforming Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Georgia*.

The UN worked with the Civil Service Bureau to conduct Georgia's first-ever specialized study on workplace sexual harassment, which will inform the design of effective civil service mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the workplace. Nine government agencies adopted sexual harassment complaint mechanisms in 2021.

Policy-making and oversight capacities of the Parliament of Georgia were strengthened through improving evidence-based inquiry, post-legislative scrutiny processes and rapporteurs' mechanism in parliamentary committees. [An Open Parliament Action Plan 2021-2022](#) was also adopted. The Supreme Council of Ajara adopted its first ever strategic plan for the next four years with the UN support.

To advance protection of human rights in Georgia, [State Strategy for Civic Equality and integration for 2021-2030](#) was developed with the UN support and approved by the Government of Georgia. Moreover, the UN strengthened capacities of the State Inspector's Service in Georgia in personal data protection and in investigations of alleged human rights violations by the law enforcement agencies.

The introduction of alternative dispute resolution was further advanced by piloting a 3-step certification programme resulting in an increased number of mediators. Four new mediation centres, including three in the regions, were opened enabling citizens' increased access to mediation.

In consultation with the social partners, the UN supported the Government in strengthening the machinery for labour dispute settlement in line with international labour standards. In 2021, national legislation was further strengthened to improve protection for night workers, while additional by-laws on various employment aspects were drafted for further consultation in 2022. The UN also worked with the Government and the social partners on the implementation of the business and human rights chapter of [the National Action Plan on Human Rights](#).

Furthermore, the UN promoted gender equality and elimination of harmful practices and gender-based violence against women and girls, and combating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. National evidence-based policies were enhanced in the fields of gender equality and youth policy. [Youth Strategy 2025 and the related Action Plan](#) aim to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health rights and take steps towards elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices. The UN also supported the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament and the Government Commission on Gender Equality in developing a legislative proposal on institutionalizing gender impact assessments as a part of the law-making cycle. Renewed [National Action Plans on women, peace and security and on ending violence against women](#) were drafted by the Government with the UN's active engagement and are scheduled for adoption in 2022. At the local level, newly adopted Guidelines on the Development of Municipal Gender Equality Action Plans will enable a uniform approach and standards in this field across 64 municipalities.

Two hundred women including civil society representatives, women with disabilities and activists working on disability and gender equality and 36 civil society organizations strengthened their capacity to work on gender, disability, advocacy and research. Around one million people were reached through awareness raising campaigns on gender equality conducted in partnership with women's organizations. A national information campaign *Shall We Go to Vote* engaged over 300 young people from across Georgia, including internally displaced persons, national minorities, persons with disabilities and conflict-affected youth. Over 200 women candidates running for local self-government elections undertook leadership training offered by the UN in 2021.



The UN advocated for the ratification by the Parliament of Georgia of the [Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), which further strengthened protection of human rights of persons with disabilities. The UN also contributed to the establishment of the coordination mechanism to implement the Protocol. Organizations of persons with disabilities were trained to enable them to file *amicus curiae* with courts on cases involving rights of persons with disabilities.

Integration of comprehensive sexuality education in the formal education system was promoted, piloting *School Doctor's Hour* at the elementary education level. A multi-year plan for social norm transformation in comprehensive sexuality education was designed with involvement of the civil society *Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Coordination Platform* and endorsed by the Ministry of Education. The UN worked with the healthcare system to improve its ability to respond to gender-based violence perpetrated against women with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ persons. The UN also assisted the State Care Agency in building knowledge of over 60 social workers and employees of domestic violence shelters on LGBTIQ+ rights in Georgia.

Moreover, the UN promoted gender-responsive family policies, resulting in an introduction of the paternal leave option in the amended Labour Code. In partnership with the private sector, the first Fathers' Schools were piloted in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Advocacy campaigns to tackle the harmful practice of gender-biased sex selection were implemented in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions.

Together with the Government, a public campaign *Do Not Deprive of Childhood* on prevention of child marriage was conducted to reach ethnic Georgian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian population. Religious leaders in Imereti and Guria were sensitized to contribute to prevention of child marriage and domestic violence. In partnership with the civil society, young people in Imereti, Guria, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti were empowered to lead on initiatives combating gender stereotypes in local communities.

Achievement Highlights:



200

women and 36 civil society organizations strengthened their capacity to work on gender, disability, advocacy and research



36



Around

1 000 000

People were reached through awareness raising campaigns on gender equality



Over

200

women candidates undertook leadership training



Over

300

young people were engaged in a national information campaign *Shall We Go to Vote*



Over

60

social workers and employees of domestic violence shelters built knowledge on LGBTIQ+ rights in Georgia

The UN partnered with various stakeholders to promote child rights. The UN strengthened institutional cooperation with Parliament for the advancement of child rights, including supporting the establishment of the Permanent Parliamentary Council on Child Rights Protection to oversee the implementation of the Code on the Rights of the Child. The UN engaged with nine state universities to establish Child Rights Centres which are moving the child rights agenda forward in academia and empowering communities.

The UN continues its support in the development of a child-friendly justice system, including through capacity building of professionals, and development of quality monitoring and multidisciplinary implementation mechanisms. The Diversion and Mediation Programme was further strengthened as the major cornerstone of the juvenile justice system. The Juvenile Referral Center for children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility was supported as an important mechanism for the prevention of crime among children.

The UN is supporting the Government in creating an integrated service for child victims of sexual violence. A concept of a national child helpline on violence against children as a safe and accessible channel for children to report violence, seek help and get immediate counselling was developed and agreed with major counterparts.

As a result of the UN advocacy, a special chapter on Rights of Older Persons has been included in the draft National Human Rights Strategy. Active and healthy ageing was promoted together the municipalities of Kutaisi and Rustavi where two pilot municipal 60+ Clubs for Healthy and Active Life were launched.

In the field of migration and asylum, the UN worked with the Government on designing an operational framework for the integration of foreign migrants and refugees residing in Georgia. The UN also supported the State Integration Centre implementing a livelihood programme for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.



Photo: UNICEF

Outcome 2:



Contributing UN Entities



Expenditures in 2021:

6 864 760 \$

By 2025, all people in Georgia have equitable and inclusive access to quality, resilient and gender-sensitive services delivered in accordance with international human rights standards

In the field of ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all, the UN helped to strengthen Georgia's capacity in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, improving primary health care, maternal and child health. The UN enhanced infection prevention and control skills of nearly 600 primary healthcare personnel and promoted COVID-19 vaccination amongst various population groups, such as health care workers and teachers. As COVID-19 represents a major risk for pregnant women, the UN together with the Government and professional

associations enabled some 130 reproductive health service providers in all major regions to adopt the most recent international clinical protocols for the management of pregnancy during the pandemic. The UN helped to connect rural primary healthcare doctors in 1,000 rural ambulatories with up-to-date protocols and trained 1,300 rural primary healthcare workers in the management of COVID-19 cases and delivery of remote health consultations on basic maternal and child health issues.

Telemedicine and digital health solutions become the new normal

"A few months ago, they connected us to the Internet, brought us computers and since then we actively started learning the new medical platform. Through this platform many things got simpler – prescribing medicines, entering immunization data, compiling reports, attending online trainings. Online meetings bring together rural doctors from all over the district and we exchange information with each other, who needs what, who can provide support. Getting familiar with changes is always difficult and it may sometimes seem that it is better to keep doing things the way they were always done. But if you have a little more curiosity, more interest, you will suddenly pick up new ways and realize that the whole process becomes much more efficient and faster. Now we have everything available to us at home or in our offices, what is not to like? This platform has become my right hand."

With support of USAID and the UN, all village doctors in Georgia have access to the latest professional information through a common online information platform based at the Emergency Coordination and Emergency Assistance Center of Georgia. In partnership with Czech Caritas, all rural doctors were trained in the management of suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 cases.

Through the new EU-funded UN joint programme on *Minimizing the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in Georgia through telemedicine and digital health solutions*, 200 rural facilities will receive basic equipment and another 50 will receive telemedicine equipment to support the safe management of COVID-19. New equipment will also be used to ensure uninterrupted access to health care for persons with chronic conditions and provision of routine health services for children.



Photo: Turabelidze/UNICEF



The UN contributed to the development of primary health care reform implementation roadmap for 2022-2025, which outlines the composition of the basic benefit package including child development-oriented services. Health workforce assessment was completed, and health workforce planning course was initiated to build health workforce planning capacity. The UN also expanded the digitalization of health services in Georgia through strengthening of the birth registry and telemedicine. An assessment of the health information system was also completed in the framework of a new joint EU-UN telemedicine project that will improve digital health capabilities nationally.

The UN also supported the update of the National Non-communicable Disease Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-2025, and improvements to tobacco control legislation that now bans smoking in taxis, private cars in the presence of minors, cable and all types of enclosed public water transport, and foresees enforcement mechanisms for the bans of advertisement, sales of tobacco near schools and promotion in points of sales. The UN enabled the development and operationalization of the first digital Cancer Screening Registry. Assistance was

provided in the assessment of physical activity policy and development of the related National Strategy and Action Plan. The UN helped to develop the [National HIV/TB Strategic Plan and its costing for 2023-2025](#). A special protocol was developed for stigma-free counselling and service provision in order to tackle low demand for HIV prevention services.

To foster reduction of preventable maternal mortality in Georgia, the UN facilitated the development and adoption of a costed 3-year [Maternal and Neonatal Health Action Plan](#) and advanced the antenatal care regionalization process by assessing 74 facilities in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi and Kvemo Kartli region. The UN also worked to improve clinical protocol for quality reproductive health services and assisted in improving the skills of 433 health professionals to decrease C-section risks for mothers and infants. The UN contributed to the improvement of antenatal health care provision to promote access for women and youth with disabilities.

In the area of education, the UN supported the Government in strengthening inclusive and quality education for all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities and children from national minority families. Improved competency-based national curriculum was developed for upper-secondary schools and subsequently adopted by the Government. Digitalization of school textbooks was supported for lower secondary grades in science, technology, engineering and math. The UN also assisted the Ministry of Education and Science in improving the teacher professional development system.

To improve the delivery of social services, the UN helped to map the services available at the municipal level across Georgia and supported the rollout of the digital municipal services. The UN also strengthened the municipal social services and improved coordination between central and municipal services in line with the Code on the Rights of the Child. With the UN assistance, the

Parliament elaborated the Guidelines on Web-Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities, that will become the basis for the national legislation on web-accessibility.

With the UN support, the Government was able to fulfil its obligations provided in the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to adopt annual action plans by all responsible state agencies, and to integrate rights and needs of persons with disabilities in the delivery of public services, including sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention and response services. The UN worked with the Government to transform the system of disability assessment and status determination and to analyze the existing social protection measures for children with disabilities. The UN helped to pilot a new social model of disability assessment and status determination, assessing 260 people through the new procedures in six health care facilities in Tbilisi and Mtskheta.



Photo: Gegenidze/UNFPA

The UN continued to provide technical assistance to the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence to support the development of the [National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of the Victims for 2022-2024](#). To improve efforts to address sexual violence, the UN together with the Council of Europe and Equality Now have jointly developed a manual on sexual violence investigation that will improve compliance with the standards set forth in the Istanbul Convention and the effective administration of justice.

The UN convened stakeholders including different Ministries, the Parliament of Georgia, State Care Agency, Public Defender's Office, religious and civil society organizations and international partners to mobilize efforts on deinstitutionalization of children that maintains best interests of children as the primary focus.

In support of the implementation of Georgia's [Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2021-2022](#), the UN worked with the Ministry of Justice, law enforcement agencies and the State Care Agency to foster inter-agency coordination and direct cooperation. Extensive guidance documents were developed for social workers and labour inspectors to hone their engagement in combatting trafficking in human beings.

To contribute to the implementation of [the Annual Action Plan of the 2021-2030 Migration Strategy](#) and elaboration of [the State Policy on Reintegration](#), the UN supported the Government in launching the dialogue within the interagency Reintegration Working Group. Two returnee reintegration surveys were conducted to provide the Government with evidence for informed policy development. A community revitalization project was implemented to pilot test the methodology on integrated approach to reintegration of Georgian nationals returning from abroad.

Achievement Highlights:



Nearly
600

primary healthcare personnel enhanced infection prevention and control skills



Some
130

reproductive health service providers adopted the most recent international clinical protocols



1 000

rural ambulatories connected with up-to-date protocols



433

health professionals improved skills to decrease C-section risks for mothers and infants



1 300

rural primary healthcare workers trained in the management of COVID-19 cases

Outcome 3:



Contributing UN Entities



Expenditures in 2021:

18 585 560 \$

By 2025, all people without discrimination benefit from a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy in Georgia

The UN supported the development of policy and institutional frameworks to promote business environment that is conducive to the development of a competitive, inclusive and job-rich economy.

Prioritizing support to rural development, the UN worked with the Government on advancing a governance mechanism of the rural development policy through establishing a management authority under the Ministry of Environmental Protection

and Agriculture for planning and evaluation of policy effectiveness. The Government of Georgia invested 618 million GEL in 2021 in

Implementing the [Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for 2021-2027](#) with the UN support, thus benefitting more than 110,000 rural residents through infrastructure development, public agriculture extension, social, education and business support services.



Photo: UN Women

Supporting rural women entrepreneurs

Natia Ghurtskaia, 38, lives in the village of Kakhati in Zugdidi Municipality with her husband and three children. She works as a mentor and a teacher and also runs a small cow farm. "In the beginning, I had only one cow," Natia says. "I gradually expanded my business, and today I already have 11 milk cows." The young farmer produces Georgian traditional dairy products: sulguni (a type of cheese), matsoni (a special kind of Georgian yoghurt) and nadughi (a traditional product resulting from souring milk). At the same time, she is constantly striving to make her own high-quality products, for which she is now deepening her knowledge about dairy production by attending a farmer field school.

The training platform *Farmer Field School* is part of a UN joint project *Empowering Women Economically through the Farmer Field School Approach*. The initiative helps women farmers to acquire knowledge on food safety

and international food standards, and modern technologies in cheese production. In addition, women farmers are taking a course on business start-ups at the Academy of the Ministry of Finance to strengthen their entrepreneurship, leadership and management skills.

"With the help of this school, I have seen myself from a different angle: I have become more self-confident and purposeful," Natia says. "After its completion, I will try to promote and share my knowledge and experience with those women entrepreneurs who are just starting to their first steps now."

Since the beginning of the project, 20 field farming schools have been established and about 200 female farmers have been trained to sustain jobs and incomes in rural regions. The 4-year project plans to train 1,000 farmers in total.

The UN strengthened capacities of the national Rural Development Agency and helped to set a 3-year plan for its institutional reform that seeks to improve institutional and staff capacities and compliance with the EU standards and practices for programme and service delivery. Coordination between central and local levels was promoted by establishing Integrated Municipal Coordination Framework in eight pilot municipalities, which helped to solve significant issues related to land registration and gas supply. Sustainable management of natural resources was promoted in rural areas where with the UN support more than 400,000 ha of forests are now managed under the Sustainable Forest Management Plans.

In the agricultural sector, the UN promoted competitiveness of nurseries through training on production of high quality, disease free, traceable planting material and verifying their compliance with the EU and international standards. Two greenhouses were established for the National Repository of basic vegetative material at the facility of Scientific Research Center of Agriculture in Jighaura. With the UN support, the Centre benefitted from the support of Georgian diaspora IT professionals in creating a website with an online database for national seeds and planting materials and a general registry of nurseries and seeds producers operating in Georgia. The UN facilitated the development and adoption of the Decree on Qualification Requirements for Nurseries that outlined minimum standards for nurseries to receive qualification certificates. In parallel, the UN provided technical support to certification bodies and to private nurseries to ensure smooth implementation of the Decree. Coordination was facilitated between insurance companies, nurseries and the Government to implement the insurance packages and solutions for the nurseries.

Georgia is also the first country in the region that introduced a [National Animal Identification and Traceability System](#), which guarantees traceability of animals and animal origin products, thus delivering safe food to the consumers, facilitating trade and contributing to the effective

implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreement with the EU. Moreover, Georgian Employers Association was supported in the analysis on perspectives for value chain growth in fruit and vegetable processing.

Over 5,000 farmers benefitted from the UN-supported extension services. The digital extension platform <http://regions.mepa.gov.ge> reached over 80,000 farmers. Additionally, 12,000 farmers benefitted from SMS-based services and 24,000 households used Agripedia as a major source of information. The UN assisted in the development of 30 new trainings for farmers for delivery in a formal Vocational and Technical Training (VET) setting for 16 agribusiness professions and eight work-based learning authorized programmes. In 2021, 1,390 farmers benefitted from skills development trainings with the UN support, where women represented 38% of beneficiaries.

The UN implemented various grant programmes for rural Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) worth USD 5.3 million to increase resilience, expand markets and promote job creation and sustainability in eight target municipalities. Support to digitalization of businesses benefitted 306 MSMEs with increased knowledge on digital tools to improve productivity. Six smart village projects created web-based solutions providing local population and businesses with access to information, products, services and consumers.



Photo: Valishvili/UNO

In collaboration with the Government, a micro-grants programme was implemented for local women entrepreneurs from six regions to enhance their businesses and mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic. The UN also commissioned a feasibility study on a new e-commerce platform bywomen.ge that would serve as a unified platform to facilitate sales of goods made by women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, an online training conducted with Mashav - Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation enabled 35 women entrepreneurs to develop skills on innovation strategies, brand building, team building, creativity and digital transformational tools.

For the packaging cluster, the UN helped advance its organizational effectiveness and deliver business development services, thus promoting green stream and better environmental performance, including targeted placements of diaspora experts. Georgia's packaging cluster more than tripled its membership, growing from 25 members in 2020 to 90 by the end of 2021.

A study for exports of pharmaceutical products from Georgia to the Central Asian countries established and identified possible bottlenecks and propose solutions in the trade-related regulatory framework.

Following up on the National Connectivity Report adopted in March 2020, stakeholder workshops were conducted to improve sustainable transport connectivity. Georgia also strengthened its capacity in digitalization of information exchange along multimodal transport corridors. Efforts are underway to classify Georgia's non-tariff measures at the product level for publication online, and to map them against the EU acquis to detect gaps in secondary legislation.

The UN provided assistance to Georgia in building an innovation ecosystem through the elaboration of a Digital Innovation Profile for Georgia, which includes recommendations to foster digital innovation and artificial intelligence sectors. An additional in-depth analysis of the current innovation policies was conducted to propose ways to foster their contribution to Georgia's sustainable development.

The UN facilitated analysis and development of policy recommendation to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal employment, in particular for domestic workers. The UN also worked with the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation to improve social dialogue on care economy and gender pay gap. A strategy for promoting trade union representation, protection, and services in the care economy was developed with the UN technical assistance. In addition, the UN supported the Government in launching the process of drafting a comprehensive Social Code and will in particular be engaged in the work on social assistance, child rights and informal economy.

The UN assisted the Government in mainstreaming gender in the national SME Strategy and promoted the adoption of mechanisms to improve company reporting on equal pay and increased statistical capacity in data production. In addition, state agency Enterprise Georgia approved its internal Gender Equality Strategy and a 3-year action plan developed with the UN technical support, which place a special focus on prevention and elimination of discrimination and sexual harassment.



The UN assisted the Government in mainstreaming gender in the national SME Strategy and promoted the adoption of mechanisms to improve company reporting on equal pay and increased statistical capacity in data production. In addition, state agency Enterprise Georgia approved its internal Gender Equality Strategy and a 3-year action plan developed with the UN technical support, which place a special focus on prevention and elimination of discrimination and sexual harassment.

Georgian businesses were supported in promoting decent work and sustainability practices. A concept for a [Business Advisory Council on Child Rights](#) was developed and companies were nominated for membership with due diligence process currently underway. The number of private companies that joined the UN Women and UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles reached 102 by the end of 2021. Dedicated capacity building empowered employers to tackle workplace sexual harassment and domestic violence. Together with the Business and Technology University and in partnership with twelve IT companies, the UN launched a new programme 500 Women in Tech, which aims to advance women's participation in the innovation and technology sector.

Moreover, 100 employers improved capacities in occupational health and safety and COVID-19 measures and are now able to adopt new safety and sanitation protocols. More than 100 SMEs strengthened their capacity in business continuity planning to help strengthen their productivity and business competitiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two forums were organized to promote the engagement of Georgian diaspora in the private sector development in Georgia, further supported by a dedicated web portal.

Transformation of the VET governance system was fostered through support to the creation of a Vocational Skills Agency, a platform for delivery of sector-led skills systems. Moreover, a model was elaborated for secondary school based VET delivery to increase the coverage of VET services.

The UN also supported the Ministry of Education and Science in the development of a catch-up and accelerated learning curriculum and capacity building of schoolteachers and universities' academic staff in inclusive education. The adapted curriculum was piloted in 39 target schools and six daycare centres. In 2021, 200 students from among both former out-of-school children and those at risk of school dropout benefited from the programme and improved their literacy and numeracy skills. UN also facilitated the elaboration of policy on youth not in employment, education or training through fact-finding on the root causes of youth marginalization.

The UN fostered partnerships between businesses and educational organizations to support socially disadvantaged youth in improving their digital skills and employment prospects. Online sessions organized through Real-Time Jobs for Youth initiative equipped participating young people with practical skills in social media, digital marketing and graphic design, and triggered increasing interest from other companies that subsequently committed to offering internships and job opportunities.

Surveys were carried out with the National Statistics Office of Georgia to produce data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and their families. The evaluation of the Targeted Social Assistance programme provided crucial evidence to the Government on the impact of the programme on the households, contributing to the move from food vouchers to cash-based assistance for children. In addition, the Government doubled its investment in child cash benefits and increased the coverage of children targeted by cash benefits to more than 20% of child population.

The UN also supported the Government in developing and concluding bilateral labour migration agreements with Bulgaria, Germany, France and Israel. The UN trained staff of the relevant Government entities and contributed to the development of pre-departure orientation and training for migrant workers. Sustainable reintegration of returned Georgian migrants was enabled through socio-economic community revitalization pilots and provision of grants in selected municipalities in Guria, Imereti and Kakheti regions. Referral Centres have been established in ten municipalities in these regions to connect both returned Georgian migrants other community members to programmes and services that support their social and economic inclusion.

To promote urban development towards smart sustainable cities in Georgia, a capacity development programme was implemented to identify investment priorities of Tbilisi to achieve sustainable urban development and to build capacities of the city government to attract external financing to related city projects.

Achievement Highlights:



More than
110 000

rural residents benefited through infrastructure development, public agriculture extension, social, education and business support services.



Over
5 000

farmers benefited from the UN-supported extension services



12 000

farmers benefited from SMS-based services



1 390

farmers (38% women) benefited from skills development trainings



306

MSMEs benefited from digitalization of businesses



35

women entrepreneurs developed skills on innovation strategies, brand building, & digital transformational tools



102

private companies enrolled in the UN Women and UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles



100

employers improved capacities in occupational health and safety and COVID-19 measures



More than
100

SMEs strengthened their capacity in business continuity planning



200

students benefited improved their literacy and numeracy skills.

Outcome 4:



Contributing UN Entities



Expenditures in 2021:

12 592 026 \$

By 2025, conflict-affected communities enjoy human rights, enhanced human security and resilience

In 2021, the UN continued its work in conflict-affected communities based on ideals enshrined in the UN charter and internationally recognized normative frameworks, including human rights standards and humanitarian principles. Another important aspect of this component of the UN's work is to preserve and create space for dialogue leading to reconciliation and sustainable peace within and across divided communities.

The UN continued to promote an enabling environment that is conducive towards peacebuilding and conflict transformation, including through assistance to civil society in Abkhazia. It was not possible to extend such programmatic support to beneficiaries living in South Ossetia, where the UN does not have access.

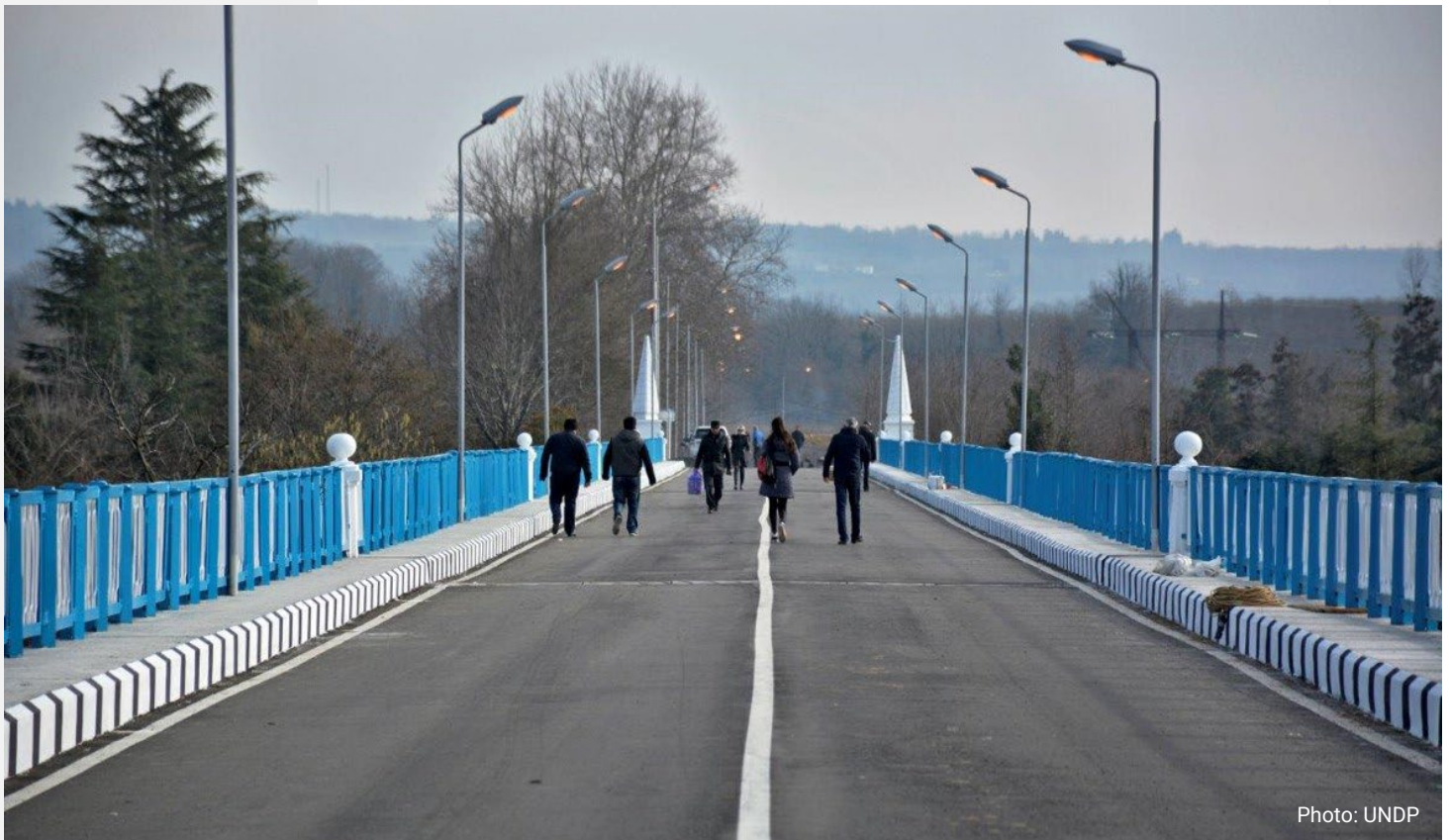


Photo: UNDP

The COVID-19 pandemic brought additional problems and challenges to the already vulnerable conflict-affected communities, further limiting their access to social services and livelihoods, and reducing mobility and interaction across the conflict dividing lines. The UN supported the COVID-19 response in Abkhazia by providing medical equipment and supplies, conducting consultations and support in setting up laboratory testing capacity, and by offering online peer-to-peer consultations for healthcare professionals. The COVID-19 response also included livelihood support to vulnerable communities, households and individuals, as well as efforts to improve water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Twenty-four schools in Abkhazia benefitted from improved water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for over 5,000 students.

In other areas of health care provision, the UN continued to support regular immunization programmes for children, maternal and child healthcare, and sexual and reproductive health services. In total, 3,245 women throughout Abkhazia benefitted from reproductive and maternal health services in 2021. Medical professionals received online trainings on the implementation of a new ante-natal clinical protocol, and also on awareness raising about gender-based violence. The UN also facilitated access to infectious disease testing and treatment in Abkhazia; this testing was complemented by awareness raising campaigns around infectious diseases, including HIV and COVID-19. Access to healthcare for 3,000 people living close to the dividing line in the village of Nikozi, on the Georgian-controlled side, improved through the provision of medical equipment to the village clinic.

Efforts to strengthen education, including VET aimed to create socio-economic opportunities for youth with the potential to transform conflict-affected communities in the future. Activities to improve VET in Abkhazia benefitting 700 college students/pupils and around about 60 teachers in 2021. In an effort to address poverty and social vulnerability, the UN supported a network of social workers to provide social services, including child

protection, to the most vulnerable children in Abkhazia, reaching over 700 vulnerable families in all districts, including almost 2,000 children. Awareness raising campaigns were also conducted with a focus on the rights of the child. Furthermore, a new home for the elderly, Chemi Mordu opened with the UN support in the village of Rukhi, Zugdidi Municipality, catering to 12 conflict-affected residents.

In close cooperation with legal and social partners, the UN continued to raise awareness and provide legal counselling and assistance to conflict-affected persons in Abkhazia to enhance their access to services and basic rights, including through documentation. Efforts were also stepped up to facilitate freedom of movement across the dividing line by means of free-of-charge shuttle bus services and the negotiation of a humanitarian corridor that enabled more than 6,000 pensioners and other vulnerable people to access pensions and other benefits critical for meeting their basic needs, especially during periods when regular traffic across crossing points was unavailable due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Humanitarian assistance and psychosocial support for the most vulnerable was increased, including for the isolated elderly persons in Abkhazia.



To address environmental hazards and risks induced by climate change, the UN also supported an initiative to monitor and reduce flood hazards in rivers basins in Abkhazia. This effort was combined with awareness raising campaigns in schools, together with partner organizations.

The UN also supported more than 600 individuals to maintain and increase farming productivity and other non-farming income-generating activities, while facilities and services were enhanced to strengthen the resilience and protection of village communities. Furthermore, 22 conflict-affected women benefited from business grants and mentorship.

Through a network of 18 farmer field schools in all seven districts of Abkhazia, the UN contributed to mitigation and prevention of the negative effects of plant pests on agricultural production and reducing risks associated with the use of pesticides. In addition, 18 female dairy producers in Abkhazia received training on integrating animal husbandry best practices and women's rights. Participants on the Georgia-controlled side of the dividing line also benefitted from training in business skills and private sector networking in cooperation with Liberty Bank and the Academy of the Ministry of Finance, thus linking the women, peace and security agenda to women's economic empowerment.

The UN supported a network of volunteers from the community of internally displaced persons (IDP) to enhance two-way communication with the Georgian Government authorities and to facilitate access to services, including livelihood and housing programmes. This work includes ongoing social protection monitoring and advocacy on behalf of the IDP community.

A radio programme was launched to promote non-violence, human rights, and tolerance through discussions around gender stereotypes, unequal pay, sexual harassment, mental health, labour rights, IDP rights, and other themes.

Achievement Highlights:



Over

5 000

students (24 schools) in Abkhazia benefitted from improved water, sanitation and hygiene facilities



3 245

Women in Abkhazia benefitted from reproductive and maternal health services.



More than

600

people living close to the dividing line in the village of Nikozi get access to healthcare.



3 000

people living close to the dividing line in the village of Nikozi get access to healthcare.



22

conflict-affected women benefitted from business grants and mentorship.



18

female dairy producers in Abkhazia received training on integrating animal husbandry best practices and women's rights.



Over

700

vulnerable families in Abkhazia received social services, including child protection



Photo: UNDP

Each show reached on average 5,000 listeners each week. Furthermore, through outreach activities targeting conflict-affected youth, the UN promoted awareness raising on human rights and the rights of the child. As part of this effort, a football game was organized between the girls' teams of the VET colleges in Gali and Sukhumi during the globally observed 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence.

Women-led households among IDPs and conflict-affected communities were supported with small grants and entrepreneurship skills development, enabling the monthly income per beneficiary by 65% on average. By providing training to enhance resilience and rights awareness among conflict-affected women, the UN helped to promote agents of change, who take the lead in improving socio-economic conditions within their communities.

The UN continued its engagement and support to civil society, including in Abkhazia and also a small

number of civil society organizations in South Ossetia, to promote long-term confidence building and conflict transformation. Grants with a strong focus on gender and youth mainstreaming were given to the civil society organizations for a wide range of activities in healthcare, research, human rights, youth, preservation of cultural heritage, peace research, and public diplomacy. To raise the visibility of this peacebuilding work, ten media projects were launched, resulting in 200 publications in the form of articles, video documentaries, TV and radio shows and citizen reports.

To support Georgia in acting upon its commitments under the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the UN provided technical support to develop the related fourth National Action Plan for the period 2022-2024, which is expected to be adopted in 2022.

The UN also worked to promote gender mainstreaming in key security sector institutions, primarily the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the National Security Council, the State Security Service and the Intelligence Service. Furthermore, a participatory gender audit of the Ministry of Defense was completed, and another audit initiated with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Audit findings and recommendations will be integrated into institutional action plans and policy documents and will be used for planning relevant capacity building activities. In addition, the UN created a platform for the meaningful engagement of 180 conflict-affected women and civil society activists with the mechanisms addressing the consequences of conflict, including the Geneva International Discussions and multilateral incident prevention and response mechanisms.

The Public Defender's Office of Georgia was supported in drafting a report on the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on conflict-affected women and girls, revealing that their needs are driven by the social and economic factors that had not been addressed by the Government. The report offered policy recommendations and was used by the Public Defender's Office in advocacy to inform the policy response to the pandemic.

In 2021, the UN contributed to renewed discussions on the IDP housing policy and broader IDP social assistance reform, with a view to moving from a status-based to a needs-based social support system for IDPs to enhance their long-term inclusion and resilience. Renewed efforts were also made to support the IDP community in light of the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Creating opportunities and possibilities for others

Nino Akubardia, a 20-year-old woman from Chuburkhi village in Abkhazia has been passionate about helping internally displaced persons (IDPs) since she was 16. This passion arose from the experience of her whole family coming from Abkhazia and seeing the life challenges that IDPs face.

She currently volunteers at the IDP volunteer network supported by the UN. "During the pandemic, I was of course still assisting IDPs and with elderly people," says Nino who herself lives in an IDP settlement. She mentions that the connection she builds with everyone she helps inspires her and helps to finally have a voice in society.

Nino wants to make the most of her potential and is currently a third-year social politics student. She feels a very intimate and strong connection to Abkhazia even though she grew up in Tbilisi. When asked where she is from, the answer is always Abkhazia.

Her last visit to Abkhazia was five years ago, and she carries the memories of that visit with her. "When I was in Abkhazia, my heart felt a paradox of both feeling so broken yet also empowered to see my home. It is for certain that my motivation is to help all the IDPs I can to create a home we all share."

The UN closely works with the Government to facilitate the integration of IDPs and conflict affected women and men into the local communities. A network of IDP volunteers with countrywide coverage was expanded and trained to help IDPs access services at the local level.

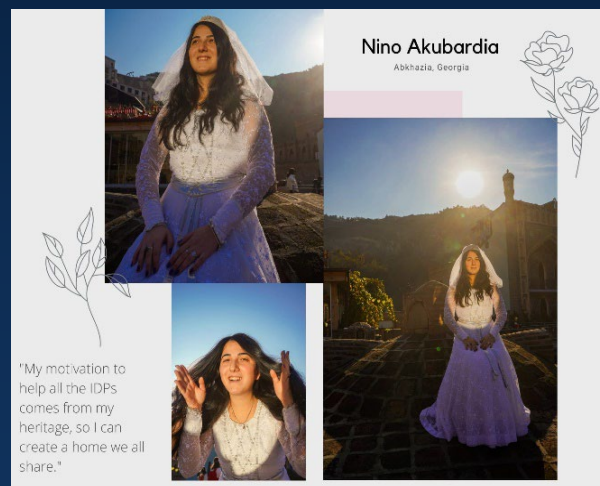


Photo: Anais Stupka/UNHCR

Outcome 5:



Contributing UN Entities



Expenditures in 2021:

9 708 347 \$

By 2025, all people, without discrimination, enjoy enhanced resilience through improved environmental governance, climate action and sustainable management and use of natural resources in Georgia

In 2021, Georgia's progress on climate action was marked by the submission of the **4th National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, updating the Nationally Determined Contributions to commit to 35% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and adoption of the National Climate Strategy and Action Plan. In addition, [Long-](#)

[Term Low Emission Development Strategy](#) was drafted and awaits adoption with the aim to ensure carbon neutrality and transformation to a green economy by 2050. The UN also supported the preparation of the [National Energy and Climate Action Plan](#) and finalized three reports on mainstreaming climate in health, agriculture and energy sectors.



Photo: UNDP



Photo: Popiashvili/FAO

The Government was supported to comply with its obligations under Montreal Protocol by collecting information on 2020 Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) imports. The UN helped to improve the system for enforcing of ODS control measures and monitoring of illegal ODS trade through establishment of a web-based ODS monitoring system.

The UN further advanced institutional capacity building and development of the regulatory framework for the Multi Hazard Early Warning System. Gender and vulnerability issues were mainstreamed in climate driven disaster risk reduction interventions, particularly in the development of methodology for risk informed, gender sensitive municipal level preparedness and response planning.

Georgia was supported in the gradual upgrading of the hydro-meteorology network with 89 units of modern, high-tech equipment, and in becoming a cooperating state to the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting. High Performance Computer was commissioned and upgrade of ICT system was launched to enhance forecasting and early warning capacities.

Educational and awareness raising efforts engaging stakeholders on climate risk management reached ten municipalities. [Community-Based Disaster Risk Management strategy](#) was drafted and construction of flood protection measures in ten high-risk areas in ten municipalities was initiated in line with social and environmental safeguards.

The UN contributed to the development of institutional capacities for implementing environmental commitments under the Convention of Biological Diversity through expanding capacities of the Agency of Protected Areas to better manage and patrol protected areas and increase their financial sustainability.

Climate-smart agriculture practices were integrated into the national strategies and policies through the work of the Climate-smart Agriculture Working Group. Agriculture is thus one of the sectoral priorities in [Georgia's 2030 Climate Change Strategy and its Action Plan for 2021-2023](#) with the aim to promote low-carbon agricultural development by fostering climate-smart agricultural technologies and services as set out in Georgia's updated Nationally Determined Contribution.

The UN supported promotion of sustainable management of pastures in Kazbegi, Dmanisi, and Gurjaani municipalities to prevent further degradation of lands. Multi-stakeholder Pasture Management National Policy Development Working Group was established. Feasibility study on integrated pastureland and livestock development and nationally appropriate pastureland inventory and pasture grazing capacity methodologies were developed by the Working Group to identify policy transformation options.

Over 300 beneficiaries comprising national and local decision-makers, extension service workers, women group representatives and farmers participated in trainings on sustainable pasture management. More than 750 farmers (40% women) were trained on climate-smart agriculture and conservation agricultural practices in 26 municipalities. UN-organized demonstration plots stimulated farmers to observe, experience, experiment with, and adopt innovative approaches, and technologies to increase their farm outputs and income while reducing environmental impact. Policymakers at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia were also trained to consider these innovative and sustainable practices when designing national policies and strategies. In addition, a publication on

good agricultural practices for plum, hazelnut, vegetable cabbage, and broccoli production in Georgia was produced and distributed to local farmers.

Guidelines and a selection of regional best practices for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises on energy efficiency and renewable energy and a study on financing and investment opportunities for renewable energy will inform efforts towards sustainable energy in Georgia.

The UN supported the implementation of the [National Environment and Health Action Plan 2018-2022](#) in the areas of air quality, chemical safety, water, sanitation and hygiene, climate change and health through capacity building of Georgian experts. Eighty-six workshops for a total of 510 healthcare professionals were conducted on COVID-19 biosafety and safe sample handling. Trainings of trainers were organized to reinforce capabilities of the Georgian state security and law enforcement agencies to devise, plan and carry out intelligence operations to thwart radiological and nuclear trafficking attempts. Knowledge of national experts was improved on data management and reporting in accordance with the requirements of the Air Convention.



Photo: FAO

The UN provided technical assistance in conducting the national survey on water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities to provide the Government with recommendations to ensure compliance with the national standards across Georgia. A model was also developed for the provision of purified water through the use of high-tech water purification equipment in four schools in Guria region, which had 69% of source water contaminated with E. coli in 2018.

Georgia's capacity to assess chemical risks to human health was strengthened to ensure sound chemicals management at each stage of the chemical life-cycle. Public awareness was raised on lead poisoning prevention in Gori, Telavi and Dusheti municipalities. Moreover, the UN continued supporting the Government in tackling elevated lead levels in children through the establishment of an environmental health laboratory that both detects toxic metals and investigates sources of exposure. The laboratory will also serve a major component of an Environmental Health Surveillance System that will be designed in 2022. The UN also enabled private sector capacity building on hazardous chemical management. The development of industrial waste mapping was launched in two regions.

Achievement Highlights:



Over
300

beneficiaries trained on sustainable pasture management



More than
750

farmers (40% women) trained on climate-smart agriculture and conservation agricultural practices



510

healthcare professionals trained on COVID-19 biosafety and safe sample handling



89

units of modern, high-tech equipment provided to the hydro-meteorology network

No-till farming: innovative technology increases yields and saves costs

"When I used the no-till method for the first time, my neighbours were making fun of me, saying that I am wasting seeds. Now, after I brought in a great harvest, they come to me for advice and say they want to try the method for themselves. Saving thousands on the machinery services is not a joke, any farmer can use these extra funds to get better fertilizers, other necessary supplies and reap an even better harvest," says Vano Katselashvili.

Vano Katselashvili, a farmer from Kareli municipality accepted this innovation from the start. With the EU and UN support, he was able to use a tractor and a no-till seeder equipment to sow wheat on the 10-hectare plot of his farm. A UN agronomist trained him and helped in the monitoring of the plot during the growing period. The farmer says he was able to save more than 4,000 GEL of fuel and mechanization costs with the new conservational agriculture solution.

Since 2019, up to 100 cereal farmers in Georgia joined the conservation agriculture system introduced by the EU and UN to increase yields and lower cultivation costs. while

increasing resilience of farmers to climate change. Agricultural land under no-till method now exceeds over 400 hectares.



Photo: FAO

**Support to
partnerships and
financing the
2030 Agenda**

Partnerships and close cooperation with key stakeholders were instrumental in ensuring the UN's success in supporting the national development priorities. In 2021, the UN in Georgia strengthened collaboration and coordination with the Government, development partners, social partners, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector.

The UN supports the Government of Georgia in all matters related to successful functioning of the national SDG Council, the chief custodian of Georgia's progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The SDG Council is composed of relevant Government ministries, heads of UN agencies, private sector, civil society representatives and international organizations. The UN also continued contributing substantive inputs and coordination assistance to the Administration of the Government in leading the four SDG Working Groups that are co-chaired by the relevant ministries, UN agencies and civil society organizations. The functioning of these groups ultimately promotes alignment of the current government strategies with the relevant SDG targets.



The UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia continued to chair the coordination efforts of the development partners, including bilateral and multilateral donors and all resident financial institutions. The work of this group is instrumental for securing the Government's agreement to hold regular High-level

Development Partnership Forums, which are co-chaired by the Prime Minister and the UN Resident Coordinator and serve as the main platform for coordinating development partner support to the national development agenda. Preparations are underway for 2022 Development Partnership Forum. In addition, development partners jointly contribute to the work of six Government-led thematic coordination groups that serve to build a shared understanding of the priorities, achievements and needs, and support alignment of government expenditures and related donor support towards priority areas within Agenda 2030 in Georgia.

Furthermore, the UN continued to engage with the Abkhazia Strategic Partnership (ASP), which is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and brings together a group of UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations working in Abkhazia. Enhanced coordination under the ASP umbrella enabled resource mobilization for joint work in Abkhazia.

The UN also actively pursued improved bilateral cooperation with major development partners, including the European Union (EU). In April 2021, the senior UN Country Team and the EU representatives in Georgia held a partner meeting to discuss institutional strategies, identify joint priorities and future cooperation modalities in support of Georgia's reform and development agenda. The UN continued engagement with various International Financial Institutions focusing on knowledge sharing and coordination with the focus on leaving no one behind and ensuring a shared understanding of the development priorities.

Throughout the year UNCT has issued 10 joint statements together with diplomatic missions and international organizations to uphold the universal human rights, values and principles.

Partnerships with the private sector have been enhanced to both inform the UN work and to secure opportunities to collaborate on the implementation of various initiatives. In 2021, the UN in Georgia established partnerships with 27 business entities. Some of the notable examples include a) partnership with Hera Clinic to implement the first Fathers' School in the country initiated in the framework of Men Care campaign; b) partnership with World Vision Georgia, Majorel and Sheraton to offer employment opportunities to asylum-seekers and refugees, and c) 18 new companies becoming signatories of the Women's Empowerment Principles.

Furthermore, innovative multistakeholder partnerships included Real-Time Jobs for Youth,

which saw the UN co-design a digital skill building model for vulnerable youth that linked Business and Technology University, the Future Laboratory, Association of Small Group Homes and potential employers for tech skills development and youth job placement.

With regard to development financing in Georgia, the UN updated the annual SDG Financing Report assessing the latest data for 2020 with the focus on the role of the state budget and Tbilisi municipal budget in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and financing inclusive recovery measures. The report also builds ground for a broader national discussion on the next steps towards an Integrated National Financing Framework.



Photo: Valishvili/UNO



Working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

The UN in Georgia continued to strengthen its capacities to deliver as one and build further team synergies to enhance support to Georgia in the first year of implementation of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025.

The new joint planning modalities enabled the UN Country Team to develop a better mutual understanding of each entity's work and identify possibilities for further synergies. Five Results Groups were formed comprising teams working on the implementation of each of the five UNSDCF Outcomes. A system of annual rotating Chairs was introduced for the Results Groups to prevent the creation of new silos and provide opportunities for all team members to contribute.

This structure is further supported by the work of UN Country Team's thematic working groups on various cross-cutting priority issues, including human rights, youth, gender, HIV/AIDS, communications and others. In particular, Gender Theme Group provided coordinated support to national partners in Georgia in their implementation of commitments to gender equality and women's rights.

The work of the UN Socio-Economic Recovery Plan that was adopted in 2020 to deliver coordinated support to COVID-19 response in Georgia was folded into the implementation of UNSDCF as of 2021. The UN Situational Reports continued to be disseminated among the Government of Georgia and other partners until mid-2021.

In terms of joint delivery, nine UN Joint Programmes were ongoing in 2021 focusing on different UNSDCF priorities, including better protection of human rights, transforming social protection system for people with disabilities, women's political and economic empowerment, enabling environment to eliminate violence against women and girls, advance gender equality and reproductive rights including most vulnerable women, adolescents and youth, skills development, rural development and private sector competitiveness.

In particular, two new joint programmes were launched in 2021. A new programme under the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aims to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities in Georgia and foster the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Another new joint programme is funded by the European Union and enables the UN and the Government institutions to work towards minimizing the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in Georgia through telemedicine and digital health solutions, focusing on supporting Georgia's primary health care system in rural areas.

In the field of joint advocacy in 2021, UN efforts aimed policy engagement and public communication fostering concrete actions by the Government and partners towards enhanced protection of human rights, including rights of persons with disabilities, safeguarding the welfare and protection of rights of LGBTIQ+ persons and promoting gender equality with a focus on legal framework, empowerment and measures to curb existing inequalities, and tackling COVID-19 pandemic, including vaccination rollout.



Photo: Valishvili/UNO

The UN also made efforts towards localization of UNSDCF through joint Country Team visits to several regions to review current programming and assess evolving needs and opportunities for engagement in the light of the ongoing decentralization reform.



Photo: Khizanishvili/UNO

In the context of COVID-19, the UN drafted and presented to the Government a joint consolidated analysis on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on various vulnerable groups in Georgia with the aim to inform the planning of mitigation and recovery measures. The UN supported the Government's risk communication efforts together with other stakeholders through series of awareness-raising and educational campaigns to help counter misinformation and vaccine myths and speed up COVID-19 vaccination rates. Several campaigns were organized in partnership with the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia and other national stakeholders, reaching rural residents, youth, businesses, civil servants, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and marginalized social groups to increase vaccine confidence and to motivate people to get vaccinated. Among other activities, some 80,000 information, education and communication materials on COVID-19 vaccination in Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages were distributed across 46 villages. Some 25 promotional and influential videos featuring role models were

produced for public information purposes.

The national SDG Localization Plan for Georgia was presented and approved at the SDG Council on 12 July 2021. The plan aims at strengthening the involvement and ownership of local government in the implementation of 2030 Agenda and raising the awareness about the SDGs and their importance at the local level. The plan is to be initially implemented in the following 5 municipalities - Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Rustavi and Telavi. Ten municipalities are planned to be added in 2022. UN in Georgia will continue strengthening support to these efforts and relevant local partnerships.

Awareness raising and information campaigns on gender-based violence and gender equality were implemented through social media platforms and TV programmes. Several national TV stations joined the *16 Days of Activism* campaign and helped to spark a conversation within the society on the need to combat gender violence and promote solidarity towards the victims of violence. *Equality Corners* were opened in Koki and in Baghdati to raise awareness of the local residents on equality with the help of contemporary fiction.



Photo: Valishvili/UNO

To further engage Georgian society in the national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG open spaces were opened at the National Library of Georgia and the Public School #1 to enable the adolescents and youth to get informal education, enjoy meaningful free time and share ideas with each other. Over the year, 14 SDG-related dialogues were conducted, highlighting the notion of Leaving No One Behind, with the participation of about 1,000 students and school children. The UN also supported Georgia's Youth Representative to the UN in engaging young Georgians in activities and exchanges on the SDGs, COVID-19 vaccination and youth empowerment.



Photo: UNICEF

Throughout the year the UN launched joint events and social media campaigns on key international days including the International Women's Day, Human Rights Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities, advocating for respecting the rights of vulnerable groups. On World Environment Day, the UN organized events together with representatives of the Government and the Parliament, eco-activists, and civic education teachers, as well as a social media campaign to advocate for clean air and sustainable transport and for the need to protect and restore ecosystems.

The UN Network on Migration was launched in Georgia in 2020 in order to provide coordinated and coherent UN system-wide support to the Government in strengthening migration policies and enhancing migration management efforts. The Network also works to foster coordination among the UN agencies in Georgia and enhance the coherence and stakeholder partnerships to achieve the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). In 2021, the UN carried out several events aimed at building awareness, capacity and coordination of the Government, the civil society and the UN Country Team on the GCM implementation.

In fall 2021, the UN Country Team in Georgia conducted its second UNCT-SWAP Scorecard standardized assessment of the effectiveness of UN country level gender mainstreaming processes that provides recommendations to drive further improvements towards gender equality and empowerment of women. This SWAP scorecard exercise revealed exceptional performance for five indicators, including the quality of UNCT collaboration and engagement with the Government and organizational culture that fully supports promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. A UNCT action plan based on the report recommendations will guide further improvements in the next years. In 2022, the UNCT will also work to strengthen its response to prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Finally, the new Business Operations Strategy (BOS) of the UN in Georgia became operational from 1 January 2021 in order to enable the Country Team to take a strategic and results-oriented approach to planning, management and implementation of harmonized business operations at the country level, aligning operational activities with programme activities outlined in the UNSDCF.

**Resource
mobilization and
financial overview**



The UN in Georgia is pursuing the following approaches to resource mobilization to support the implementation of UNSDCF in 2021-2025:

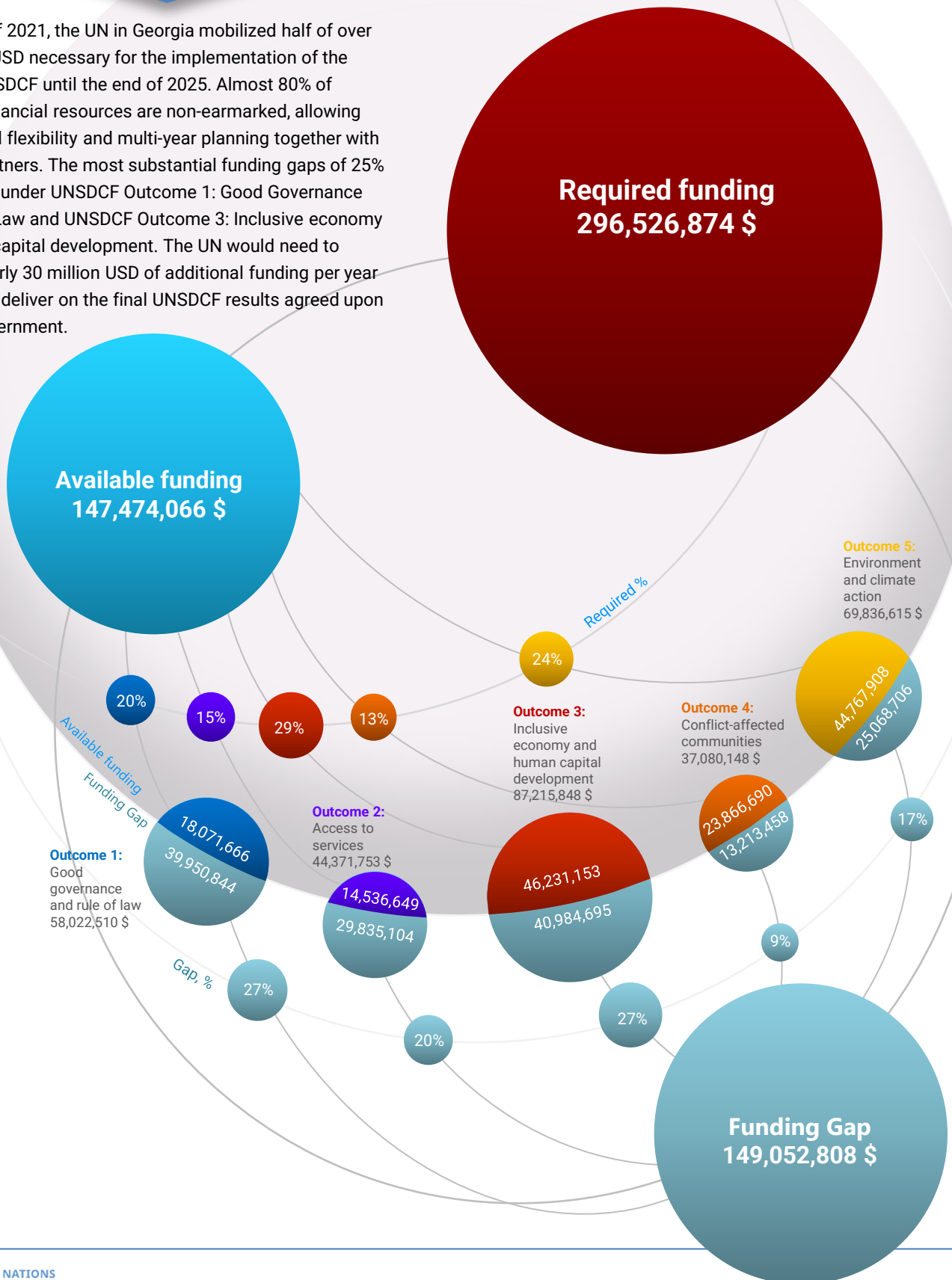
- Use the multi-year Funding Framework for the Cooperation Framework as a basis for the periodic funding dialogue with the Government and donors to pursue the alignment of financial support with UNSDCF priorities.
- Engage with the International Financial Institutions and other development partners to coordinate and promote coherence of country programmes and development strategies.
- Maintain dialogue between development partners at the country level to identify SDG-related development areas where partnerships

can have a multiplier effect.

- Prioritize development of the new UN joint programmes under global multi-partner thematic funds.
- Intensify partnerships with the private sector and explore innovative approaches to financing.
- Pursue partnerships to secure complementary non-monetary means of implementation, including joint advocacy, exchange of experience at the technical level, and in-kind contributions

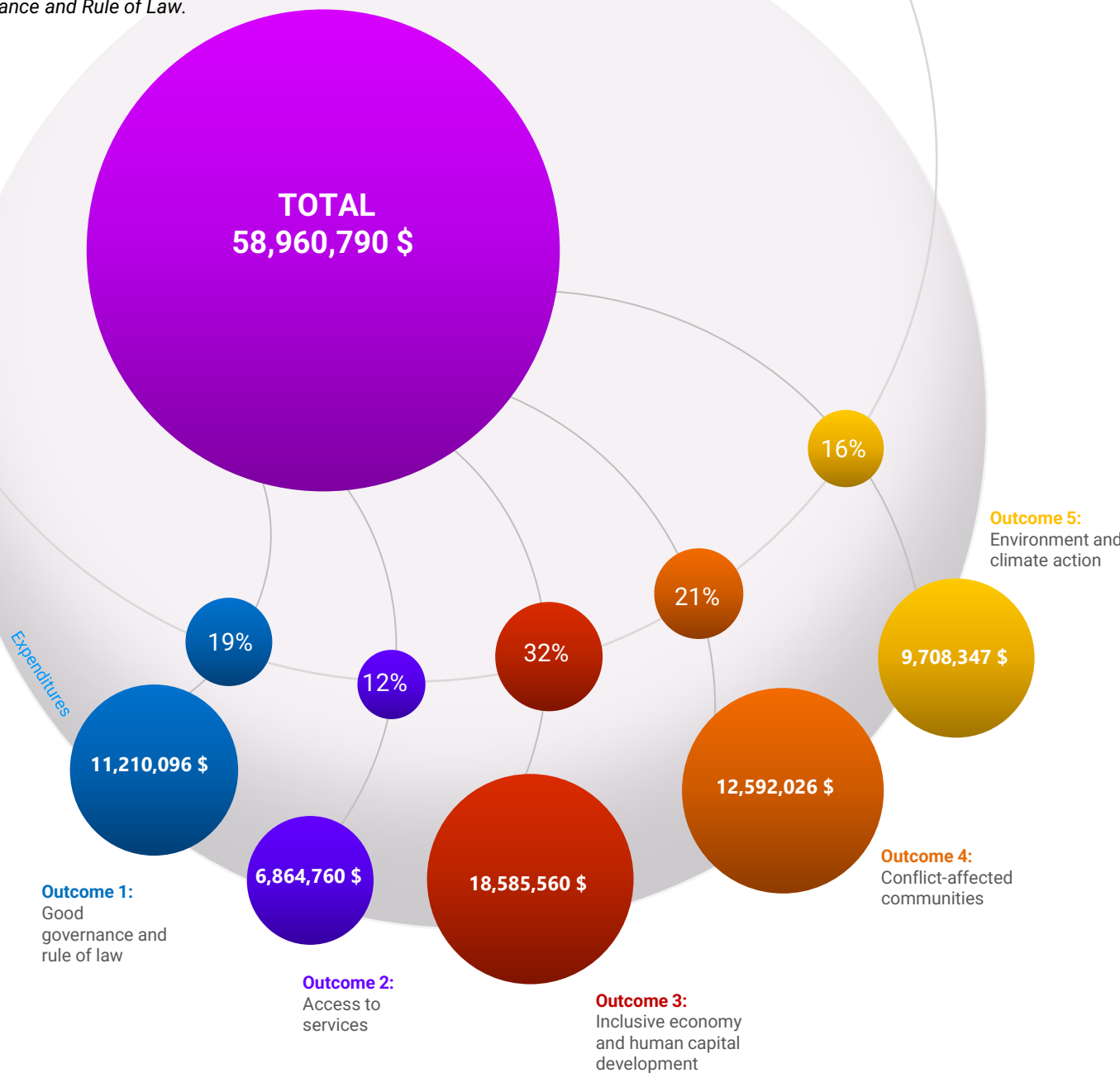
Resource mobilization and funding needs for UNSDCF 2021-2025 in Georgia, USD

By the end of 2021, the UN in Georgia mobilized half of over 296 million USD necessary for the implementation of the five-year UNSDCF until the end of 2025. Almost 80% of mobilized financial resources are non-earmarked, allowing for increased flexibility and multi-year planning together with strategic partners. The most substantial funding gaps of 25% each remain under UNSDCF Outcome 1: Good Governance and Rule of Law and UNSDCF Outcome 3: Inclusive economy and human capital development. The UN would need to mobilize nearly 30 million USD of additional funding per year to be able to deliver on the final UNSDCF results agreed upon with the Government.



Expenditures by UNSDCF Outcome in 2021, USD

The UN expenditures to support Georgia's development agenda in 2021 by UNSDCF implementation amounted to almost 59 million USD. Over 31% of this funding supported the implementation of Outcome 3: *Inclusive Economy and Human Capital Development*, followed by 21% allocated for efforts under Outcome 4: *Conflict-affected Communities* and 19% for Outcome 1: *Good Governance and Rule of Law*.



**UN key focus in
Georgia for 2022**





Photo: UNDP

Georgia entered 2022 making efforts to contain the new waves of COVID-19 pandemic in conditions of high uncertainty on the future interplay between the slow vaccination rollout, high vaccine hesitancy among the population and evolving virus strains. Volatile geopolitical situation, especially with the eruption of war in Ukraine and introduction of sanctions against Russia, poses considerable risks for security, social cohesion and economic resilience in Georgia. These factors will likely bring about significant political, social and economic upheavals, leading to negative global, regional and national impact across all SDGs, especially for health and well-being, education, decent jobs and economic growth, and perspectives to reduce inequalities.

In 2022, the UN will prioritize efforts the following areas:

- Mitigating the economic and social fallout from the war in Ukraine and regional instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for vulnerable groups
- Operationalizing prevention vision of the UN Secretary General to ensure coherence between peacebuilding, development and humanitarian assistance, in particular in conflict-affected communities
- Pursuing joint advocacy, partnerships and programming to foster Georgia's commitment and decisive progress in strengthening democratic governance and rule of law, tackling societal polarization, implementing decentralization agenda, promoting gender equality and ending violence and harmful practices against women, girls and children, and effectively upholding human rights for all
- Strengthen joint advocacy and programming to enable climate action, environmental sustainability and green transformation of the economy and society as the basis for recovery and long-term resilience and competitiveness
- Leaving no one behind: prioritizing action across regions of Georgia to support people who experience multiple vulnerabilities, including children living in poverty, persons with disabilities, specific categories of women and girls, older persons, ethnic and religious minorities, people in conflict-affected communities, persons of non-dominant sexual orientation or gender identity, and informal economy workers
- Forge strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance and target financing for development and expand joint UN engagement with the social partners, academia and the private sector to advance the implementation of the UNSDCF



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