



UN Country Annual Results Report

GEORGIA

2020



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Foreword

I am pleased to present the UN in Georgia Annual Progress Report for 2020 which gives an account of the main directions and outcomes of our activities over the extraordinary and challenging last year. At the same time as the UN in Georgia was concluding the implementation of the United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD) for 2016-2020, we had to swiftly move to “development in emergency” mode due to the COVID-19 crisis. The period from 2016 to 2020 has been a time when significant progress has been achieved in Georgia’s economic and social life. The UN’s contributions have been instrumental in providing prompt and high-quality support that had an impact on the national achievements in the areas of justice, human rights, gender equality, green economy, climate change, healthcare and education. Many of these gains have however come under strain due to the pandemic which hit the entire world.

The present report also highlights the progress of our partnerships towards joint efforts to address the national priorities of our host country. It is about our support to Georgia, with its unique spirit, its dynamism and its remarkable development pathway.

In 2020, the UN in Georgia continued to closely work with the Government as well as many other partners to provide assistance in the areas of socio-economic development, protection of the environment, strengthening the rule of law, human rights and democratic values, reinforcing social justice, making quality education and healthcare available to all. We focused on promoting sustainable livelihoods and taking forward national SDGs based on the ‘Leaving no one behind’ principle. In 2020 the UN family has mobilized and delivered a total of over 57.5 million USD to help respond to the most critical and pressing priorities in the country.

We strengthened early, proactive, consistent and effective national emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis. In cooperation with our partners, the UN addressed the immediate challenges of the pandemic by providing technical advice in health care, risk communication, education and supporting social welfare for the most vulnerable. We also reacted quickly to help procure and deliver vital medical and other supplies, including to the Abkhazia region.

We have helped mobilize additional resources that were necessitated by the coronavirus crisis. In total, we spent an estimated 20 million USD to support the

people and the Government of Georgia in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Georgia was among the first countries to receive one million USD from the UN Secretary-General’s COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund which enabled us to address specifically the needs of the first responders as well as older persons and children in the different regions of Georgia. We continue to support effective response to immediate health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuity of essential health services for women and children, as well as assist the most vulnerable groups, inter alia national minorities, conflict-affected population on both sides of the dividing line, persons with disabilities and rural communities, especially in the remote and mountainous municipalities. We focus on protecting people from the threat of the virus and reviving the local economy.

Looking forward, we aim to continue working with our partners towards sustainable development that truly benefits everyone and helps Georgia build a peaceful, just, inclusive and resilient society, leaving no one behind.

In October 2020 a new-generation United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) was signed for the 2021-2025 period. This happened after intensive consultations with the government, civil society, development partners and academia, as well as people who have been directly affected by conflict. The new Cooperation Framework is firmly anchored in Georgia’s national development objectives and has one overarching priority for the coming years – enhancing human wellbeing, capabilities and social equality.

The UN will continue its support to Georgia and to the country’s effort to strengthen its national capacities, recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, address development challenges and move towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sabine Machl

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Georgia

United Nations Country Team in Georgia

The United Nations system in Georgia is a unique set of diverse institutions –funds, programs and specialized agencies – united by common vision for the development of Georgia and empowerment of its people. Georgia joined the United Nations on 31 July 1992, shortly after the country became independent. In the span of last 28 years, the United Nations has very much been part of Georgia's history and development.

Working closely with the government of Georgia, civil society, and other national and international partners, the UN works to respond to national development needs and improve the economic and social conditions of people in Georgia. Within its mandate to support Georgia to achieve its national priorities, the United Nations is providing tailor-made support to address the issues of sustainable human development while also supporting the national priority goal of European integration.

UN's support covers a diverse range of areas, including economic well-being, health, human rights, education, agriculture, industry, environmental protection, gender equality, effective governance and the rule of law. In the crisis areas, UN stands with people who suffer from crises and need help in relief and recovery. As a reliable partner to the people of Georgia in addressing key national challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN brings worldwide experience and advice to help Georgia build a better life and become a prosperous, peaceful, and resilient society, leaving no one behind.

In 2020, the UN Country Team in Georgia brought together 21 partner agencies, including 19 resident and non-resident UN Agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund:



Delivering as one

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner (OHCHR)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Bank (WB)

Chapter 1: Key developments in the country and the regional context



Photo: Nino Zedginidze/UNDP

Georgia experienced multiple challenges in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has become a major unexpected shock that affected all aspects of social and economic life. The various negative implications have been shaping the country's development for most of the year and will continue to constitute a major challenge in 2021. Georgia also lived through a major domestic political crisis caused by a dispute over the results of parliamentary elections. The crisis has not been resolved and is adding political polarization and contested government legitimacy to the mix of challenges the country faces. Finally, 2020 brought significant changes to the sub-regional environment as a result of resumed hostilities in the protracted Nagorno Karabakh conflict. This development that has significant implications for Georgia's positioning in the sub-region and for the

handling of its own protracted conflicts.

Despite all these challenges, the country has remained firmly on its course of seeking deeper integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. Both the government and main opposition forces declare commitments to the goals of EU and NATO membership and compete for societal support, to a significant extent, on a promise to be more effective in achieving these long-term goals. There have been no major developments with regard to another major foreign policy issue for Georgia – relations with Russia. The ruling party's earlier attempts to seek ways to normalize relations with Russia received a major setback over the course of the June 2019 protests and there were no signs that the government was willing to renew these efforts in 2020.

In terms of the initial response to the COVID-19 challenge, Georgia was among the countries that proved to be quite effective in keeping the infection rate and death toll very low in the first months of the pandemic. The need to keep the economy functioning and societal pressures led to a relaxation of the initial restrictive measures and a very significant increase in infection and death rates in the second half of 2020. The government was able to stabilize the epidemiological situation by the end of 2020 after re-introducing strict social distancing measures that proved effective in the beginning of 2021. Balancing these restrictions with the need to stimulate economy has been an ongoing challenge.

Following October 2020 parliamentary elections, the opposition forces refused to accept the results of the first round of elections and boycotted the second round and the new parliament that was eventually formed. Due to the opposition's boycott, about one third of parliamentary seats remain vacant and the longevity of the current legislature remains in question. Georgia's key western partners are trying to mediate the dispute between the government and opposition but so far with very limited success.

The Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Tskhinvali region) are outside the control of the central government following the conflicts in the 1990s and the war in 2008¹. Little progress was registered in 2020 with respect to Georgia's protracted conflicts. The formation of a new de facto administration in Abkhazia and conciliatory signals this administration sent to Tbilisi raised hopes about the prospect of conflict transformation. These hopes have not been realized. Concerning South Ossetia, some decrease of tensions in relation to the so-called process of borderization – demarcation, fencing, and re-enforcement of the lines that the de-facto South Ossetian authorities consider to be their borders – has been registered in comparison to 2019. The process has continued but without the major flare-ups of tensions that occurred in the previous year. The crossing points on both the

Abkhaz and South Ossetian segments of the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) have been closed which adversely affected the general situation and the plight of the conflict-affected population.

The pandemic threatens to reverse Georgia's past gains in economic development and poverty reduction. In the beginning of the pandemic, the Government's swift and comprehensive reaction, was effective in flattening the infection curve, but it also took a heavy toll on economic activity. Macroeconomic policies prior to the pandemic, and strong support by the international community, allowed the authorities to launch a robust effort to mitigate the economic and social impacts of the crisis and to mobilize additional loans. In line with good emerging practices, the Government expanded existing social transfers while introducing new ones and enacted temporary relief measures for businesses and households. About 700 thousand people benefited from the government's economic aid package due to the first lockdown in 2020. In November 2020, the Government announced a new economic support package for individuals and businesses following the introduction of the second nation-wide lockdown. In particular, the programme for vulnerable persons is expected to reach more than 500,000 beneficiaries.

According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat), Georgia's real GDP contracted by 6.2 per cent in 2020. The unemployment rate of 20.4 per cent was registered in the fourth quarter of 2020, compared to 16.6 per cent in the same period of 2019. The newly introduced restrictions in November 2020 led to the downward revision of the Government forecast of the economic growth rate for 2021 from 4.3 per cent to 4 per cent. However, these estimates are subject to major uncertainties related to the development of the pandemic and to the success of the national vaccination rollout, as well as the strategic focus of the national socio-economic recovery plans.

¹Henceforth referred to as Abkhazia and South Ossetia in this report for ease of exposition.

Chapter 2: UN support to national development priorities in Georgia



Photo: Tako Robakidze/UNICEF

2.1. Delivering results for Georgia

The year 2020 concluded the five-year implementation of the United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD) for 2016-2020 in five focus areas: (1) democratic governance; (2) jobs, livelihood and social protection; (3) education; (4) health, and (5) human security and community resilience. Due to the extraordinary crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the overall focus and implementation plan had to be adjusted to address the urgent needs of Georgia and its people. In addition, the UN implemented the recommendations of the 2019 independent evaluation of the UNPSD, in particular by enhancing advocacy for persons at higher risk of being left behind and strengthening humanitarian support to Abkhazia.

This chapter presents UN's key achievements in the implementation of UNPSD in Georgia in 2020 in five focus areas and by eight outcomes, including through the implementation of twelve UN Joint Programmes that were ongoing in 2020.

Moreover, Box 1 summarizes comprehensive support provided by the UN in Georgia to the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Focus area 1: Democratic Governance

Outcome 1: By 2020 expectations of citizens of Georgia for voice, rule of law, public sector reforms and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance at all levels

Outcome 2: By 2020 all people living in Georgia – including children, minority groups, people with disabilities, vulnerable women, migrants, internally displaced persons and persons in need of international protection have increased access to the justice service delivery in accordance with national strategies and UN Human Rights standards

UNCT joint contribution in 2020: 11,117,986 USD



Outcome 1: In 2020, the UN continued to support Public Administration Reform in Georgia with the focus on embedding participatory, evidence- and results-based processes, and enhancing the capacities of civil servants. The UN helped finalize the unified methodological guidelines and capacity building for design and delivery of public services. The number of e-services available through the unified Government portal - my.gov.ge - increased to 700, with up to 140 services digitized with UN support. The uptake of e-services in 2020 increased by 40 per cent compared to 2019 due to amplified demand on online services in the context of COVID-19. Gender and social inclusion issues have been mainstreamed in the development of the 2021-2024 Public Administration Reform Strategy.

The UN assisted the parliament in exercising its expanded oversight powers, including facilitating six legislative gender impact assessments. The UN advocated for the adoption of a seminal legislative amendment to the Electoral Code instituting a gender quota for the parliamentary and local elections. Subsequently, the recent elections resulted in the highest representation of women in parliament (21%) in the history of Georgia.

The UN supported the entry into force of the Code on the Rights of the Child on 1 September 2020, a landmark achievement which fundamentally changes how Georgian law treats children, ensuring the welfare and protection of all children. The UN is supporting the Government to analyze national laws vis-a-vis the requirements of the Code to inform amendments needed in legislation and capacitating municipalities to fulfill their roles as outlined by the Code.

The UN also worked on the development of gender equality strategies and action plans for a number of public entities and helped mainstream gender in the Public Administration Reform process. As a result, the Parliament of Georgia and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport adopted Gender Responsive Budgeting principles in the 2021 state budget.

In the field of decent work, the UN provided support in bringing about major reforms in the legislative framework governing labour relations. Further to extensive support provided by the UN, in September 2020 the Parliament adopted major amendments to the Labour Code, as well as a Law on Inspection Services, where previously no such law existed. The Labour Code amendments saw improvements in areas ranging from non-discrimination, sexual harassment, working hours, maternity leave, and worker consultations. Adoption of the Law on Inspection Services was a significant

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breakthrough in the promotion of the rule of law as it requires the establishment of a labour inspectorate as a Legal Entity under Public Law with a mandate encompassing labour rights, labour relations and occupational safety and health, whereas hitherto labour inspection was undertaken by a Department within the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs with a mandate limited to occupational safety and health and limited resources. The new Decree was also passed in February 2020 by the Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and developed jointly with the UN, improving protection from harmful and hazardous work for pregnant and post-partum women and nursing women.

Decentralization remained a priority area of work with the UN providing support to the Ministry or Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI) and local self-governments in line with the national Decentralization Strategy for 2020-2025, and facilitating implementation of the decentralization strategy action plan and the adoption development of over 170 legal amendments aimed at harmonization of sectoral legislation with the Local Self-Government (LSG) Code. The Supreme Council of Ajara was supported in introducing open governance principles in its work by adopting the Open Governance Action Plan for 2020-2021 and reinforcing closer cooperation with the local civil society.

The UN also contributed to the implementation of the Action Plan for the Strategy for Development of High Mountain Settlements of Georgia 2019-2023 through support to the local self-governments in improving the environment for economic activities and promoting employment among residents of high mountainous settlements.

Moreover, the UN strengthened the capacity of the civil society to promote pluralistic and balanced coverage through media monitoring activities ahead of 2020 Parliamentary elections.

Outcome 2: The UN supported Georgia's efforts in developing and improving a broad range of national policies and strategic documents to promote human rights and access to legal and social services, including support to the development of a new draft of Human Rights Strategy for 2021-2030. The UN worked with the Human Rights Council (HRC) and its Secretariat to enable its transformation into National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up with wider CSO involvement and duties to consider the Public Defender's recommendations. The UN provided support to

the Office of the State Inspector to ensure independent investigation of allegations of serious human rights abuses by law enforcement officials. By the end of 2020, the State Inspector's Office increased the number of cases of investigation of allegations of human rights abuses by law enforcement officials. Furthermore, the UN supported the implementation of the Law on Mediation.

The UN supported the development of a draft strategy on prevention of violence against children, which was used to inform the Human Rights Strategy (2021-2030). The UN worked with the Ministry of Health to introduce a health system response to domestic violence and violence against women and conducted a pilot programme to strengthen the respective national referral mechanism.

With regard to youth and children, the UN supported the development of the National Youth Policy for 2020-2030, including provisions on entrepreneurship and employment, the entry into force of the Code on the Rights of the Child and the submission of periodic reports on the CRC and its optional protocols. To support the implementation of the Code, the UN supported the development of a road map for transformation of the child protection and justice systems and is building the capacities of staff in state agencies, municipalities, and the justice sector. The UN also advocated for and supported juvenile justice reform and promoted child rights and sexual and reproductive health as well as rights monitoring. In particular, the UN focused on ending violence against children in schools, creating the ministerial child rights coordination mechanism and the Parliamentary Council on child rights, and establishing a Child Hotline "111". The UN supported the Government in integrating gender equality and sexual and reproductive health issues into the formal education system.

The UN also supported the Public Defender's Office (PDO) of Georgia to monitor sexual rights and reproductive health (SRHR) within the human rights monitoring framework. In 2020, the PDO released the findings of the Country Inquiry (CI) on SRHR of women in psychiatric facilities. The report findings and recommendations were discussed with the relevant government representatives and enabled the planning of interventions to address identified gaps.



Photo: Nino Zedginidze/UNDP

In line with the imperative to leave no one behind, the UN advocated for and provided assistance in drafting the new Law on Persons with Disabilities, which was passed by the Parliament in July 2020 and is largely in line with the International Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, the UN has been working with the government in creating the Coordinating mechanism on the rights of Persons with Disabilities. The final draft of the regulation to create the mechanism also envisages a strong role for the civil society. The UN continued to support the Government in transforming the system of disability assessment and status determination according to the social model of disability.

The UN promoted healthy and active ageing through innovative municipal services “60+ Clubs” and conducted an assessment of the needs of older persons living alone under the poverty line during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, the UN supported the Government in the development of the 2021-2030 Migration Strategy and the accompanying 2021 Plan of Action and provided assistance in maintaining the visa-free regime with the European Union by supporting the return and reintegration of asylum seekers. The UN also ensured material and expert support to the Government that enables maintaining essential services for asylum-seekers and refugees during COVID-19 related lockdowns, as well as provided legal counseling to over 600 asylum-seekers in partnership with Rights Georgia and the State Legal Aid Service. Upon the Government’s request, the UN contributed to a lessons learned exercise on the impact of COVID19 with relevant analysis and inputs from UN agencies on the extent of inclusion of vulnerable groups including asylum-seekers, refugees, and stateless persons, the obstacles encountered, as well as recommendations.



Focus area 2: Jobs, Livelihoods, and Social Protection

Outcome 3: By 2020 poor and excluded population groups have better employment and livelihood opportunities as a result of inclusive and sustainable growth and development policies

Outcome 4: By 2020 vulnerable groups have access to proactive and inclusive gender and child sensitive social protection system that address major vulnerabilities

UNCT joint contribution in 2020: 17,421,496 USD



Outcome 3: The UN supported Georgian businesses and workers, as well as the Government and social partners in the efforts to maintain jobs and livelihoods during the COVID-19 pandemic and create opportunities for digital transformation and green, skills-based, competitive and sustainable recovery.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) of Georgia was supported in the elaboration of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for 2021-2027. Assistance included gender mainstreaming of the document. The new strategy aims to create an environment that will increase competitiveness in the agrofood sector, promote stable growth of high-quality agricultural production, ensure food safety and security, and eliminate rural poverty through sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas. The revision and gender mainstreaming of the National Strategy of Agricultural Extension in Georgia 2018-2020 were also finalized and approved in 2020. MEPA was assisted in building capacity of 103 (49 women) extensionists in the delivery of gender-sensitive advisory for female and male farmers across Georgia.

Moreover, the UN supported MEPA and its National Environmental Agency in the development of the Aquaculture Law that was approved by the Parliament of Georgia in June 2020. In addition, NEA was supported in the process of setting fishing quotas for 2020-2021 in compliance with EU standards and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean requirements for Georgia. The comprehensive stock assessment will support the development of sustainable fishing, growth of the economy and employment of the local population.

With regard to skills development, the UN promoted competitive skills by strengthening the vocational education and training in Georgia, including systems for life-long learning, supporting development of vocational education and training (VET) coordination mechanism, introduction of the new authorization standards in VET institutions, establishment of the first sectoral skills organization (in agriculture) and a digital platform for the extension services and the consultancy. The UN collaborated with the Government on

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reaching 60,000 farmers in four regions through extended online provision of extension and consultation services, and training. Furthermore, SMS services reached up to 8,000 farmers in three regions, while a newly launched electronic repository for agriculture-related information, installed in public service spaces enables access to information for 5,700 farmers. The UN promote the innovative approaches and the knowledge transfer mechanisms to foster climate smart and green agriculture. The UN had also trained 270 women and 66 men potential young entrepreneurs from across Georgia, enabling them to identify business ideas, assess their viability and to develop detailed business plans.

The UN has supported Georgian stakeholders through cluster diagnostic studies for clusters with highest potential such as marine fishing, hazelnut processing and bacteriophages, as well as built capacity of national actors on cluster development methodology and tools. The UN also worked with the Georgian packaging cluster to build company management capacities and to facilitate their regional and global networks. Furthermore, Georgian packaging value chain businesses benefit from the UN-initiated 1 million USD grants scheme to enable companies to upgrade machinery, expand assortments, improve quality of production and certification, meet environmental standards and expand domestic sales as well as increase export capacity and access to foreign markets. The UN strengthened capacities of the Georgian testing and calibration laboratories and trained around 110 people, including on laboratory safety and general requirements, which will support increasing exports to new markets, including the European Union.

With the UN's support, the government Agency of IDPs, Eco-migrants and Livelihood Provision initiated the inclusion of refugees in livelihood support schemes. Fifteen IDP entrepreneurs received small grants to expand their businesses while providing employment for refugees. The Agency also updated its data on the skills and employment-related profiles of refugees to support future economic inclusion efforts. The UN also directly supported 60 asylum seekers and persons granted international protection with job placement opportunities in partnership with World Vision International.

Outcome 4: The UN continued to provide support on improving the legislative and policy basis as well as the quality of services for the survivors of domestic violence and violence against women and children (DV/VAW/VAC). Amendments to the VAW/DV legislation reflecting the GPS electronic monitoring system to track high-risk offenders have entered into force in September 2020. Furthermore, the legal requirement to obtain victims' status in order to access state shelters has been continuously identified as a major impediment to effective service provision. The UN has been assisting the Government in elaboration of draft legal amendments which would lift this requirement if adopted. A qualitative study on the impact of COVID-19 on service provision for survivors of DV/VAW was shared with the Government to inform policy decisions. The UN facilitated a stakeholder discussion on the findings of the Femicide Watch report for 2019 released by the Public Defender's Office, which highlighted deficiencies in identifying the gender motive in femicide cases, and lack of uniform administrative data collection. The UN also supported the development of a concept for integrated services for child victims of violence and crime based on the Barnahus model, which was adopted by the Government.

The UN conducted an impact evaluation of the Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) programme in Georgia, assessing over 7,000 households to identify the effects of the TSA programme on child poverty, health, and behaviours, and will be used to inform the development of a new social protection strategy.

With the purpose to strengthen policy and legal environment, the action plan for better detection, prevention and response to gender-based violence among the key population at risk of HIV/AIDS has been developed and endorsed by the Government with UN support.

Social counselling, referrals and accompaniment supported by the UN and World Vision, helped more than 700 refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons to access services and navigate the legal, social and cultural environment in Georgia.



Focus area 3: Education

Outcome 5: By 2020 state and non-state parties at central and municipal levels are providing inclusive and high-quality Preschool and General Education for children

UNCT joint contribution in 2020: 1,893,568 USD



Various initiatives implemented in 2020 promoted access to inclusive education for children in Georgia, including various modalities for distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In partnership with the Government, the UN piloted the New School Model in Georgian schools that use innovative pedagogical approaches and digital resources to improve the quality of learning for children. The initiative comprises teacher training enhancements and provides teachers in the participating schools with guidelines and training modules in eight primary grade subjects. E-learning tools, and in particular the programme “We Learn by Playing” support curriculum implementation through development of children competencies in literacy, information and communication technology use, creativity, cooperation and communication.

To further strengthen the capacities of Georgian teachers to deliver inclusive and high-quality education, the UN supported the integration of the Early and Preschool Education and Care Standards in the pre- and in-service training and enabled the development of teaching resources to meet requirements of children with special needs. Child rights were also incorporated into university education programmes. Georgian language online catch-up classes were conducted for around 60 refugee and asylum-seeker children.

Box 1 outlines the various types of support provided by the UN in Georgia during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular to enable distance learning, promote early childhood development and improve sanitation in pre-schools and schools.

UNFPA

UNICEF

UNOPS

UN WOMEN



Focus area 4: Health

Outcome 6: By 2020 health of the population especially the most vulnerable groups is enhanced through targeted health policies and provision of quality, equitable and integrated services including management of major health risks and promotion of targeted health seeking behaviour

UNCT joint contribution in 2020: 2,426,947 USD



Supporting Georgia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been the primary focus of the UN health-focused work in Georgia in 2020 (see Box 1). In parallel, the UN continued to support the overall health system strengthening in Georgia and provided technical assistance to improve the coverage and quality of primary health care, strengthen relevant legislation, develop human resources for health policies, build health workforce capacity, expand digital health capabilities and increase access to quality services and medicines.

A new Law on Medicinal Products was developed in 2020 by local experts under UN guidance to create a framework for price regulation and quality assurance of essential medicines. Technical assistance has been continuously provided in tobacco control, including in the development of the National Strategy for Tobacco Control 2021-2025, further changes to legislation and public advocacy. The UN also supported implementation of the National Environment and Health Action Plan, and supported revision of the regulatory framework on Water, Sanitation and Health in health care facilities as well as adapting survey instruments to the local context.

Moreover, the UN worked with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Georgia to update the National Noncommunicable Diseases Strategy and to ensure increased emphasis on health promotion. With the UN support, Georgia manages HIV, tuberculosis, and viral hepatitis C through an integrated, people-centered approach at the primary healthcare level and harm reduction services. Due to its success in Georgia, the NCDC is in the process of being designated a WHO Collaborating Centre, to provide technical assistance to other Member States in developing national hepatitis elimination strategies and action plans and assessing viral hepatitis monitoring response in the WHO European Region.

Addressing the causes of preventable maternal death, the Antenatal Care regionalization national model was developed and adopted by the Ministry of Health to ensure risk-appropriate stratified care provision to pregnant women. The UN also supported the strengthening of the policy environment to advance reproductive health, maternal and newborn

WHO
UNICEF
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health care through a consultative process for the development of the second wave of the Maternal and Newborn Healthcare costed Action Plan to be adopted in 2021. The Birth Registry was enhanced to allow automatic generation of reports, thus creating the possibility of real-time analyses of perinatal field performance.

In addition, the UN-supported innovative National Cervical Cancer Screening Registry will allow to further improve the national cancer screening system. With regard to combatting HIV/AIDS, the UN supported advanced prevention by improving understanding on behavior and perceptions of key populations at risk of HIV/AIDS regarding available services, and by enabling the introduction of a special post-graduate learning course on stigma and discrimination for service providers.

The Ministry of Education was supported in the integration of sexual and reproductive health and healthy lifestyle issues into the formal education curriculum and subsequent school rollout. Twenty-four coaches were trained to continuously advise teachers on these topics.

In an effort to address sexual and reproductive health needs of women with disabilities, the UN provided

analysis and recommendations that served as a basis for the adoption of the new standard operating procedures for provision of relevant services to women with disabilities.

The UN supported the Government to develop a centralized communication platform to reach all primary healthcare doctors in 1,000 ambulatories across the country to facilitate sharing of information and protocols. The platform is being used to deliver trainings and support teleconsultations between rural primary healthcare doctors and specialists.

Immunization training modules were developed for medical staff, with trainings reaching 30 per cent of immunization service providers. In addition, the electronic immunization system was upgraded to allow for real time data collection and analyses at all levels.

The UN supported the Government to embark on school nutrition reforms and to develop a roadmap for the development of a comprehensive nutrition agenda. Furthermore, the UN supported NCDC to conduct studies to understand sources of lead exposure among children and to equip the national laboratory to monitor harmful environmental contaminants.



UN agencies delivered essential hygiene and medical supplies, technical and in-kind support, psycho-social counselling, hospital readiness and laboratories.
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Focus area 5: Human Security and Community Resilience

Outcome 7: By 2020 conflict affected communities enjoy better security and stronger resilience to conflict-induced consequences

Outcome 8: By 2020 communities enjoy greater resilience through enhanced institutional and legislative systems for environmental protection, sustainable management of natural resources and disaster risk reduction

UNCT joint contribution in 2020: 18,987,362 USD



Outcome 7: UN continues to work in support of conflict-affected communities, including in Abkhazia and provide support through the Abkhazia Strategic Partnership. COVID-19 pandemic resulted in worsened socio-economic conditions, limited access to social services, and restrictions of freedom and human rights for the conflict-affected population. In the course of 2020 over two million USD worth of COVID-19 related humanitarian aid was delivered to Abkhazia. The response included distributing essential hygiene supplies, medical commodities, and public awareness materials, as well as provision of recommendations to healthcare workers in Abkhazia, Georgia (see Box 1). Various programmes continued to support general and vocational education, agriculture and rural development, improved access to livelihoods and essential social services, including reproductive health, maternal and child health and family planning services, especially in rural areas. Efforts were continued to strengthen mechanisms for confidence-building, social cohesion and people-to-people contacts through civil society driven and grassroots initiatives.

The UN supported the provision of social services for over 400 families, including 1,120 children. Social and legal counseling and support was continuously provided to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict affected women and men to access rights, services and livelihood opportunities as well as life-saving sexual and reproductive health services. A network of IDP Volunteers with countrywide coverage was expanded and trained by the UN to better help IDPs access services at local and municipal levels, to strengthen links with Government programmes, to enhance community-based protection mechanisms, and inform advocacy on IDP issues. Furthermore, the UN worked to strengthen women's meaningful participation in sustainable peace and conflict resolution processes, along with supporting people-to-people programming for adolescents and youth. Efforts were also made to enhance the local community resilience to climate risks, including the mapping of flood hazard and risk of major river basins in Abkhazia along with hydrological analysis of watersheds and model calibration.

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UNOPS
UN WOMEN



Outcome 8: In 2020, the UN continued efforts to support Georgia in improving climate policies, creating an enabling environment for improved environmental governance, fulfilling national obligations in relation to global environmental conventions (UNFCCC/Paris Agreement, Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal protocol), as well as harmonization of Georgian legislation and strategic frameworks for environmental components of the EU Association Agreement. The UN also supports Georgia in elimination of toxic chemical/polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) under the Stockholm Convention. Among other achievements, the Strategic Roadmap was developed to support harmonization with the EU climate acquis, and various surveys were conducted, including on climate change perception and knowledge to inform public communication, and a climate mainstreaming baseline survey in energy, agriculture and health sectors.

Major efforts were dedicated to supporting the development of national and local capacities for climate risk management through a large-scale national programme to reduce risk of climate-driven disasters, which would benefit up to 40 per cent of Georgia's population who currently face risk from hydro-meteorological hazards. The UN facilitated the introduction of new methodologies for multi-hazard and risk mapping, designing concept for risk information system, targeted capacity development and public awareness in ten municipalities.

The UN also supported the launch of the guidelines for the Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Moreover, assistance was provided for transboundary cooperation in the Khrami-Debed basin and for the development of a SEA for Alazani-Iori river basin management plan. Moreover, the UN worked on improving sustainability of protected areas system to meet commitments under the Convention of Biological Diversity and achieve Aichi Targets. The government Agency of Protected Areas benefited from technical/methodological support for initiation of biodiversity monitoring and development of SMART patrolling system. The UN also supported the

development of a ten-year biodiversity monitoring programme for twelve Protected Areas, and expansion of the revenue generation opportunities and tourism capacities in individual Protected Areas. To support sustainable management of forest resources, the UN initiated a forest inventory in selected municipalities with National Forestry Agency.

With regard to green economy, the UN promoted the concept of circular economy, further supported the uptake of resource efficient and cleaner production methodology and helped promote energy efficiency in large industrial enterprises. Green Matching Fund mechanism for energy efficiency and renewable energy demonstration sites was designed and piloted in targeted municipalities with participating households. In the area of forest management, the Government was supported in introduction of a new regulatory system for the currently nonregulated non-timber forest products. The UN has customized for Georgia the Guidelines and Best Practices for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in delivering energy efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment. UN-supported national workshop helped identify the key elements needed to develop data solutions to support energy transition of buildings for Georgia. In February 2020, the UN has established a Government-Industry Working Group on Energy Efficiency as a platform to jointly discuss and identify solutions to the challenges posed by the implementation of the new Georgian Law on Energy Efficiency (and associated EU Directives) to the Government and to industrial companies and businesses. In the area of agricultural production, the UN strengthened the capacities of farmers and stakeholders on innovative sustainable agriculture production practices through training. The UN is also assisting Georgia in developing preparedness and emergency response to locust infestations to secure potentially affected livelihoods, feed and food security.

In the area of urban development, the UN in partnership with Georgian stakeholders launched the development of the smart sustainable city profile of Tbilisi. In Batumi, the UN supported the introduction of sustainable transport practices in Batumi city, including bus lanes, digital bus information displays and hourly-paid parking zones.

Box 1: COVID pandemic and the UN Response

The UN in Georgia has been involved in the response to the COVID-19 crisis from the very beginning, marshalling its resources to support the Government and other partners in protecting public health and advocating for “leaving no one behind” during the pandemic. These efforts have been devoted to a wide range of areas: not only in supporting the healthcare system, but also in improving social protection, protecting jobs and livelihoods, and sustaining social cohesion and community resilience.

Already in March 2020, at the onset of the crisis, the RCO together with WHO and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs briefed 60 representatives of the international community on the COVID-19 situation. In May the RCO organized a similar forum at which the Government presented its response and recovery plans to all development partners. The RCO also compiled regular updates on UN COVID-19-related activities, which were shared with partners and posted on the website of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In addition, under a decree signed by the Prime Minister, the UN Disaster Management Team was tasked to coordinate international humanitarian support should it be requested by the Government.

In May 2020, Georgia was one of the first countries

to receive one million USD in funding from the UN Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund to assist the Government of Georgia and local communities in mitigating the impact of COVID-19. The project was providing targeted support to the education and healthcare systems, assisting vulnerable older persons living alone and in institutions, improving services provided by the emergency response system and local authorities, equipping frontline healthcare and public-sector workers with protective gear, and improving the sanitation and hygiene conditions in schools in Abkhazia.

Furthermore, the UN Socio-Economic Recovery Plan (SERP) for Georgia was finalized at the end of August 2020. Over six thematic chapters, the SERP mapped out a wide-ranging offer of support as Georgia looked beyond the needs of the healthcare system to face the daunting task of socio-economic response and recovery. Here the UN team identified many challenges, but also opportunities for building forward to a more inclusive, fair, greener and more resilient economy and society.

All UN agencies in Georgia have invested significant energy in working together with the Government and development partners to repurpose their programmes in order to implement support measures proposed in the SERP. In total, an estimated 20 million USD were dedicated by the UN in 2020 to support the people and the Government of Georgia in mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

The following key results were achieved with support of the UN in Georgia in 2020:

Funding:



Health – 10,046,864 USD [7,115,864 USD mobilized; 2,931,000 USD repurposed] – UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO



Social protection and basic services – 2,606,055 USD [2,040,397 USD mobilized and 565,658 USD repurposed] – IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF



Economic response and recovery – 3,015,185 USD [813,000 USD mobilized and 2,202,185 USD repurposed] – FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNECE, UNHCR, UNICEF



Social cohesion and community resilience – 4,183,009 USD [3,176,770 USD mobilized and 1,006,239 USD repurposed] – FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNECE, UNICEF, UN Women



Support to people in Abkhazia – 2,357,741 USD [1,547,000 USD mobilized and 810,741 USD repurposed] – FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women



Health

- Updated WHO guidance covering all areas of COVID-19 response was disseminated in a timely fashion and applied in relevant institutions and facilities and at policy and strategic levels;
- Designated laboratories and healthcare facilities were supported with assessment of COVID-19 preparedness, including hospital readiness and infection prevention and control capacities, and over 1,500 healthcare providers in 56 hospitals were trained in COVID prevention, referral and appropriate case management;
- Personal protection equipment, hand sanitizers, disinfectants and other COVID-19 supplies were procured and distributed to more than 8,000 medical personnel, front-line public-sector workers, as well as high-risk groups such as internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities and the elderly;
- Local producers received support in adapting manufacturing facilities to produce hand sanitizer, antibacterial soap, chlorine-based cleaning solution, masks, face shields and other protective gear, later produced from reprocessed materials; and procurement of COVID-19 supplies was made locally wherever possible;
- Support was provided in preparing risk communication materials and a new strategy and action plan for risk communication based on WHO advice and ready-made examples, with a focus on ensuring that COVID-19 messages reached minority communities;
- Designated laboratories were supplied with COVID-19 test kits and other testing materials;
- Over 1,100,000 people were reached via information campaign and were better equipped with knowledge to avert the negative impacts of the pandemic on economy and health. COVID-19 awareness campaigns were conducted across the country, using all possible media (TV and radio, posters, leaflets and social media) with a focus on vulnerable groups (such as the elderly, persons with disabilities and pregnant women) and target audiences with specific needs or important functions to fulfil (such as national minorities, taxi drivers and journalists);
- Technical support and medical supplies were provided to healthcare facilities, and virtual training packages were developed for laboratories to improve COVID-19 detection and for designated hospitals on clinical management and infection prevention and control;
- Updated specialist guidance and videoconferencing equipment was provided to designated facilities for distance training of medical personnel on a wide range of COVID-19-related topics;
- Telemedicine was used to provide online treatment for different groups (for example, to pregnant women) and training for medical personnel (for example, on infectious disease protocols and clinical management of pregnant women suffering from COVID-19); and
- Support and high-tech equipment were provided to the headquarters of the 144 COVID-19 hotline to improve the efficiency of ambulance dispatching and other emergency services.



Social protection and basic services

- Over 218,000 people reached with hygiene supplies and food parcels, including thousands of poor families and vulnerable persons, including vulnerable children, children with disabilities, the homeless and elderly persons living alone or in care institutions;
- Government received support in setting up three shelters housing 200 elderly and homeless, which received new equipment, appliances and furniture;
- The impact of COVID-19 on child poverty was analyzed and the findings contributed to the introduction of a universal, one-off payment of 65 USD for all children under the age of 18, with more than 915,000 children receiving the cash transfer in 2020;
- Counselling, legal advice, medical and psychosocial care and (in extreme cases) cash stipends were provided to vulnerable migrants, asylum-seekers and persons granted international protection;
- Online counselling was provided to Georgian migrants stranded abroad and reintegration support was made available to those who returned to Georgia during the crisis;
- COVID-19-related guidance, peer-to-peer counselling and online psychological support was provided to residents and staff of institutions for persons with disabilities and mental health, penitentiaries, and care and foster homes for children and adults;
- More than 5,000 elderly and 5,716 vulnerable persons were provided with professional and community-based home care services, information and counselling in Tbilisi and 29 municipalities through a network of more than 600 caregivers and volunteers;
- Juvenile offenders received hygiene supplies and recreation and rehabilitation equipment;
- All Government COVID-19 briefings were interpreted in sign language;
- Government was supported in raising awareness of the population on the COVID-19 pandemic and related regulations with the focus on vulnerable groups through preparing 35,000 brochures in Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian languages and producing the Armenian-language version of the www.stopcov.ge information website;
- Internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in 100 “collective centers” received protective gear, food supplies and psychosocial support, and their premises were disinfected regularly;
- The UN launched a campaign to advocate for the safe reopening of schools and preschools along with advocating for internet access for every child to lessen the digital divide, which is further marginalizing vulnerable families;
- Support was provided to the education system to shift from classroom to distance learning. Over 414.000 children were reached with TeleSchool for long distance/home based learning. For children without equipment or internet coverage, UN and partners launched a TV-school transmitted through Georgia Public Broadcasting. The TV-school covered all levels of national education curriculum and was accompanied by sign language translation and was made available in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages.
- Early childhood development and positive parenting programs were broadcast on TV and online reaching 37,000 parents/caregivers;
- Hygiene supplies were provided to schools and preschools in selected regions in Georgia supporting a safer learning environment for over 200,000 children;
- Virtual educational content was generated to engage young people during lockdowns at home;
- Georgian language and catch-up classes were organized for more than 100 refugee children, and online educational support was provided to asylum-seeker children;
- Vulnerable members of the LGBTQI+ community were provided with shelter, food supplies and medical assistance;
- 52,000 children and women have received essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care, HIV care and gender-based violence;
- A rapid response fund was created to support women’s activism in the COVID-19 crisis; and
- A 111 COVID-19 hotline was established to support families and children, including providing linkages to social services;
- Key service delivery agencies supported in improving the quality and security of electronic public services, by enhancing the cybersecurity systems and data management processes in response to the increased global cyber threats, challenges posed by COVID-19 reality and associated remote working practices.



Economic response and recovery

- Support provided to women-led small businesses, including in shifting retail sales online, and a micro-grants program was established to promote women-led businesses in rural areas;
- Grants programs organized or reoriented for farmers, rural communities, civil society organizations and municipalities to support local efforts to build economic resilience amidst pandemic hardships. Fifty matching grants were provided for a total amount of 2.2 million GEL to support food production and security. Under the MPTF programme, 620 vulnerable households engaged in small family farming in seven regions have received agricultural inputs.
- Distance learning and short-term authorized training courses introduced into the vocational education training system, new equipment and machinery were provided and VET course offerings broadened to overcome pandemic suspensions;
- Occupational safety and health tools developed to assess the workplace risks of COVID-19, inform employers, employees and customers and apply risk-mitigation measures;
- Regions seeking to develop tourism opportunities received guidance and funding to adapt their offerings to pandemic realities; and
- Assistance provided to asylum-seekers and refugees to find new jobs and access vocational training opportunities and strengthen their self-reliance and local integration or, in the case of Georgians returning from abroad during the pandemic, reintegration into the local community.



Social cohesion and community resilience

- Parliament received technological support to move deliberations and committee work to a virtual format and also to clarify its functions under the state of emergency;
- Government institutions and public entities assisted in adapting to working online;
- Dozens of new electronic services added to Georgia's unified service portal to ease the paperwork burden on people confined to their homes;
- Mediation services moved online to help settle work-related disputes during the pandemic;
- Judges and lawyers received training on how to interpret labor legislation in the COVID-19 context, taking into account relevant international labor standards;
- Religious leaders engaged in discussions on children's rights and COVID-19 prevention;
- The importance of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing was widely publicized and support was provided in individual and group psychosocial consultations for more than 7,500 adolescents and 810 parents and/or teachers;
- Adolescents and youths were empowered to volunteer and engage in their communities, contributing over 10,000 hours to 150 initiatives such as peer education, distance learning, supporting homeless and elderly citizens, information campaigns on COVID-19, sewing and distributing reusable masks, and assistance to socially vulnerable families, reaching an estimated 1,230 beneficiaries;
- Awareness-raising activities promoted refugee and hotlines were operated 24/7 to respond to urgent needs of refugee communities; and
- Psychosocial consultations, online and face-to-face, provided to vulnerable individuals, while online peer-to-peer support workshops were organized on COVID-19 and health related issues.



Support to people in Abkhazia

- Advocacy and risk communication materials on COVID-19 prevention prepared on a wide range of issues for many specific audiences and distributed in local languages;
- Regular deliveries of PPEs and other pandemic medical supplies made to the main COVID-19 treatment facility in Gudauta and to other hospitals and healthcare facilities across Abkhazia;
- Online training courses designed by international experts and delivered to health personnel in Abkhazia on clinical management, infection prevention and control, and laboratory diagnostics;
- A guidance package on maternal care during the pandemic distributed among local providers;
- Social workers supported in providing psychosocial assistance to vulnerable families;
- Videoconferencing equipment installed at 11 different medical institutions in Abkhazia to facilitate consultations with colleagues and international specialists and online training;
- Regular peer-to-peer online consultations organized between Georgian and Abkhaz doctors;
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in five schools were rehabilitated, providing proper handwashing points and toilets for over 500 students, and an assessment of WASH conditions in all schools in Abkhazia is underway;
- Rural development programs expanded and adapted to provide support to livelihoods threatened by pandemic restrictions on travel, trade and tourism;
- Cash stipends, food packages, hygiene items, fuel and fertilizer supplies distributed to vulnerable households; and
- Small-scale rehabilitation undertaken of village community facilities such as mills, classrooms, primary health points, water supply and irrigation systems.
- In addition, the UN in Georgia has produced and made available to the Government and partners extensive data and analysis pertaining to the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impact on women, youth, the elderly, religious and national minorities, migrants, refugees and people in refugee-like situations. Moreover, assessments of the economic impact, including by sectors, and of the risks for labour rights have been undertaken. The UN has supported capacity development to address the negative impact of the pandemic of the Public Defender's Office, social partners, youth and women civil society organizations and various community-based organizations.
- In 2021, the UN in Georgia will continue implementation of SERP which will be integrated into the joint work plan of the new UNSDCF 2021-2025. We shall work closely with the national counterparts to support the development of a comprehensive recovery plan.

2.2 Strengthening partnerships and financing 2030 Agenda



Photo: Leli Blagonravova/UNICEF

Partnerships and close collaboration with key stakeholders were instrumental to enable the UN to support progress towards the national development objectives. In 2020, UN in Georgia continued and further strengthened cooperation and coordination with the national and local government bodies, development partners², civil society organizations and the private sector.

The UN remained an active contributor to the organization and facilitation of the six Thematic Coordination Groups³ led by the Administration of the Government of Georgia. The groups are co-chaired by the relevant line ministry, and on rotational basis, by one of the development partners and serve to build a shared understanding of the priorities, achievements and needs. This coordination mechanism also supports the realignment of government expenditures and related donor support towards priority areas within Agenda 2030 in Georgia.

Moreover, the UN support 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 contributed 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.⁴ 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 chairing quarterly development partner coordination meetings attended by all major actors, including all resident international financial institutions. The coordination meetings ensure continuous alignment and identification for partnership opportunities to advance efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

² See Annex 1 for the list of development partners working with the UN in Georgia in 2020.

³ Covering (1) Good Governance; (2) Rule of Law; (3) Economic Growth; (4) Sustainable Use of Natural Resources; (5) Social Welfare; (6) Human Capital Development.

⁴ Covering (1) Sustainable Energy and Environmental Protection; (2) Economic Development; (3) Social Inclusion; and (4) Democratic Governance.

Continuous UN efforts to reinvigorate country partnerships enabled the organization of the High-level Development Partnership Forum in January 2020, which was co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Georgia and the UN Resident Coordinator and was attended by eight Government ministers, all development partners and the UN Country Team. The Forum was instrumental in enhancing the coordination of development aid to the country in support of the national SDG-driven development agenda and strengthening valuable synergies between the Government, the UN in Georgia and development partners active in the country.

The UN also provided guidance to the Administration of the Government in putting together the 2nd Voluntary National Review (VNR) that was delivered at the virtual meeting of the United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF) by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on 13 July 2020. The report focused on Georgia's three priority directions: economic growth; human capital development and economic welfare; and democratic governance. Building on the first VNR in 2016, the report highlights the importance of leaving no one behind, and prioritizes the need to invest in young people and human capital development, decentralize development and promote green energy production and consumption.

The UN also actively pursued improved bilateral cooperation with major development partners, including the European Union (EU). In February 2020, 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 meeting was timely as both sides were working on their respective country cooperation frameworks at the time, and the deliberations helped shape a joint vision of key issues and possible ways forward in line with respective mandates.

Partnerships with the private sector have been enhanced to both inform the UN work in Georgia and to secure opportunities to collaborate on implementation of various initiatives. For instance, as a result of the UN advocacy and support, eighty companies became signatories of the Women's Empowerment Principles. Among other results, this led to the creation of fourteen

mentoring groups at the company level, and more than 40 signatory companies joined the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in Georgia in 2020. Private sector representatives also issued a special statement in support of the campaign on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Various partnerships with individual companies, including JSC Liberty Bank, AVON and the Body Shop, helped promote awareness on reproductive health and rights and women economic empowerment in rural areas and efforts to end early/child marriage. Georgian Football Federation and FC Locomotive contributed to the UN work on promoting gender equality, healthy lifestyle and increasing men's engagement in advocacy for gender equality through participation in MenCare campaign⁵. Unfortunately, social dialogue mechanisms bringing together Government, employers' and workers' organizations to discuss social and labour issues remain underutilized in Georgia, in spite of UN awareness raising efforts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an important new group of technical experts was formed to inform the development and future implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination plan. The group is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and is comprised of WHO, UNICEF, WB, ADB, EIB, EUD and USAID representatives, working to ensure internal coordination among the UN and development partners that contributed to the successful preparation of the national vaccine deployment plan and securing initial vaccines for Georgia through the COVAX⁶ facility⁷.

With regard to development financing in Georgia, the UN commissioned the first of national SDG Financing Report in 2020.⁸ The analysis reflected on the types of internal and external development financing available to Georgia, attempted to match the current financing with the SDGs, assessed data quality and the current practices by the Government and the development partners to enhance financing alignment with the SDGs. The findings revealed the need of more robust methodologies and better data for tracking the links and possible impact of the various financing sources on the SDGs and to use SDG accelerators to guide available resources towards the implementation of those SDG targets that would have a positive multiplier effect.

⁵The goal of the campaign is to raise awareness of the importance of active fatherhood and male involvement in family life, and to break the stereotype that family health and wellbeing is solely a woman's responsibility.

⁶COVAX is one of three pillars of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, which was launched in April 2020 in response to this pandemic. COVAX is co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and WHO, alongside key delivery partner UNICEF. ACT brings together governments, global health organisations, manufacturers, scientists, private sector, civil society and philanthropy, with the aim of providing innovative and equitable access to COVID-19 diagnostics, treatments and vaccines. The COVAX pillar is focused on ensuring equitable access to vaccines.

⁷Arrived in early 2021.

⁸ See at <https://georgia.un.org/en/111347-sdg-financing-report-georgia>

2.3 Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency



Photo: Vladimir Valishvili/UNDP

The United Nations in Georgia continued to strengthen its capacities to deliver as one and build further team synergies to enhance support to Georgia.

The development of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2021-2025 was a priority in 2020 and was successfully signed on 2 October 2020 following a comprehensive collaborative UN efforts and extensive consultations with stakeholders in Georgia. The participatory methodology was designed by the UN and validated by the Government, the civil society and the development partners. To ensure the coordination and to engage all available resources within the UNCT, five outcome groups were created, each led by co-chairs from key UN agencies. The groups focused on the development of the UNSDCF outcomes and outputs, the theory of change and on defining the targeted sets of indicators for evidence-based progress evaluation. In June 2020, the UN organized six large scale consultations with all stakeholders to guide the definition of the UNSDCF priorities. The consultations enabled wide and effective participation of the government bodies, the civil society, academia, private sector, international organizations and development

partners, and provided essential insights to further enhance the quality of inputs to the UNSDCF. Leaving No One Behind had been the overarching principle in the design of the new UNSDCF 2021-2025 and will thus be effectively integrated in the UN programming in Georgia in the next five years. The newly established UNSDCF Results Groups will develop Joint Work Plans in early 2021.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN in Georgia strengthened coordination in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 at different levels. The UN Situational Reports were disseminated among the Government of Georgia and other partners since the start of the pandemic. UN prepared the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP), the COVID-19 UN Operational Response and Business Continuity and Contingency Plan, and Guidelines on safe return of UN staff to the work site in the context of COVID-19. A dedicated UNCT team developed the Socio-Economic Recovery Plan (SERP) that was finalized on 31 August 2020. Communication efforts by the UN aimed to reach out to the public at large with relevant and evidence-based information and messages on COVID-19 risks and prevention measures. Three joint UN statements have been issued on the situation with the COVID-19 outbreak, encouraging the Government of Georgia to ensure that the most vulnerable

groups are not left behind in this crisis and highlighting the need to avoid stigmatization in connection with the disease.

The UN Network on Migration was launched in Georgia on 1 July 2020 in order to provide coordinated and coherent UN system-wide support to the Government of Georgia for strengthening migration policies and enhancing migration management efforts. The Network will also 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.

Partnership with the international financial institutions has been strengthened throughout 2020. In Georgia the WB and the IMF are members of the UN Country Team and actively participated in the development of the COVID-19 Socio-economic Response Plan by the UN in Georgia. At the end of 2020 the WB Director and the UN RC agreed to coordinate special efforts to support the Ministry of Education and Science in strategic planning for next cycle 2022-2030 with the aim of aligning it with the Agenda 2030.

In terms of joint delivery, the UN proceeded with the development and implementation of several Joint Programmes. Overall, 12 UN Joint Programmes were ongoing in 2020 focusing on different areas of UNPSD, focusing on better protection of human rights, transforming social protection system for people with disabilities, women 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, as well as emergency assistance to Georgia to mitigate the COVID-19 impact.

Furthermore, the UN provided continued coordination support to Abkhazia Strategic Partnership (ASP), chaired by the UN resident Coordinator. Enhanced coordination under the ASP umbrella enabled the UN agencies to receive substantial funding for activities in Abkhazia, in particular in the context of COVID-19 response.

UN also continued joint efforts to advocate and to foster and support concrete actions by the Government of Georgia and partners towards enhanced protection of human rights, including women's rights, safeguarding the welfare and protection of all children and promoting gender equality with a focus on legal framework, empowerment and special measures to curb existing inequalities.

In the course of 2020, the UN carried out a communications campaign in Georgia dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the UN, including joint celebration of the UN Day in October 2020. The activities formed part of the global UN75 campaign and were carried out in partnership with the civil society, educational and academic institutions. Over 3,000 Georgians shared their views through organized dialogues, focus groups meetings and survey on what the UN priorities should be by 2045.

Finally, the new Business Operations Strategy (BOS) was produced by the UN Operations Management Team and will become operational from 1 January 2021. BOS will enable the UN in Georgia 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.

2.4 Evaluation and Lessons Learned

In January 2020 an independent evaluation of the UNPSD has been completed. The report assessed the relevance, effectiveness and highlighted comparative advantages of UN programming in Georgia.

The report emphasized the UN's strong partnership with the Government and civil society, but underlined the need to strengthen collaboration with the private sector. The evaluation also noted the continuous imperative to enhance collaboration within the UN Country Team and promote joint advocacy and delivery.

UN addressed various recommendations of the evaluation in the process of developing UNSDCF 2021-2025, which drove the highly participatory stakeholder engagement methodology that was implemented virtually despite the pandemic. From May through June 2020 six online consultations were held with more than 380 participants; government, civil society, development partners, academia, private sector, think tanks, etc.

2.5. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

The UN in Georgia work to support Georgia’s development agenda in 2020 amounted to the overall 53,253,403 USD in expenditures. In particular, expenditures were the highest under Outcome 3 (Better Employment and Livelihood Opportunities) with 28 per cent of spending, followed by 22 per cent dedicated to the implementation of Outcome 7 (Better Security and

More Resilience for Conflict-affected Communities) and 16 per cent for Outcome 1 (Democratic Governance). Table 1 below presents the financial overview for the implementation of the UN Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD) in 2020, including resource mobilization results.



Photo: Vladimir Valishvili/UN

Table 1: Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization for UNPSD implementation in 2020

Agency	Required resources (USD)	Available resources (USD)	Resources mobilized (USD)	Expenditures (USD)
Outcome 1: Stronger systems of democratic governance at all levels				
ILO	556,341	556,341	0	247,927
OHCHR	300,000	124,000	106,000	230,000
UNDP	6,571,195	6,571,195	400,000	6,649,543
UNFPA	851,234	255,580	595,654	813,998
UNICEF	504,000	306,500	301,790	296,216
UN Women	600,000	593,589	593,589	593,589
Sub-total:	9,382,770	8,407,205	1,997,003	8,831,273
Outcome 2: Increased access to the justice service delivery in accordance with national strategies and UN Human Rights standards				
OHCHR	250,000	128,000	92,000	220,000
UNDP	531,141	531,141	0	529,772
UNHCR	1,572,364	1,113,423	0	1,104,604
UNICEF	560,000	518,715	1,976,354	432,337
Sub-total:	2,913,505	2,291,279	2,068,354	2,286,713
Outcome 3: Better employment and livelihood opportunities as a result of inclusive and sustainable growth and development policies				
FAO	5,059,247	5,059,247	0	3,208,642
IFAD	2,691,741	2,691,741	0	2,691,741
ILO	390,693	390,693	0	109,393
UNDP	4,269,750	4,269,750	0	3,808,857
UNHCR	411,627	202,279	0	200,314
UNIDO	186,000	186,000	0	186,000
UNOPS	2,373,200	2,373,200	0	2,373,200
UN Women	2,500,000	2,416,402	2,416,402	2,416,402
Sub-total:	17,882,258	17,589,312	2,416,402	14,994,549
Outcome 4: Access to proactive and inclusive gender and child sensitive social protection system that address major vulnerabilities				
UNHCR	1,436,685	922,114	0	921,616
UNICEF	472,000	420,000	0	418,711
UN Women	1,000,000	1,086,620	1,086,620	1,086,620
Sub-total:	2,908,685	2,428,734	1,086,620	2,426,947
Outcome 5: Inclusive and high-quality preschool and general education for children				
IFAD	1,237,889	1,237,889	0	1,237,889
UNHCR	57,450	57,450	0	54,258
UNICEF	658,514	598,514	3,133,567	601,421
Sub-total:				
Outcome 6: Provision of quality, equitable and integrated health services				
UNFPA	812,428	671,404	141,024	788,972
UNICEF	721,000	590,000	0	588,219
UNOPS	1,457,320	1,457,320	0	1,457,320
WHO	5,500,000	531,000	4,724,000	5,255,038
Sub-total:	8,490,748	3,249,724	4,865,024	8,089,549
Outcome 7: Conflict affected communities enjoy better security and stronger resilience				
UNDP	8,136,263	7,748,949	387,314	7,740,759
UNHCR	2,611,250	2,070,035	0	2,069,347
UNICEF	2,000,000	1,700,000	173,107	1,562,334
UNOPS	1,169,480	1,169,480	0	1,169,480
UN Women	600,000	588,081	588,081	588,081
Sub-total:	14,516,993	13,276,545	1,148,502	13,130,001
Outcome 8: Environmental protection, sustainable management of natural resources and disaster risk reduction				
FAO	3,513,583	3,513,583	0	2,127,944
UNDP	3,309,244	3,309,244	0	3,069,417
UNIDO	560,000	560,000	0	560,000
WHO	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Sub-total:	7,482,827	7,482,827	100,000	5,857,361
TOTAL:	65,531,639	56,619,479	16,815,502	57,509,961

Chapter 3: UNCT focus for 2021



Photo: Vladimir Valishvili/UN

On 1 January 2021 our new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 came into force with one overarching priority: Enhancing human wellbeing and capabilities as well as social equality in Georgia. In 2021 the UN will focus on ensuring that we support the implementation of Georgia’s development agenda through effective joint implementation. In particular, we will focus on these main areas:



MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ENABLING AN INCLUSIVE, GREEN AND DYNAMIC RECOVERY

The UN will continue to provide a comprehensive joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The UN Georgia’s Socio-Economic Response Plan will be fully integrated into the UNSDCF and the related Joint Work Plan. We will continue to support the Government in the national vaccination deployment plan and advocate jointly with the Government and other partners for building forward better in the COVID-19 recovery. The UN will prioritize support to the most vulnerable groups in mitigating the impact of the pandemic.



OPERATIONALIZING THE SG’S PREVENTION VISION

The UN in Georgia will ensure coherence between development, humanitarian and peacebuilding. We will continue focusing on providing assistance to conflict-affected people, including in Abkhazia.



SDG IMPLEMENTATION AND LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

The UN in Georgia will continue to promote the 2030 Agenda and advance UNSDCF priorities, including by formulating new ideas for Joint Programmes and innovative partnerships aimed at accelerating progress towards the SDGs. The UN will engage in joint advocacy to leave no one behind and to promote human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability. In particular, the UNSDCF prioritize action to support groups of people who experience multiple vulnerabilities: with regard to groups of people whom the UNSDCF identifies as furthest behind due to multiple vulnerabilities: children living in poverty, persons with disabilities, specific categories of women and girls, older persons, ethnic and religious minorities, persons of non-dominant sexual orientation or gender identity, and informal economy workers.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING

The UN will continue strategic dialogue and expand partnerships with the Government, the development partners in the area of financing for development. A mapping of private sector engagement is foreseen to pave way for enhanced collaboration to advance the UNSDCF priorities. The UN will also foster partnerships with existing and new civil society partners, as well as promote dialogue with the social partners to strengthen their contribution to the implementation of Georgia's development agenda.

Photos: The joint program implemented by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA has reached senior citizens living alone delivering food and sanitary supplies. ©UNFPA/UNDP



ANNEX 1. The list of key development partners in Georgia

Action Against Hunger (ACH)
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)
Council of Europe (COE)
Czech Development Cooperation
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
Delegation of the European Union to Georgia (EUD)
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Dutch Development Cooperation
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
European Investment Bank (EIB)
Georgian Red Cross
German Development Cooperation
Government of Estonia
International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Norwegian Development Cooperation
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
Turkish International Development Agency (TIKA)
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
World Vision (WV)

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GEORGIA

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