



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

UN AZERBAIJAN PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK 2016 - 2020

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FOREWORD

2020 marks the final year of the UN-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework for 2016-2020 and I am pleased to present our fourth Annual Progress Report which highlights the results of our joint efforts with the Government and other national actors, including, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector.

2020 was not an easy year, as people around the world had to deal with the dire consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on their health and livelihoods. In Azerbaijan the socioeconomic challenge was further exacerbated by the escalation of hostilities in and around of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Both crises compelled UN and its partners to join efforts and resources in support of the government and affected populations, building capacities for crisis assessment, preparedness, response, and communication.

UN action in Azerbaijan was not limited to crisis response. We also worked on building skills and increasing employment opportunities in non-oil sectors, developing capacities for better policies and services, supporting compliance

with international human rights standards, advancing gender equality, strengthening the public health systems, promoting modern and sustainable agriculture, as well as protecting the environment. The actions we took and results we achieved are discussed in the key highlights section and throughout the report. In 2020, we collectively delivered USD 26.9 million through our programmes (the highest figure in the five-year cycle), of which around 45% was funded by Azerbaijan. This is a testimony to the level of trust and reliance in UN knowledge and expertise that has been achieved in the past five years.

A new chapter opens with the signature of a new five-year [UN-Azerbaijan Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025](#). This framework has been designed to help Azerbaijan accelerate its progress on the SDGs and meet its commitments under the Decade of Action. It places strong emphasis on transformational solutions in the areas of inclusive growth, delivery of public and social services, protection of the environment, and building a gender equitable society. The new framework comes at a pivotal time when the Government has just released Azerbaijan's ambitious 2030 Vision document, which the UN will continue supporting.

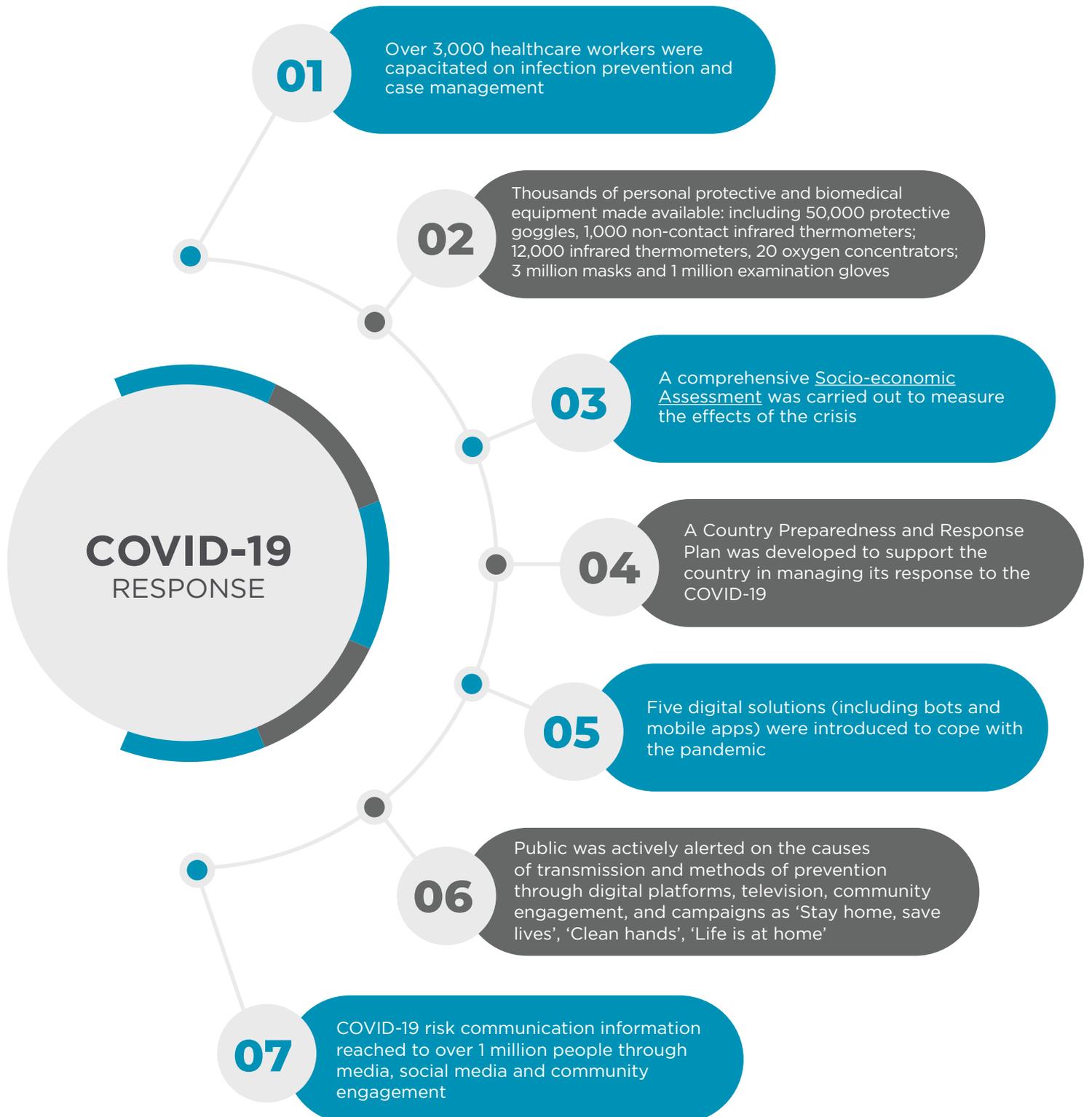
I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan, our partners, and our staff and experts for the passion and commitment that they showed under the extraordinary conditions of 2020. Your work has saved lives, provided support to the most vulnerable, and laid the foundations of plans and policies to rebuild back better.

I wish you continued success in 2021 and beyond.

Ghulam Isaczai

United Nations Resident Coordinator

KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2020

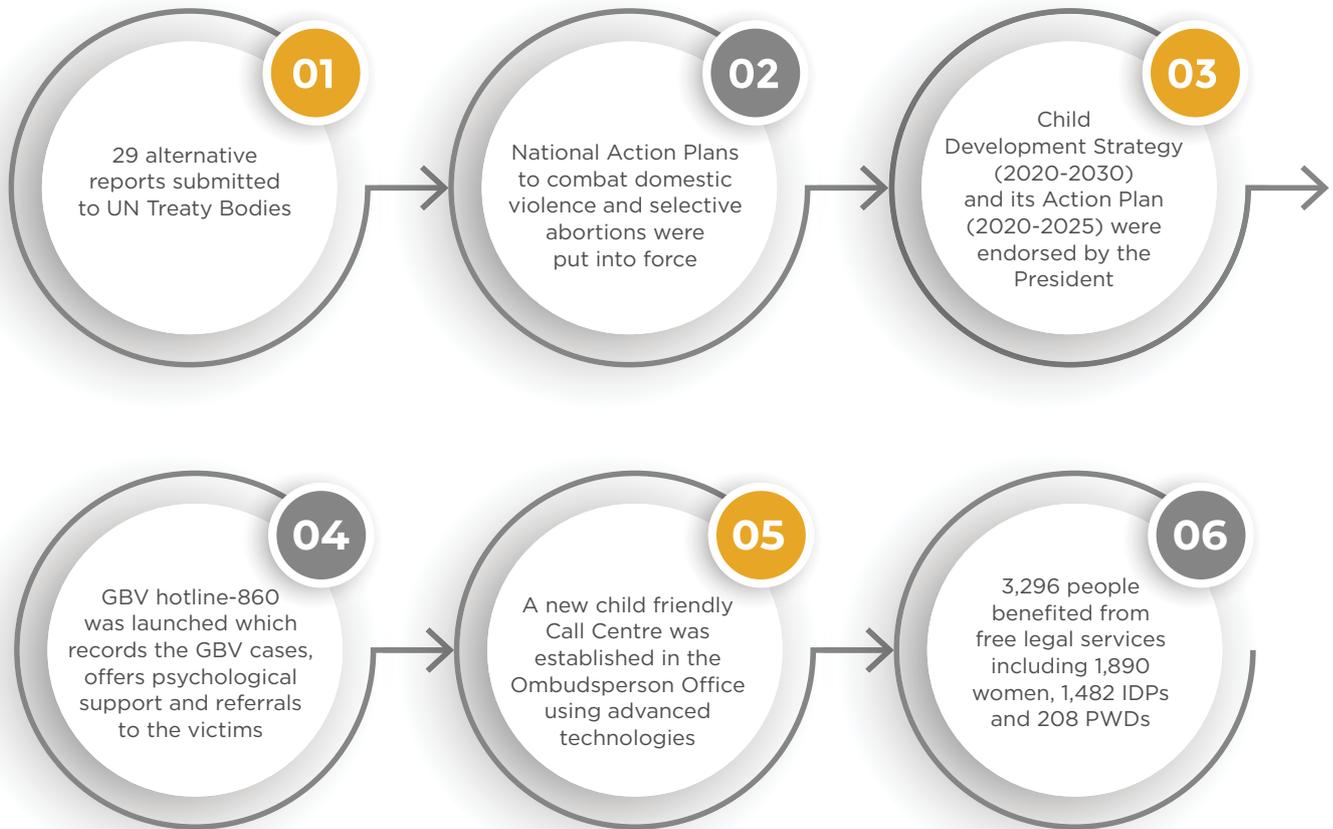




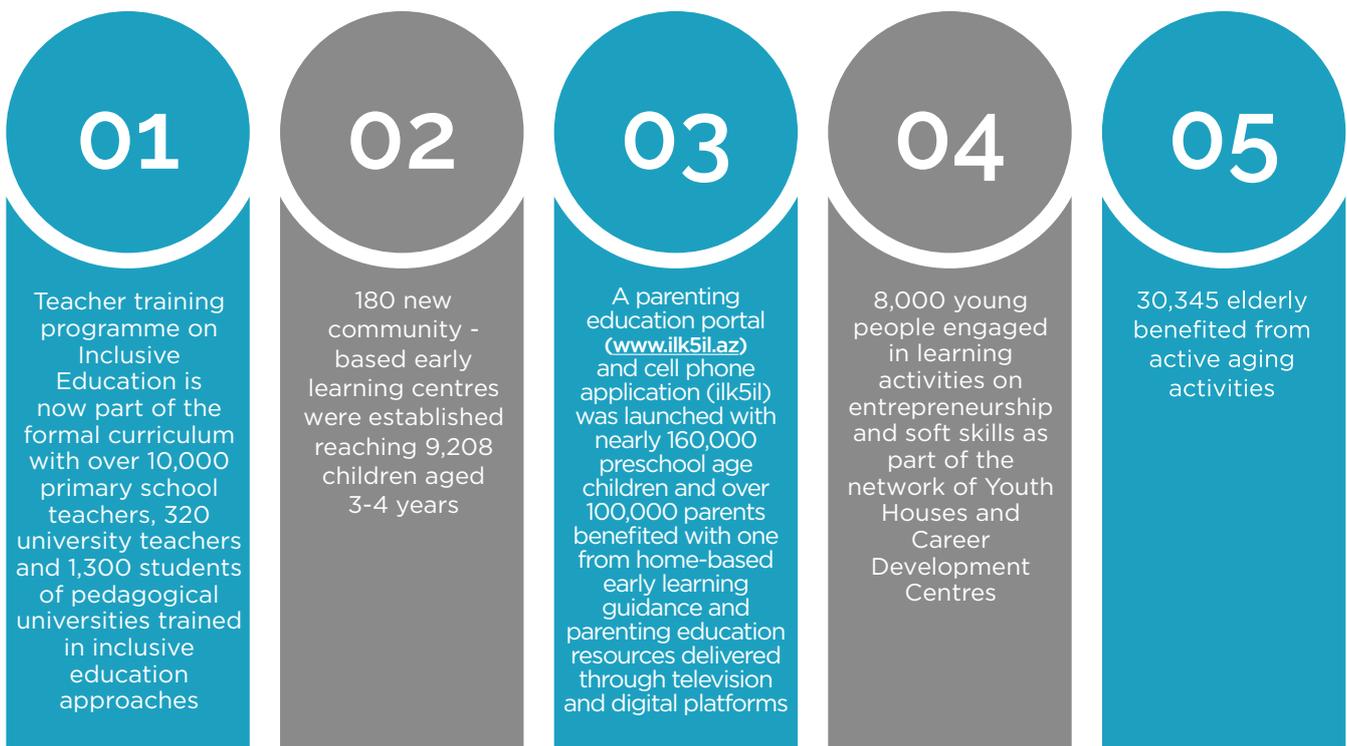
SUPPORTING LIVELIHOODS AND AGRICULTURE



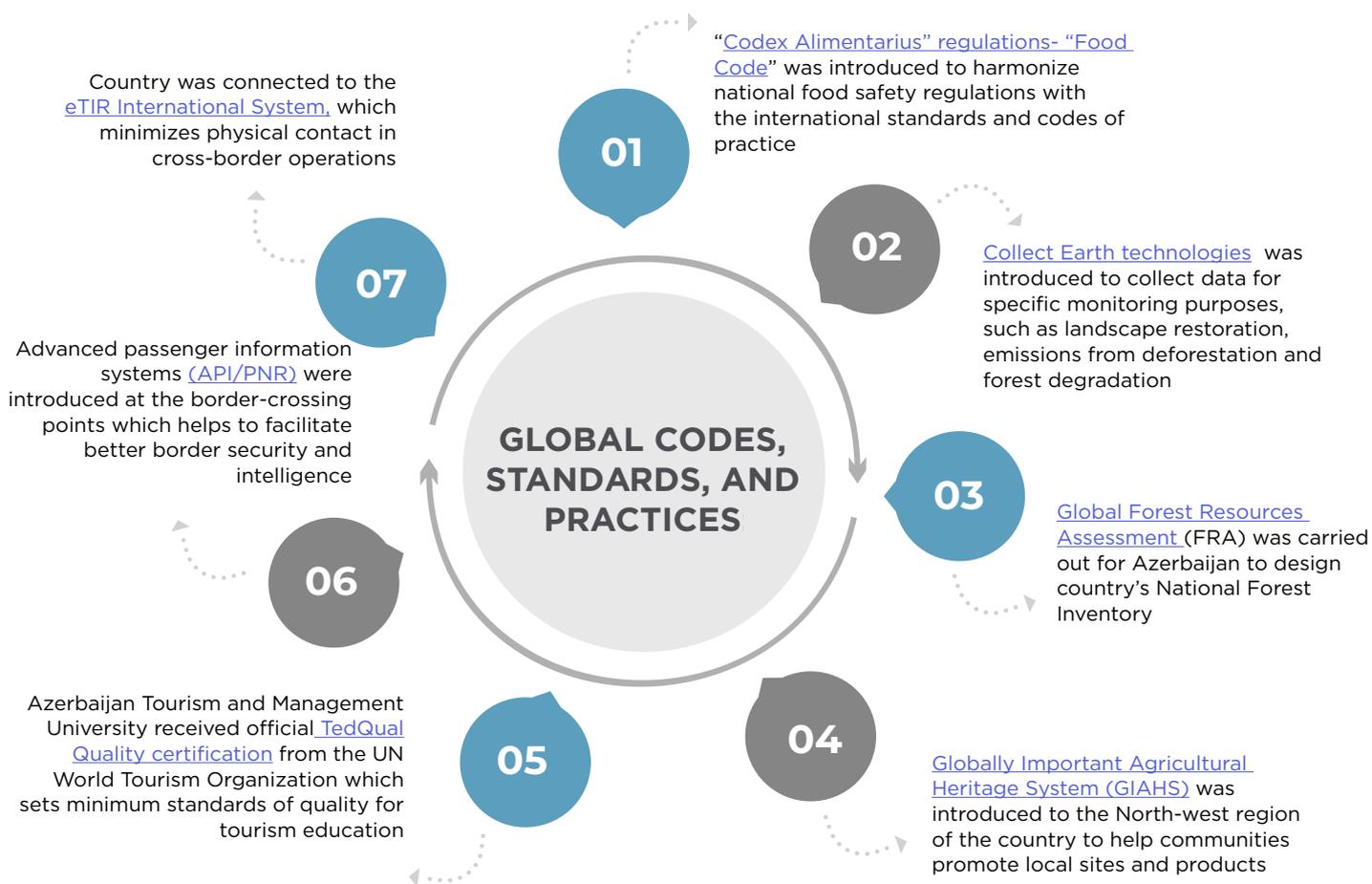
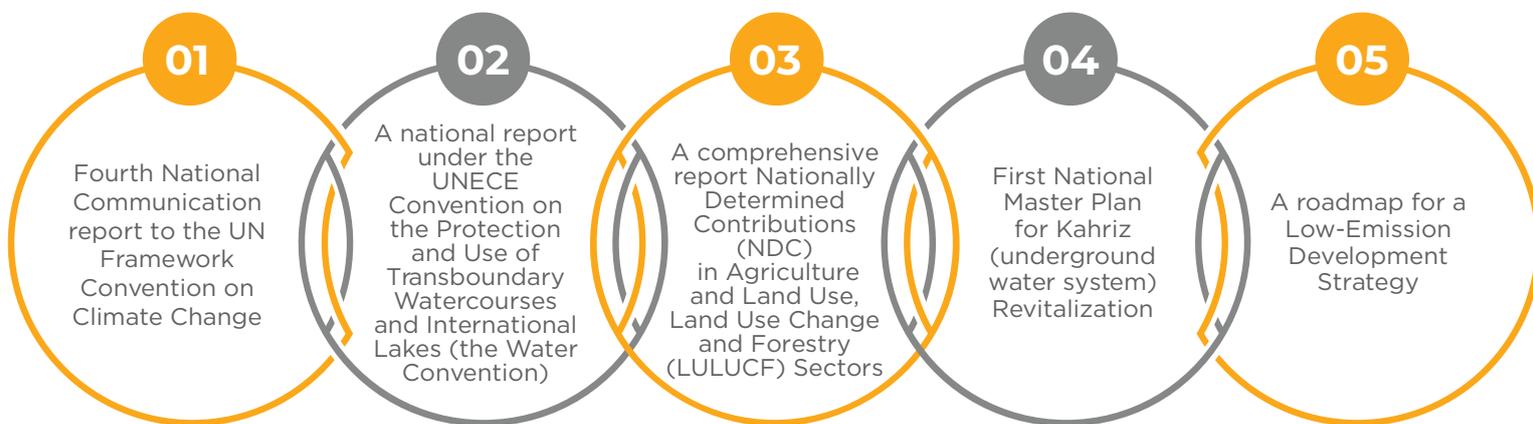
HUMAN RIGHTS



LIFE-LONG LEARNING



REPORTS AND ROADMAPS WERE DEVELOPED ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE



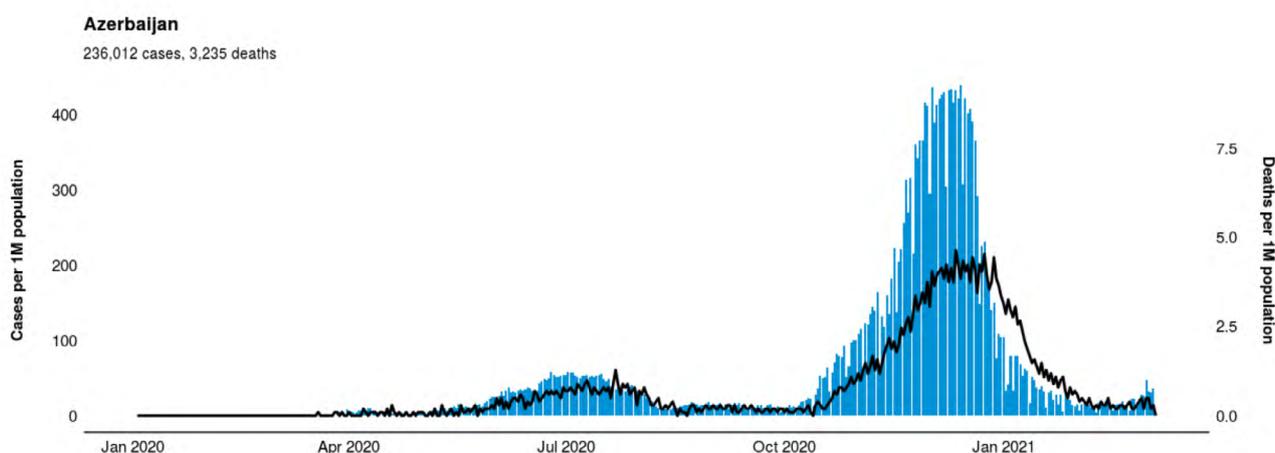
SECTION 1: KEY DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN AZERBAIJAN: YEAR 2020 IN BRIEF



The Heydar Aliyev Center, one of the main architectural symbols of Azerbaijan displaying the flag of the World Health Organization (WHO) in solidarity.

The year started with snap parliamentary elections on February 9 which involved new political figures, representatives of civil society and youth activists.

The spread of COVID-19 started in February with the first case of infection recorded on February 28, reaching 217,636 cases by the end of the year. The Government quickly took a number of effective measures – such as additional border controls, restrictions on movement, media campaign on risk communication and the designation of hospitals for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. At the same time, efforts were deployed to ensure the continuity of essential health services, triage of health facilities, and to prevent the indirect health impact of the crisis on the management of other illnesses.



Country overview, WHO, March 7, 2020 see [here](#)

With the increase in infection rate, the Government put in place stringent lockdown measures, including closure of non-essential workplaces and education institutions, to contain transmission. The lockdown undermined growth, increased levels of unemployment and disrupted provision of essential public and social services. The collapse in global oil prices in 2020 further contributed to a reduction in the country's GDP by 4.3 percent compared to the previous year¹. The Government introduced a socio-economic and financial support package worth over \$ 2.5 billion²

(more than 3 percent of GDP) to counter the health and economic consequences of the pandemic. A combination of subdued economic activity, lower oil prices and high government spending led to a large fiscal deficit. Azerbaijan also allocated a total of \$10 million to the WHO central COVID fund in solidarity with the global community. A Special Session of the UN General Assembly in Response to COVID-19 took place on 3-4 December 2020 by initiative of Azerbaijan as the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement.

¹ Ministry of Economy, "Macroeconomic development of the country in 2020", see [here](#)

² "President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev addressed the Special Session of UN General Assembly in response to COVID 19 pandemic at the level of heads of state and government", 4 December 2020, see [here](#)

Continued reforms in business, tax and customs sectors paid off with higher international economic rankings, as in the World Bank's Doing Business Report 2020 at 34th³ and Global Competitiveness Index at 58th⁴. Among key factors that contributed to this result were easing property registration, strengthening access to credit, protecting minority investors and better enforcement of contracts.

The closure of education institutions including childcar facilities in early March 2020 had negative implications on learning and social skills for students of all ages. Despite a variety of initiatives by the Ministry of Education to ensure the continuity and sustainability of education, the digital divide reduced the effectiveness of learning for students without access to technology.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government's reforms in social protection resulted in the establishment of the Social Service Agency under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MLSPPP) with the further development of social services workforce in support of the most vulnerable populations in Azerbaijan.

In terms of human development, Azerbaijan remained in the high category with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.756 positioning it 88 out of 189 countries. However, when adjusted for inequality, the HDI fell to 0.684, with a loss of 9.5 percent. Despite efforts to improve social outcomes, inequalities persisted, and women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, refugees, internally displaced people, informal workers, and rural populations remained the furthest behind in accessing some social services.⁵ Gender Inequality Index with a value of 0.323 in

HDR 2020 ranked the country 73 out of 162. Despite some improvements, women continued to face substantial inequalities evidenced by skewed sex ratio (114 boys to 100 girls), gender based violence (76 percent of total victims of domestic violence), poor representation (18.2 percent of parliamentary seats; 21.7% of entrepreneurs), lower wages (335 AZN vs 663 AZN), early marriages (with adolescent birth rate of 48 per 1,000 women of ages 15-19) and other forms of discrimination.^{6 7}

³ World Bank "Doing Business Report 2020", see [here](#)

⁴ World Economic Forum "The Global Competitiveness Report 2019", see [here](#)

⁵ Common Country Analysis, 2020

⁶ UNDP, "Human Development Report 2020", see [here](#)

⁷ Report of the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs to the Parliament dated 30.12.2020, see [here](#)



The Azerbaijani government approves the Action Plan on prevention of gender-biased sex selection (GBSS) for the period of 2020-2025, a product of long standing UN advocacy and technical support led by UNFPA. This is a response to the persistent prevalence of boys among newborns resulting in a skewed sex ratio at birth (114 boys born for every 100 girls) which considerably exceeds the biological norm (105-107 boys per 100 girls).

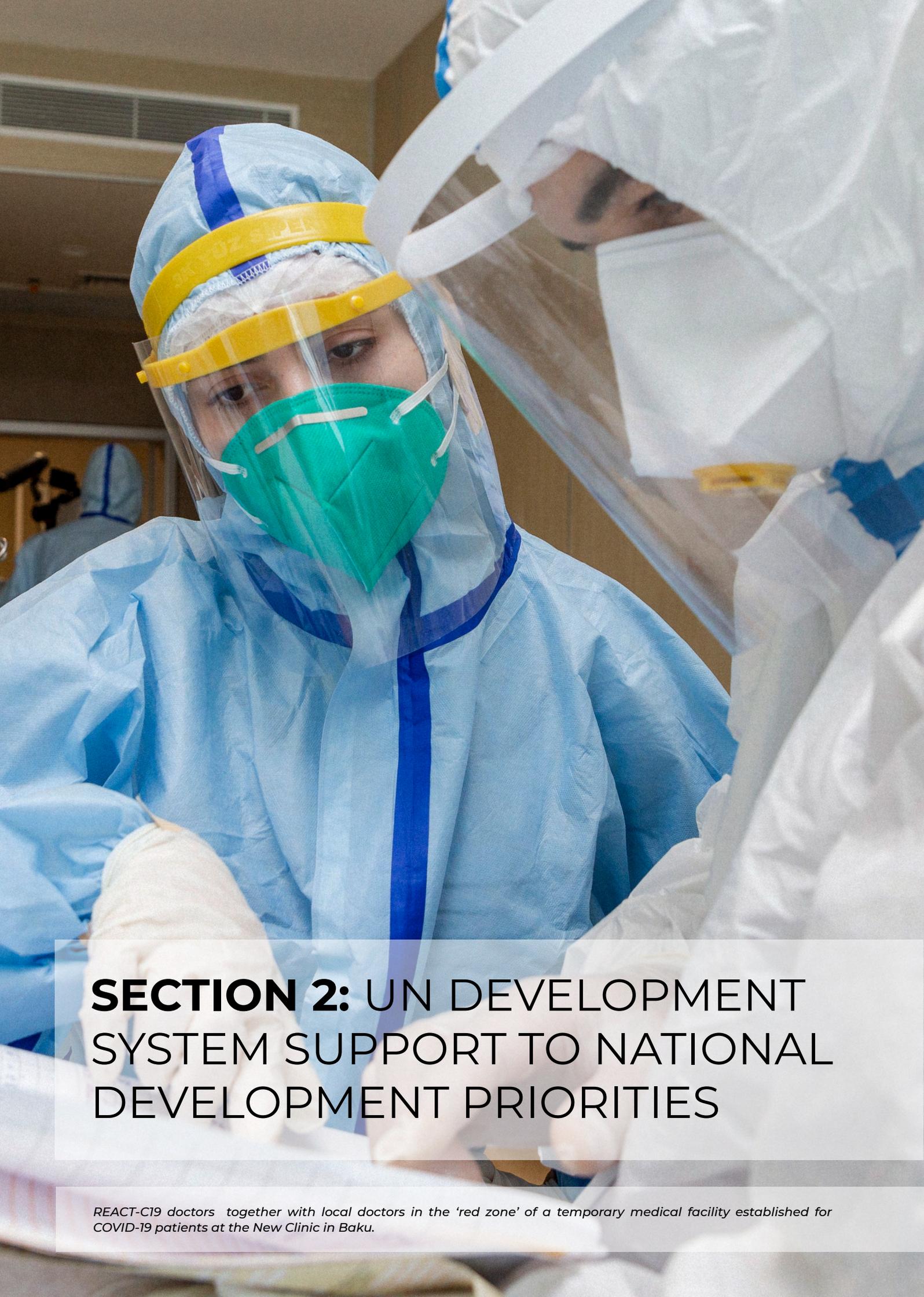
Photography: UN Azerbaijan archives

A rapid gender assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women and men⁸ indicated an increase in the prevalence of domestic violence against women during the lockdown and that restrictive measures also increased the burden of unpaid household work on women. Government data also shows a large share of people working in frontline health services that were most exposed to infection were women (77.6 percent in 2018 in health and social services sector). The Government responded to these calls by endorsing new action plans in 2020 for combating domestic violence (2020-2023) and fighting gender-based sex-selection (2020-2025), and human trafficking (2020-2024).

Azerbaijan also faced increased environmental challenges, such as the sharp decrease in the water of the Kura river which plays an important role in the ecosystem of the entire South Caucasus. The very high salinity (10.6) identified in June 2020 in the upper parts of the river delta indicated that the saline water of the Caspian Sea (average value of 16) entered river for about 66 km distance. Causes may be connected with major water abstractions for agriculture upstream at the Kura river which have led to a significant reduction of the downstream river flows and may have triggered inland movement of seawater beyond the delta during strong winds and waves. An action plan on the efficient use of water resources for 2020-2022 was signed by the President in April with the aim to increase water resources and improve the supply of drinking and irrigation water to consumers. A special commission was also set up to propose a restoration program of water levels in the Kura river. A ban of the use of plastic bags up to 15 microns thick was another positive development.

The conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan escalated between 27 September and 9 November 2020 leading to a large number of military and civilian casualties as well as damage to infrastructure and ecosystem. The war ended with the signing of a trilateral statement by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia on 9 November 2020. The UN provided humanitarian assistance to some of the 40,000-population temporarily displaced by recent fighting along the former Line of Contact. The process for early recovery and peace building assessment (RPBA) alongside demining operations to allow for reconstruction works and the return of displaced populations commenced at the end of 2020.

⁸ UNFPA, UN Women “A rapid gender assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women and men”, 2020, see [here](#)

A healthcare worker in full PPE (blue gown, yellow face shield, green N95 mask, and blue hairnet) working in a clinical setting. The worker is focused on a task, with another person in white PPE visible in the background. The scene is brightly lit, typical of a hospital or clinic.

SECTION 2: UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

REACT-C19 doctors together with local doctors in the 'red zone' of a temporary medical facility established for COVID-19 patients at the New Clinic in Baku.

COVID-19 RESPONSE



Health response

The UN Country Team (UNCT) worked in collaboration with the Government of Azerbaijan to support its response efforts to the pandemic. As early as in March, a WHO team of experts arrived in the country at the Government's request to provide recommendations on preparedness and response capacity. The mission paved the way for the launch of the REACT-C19 project (Rapid Scale-up of Essential Capacities for COVID-19) in April 2020 which helped to strengthen the capacity of 12 hospitals over a period of three months to improve their readiness to treat COVID-19 patients, as well as create a safe environment for healthcare workers. REACT-C19 has left a legacy, the PROACT Programme (PROACT Care and PROACT Training) managed by WHO and UNICEF, which supports the creation of sustainable systems and competencies to deliver essential health services. Subsequent assessments were carried out to track national response and improve compliance with WHO standards, including on infection prevention and control (IPC), coordination, communication, case identification, testing and contact tracing. UN agencies also provided extensive support to the Government to train over 3,000 healthcare workers, including laboratory staff on COVID-19 infection prevention and case management (WHO) and on maternal and child health (UNICEF).

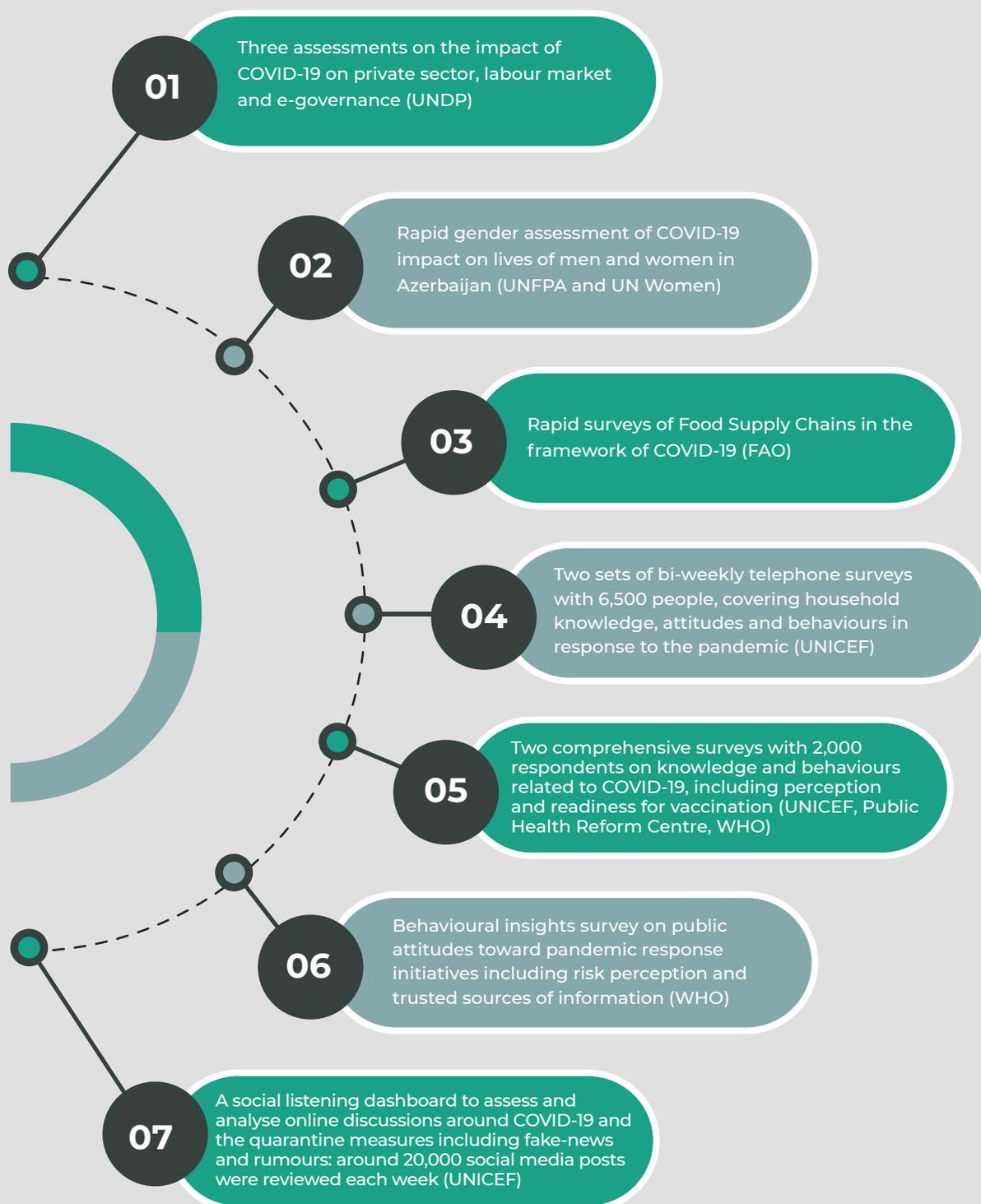
UN agencies also provided personal protective and biomedical equipment to the Government to keep first line responders safe and strengthen hospital capacities: these included 50,000 protective goggles and 1,000 non-contact infrared thermometers (UNDP); 12,000 infrared thermometers UNICEF responded to the request

of the Ministry of Education to provide 12,000 infrared thermometers for all 4,411 general schools and 16 special and boarding schools, 20 oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeters and related supplies (UNICEF); 3 million masks, 1 million examination gloves and other PPEs (WHO).



Socio-economic response

A comprehensive Socio-economic Assessment was jointly undertaken between the UN and the Government to measure the impact of the crisis across key sectors and provide the evidence base needed to formulate effective recovery strategies. Other thematic assessments and analyses were conducted with relevant stakeholders to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the welfare of people and families and to support decision-making, programming, planning and monitoring.



Based on the findings of these assessments and in close consultation with the Government, a WHO-led Country Preparedness and Response Plan was designed by UNCT to ensure response to COVID-19 is systematic, coordinated and effective.

UN agencies supported the most vulnerable segments of the society during the COVID-19 crisis:



510 families in need received basic food assistance and hygiene supplies (UNDP)



448 refugees and asylum-seekers households benefited from social counselling and received three rounds of emergency cash assistance (UNHCR)



339 third-country nationals stranded in Azerbaijan due to travel restrictions received needs-based protection and assistance (IOM)



Over 800 rural women and their families in 9 districts received online psychotherapy support (UNDP and UN Women)



1,275 children and families in three districts were reached with social support including advice on available social assistance, monitoring for signs of stress and potential violence at home etc (UNICEF)



More than 16,000 parents received online counselling on nutrition and over 210,000 people received practical information on supporting early childhood development at home during the quarantine periods (UNICEF)



Risk communication

UNCT also put an immediate focus on risk communication to alert people to the causes of transmission and methods of prevention through digital platforms, television, and community engagement. To expand the reach and coverage of the preventive messages to all layers of society joint awareness campaigns such as 'Stay home, save lives', 'Clean hands', 'Life is at home' were kicked off in broad partnership with the government, civil society, mass media, and influencers. Young people were actively engaged in the design, development and dissemination of COVID-19 prevention messages relevant to youth audiences. UNICEF developed nine Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, with about 300,000 copies produced and distributed across the country.



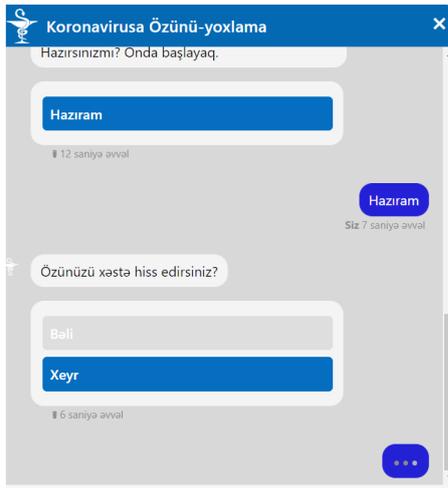
Volunteers distribute risk communication materials by UNICEF among vulnerable populations in the districts to support families and children providing parenting tips, psychological advice and prevention information during COVID-19.



Education

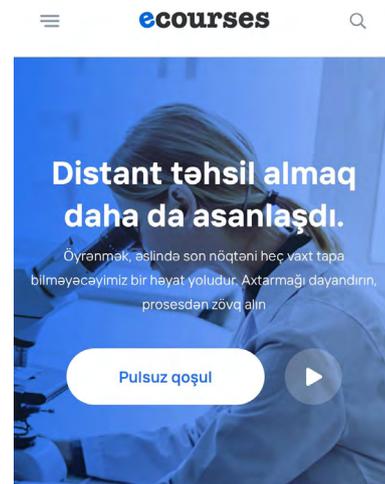
With schools remaining closed for most of the year, UNCT worked with the Government to mitigate the inevitable impact of closures on learning outcomes and access to education. UNICEF provided guidance on remote learning and quality distance education to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry was also supported in developing a roadmap for future school reopening and in providing psychosocial assistance for children ahead of a possible return to classes. UNHCR helped register refugee and asylum-seeking children in the national database to get access to online education, with 378 among them receiving tablets and internet packages for this purpose.

Several innovative digital solutions were launched by UNDP to help healthcare professionals and the public cope with the pandemic:



Shefa coronavirus self-checker bot informs people with symptoms on what to do. The bot helped the health authorities answer over 3,000 queries online, freeing up resources to enable medical professionals to look after patients in need of critical care.

E-courses.az platform provides free online training courses and certification programmes to healthcare professionals. The platform currently offers over 55 courses, including training in infection prevention, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 and other acute respiratory infections. Over 500 healthcare professionals have enrolled in the courses.





MD Reference app a mobile app for COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment helps medical personnel make informed clinical decisions based on up-to-date research. Over 750 medical professionals are regularly using this platform.

Video Doktor app enables remote medical consultations and helps reduce the need for close contact between healthcare workers and patients. It was deployed in 15 polyclinics in Baku, involving 31 doctors and 131 patients.



WhatsApp bot answers questions from the public, providing prompt, reliable and officially approved information 24/7. Over 200,000 queries from the public were answered.



#Tekkieheroes - a virtual hackathon involving some 600 applicants from over 40 countries to mobilize innovative ideas and harness local experience in addressing the impact of the pandemic and reducing the risk of infection.



UNICEF also supported the development of a digital platform with medical experts www.eudi.az to provide online maternal and child health and nutrition information, knowledge and counselling support when essential health care was suspended during the pandemic.



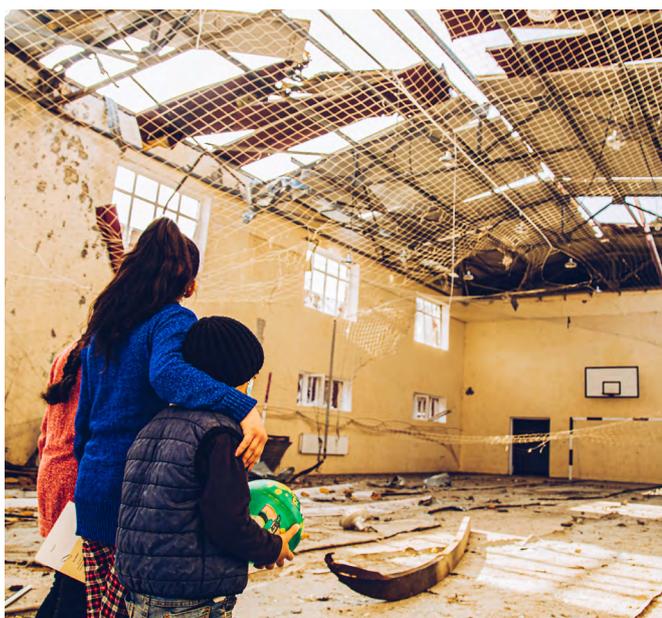
An inter-agency coordinated assessment mission comprised of technical experts from various UN agencies carried out four-day visit to the conflict-affected regions of Azerbaijan: Barda, Aghdam, and Agjabedi districts where temporarily displaced persons, and other conflict-affected communities reside.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO CONFLICT AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

The UNCT's humanitarian response to the escalation of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan was informed by the findings of the UN interagency rapid needs assessment carried out in November 2020 in conflict-affected districts close to the former LoC. National priorities and needs were also determined using sectoral assessments by UN entities, including interactions with civil society actors and biweekly consultations with Government partners. With the support from OCHA and UN Peace and Development Team, UNCT regularly kept-a-breath of conflict-affected people's needs, changing conflict and post-conflict dynamics, as well as shared the collected data and analysis with UN Headquarters and development partners for well-informed decision making and prioritizing targeted interventions to address the most vulnerable groups of population. While WHO conducted an in-depth Health Needs Assessment at the health facilities and a rapid assessment of the mental health/psycho-social activities in conflict affected areas, another assessment was carried out by UNDP to explore the needs of IDPs in terms of economic opportunities, education,

public participation, and social cohesion. UNICEF together with the Ministry of Education started assessing the impact of the conflict on education in affected communities.

An Azerbaijan country profile was set up at UNDP's global Crisis Risk Dashboard by the regional Peace and Development Team allowed more effective monitoring, assessment, and understanding of crisis-related risks. In response to a Government request, a joint UNDP/UNMAS Humanitarian Demining mission conducted an assessment in five regained districts (Zangilan, Gubadli, Jabrayil, Fuzuli and Aghdam), in two regional operational bases of the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) in Horadiz and Goygol and provided advisory services to them. In partnership with ANAMA, UNICEF also conducted mine and unexploded ordnance awareness initiatives that reached 87,000 people, half of them children. These assessments informed the areas of support for UN in Azerbaijan which ranged from mine action to support in the areas of health and psychosocial welfare, access to shelter, food and non-food items, education and agriculture.



A psychologist talks to a child in Ganja, Azerbaijan. UNICEF continues its project "Child protection during emergencies" in partnership with the State Committee of Family, Women and Children Affairs and ASAN Volunteers Organization to support children in immediate need of psycho-social support.

UN agencies collaborated with national and local authorities to strengthen social services and support to people living in the conflict-affected communities. At 15 Baby-Friendly Rooms that were set up in the local health facilities with UNICEF support, pregnant women and young children benefited from early childhood development activities, nutrition counselling and health examinations. 24 professional psychologists were

trained and deployed by UNICEF to the conflict-affected districts who provided psychological first aid and counselling to 1,070 children to deal with the direct and long-term impact on children caused by the conflict. Health service facilities also received trauma kits, infection prevention and control supplies and SRH emergency kits (WHO, UNFPA).



UN agencies provided emergency assistance to vulnerable groups whose livelihoods were affected by the conflict escalation in 2020.

- *Food packages to 2,100 vulnerable families benefiting around 10,000 people (UNICEF)*
- *Dignity kits for 364 temporarily displaced women including hygiene items, clothing, and personal protective equipment during 16-day campaign (UN agencies)*
- *1,300 family kits containing basic household supplies, and 1,000 hygiene kits covering more than 11,000 people (UNICEF)*
- *400 Hygiene kits to families of IDPs (WHO)*
- *Core Relief Items of 24,000 blankets and 2,400 kitchen sets (UNHCR)*

To better respond to the humanitarian needs, UNCT mobilised \$ 2,000,000 from UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) to further assist the conflict-affected population in the areas of health, mine action and non-food items. UNICEF mobilized an additional US\$ 910,000 to support children and families affected by the conflict. UNDP mobilized additional \$750,000 for early recovery assistance to support livelihoods at the

community resource hubs, for access to services through digital infrastructure and support to ANAMA on Mine action. At the same time, FAO initiated formation of Food Security, Agriculture and Livelihoods (FSAL) working group to coordinate the humanitarian assistance activities in the conflict affected areas.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA ONE:
PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, UNDERPINNED
BY INCREASED DIVERSIFICATION AND
DECENT WORK



Beekeeping is one of the agricultural activities that UN supports to revive in the rural areas, both for its high profitability and benefits to the ecosystem.

OVERVIEW

Outcome 1.1 By 2020, the Azerbaijan economy is more diversified and generates enhanced sustainable growth and decent work, particularly for youth, women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups

UN Agencies: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR

SDG targets: Target 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.a, 2.b, 4.4, 4.7, 5.c, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8, 8.10, 9.3, 11.5, 16.7, 17.15, 17.18, 17.9
Under this Priority Area, 35 key activities were implemented across 26 locations in Azerbaijan in 2020.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Total Required Resources (Annual)
\$10,752,487



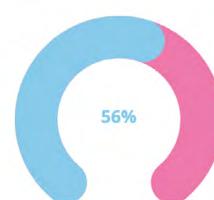
Available Resources (Annual)
\$10,588,799



Expenditure
\$5,954,280

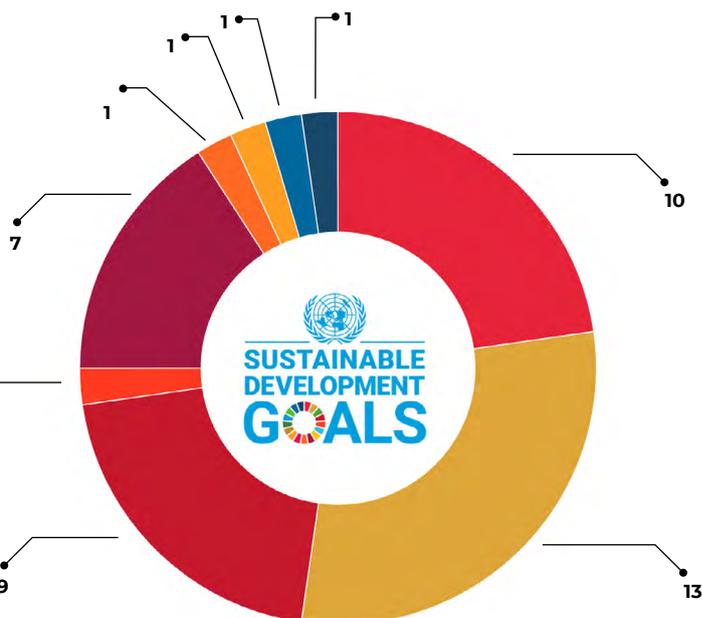
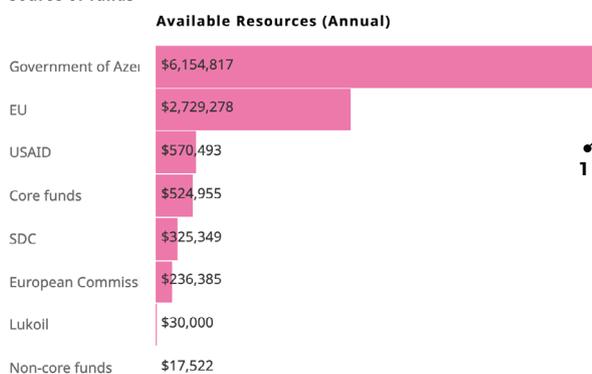


Delivery rate
Ratio of Expenditure vs Available Resources (Annual)



TOP 10

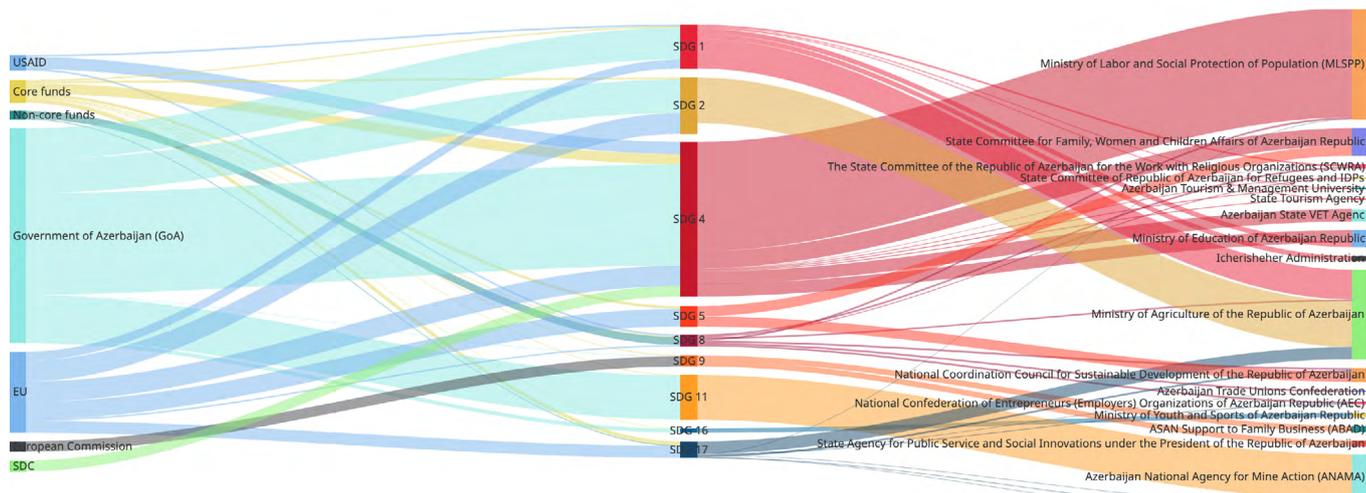
Source of funds



This chart shows the share of different UN activities planned per Sustainable Development Goal.

PARTNERS

This graphic shows how investments are contributing to the work of different partners to advance the SDGs in Azerbaijan. The width of the lines represents the relative amount of resources being contributed.

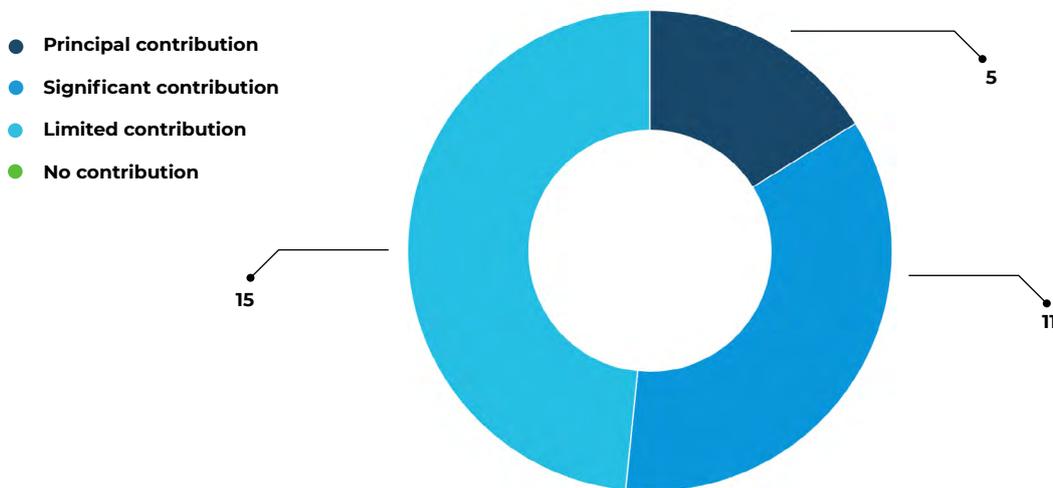


Contribution to SDGs

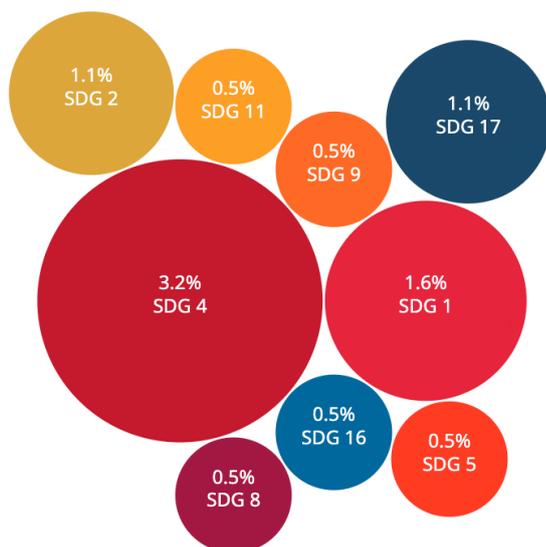


The above graphic shows how the UN allocates its resources across each of the SDGs in Azerbaijan.

CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER EQUALITY ⁹



This graphic shows the contribution of UN key activities to gender equality.



This graphic shows the distribution of Gender Equality markers (consider significant and principle contribution) to the SDGs.

⁹ **Principal contribution:** Gender equality objectives are the primary intended result(s) of the activity. Narrowing gender inequalities, transforming gender norms, or strengthening the empowerment of women and girls is the main reason the initiative is being undertaken. **Limited contribution:** There is limited consideration of gender equality/women’s empowerment. For example, there may be a gender analysis or some collection/analysis of sex-disaggregated data, but no or limited gender equality results. **No contribution:** There is no consideration of gender equality issues and there are no expected results relating to gender equality or women’s empowerment. **Significant contribution:** These are usually considered gender equality ‘mainstreamed’ activities or activities that make a substantial contribution to gender equality/women’s empowerment.

Reviving enterprises and employment

Due to the economic impact of the pandemic, most micro, small and medium enterprises saw a strong decline in their activity. To respond to this, several digital solutions were set up with UNDP support to help people and enterprises recover from the pandemic:

The logo for reqemli features the hashtag #reqemli in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, followed by a white circle with a vertical line through it, resembling a stylized 'i' or a social media icon.

With the support of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies, UNDP launched a one-stop shop portal www.evdeqal.az (which means “stay home”, now switched to reqemli.az) to help enterprises and companies go digital and provide e-services from healthcare to food delivery. With above 250 businesses on board, the platform also provides free courses and webinars on how to switch from an analogue service delivery model to digital.



Another UNDP's web platform www.progro.az is a network that brings together job seekers and employers and provides professional and qualified trainings for young people, with over 400 members enrolled up to date.



www.bacar.az (which means “be able”) is another virtual training platform within the framework of the self-employment program that provides advisory and skill building support to around 500 enterprises annually.

The logo for coursera is the word 'coursera' in a bold, blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

UNDP partnered with the world's leading education system [Coursera](https://www.coursera.org) to provide Workforce Recovery Initiative courses for 50,000 citizens of Azerbaijan who lost their jobs due to staff reduction or business closure. The initiative helped participants upskill their knowledge and competences from a wide array of 4,000 free training courses offered by renowned universities and organizations

In addition, in 2020, 513 young women participated at business and employment trainings targeting women. And, 227 women started their own businesses supported by UNDP and UN Women. Refugees and asylum-seekers experienced additional hardship during the pandemic as they are often employed in informal jobs. As a result of high-level advocacy by the UNHCR and the Resident Coordinator now they can be legally employed. For this, individual identification

numbers will be provided by the Government upon request allowing them to register employment contracts in Azerbaijan. As well, through the ILO capacity building activities, the Workers' organizations were able to monitor progress toward international standards on decent work including protection of the rights of workers to organize independent and democratic trade unions and to bargain collectively to improve their work conditions.

Investing in Agriculture and Tourism

Agriculture is an important means of accelerating the livelihoods and employability of rural communities in Azerbaijan, as 40% of the population are engaged in agricultural activity. Recognising that agriculture remains a strong pillar of growth for the country, UN agencies put efforts to substantially increase value addition across this sector. Transforming the system of provision of Agricultural Advisory Services (AAS) is one of the

initiatives led by FAO to strengthen the national extension system for effective advisory support to women and men farmers to increase productivity and food security. To kick off the intervention, a situational assessment was carried out in 2020, allowing for the mapping of regional agriculture and food systems and proposing a new effective model of AAS to the Government which is going to be piloted in two regions of Azerbaijan.



UNDP works with the local partners to ensure long-term protection of native genetic resources and promote agricultural practices using traditional crop material. A new mobile training and soil-testing laboratory helps to spread information about the most successful farming methods to adopt in local conditions.

Though a traditional agrarian country, Azerbaijan also depends on imported seeds with the share of local varieties in production as only 5% for cereal crops and some 15-20% for vegetables. High diversity of genetic resources is important for agriculture to avert food security risks. To counter the development of such endangerments, UNDP worked with the local partners to ensure long-term protection of native genetic resources and promote agricultural practices using traditional crop material. In 2020, UNDP supported locating

new agro-biodiversity hotspots, and new genetic resources were collected and used in breeding programmes. Gene banks were established in Gobustan, Sheki, and Absheron districts, and a training center was established on an area of 1 hectare at the Vegetable Research Institute. 135 farmers are now practicing sustainable farming and have access to continuous online and on-farm advice. By working together with the farmers, over 3,000 ha of land were planted with local varieties of fruits, vegetables and cereals.



IOM is revitalizing “Kahriz” water supply systems in the rural communities which is a man-made, centuries-old, traditional water-supply systems that do not need electricity or fossil fuel to function.

On the other hand, IOM helped revitalize “Kahriz” water supply systems in the rural communities, which are man-made, centuries-old water-supply systems that do not need electricity or fossil fuel to function. Restored canal Shamsi Kahriz now provides water to 214 families and 90 hectares of arable land. In 2020, first draft National Master

Plan for Kahriz Revitalization was developed in Azerbaijan which maps the existing 75 kahrizes across 8 districts in the country for future use.



Fewer and fewer young people in Azerbaijan decide to work in farming, and more than 60 percent of the farmers are over the age of 55. FAO works with the Government to revive agriculture in the regions and turn it into profitable and sustainable means of living. Rahib Aghaev, a 32-year old farmer is one of those who chose to stay in the village and engage in sustainable farming. Read more about his story [here](#).

Cattle breeding is also of crucial importance for Azerbaijan's food security, as it is the important source of nutrition and livelihoods in rural areas. FAO worked with the Ministry of Agriculture to improve cattle breeding technologies. In 2020, 60 artificial inseminators were trained, and the potentials of artificial insemination was assessed. This promises higher conception rate for cows, less calving problems, higher number and genetic merit of the animals, and higher productivity for the farm. In addition, a [2025 vision document for sheep value chain](#) was developed, proposing effective ways to develop the sheep product value chains (meat, milk and wool).

To tap into the potential of the local food producers, FAO kicked off another new initiative, where 19 communities from the three north-west region of Azerbaijan were engaged into agro

tourism and value chain development activities as part of the [Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System \(GIAHS\) platform](#). These local communities learn about local food promotion mechanisms, micro-loans, food safety, finance and taxation which gives them an advantage and helps the region itself benefit from this global platform. As well, UNDP has facilitated an official recognition and [TedQual Quality certification](#) from the UN World Tourism Organization, so Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University now brings highly skilled professionals to the tourism and hospitality sector of the country.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA TWO:
STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL
CAPACITIES AND EFFECTIVE PUBLIC
AND SOCIAL SERVICES



During the prolonged quarantine periods and (post)conflict escalation, UNICEF extensively engaged with parents on tips for taking care of children and teenagers, while also taking care of themselves.

OVERVIEW

Outcome 2.1: By 2020, Azerbaijan has enhanced institutional capacities for transparent, evidence-based and gender-responsive policy formulation and implementation

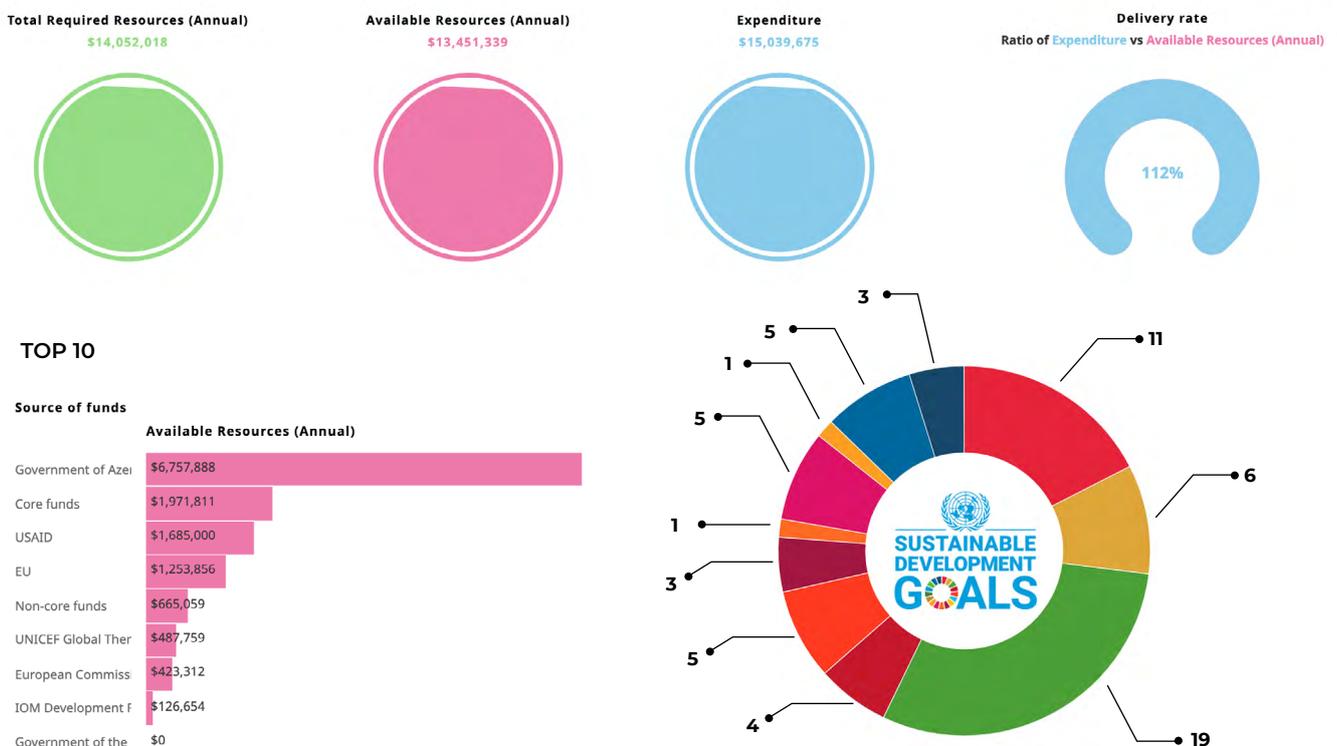
Outcome 2.2: By 2020, Azerbaijan has made progress in line with international human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review and other treaty obligations, and has strengthened capacities for implementation, monitoring and reporting aligned with international standards

Outcome 2.3: By 2020, quality public and social services are accessible to all and help achieve more socially inclusive and equitable development results

UN Agencies: IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNECE, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, WHO

SDG targets: Target 1.3, 1.4, 1.b, 2.2, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.b, 3.d, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.c, 8.2, 8.5, 9.4, 10.2, 10.7, 11.a, 16.3, 16.7, 16.9, 17.18
Under this Priority Area, 64 key activities were implemented across 27 locations in Azerbaijan in 2020.

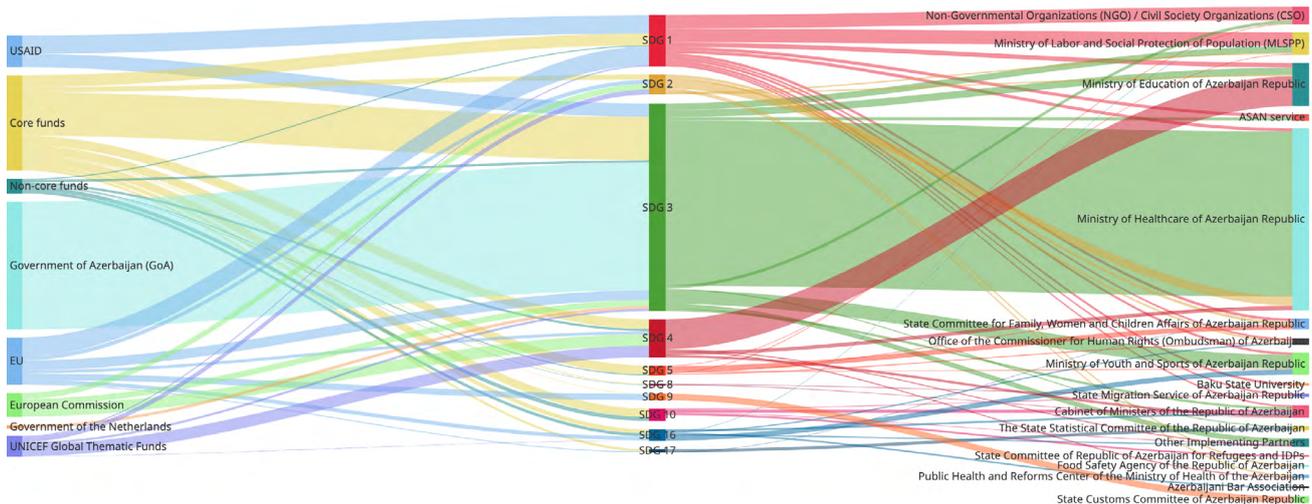
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



This chart shows the share of different UN activities planned per Sustainable Development Goal.

PARTNERS

This graphic shows how investments are contributing to the work of different partners to advance the SDGs in Azerbaijan. The width of the lines represents the relative amount of resources being contributed.

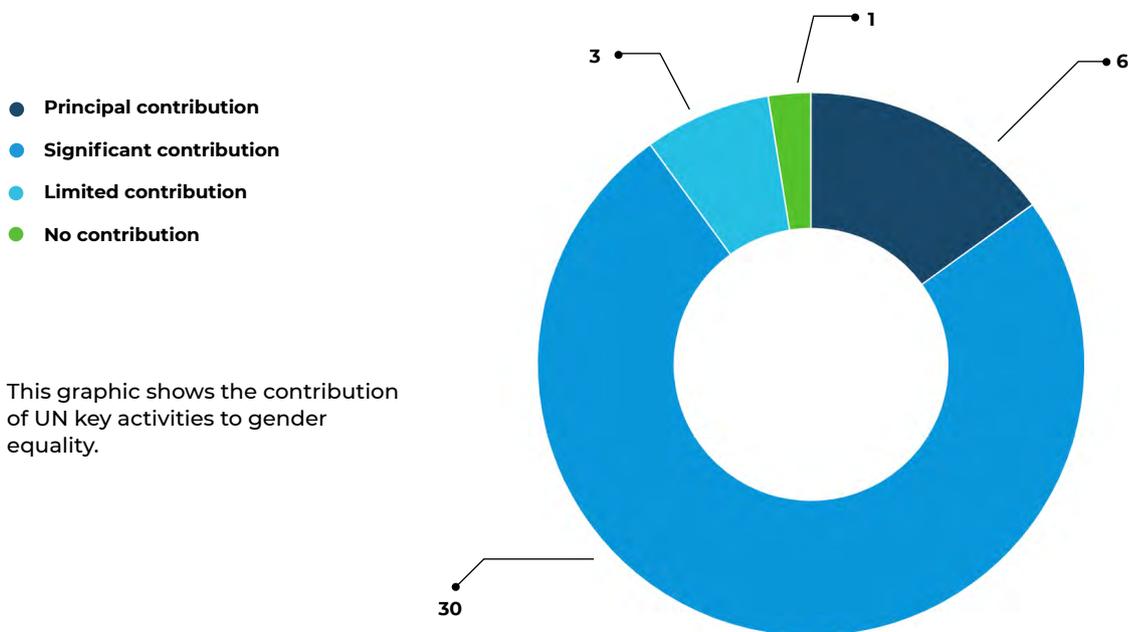


Contribution to SDGs

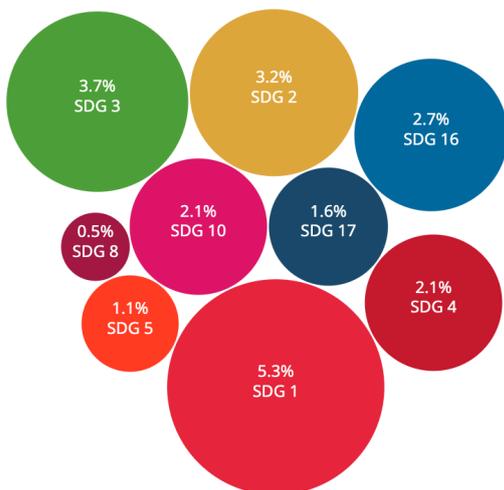


The above graphic shows how the UN allocates its resources across each of the SDGs in Azerbaijan.

CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER EQUALITY



This graphic shows the contribution of UN key activities to gender equality.



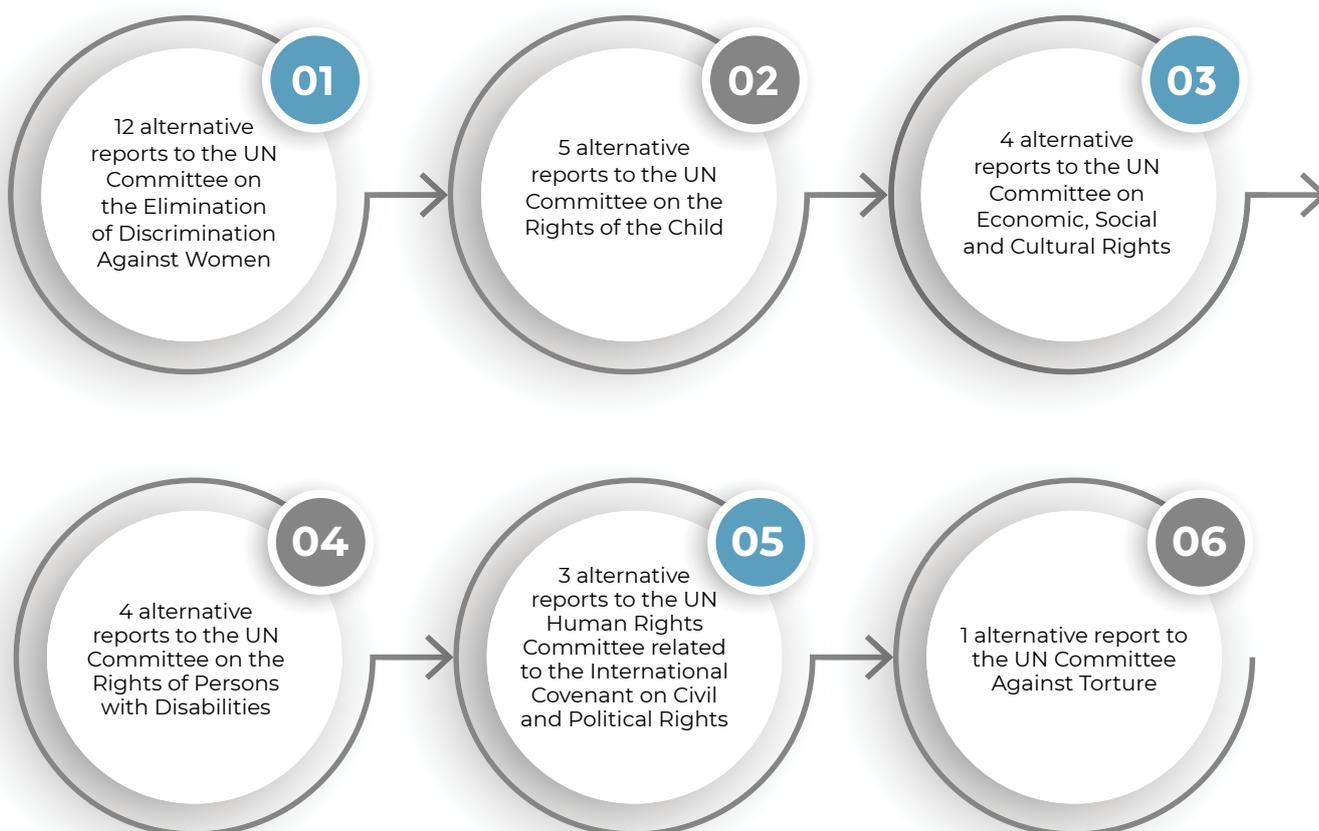
This graphic shows the distribution of Gender Equality markers (consider significant and principle contribution) to the SDGs.

Adhering to Human Rights commitments

In 2020, 29 alternative reports were prepared and submitted to various UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies by the CSOs and human rights lawyers who were capacitated by OHCHR through consultation and mentoring sessions. These reports provide an opportunity to present additional perspectives, issues of concern or information which might be omitted from the government reports.

It also enhances the better understanding of the human rights situation in the country, resulting in more relevant, focused and implementable recommendations to the Government. OHCHR also worked with the Office of the Ombudsperson to submit a parallel report to UN Convention against Torture.

29 alternative reports were prepared and submitted to various UN Treaty Bodies:



COVID-19 VƏ QADINLARIN İNSAN HÜQUQLARI : TƏLİMAT

Dövlətlərin və digər maraqlı tərəflərin görə biləcəkləri bezi əsas tədbirlər hansılardır?

- Məişət zorakılığı qurbanları və onların övladları üçün kifayət qədər və təhlükəsiz sığınacaqlar yaratmaq.
- Qaynar xətlər, onlayn söhbət platformaları, o cümlədən uzaq məsafələrdən təhlükəsiz şəkildə müraciət edilə bilən resurslar yaratmaq.
- Qurbanların necə yardım istəməli olduqları, şahidlərin hansı tədbirləri görməli olduqları, o cümlədən zorakılığa əl atma bələyindən qorxan şəxslərin necə yardım istəməli olduqları barədə maarifləndirmə işləri aparmaq.
- Zorakı şəxslərin evdən çıxarılması və qurbanların müdafiə olunması üçün hüquq-mühafizə və məhkəmə orqanları tərəfindən dərhal və hər hansı hadisə baş verməzdən əvvəl tədbirlərin görülməsini təmin etmək
- Zorakılıqdan xilas olmuş şəxslər üçün tibbi, psixoloji və iqtisadi yardımların davam etdirilməsini təmin etmək

UNITED NATIONS

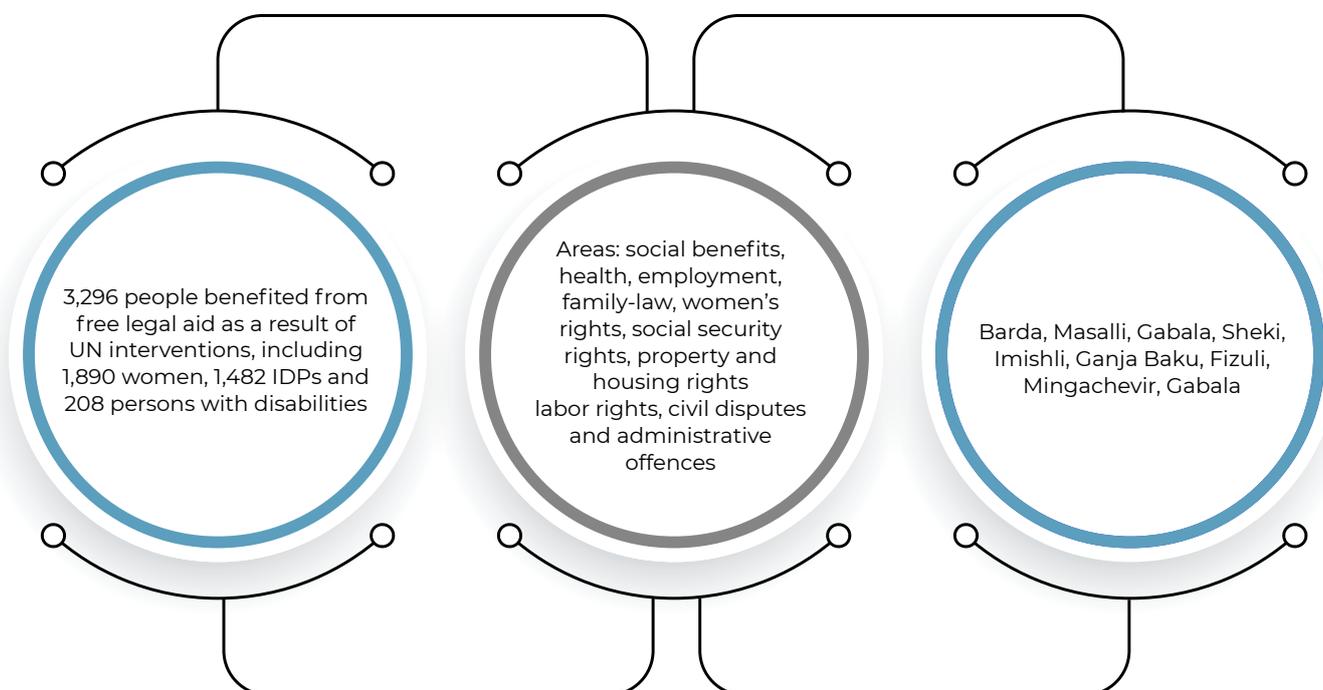
OHCHR organised various virtual workshops for the representatives of the national CSOs, lawyers and the representatives of the Ombudsperson, including from the regional centers to enhance their knowledge on UN human rights tools and mechanisms.

In addition, the Ombudsperson Office has established a new child friendly Call Centre, with advanced technologies to better record calls and track responses with UNICEF support. Despite this, direct monitoring of the situation of child rights remained challenging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the number of childcare institutions monitored by the National Preventive Group fell by 50 per cent compared to 2019.

With advocacy by UNHCR a Working Group on Statelessness was established to monitor the implementation of the Government pledge to ensure naturalization of the registered stateless persons within three years, as well as coordinate and monitor other relevant activities in the area of prevention and reduction of statelessness in Azerbaijan. UNHCR also launched initiatives

targeting stateless persons and those at risk of statelessness to raise their awareness on where to seek help to find durable solutions.

UN agencies extended and intensified the delivery of free legal assistance for vulnerable groups (including unemployed persons, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, internally displaced persons, women and men in rural areas, refugees, migrants) and other people affected by COVID-19. UNICEF developed the Guidelines on Child Friendly Legal Aid that was approved by the Azerbaijan Bar Association and recommended for lawyers' use. As well, OHCHR, in cooperation with the Ombudsperson and the Bar Association deployed new lawyers in five more regions, to deliver free legal services on a permanent basis.



Expanding Healthcare Services

To minimize the conveying of misinformation, outdated information, and biased personal opinions during family-planning consultations, [a Virtual Contraceptive Consultation \(ViC\) - module](#) was translated to local language and incorporated to the educational curriculum of the State Medical University with UNFPA support. Around 300 doctors and emergency staff were trained in 3 regions on the [Minimum Initial Service Package \(MISP\) for Sexual and Reproductive Health \(SRH\)](#) and 400 doctors on near-miss case reviews (perinatal audit) as a result of joint efforts of UNFPA and WHO with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Emergencies and Scientific-Research Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The module on the prevention of cervical cancer was translated and adapted to Azerbaijan which was later published and distributed to medical workers across the country.

Technical support and guidance were provided by UNICEF to the national health agencies, along with advocacy for maintaining and strengthening of maternal and child health services, including provision of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), immunization and Early Childhood Development (ECD) counselling through online platforms. 73,684 people were reached with breastfeeding related social media posts and messages, while 5,768 were reached through live counselling sessions on IYCF with medical professionals. Nutrition related posts (covering energy needs of young children, proper complementary feeding practices, menus for different ages in early childhood, along with nutrition of pregnant and lactating mothers) reached 96,832 people. 706 people attended the live sessions on proper nutrition of school-aged children.

UNDP continued supporting the provision of medicine for the treatment of people living with hepatitis C, HIV and tuberculosis in Azerbaijan, procuring 5,130 packs of anti-tuberculosis pharmaceuticals for drug-susceptible and drug-resistant tuberculosis patients. This happened within the framework agreement between UNDP and the Ministry of Health with the Global Fund's initiative to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), aiming to assist the Government in the cost-efficient, transparent and timely procurement of medicines and other medical devices and to support it in further reform of the national procurement, quality assurance system, and capacity development processes.

UNHCR has monitored and assessed 161 medical facilities with the aim to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers have access to treatment on equal footing with Azerbaijani nationals and identify the barriers. It continued providing free secondary healthcare (SHC) services to registered refugees and asylum seekers through contracted private

clinic which covered 690 referrals in 2020. Through UNCHR mediation, Fuji Optical dispatched 1,500 glasses and 20 intraocular lenses to internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan.

Enhancing Access to Education

The community-based early learning centres, modelled by UNICEF, expanded from 320 to 500 centres during the year, and reached to 9,208 children aged 3-4 years following the transition to online platforms. During the prolonged quarantine periods from March, nearly 160,000 preschool age children and over 100,000 parents benefitted from home-based early learning guidance and parenting education resources developed with UNICEF support and delivered through television and digital platforms, including through a parenting education portal (www.ilksil.az) and cell phone application (ilk5il) established in partnership with the Ministry of Education.



Vocational education schools continued to produce online lessons for students with UNDP support, offering them the possibility to attend classes at home during the pandemic.

Vocational education schools continued to produce online lessons for students with UNDP support, offering them the possibility to attend classes at home during the pandemic. The video lessons were not only aired on national TV but also made available on digital platforms including the [YouTube](#) channel of State Agency for Vocational Education and the www.video.edu.az portal of the Ministry of Education.

Recognizing the challenge for women to enjoy equal representation in STEM research and practice, UNDP launched a platform to encourage young women and girls to enrol in STEM¹⁰ programmes and continued matching students with mentors to provide career guidance.

The national network of Youth Houses and Career Development Centres supported by UNICEF engaged nearly 8,000 young people through digital platforms in psychological and legal counselling, and courses such as work readiness, social entrepreneurship, community project design, volunteerism etc. IOM also integrated awareness on the threat of violent extremism and radicalization into the program with youth workers. More than 5,000 adolescents, young people, their family members and teachers, took part in the UNICEF [Basic Life Skills](#) curriculum in its online format with 77 per cent positive feedback on the usage of the skills and concepts in their own lives and with their families. This also helped them to address stress and frustrations caused by the COVID-19 quarantine.

UNHCR directly supported around 70 refugees and asylum-seekers youth with their education, supporting their admission to colleges and universities and with tuition fees.

Making Societies Inclusive

People and their well-being are the ultimate focus of UN interventions. In 2020, UN agencies worked with the Government and other partners to address

the challenges that make people vulnerable to exclusion in different spheres of life.

UNICEF continued to provide technical support and advocacy in promoting a strategic approach to social services as a key aspect of the social protection system. The final draft of the Social Services Strategy was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for endorsement. The strategic importance of social services has led to the institutional reform through establishment of the Social Services Agency under MLSPP involving professional social workers. UNICEF's integrated social services model is to be adapted under Government ownership. In 2020, UNICEF also supported reforms to the child adoption system through introducing international standards and best practices in reintegration of children from residential institutions to families. It provided technical support in developing a national concept for child reintegration, case management tools and capacity building of staff of relevant structures of the MLSPP.

Persons with disabilities continued facing difficulties and barriers that often remain invisible to the broader public. Exclusion from education and training means that many people with disabilities who are employed typically occupy low-paid and menial positions, often in segregated workplaces, losing out on opportunities to realize their full potential. The Self-Employment Programme in Azerbaijan initiated by UNDP in partnership with MLSPP addresses this specific challenge, which helps unemployed people with disabilities to start up their own businesses by providing free training in entrepreneurship, as well as advice and financial support in the form of equipment and/or materials. In 2020, 528 business plans of persons with disabilities were approved by UNDP and 51 new micro and small enterprises were established. 66 households were also supported by IOM with small-micro business grants to revitalise their livelihoods and to mitigate the risk of violent extremism in the districts exposed to this threat.

¹⁰ STEM stand for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics



Nanakhanim Azimova, is a student at the first Inclusive Art School in Baku which offers free classes in drawing, knitting and woodcarving for students with and without disabilities, with the aim to empower them and change negative social perceptions.

Despite the challenges of expanding inclusive education for children with disabilities while schools remained closed, UNICEF continued to support the implementation of the State Programme on Inclusive Education, with a teacher training programme introduced to the formal curriculum of national pre- and in-service teacher training and over 10,000 primary school teachers, 320 university teachers and 1,300 students of pedagogical universities trained in inclusive education approaches. As well, an Inclusive

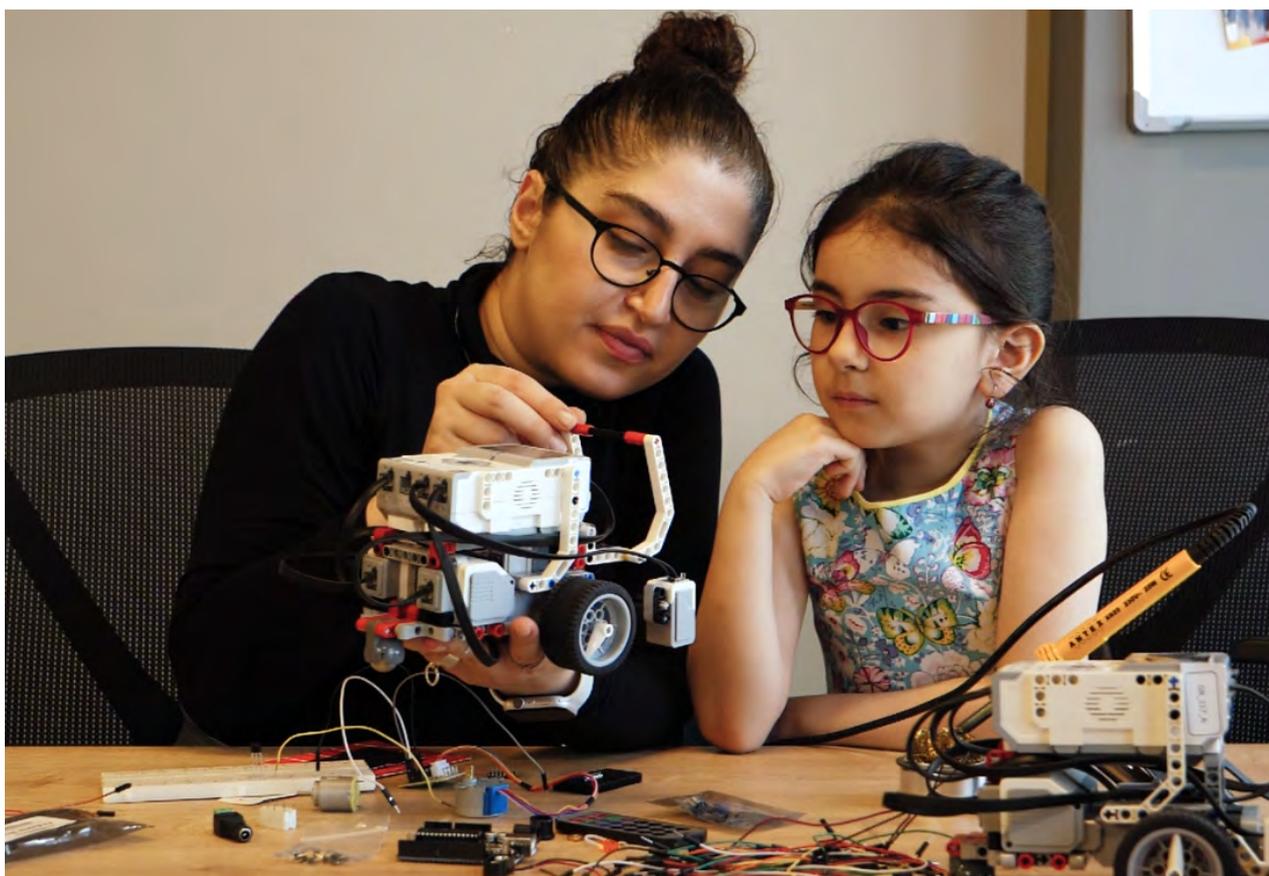
Vocational Arts and Crafts Training Centre in Baku which is established through joint efforts of UNDP and the Icherisheher State Historical-Architectural Reserve, provided a space for inclusive learning and socialising for around 115 children and youth of all abilities in woodwork, pottery, stained glass, batik and decorative handicrafts. The center resumed its classes by switching to [online platforms](#) to help its students continue their activities during the lockdowns.



Elderly receive session of dance therapy under active ageing project of UNFPA and MLSPP, an innovative social initiative providing for a variety of supportive and inclusive measures and programs to ensure active and healthy live for retired persons

In 2020 the UNCT continued working with older persons who lack social support networks, have low income, and are exposed to loneliness. In 2020, around 30,345 elderly benefited from UNFPA led initiatives on promoting wellbeing of older persons through active ageing. They engaged into learning and social activities on healthy nutrition, architecture, culinary, handicrafts, art, sports, dance and others that also helped them overcome

isolation. UNFPA continued working with the Government to develop an [Active Ageing Index \(AAI\)](#) that measures both the current realities and the remaining potential for active ageing in the population, and also identify areas where future gains can be made.



Bridging the gender gap in in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is vital for creating infrastructure, services and solutions that work for all which is a focus of UNDP's new initiative.

Mainstreaming gender equality

Azerbaijan endorsed two major national policy documents in 2020: “National Action Plan to prevent choosing the sex of the child before birth for 2020-2025” and “National Action Plan for Combating Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020-2023”. Both plans were the products of years long high-level RC and UNCT advocacy work led by UNFPA against selective abortions and gender-based violence (GBV). In addition, a three-digit GBV hotline-860 was launched within the framework of 16 Days of Activism which records GBV cases, offers psychological support, crisis intervention and referrals to the survivors.

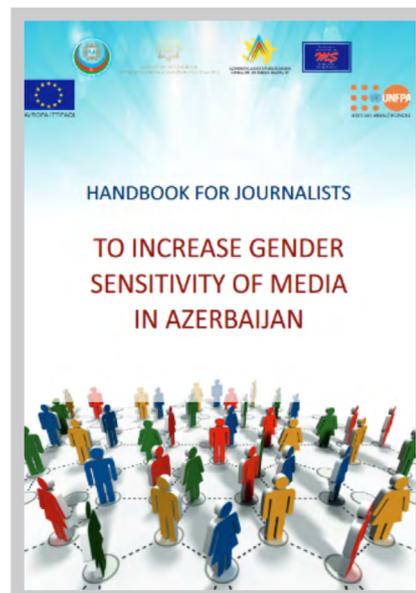
The UN Gender Theme Group (GTG) engaged UN agencies, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, the MLSPP and other development partners for this year’s 16-day campaign and focused on raising awareness about the negative impact of COVID-19 and the conflict on women and girls through TV and radio highlights, as well as online video-conferences. In 2020, GTG

has extensively promoted gender mainstreaming across agencies by focusing on awareness raising and advocacy for improved legal and policy framework and capacity building activities. Despite the major pushback by the pandemic and conflict, 35% of all activities were carried out jointly, 13% increase from the last year.

The Common Country Analysis carried out by the UNCT in 2020, singled out gender inequality as one of the core sustainable development challenges in Azerbaijan and prompted UNCT to advocate for a separate UNSDCF Priority Area dedicated to gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment. Although a gender lens applies to all priority areas, with a dedicated priority area, the UNSDCF (2021-2025) aims to achieve concrete changes in policy and practice to address the root causes of inequality to ensure full participation of women and girls in decisions affecting their lives.



The national legislation and country's socio-economic frameworks were assessed from the gender perspective with proposals to address shortcomings. [See here](#)



A handbook for journalists was also published to guide them on ways to apply a gender lens to news coverage. [See here](#)



UNDP is partnering with European Union and ABAD to help set up and expand small family businesses in rural areas. As the first producers of this Dutch style cheese in the Balakan region, Miralamovs' family target not just local shops but also national supermarkets.



Azerbaijan's first woman football manager Dilara Aliyeva becomes one of Gakh's first woman municipal councillors as an alumni of the Gender-Based Municipal Academy launched by the European Union, UNDP and the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs. Read her full story [here](#)

Cross border initiatives

Azerbaijan is located at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia and is on the way of becoming a transportation hub connecting Europe and Asia. The UNCT is continuously supporting the Government to set up advanced systems for border security, law enforcement and migration management. In 2020, new border crossing points were established which were equipped with [API/PNR \(Advanced Passenger information/ Passenger Name record systems\)](#) with support from IOM, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the UK Border Force. This new system provides the government with advanced data on passengers and cargo to conduct pre-clearance, strengthen public security and make travel safer and easier for all. The usage of passenger data for law enforcement, border security, customs, and intelligence also help the government implement the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme to counter terrorism and serious crime.

Azerbaijan was also connected it to the [eTIR International System](#) with UNECE support, which

minimizes physical contact among people in cross-border operations by facilitating the flow of goods and ensuring contactless, paperless and seamless border crossing operations.

UNODC through its Container Control Programme (CCP) conducted technical assessment mission with relevant Government agencies to identify national capabilities to support the delivery of Strategic Trade and Export Control trainings and discuss current legislation and regulations on implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540.¹¹ UNODC also along with the World Customs Organization delivered number of CCP advanced trainings/mentorships in the online format to enhance capacity of State Customs Service frontline officers, members of CCP Port Control units (PCU) in Astara and Baku/Alat, who have participated in seizures of 929.789 kg total of heroin at Astara Border Crossing Point in 2020.

¹¹[https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1540%20\(2004\)](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1540%20(2004))

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA THREE:
IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE TO
HAZARDS AND DISASTERS**



OVERVIEW

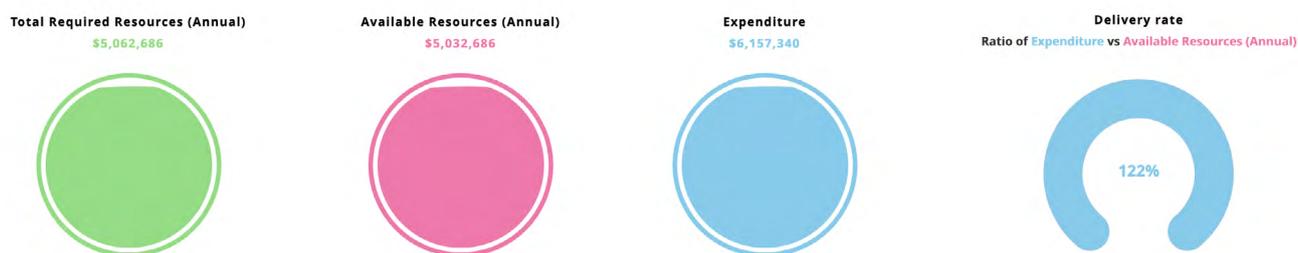
Outcome 3.1: By 2020, sustainable development policies and legislation are in place, better implemented and coordinated in compliance with multilateral environmental agreements, recognize social and health linkages, and address issues of environment and natural resource management, energy efficiency and renewable energy, climate change and resilience to hazards and disasters

UN Agencies: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNECE, WHO

SDG targets: Target 2.4, 3.8, 3.d, 6.5, 9.4, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.a, 13.b, 14.5, 14.6, 15.2, 15.3, 15.9, 17.18, 17.19

Under this Priority Area, 48 key activities were implemented across 11 locations in Azerbaijan in 2020.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



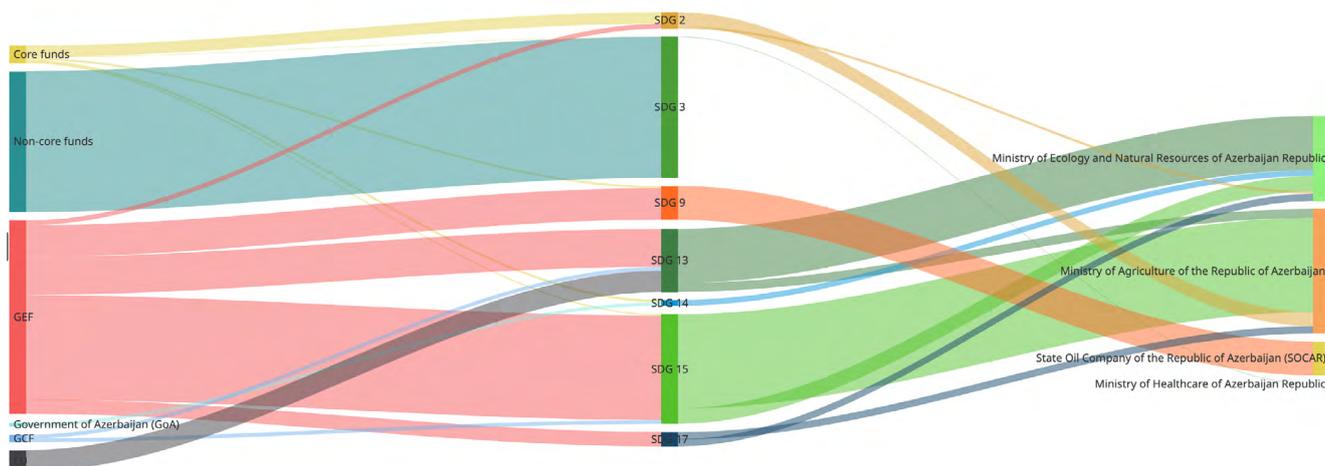
TOP 10



This chart shows the share of different UN activities planned per Sustainable Development Goal.

PARTNERS

This graphic shows how investments are contributing to the work of different partners to advance the SDGs in Azerbaijan. The width of the lines represents the relative amount of resources being contributed.



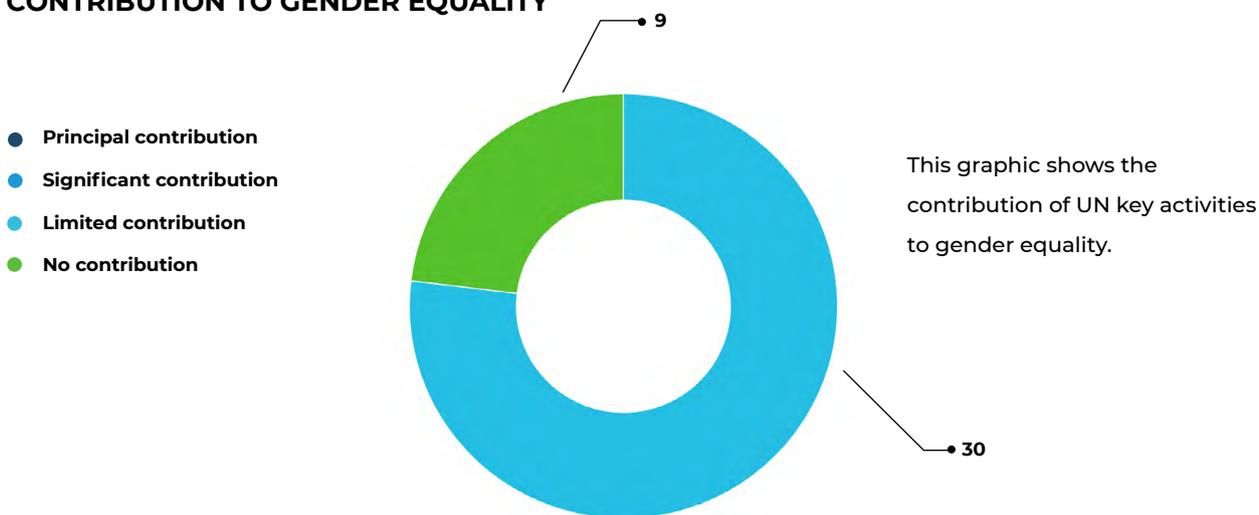
Contribution to SDGs

SDG targets: Target 2.4, 3.8, 3.d, 6.5, 9.4, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.a, 13.b, 14.5, 14.6, 15.2, 15.3, 15.9, 17.18, 17.19

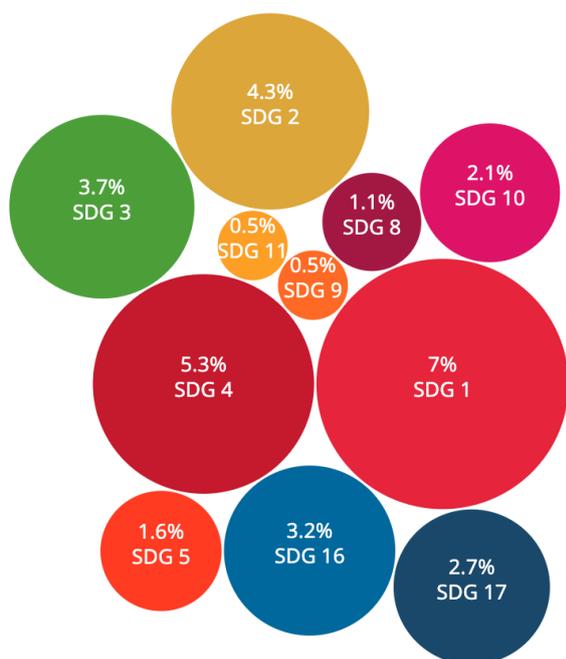


The above graphic shows how the UN allocates its resources across each of the SDGs in Azerbaijan.

CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER EQUALITY



This graphic shows the contribution of UN key activities to gender equality.



This graphic shows the distribution of Gender Equality markers (consider significant and principle contribution) to the SDGs.

Complying with international standards

As part of its international commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Government of Azerbaijan ensures regular reporting of climate change related trends and developments in the form of national communications and biennial update reports. Following the First, Second and Third National Communications in 2001, 2010 and 2016 respectively, the country is preparing to submit its Fourth National Communication report which was developed with technical and expertise support from UNDP. In addition, a roadmap for a Low-Emission Development Strategy was developed which provides recommendations for mainstreaming climate change measures in priority sectors and conducting comparative analyses of the national legislature and the EU acquis.

The country also finalized the legal review of draft legislation on Environmental Impact Assessment with UNECE support, which helps the government to address remaining gaps in the law vis-à-vis the Espoo Convention and harmonize its legal framework on environmental assessment with international standards. Submission of national report under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (the Water Convention) brings the country closer in building cooperation on transboundary surface and ground waters and strengthening their protection and sustainable management.

In addition, a comprehensive report was developed with FAO support on Azerbaijan's current efforts to implement its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)¹² in Agriculture and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Sectors.

The report also provides local partners with the tools to better align national priorities with climate change commitments related to agriculture and LULUCF sectors. Work is in progress to develop a gender responsive and participatory investment

plan to leverage private sector participation for the implementation of Azerbaijan's NDC in the Agriculture and LULUCF sector.

Building Resilience to Hazards

While the country is an important centre for agriculture, massive uses of pesticides exposes the environment and people to serious pollution and poses a significant environmental and health concern.

Thus, FAO is closely working with the national partners to improve pesticides management in Azerbaijan to reduce their negative impact on the environment and people. In 2020, the capacities for disposal of obsolete pesticides were assessed; the legal framework was analysed to align national laws and regulations with international requirements and an action plan was developed to implement pilot Integrated Pest Management measures. To improve the national capacity for early detection, diagnosis, and response to important endemic and exotic transboundary animal diseases, FAO capacitated local stakeholders on disease surveillance, including veterinary diagnostics. As part of the locust monitoring and control activities, anti-locust treatments covered 32,390 ha in 2020 with FAO guidance.

Another initiative toward safeguarding the health and well-being of people was to support strengthening the food safety control and risk communication systems in line with the State Program for Ensuring Food Safety in Azerbaijan for 2019-2025. With FAO technical and advisory support, the Food Safety Agency was able to access the relevant tools and knowledge for better risk communication and phytosanitary system management. In addition, "Codex Alimentarius" regulations - "Food Code" was introduced in Azerbaijan to help harmonize national food safety regulations with international standards and codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

¹² Azerbaijan has communicated its first NDC to the UNFCCC in 2017 and expressed its commitment to reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions by 35% by 2030 compared to 1990/base year as its contribution to the global climate change efforts.



One of the priorities in FAO's partnership with Azerbaijan is the promotion of women's representation in rural organizations and income-generating activities for rural women. The women who have benefited from the support use their skills to sustain their livelihoods during the the difficult months following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Managing Forests Sustainably

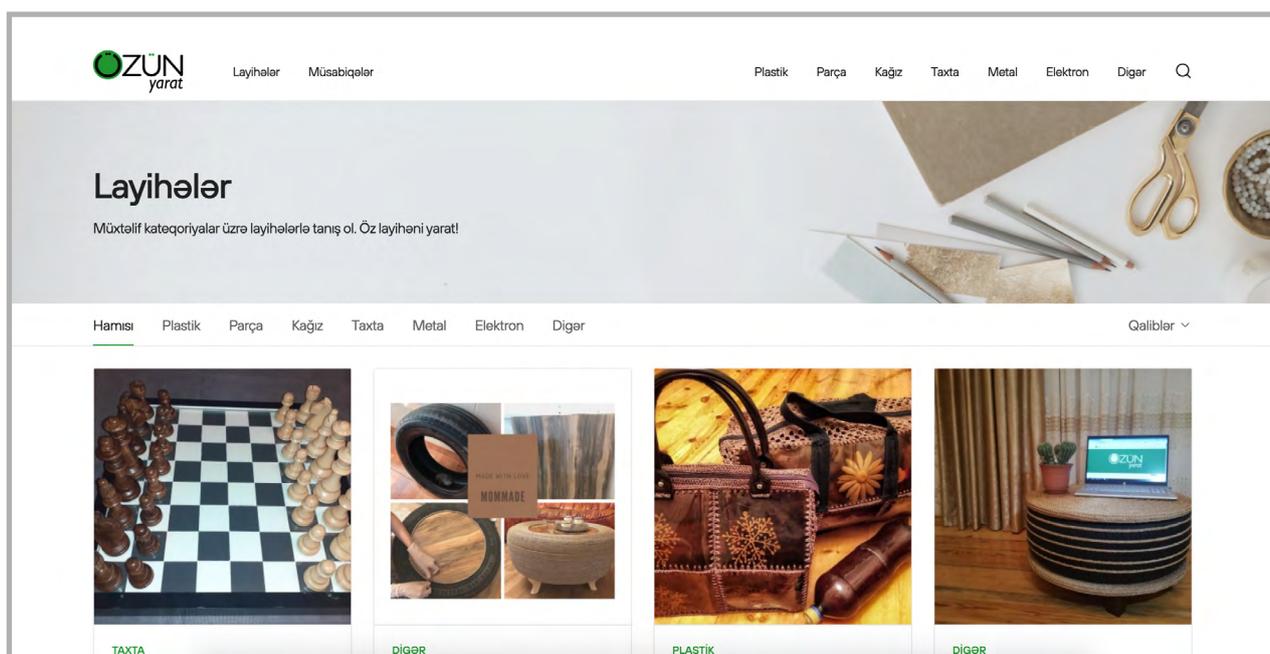
To ensure the sustainable use of forest ecosystems, National Forest Assessment and Monitoring System was strengthened with FAO technical and advisory support. The country started utilising [Collect Earth technologies](#) with very high spatial resolution which allows to collect data to address specific monitoring purposes, such as landscape restoration, track emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, map national forest inventories, disaster assessments, livestock and rangeland management, with a multi-temporal and multi-scale approach. At the same time, [Global Forest Resources Assessment](#) (FRA) was developed for Azerbaijan which helps the country to design its National Forest Inventory (NFI).

Pioneering Innovative Solutions

UNDP continued to support efforts to strengthen the innovation community in Azerbaijan. In December 2020, UNDP facilitated the organization of [InnoWeek 2020](#) to spread innovative ideas in the country, expand the start-up movement and develop innovative thinking among young people – an event that involved 200+ speakers and 3,200 participants from some 80 countries and attracted over a million viewers.

[AquaHack innovation challenge](#) - a water-themed hackathon was launched by UNDP and attracted over 300 applicants to work on finding innovative and affordable ways of tackling water-related issues. 33 digital solutions were proposed on water resource management in this digital challenge, where the following solutions were awarded: a novel procedure to extract fresh water from seawater by using alternative energy sources; IoT-based device to assess water usage and 'smart irrigation' to minimize the consumption of water used in agriculture, water-sensitive sensors for more efficient use of rainwater in residential buildings.

156 upcycling projects were submitted to the virtual competition '[Ozun Yarat](#)' — meaning 'Do It Yourself', launched by UNDP on World Environment Day under the motto 'Change begins from home'. Following the global trend in upcycling, this new platform encourages people in Azerbaijan to upcycle products they would normally throw away.



The upcycled products of the contest participants are demonstrated in the platform “[Ozun Yarat](#)”

CHALLENGES IN 2020

The outbreak of COVID-19 and escalation of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan were a setback to the implementation of UN activities in 2020, including the management, operations, programme delivery and monitoring activities. UN entities had to reprioritize their programmatic activities in order to redirect as much support as possible to vulnerable groups affected by both events. The constraints created by the pandemic on face-to-face contacts with families and communities, with travel restrictions in place for most of the year, encouraged the use of digital approaches to collecting data or conducting awareness and capacity building activities. However, this limited the scope for public engagement due to the digital divide experienced by the weakest segments of the population. Quarantine restrictions and the escalated conflict also limited the scope of work with Government agencies and other development

partners. The Government shifted its priorities to short-term measures that delayed partnership activities on strategic planning and programming with UN agencies. Another challenge was the reduced capacity for civil society organisations to access funding and thematic expertise to continue operating independently.



**SECTION 3: UN WORKING MORE
AND BETTER TOGETHER**

Programming

Looking into the next five-year cycle, the key focus in 2020 was the development and finalization of a new cooperation framework document with the Government- the [UN-Azerbaijan Sustainable Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025](#). The findings and recommendations of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the UNAPF Evaluation provided the foundation for undertaking collective visioning and prioritization exercise in January with broad range of stakeholders. The CCA was developed through inclusive, multi-stakeholder engagement processes to identify who are those left behind, including those furthest behind and the root causes of inequality, exclusion, and discrimination, including gender-based discrimination. The needs identified by diverse groups of CSOs representing women, children, people with disabilities, internally displaced people, migrants, ethnic, religious and sexual minorities along with academia and private sector actors were then translated to UNSDCF outcomes and outputs via constructive dialogue with the Government during the multi-stakeholder UNSDCF design workshop. The process helped to identify key strategic priorities and related development areas to invest collective efforts, capacities, and resources. The new framework lays its basis on the SDGs, the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) imperative and a people-centric and rights-based approach to development. Gender equality and data were given special emphasis as standalone outcomes while also recognised as cross-cutting issues throughout the document. The UNSDCF is founded on a long-term vision of resilience and building back better following the socioeconomic shocks induced by the pandemic and the conflict. Focus on the regional dimension and country's international commitments under treaties also distinguishes it from the previous partnership framework. At the end of the year, the UNCT updated the CCA focusing on the analysis of COVID-19 impact on progress towards SDGs

to ensure that it remains a signature analytical contribution of the UN, and that the Cooperation Framework continues to address the country's evolving situation.

The other key segments of the document, including the Results and Funding Frameworks were also elaborated in 2020. Through the configuration process, UNCT also succeeded in bringing necessary capacities to respond to the agreed priorities of the Cooperation Framework and the needs of the country context. Six new UN entities, namely UNDRR, UNESCO, UN Habitat, UNOPS, UNV and UN Women are signatories to the new Cooperation Framework.

UNCT had to reprogramme their activities under the UNAPF Joint Work Plans for 2020 due to the pandemic and undertook a virtual Annual Review process. [UNINFO](#) was launched for Azerbaijan, which is a web-based platform for planning, monitoring, and reporting to track the UN system activities at the country level. [An Annual Progress Report for 2019](#) was developed and published which captured the key results of the previous year.



UNSDCF Strategic Prioritization Workshop brought together high-level representatives from the Government, private sector, civil society, academia and media to define the priorities for the next five years cooperation between the UN and the Government.

Evaluation findings and management actions

UNCT undertook an independent evaluation of the UNAPF in 2019 which provided 21 findings, 11 conclusions, 6 lessons learned, and 12 recommendations all of which were accepted by UNCT and the Government of Azerbaijan. To address the evaluation recommendations, UNCT prepared a management response, identifying 58 actions for implementation. As part of the Annual Review process, UNCT reported on the key actions it has committed to together with the Government: out of 58 key actions, 26 are achieved, 30 in progress, 1 is partly achieved, and 1 is not applicable. Both the evaluation and its management response was published on the UN Azerbaijan website and annual progress update against the key actions can also be accessed through website.

Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

In 2020, UN system in Azerbaijan joined up efforts with the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development to optimize resource allocation towards national development ambitions and their alignment with the SDGs agenda. A new initiative “The Financing the Future - aligning budgeting, planning and mobilizing financing, through an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)” funded by the UN SDG Fund aims to enhance national capacities in generating evidence-based policies, developing integrated financing frameworks on climate change, climate financing and technology transfer, with special focus on gender equality, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and social enterprises and using Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) platform for enhanced corporation between the state and non-state actors.

In addition, with the support of DESA, UNCT commissioned an assessment report on “Strengthening the Multi-Stakeholder Dimension of National Development Planning and SDG Mainstreaming in Azerbaijan”, the findings of which shaped the UNCT engagement with CSOs, private sector and academia in Azerbaijan on UNSDCF (2021-2025) design and implementation. In March 2020, a Joint Task Force (JTF) was established between the UN Country Team and the State Statistics Committee to strengthen collaboration for the improvement of the national SDG monitoring and reporting systems. The Task Force started its work with an in-depth assessment of existing data and mechanisms which helped identify capacity gaps and concrete actions for improvement. Recognizing data disaggregation as one of the challenges, the Taskforce brought together key experts across the UN system in a two-day workshop in November to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, practices, and experiences to address the needs for data on the most vulnerable groups.¹³ At the end of 2020, the JTF commenced developing a guidebook for data disaggregation presenting a compilation of technical guidelines for statisticians and decision-makers who work on disaggregating SDG data.

Throughout the year UNCT held regular coordination meetings with diverse groups of CSOs, development partners, and the Government to ensure that the CSOs' input to the COVID-19 measures is integrated into the response plans of the Government, the UNCT, and the development partners. Two special sessions were dedicated to the increase of the domestic violence during the pandemic and the findings of the Rapid Gender

Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women and men in Azerbaijan.

During the escalation of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan (September 27-November 9, 2020) the UNCT worked closely with the CSOs and the Government to ensure transparency and free flow of information for building and maintaining the trust needed for effective responses and targeted assistance. A central OCHA database [Azerbaijan Humanitarian Data Exchange Dashboard](#) was populated with data to ensure coordination and corporation among all stakeholders (Government, CSOs, UN, and other development partners) and became a useful tool for the CSOs in Azerbaijan to inform the public about their humanitarian work and to inform the UN, the development partners and the Government about needs on the ground through 3W (Who Does What Where) reporting.

Despite the restrictions during the pandemic, the UNCT continued its engagement with the private sector through promotion of the UN Global Compact and Women Empowerment Principles (WEP), resulting in three more companies- A-level Education Group, Deloitte & Touche LLAC and Socar AQS joining in 2020.

¹³ The workshop covered 18 presentations across 5 sessions on various aspects of data disaggregation, including its importance, relevance for LNOB imperative, experience of other countries and application of innovative data sources and methods for SDG data disaggregation. Presenters included the representatives of Government (State Statistics Committee, National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development), UN Regional Commissions (UNECE, UNESCAP), UNDESA UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO, IOM, WHO), representatives of Statistics office of other countries (UK, Kyrgyzstan, Sweden), IFIs (ADB).



AZERBAIJAN: Response to the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

OCHA Presence of the Civil Society Organizations

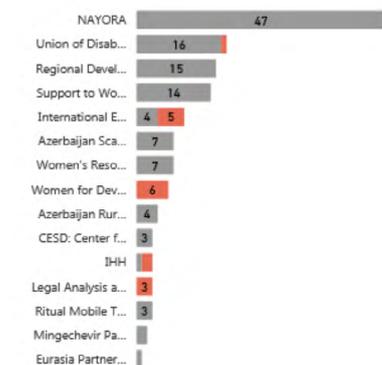
Activity Details →

as of 2 February 2021

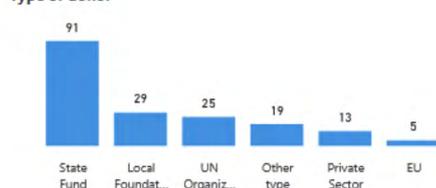


Implementing organizations

Activity status ● Ongoing ● Planned

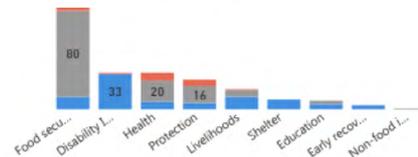


Type of donor



Sectors covered

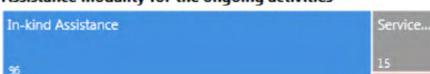
Activity status ● Completed ● Ongoing ● Planned



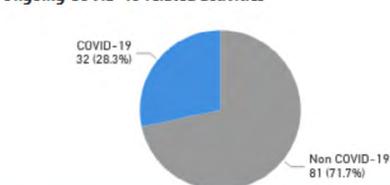
Activity status



Assistance modality for the ongoing activities

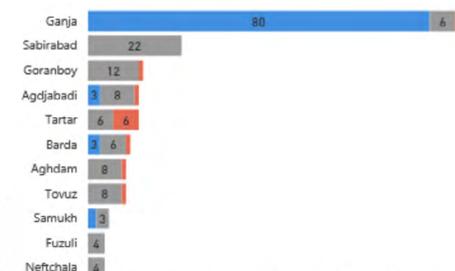


Ongoing COVID-19 related activities

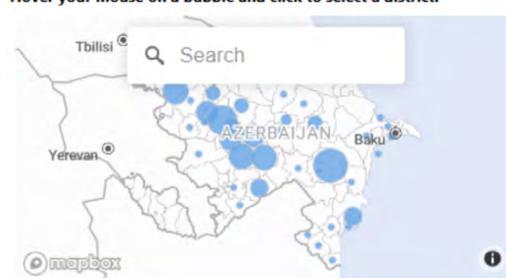


Top-10 districts with activities

Activity status ● Completed ● Ongoing ● Planned



Hover your mouse on a bubble and click to select a district.



The boundaries, and names shown and the designation used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

HDX Data Exchange | reliefweb

Peace and development agenda

While the cross-border cooperation remained limited due to the pandemic and the flare up of hostilities in and around Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, UNCT focused its efforts on engaging with national stakeholders and locally based international actors that eventually contributed in increasing the UN profile as a platform provider on peace and security. With support from UN Peace and Development team and OCHA, UNCT instrumentalized early warning systems and contingency plans during the COVID-19 outbreak and the conflict escalation. Daily reports were developed on both crises, including forecasts on situation development, and scenario planning. This helped to position the UN system both in country and at the HQ level in a rapidly changing environment. It also helped UN agencies plan and coordinate humanitarian responses to the crises. Social media monitoring, data collection and

analysis of public protests in the South Caucasus region by the Peace and Development team helped to map outstanding issues to inform programming. UNCT also revamped a dialogue with government and civil society on Women, Peace, and Security agenda to advocate for adoption of the National Action Plan in Azerbaijan.

Operations

The Operations Management Team accelerated its work on transition to the new Business Operations Strategy (BOS) in line with the new Cooperation Framework to harmonise and streamline common services. It started conducting cost benefit analyses of the adoption of common services, which will inform a joint operational planning framework. The transition is scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2021.

Normative agenda

UNCT work on human rights, gender and youth were elaborated in the previous sections. In 2020, UNCT also focused on the other normative agenda items, namely: UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). UNCT assigned a focal point at each agency to

coordinate the implementation of these agendas at the agency and country level. It also developed action plans responding to key indicators and requirements of the Disability Inclusion Strategy and PSEA and organised regular staff trainings on PSEA.



Communication

A global conversation launched by the United Nations to mark its 75th anniversary was resonated in Azerbaijan by the UN Communication Group (UNCG). 25 online dialogues with government, civil society, academia, and private sector were realised which engaged around 2,000 participants. At these dialogues the pressing challenges on the way to achieve the SDGs were discussed: from the climate crisis to pandemics, conflicts, inequalities, domestic violence, and rapid changes in technology. Around

18,000 Azerbaijanis participated and expressed their opinion on global issues in the [UN75 one-minute survey](#) which was promoted through social media platforms, public places and local mobile operators.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Azerbaijan, the UNCG operated as a Crisis Communication Group (CCG) and played an active role in the implementation of the risk communication strategy.

The CCG, in partnership with the relevant government agencies, civil society, mass media, and influencers, has promoted preventive messages and implemented several communication campaigns, such as 'Stay home, save lives', 'Clean hands', 'Life is at home', and others. During the war in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, the UNCG has promoted the statements of the UN Secretary-General and heads of UN agencies in the local media, as well as informed the public about the UN's humanitarian assistance activities in the conflict-affected areas.

In line with the global "decade of recovery" motto, UN in Azerbaijan has incorporated the SDGs messages in its communication with the

government officials, mass media, civil society and other target audiences emphasizing that the SDGs should be at the forefront of government strategies "to build back better and achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous future for all". Besides, SDG messages have been highlighted during the social media campaigns and in over 40 multimedia products dedicated to the celebration of World Environment Day, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, Human Rights Day and others. New [website](#) of the UN in Azerbaijan has been launched in 2020.



Few examples of risk communication messages by UN on COVID-19

Way ahead in 2021

The key focus of UNCT in 2021 will be operationalisation of the new Cooperation Framework through establishing inclusive management and governance structures (the Joint Steering Committee, Results Groups and Thematic Groups) and developing Joint Work Plans that will enable greater ownership and accountability toward target populations. A particular attention will be put on the data component of the UNSDCF, including through the promotion of active reporting on UNINFO and closer engagement of the UNCT with the State Statistics Committee to conduct SDG data analysis and visualization. The CCA will be used as a main tool to capture and reflect changes in the development context of the country, including the impact of COVID-19 and the conflict on vulnerable groups. This will help the UNCT strengthen national capacity for the design of evidence-based policies, achieve better targeted interventions and increase the visibility of groups left behind in particular. UNCT will also closely work with the Government to operationalise its 2030 Vision document and translate it into a costed action plan, as well as submit a data driven Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the High-level Political Forum in 2021, following its VNRs in [2017](#) and [2019](#).

Support for COVID socioeconomic response and recovery from the conflict will remain key targets, with a focus on ways to help rebuild livelihoods. Government and other partners will be further supported to implement COVID-19 response, particularly the rollout of vaccines and its coverage of the most vulnerable.

UNCT will also make sure that the health and wellbeing of UN staff and their dependents are protected, and the staff is able to continue working safely, including through access to vaccines and other appropriate measures. UNCT will work with European Union and World Bank to conduct a Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) of the conflict on which it will support the Government to design a comprehensive recovery plan that pursues a rights-based approach to reconstruction, reintegration and rehabilitation of conflict affected population. It will continue to conduct regular conflict-related joint analyses and reporting with a focus on early warning and expand the civil society

dialogue on peacebuilding, with a focus on youth. UNCT will make sure that it continues to adhere to the normative agenda requirements including on gender equality, human rights, youth, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and disability inclusion. It will capacitate the national partners to monitor and report on country's human rights obligations and will continue delivering monthly staff training sessions on the PSEA. An additional advisor capacity on Gender at the RCO will help UNCT to fully integrate the gender equality lens into programming and in work relations. UNCT will also operationalise the UN Disability Strategy and organize quarterly meetings of the Disability Thematic Group to track progress in the areas of strategic planning, inclusiveness, programming and organizational culture. UNCT will also focus on completing the transition to the new generation Business Operation Strategy and identifying a new location for common premises reflecting new BOS requirements. Additional advisor capacity at the RCO will enable UNCT to accelerate the operationalisation of the new BOS in a more effective and coordinated manner. UNCT will also launch and operationalise its new Communication Strategy in line with the UNSDCF and will continue to promote Decade of Action messaging in UN outreach.

In 2021, UNCT will foster new strategic partnerships in support of the UNSDCF implementation and to meet its funding and financing needs. It will put in place a Resource Mobilisation Strategy, integrate SDG financing into UN's support to the Government's 2030 Vision and carry out targeted SDG advocacy while strategically engaging youth and influencers in all spheres of its work with a focus on invisible and marginalized groups.

Advocacy for the setup of an SDG Fund with the Government and Development Partners is also among priorities for the next year. UNCT will restructure the Development Partners platform for focused and improved engagement and coordination, set up a regular coordination platform with NAYORA (National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan) and other youth organizations to promote action on the UNSDCF priorities, particularly those related to digital transformation.

ANNEXES

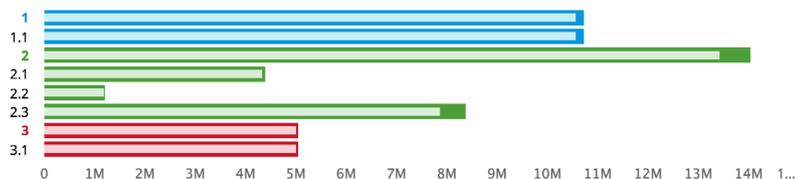
ANNEX 1: FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

UN AGENCIES	TOTAL REQUIRED RESOURCES (USD)	AVAILABLE RESOURCES (USD)	TO BE MOBILIZED RESOURCES (USD)	EXPENDITURE
FAO	4,780,526	4,616,838	163,688	2,221,000
ILO	45,000	45,000	0	22,194
IOM	1,119,079	1,119,079	0	611,896
OHCHR	45,000	45,000	0	65,000
UNDP	15,037,731	15,037,731	0	12,537,653
UNECE	366,000	366,000	0	34,000
UNFPA	911,090	851,090	60,000	850,000
UNHCR	1,562,747	1,527,073	35,674	3,232,527
UNICEF	4,067,777	3,562,772	505,005	3,951,025
WHO	1,932,242	1,902,242	30,000	3,626,000
Total	29,867,192	29,072,825	794,367	27,151,295

PRIORITY / OUTCOME AREAS	TOTAL REQUIRED RESOURCES (USD)	AVAILABLE RESOURCES (USD)	TO BE MOBILIZED RESOURCES (USD)	EXPENDITURE (USD)
Strategic Priority 1 - Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development underpinned by increased diversification and decent work	10,752,487	10,588,799.38	163,687.62	5,954,280
Outcome 1.1 - By 2020, the Azerbaijan economy is more diversified and generates enhanced sustainable growth and decent work, particularly for youth, women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups	10,752,487	10,588,799.38	163,687.62	5,954,280
Strategic Priority 2 - Strengthening institutional capacities and effective public and social services	14,052,018	13,451,339	600,679	15,039,675
Outcome 2.1 - By 2020, Azerbaijan has enhanced institutional capacities for transparent, evidence-based and gender-responsive policy formulation and implementation	4,424,024	4,357,575	66,449	6,203,771
Outcome 2.2 - By 2020, Azerbaijan has made progress in line with international human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review and other treaty obligations, and has strengthened capacities for implementation, monitoring and reporting aligned with international standards	1,224,574	1,211,974	12,600	899,623
Outcome 2.3 - By 2020, quality public and social services are accessible to all and help achieve more socially inclusive and equitable development results	8,403,420	7,881,790	521,630	7,936,281
Strategic Priority 3: Improving environment management and resilience to hazards and disasters	5,062,686.77	5,032,686.77	30,000	6,157,340
Outcome 3.1 - By 2020, sustainable development policies and legislation are in place, better implemented and coordinated in compliance with multilateral environmental agreements, recognize social and health linkages, and address issues of environment and natural resource management, energy efficiency and renewable energy, climate change and resilience to hazards and disasters	5,062,686.77	5,032,686.77	30,000	6,157,340
Total	29,867,192	29,072,825	794,367	27,151,295

● Total Required Resources (Annual) ● Available Resources (Annual)

Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development underpinned by incr...
 By 2020, the Azerbaijan economy is more diversified and generates enhanced sustaina...
Strengthening institutional capacities and effective public and social services
 By 2020, Azerbaijan has enhanced institutional capacities for transparent, evidence-ba...
 By 2020, Azerbaijan has made progress in line with international human rights mecha...
 By 2020, quality public and social services are accessible to all and help achieve more s...
Strategic Priority Area 3: Improving environment management and resilience to ...
 By 2020, sustainable development policies and legislation are in place, better impleme...



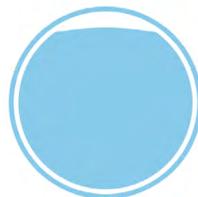
Total Required Resources (Annual)
\$29,867,191



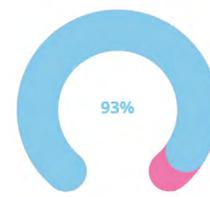
Available Resources (Annual)
\$29,072,825



Expenditure
\$27,151,295



Delivery rate
Ratio of Expenditure vs Available Resources (Annual)



ANNEX 2: UN ENTITIES AND PARTNERS

UN ENTITIES
FAO
ILO
IOM
OHCHR
UNHCR
UNDP
UNECE
UNICEF
UNFPA
UNODC
UN Women
WHO

FUNDING PARTNERS
Government of Azerbaijan (GoA)
European Union
Global Environment Fund
Government of the Netherlands
Green Climate Fund
Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)
Swiss Development Cooperation
USAID

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS IN 2020

GOVERNMENT	NGOs/CSOs	ACADEMIA	PRIVATE SECTOR
Agrarian Credit and Development Agency (AKIA)	Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA)	Academy of Public Administration under the President	Azersun Company
Agrarian Service Agency (AXA)			Equinor Apsheron AS
ASAN Support to Family Business (ABAD)	Azerbaijani Bar Association	Agrarian Research Center	
Azerbaijan Food Safety Agency	Azerbaijan Beekeepers Association	Azerbaijan State Agricultural University	
Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA)	Azerbaijan Hazelnut Producers and Exporters Association	Azerbaijan Tourism & Management University	
Azerbaijan National Paralympic Committee	Azerbaijan National development Project Public Union	Baku State University	
Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation	Azerbaijan Physiotherapy Association Public Union	Research and Crop Husbandry Institute	
Azerbaijan Youth Foundation	Azerbaijan Rural Women's Association (ARWA)		
Baku Icherisheher Administration	BUTA Humanitarian Children's Fund		
Cabinet of Ministers	Constitution Research Foundation		
District Executive Committees (ExComs)	DAN International Youth Public Union		
International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) Ministry of Health	Early Aid in Disability Portage Network Public Union		
Justice Academy	International Dialogue for Environmental Action (IDEA)		
Ministry of Agriculture	International Eurasia Press Fund		
Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	Junior Achievement Azerbaijan (JAA)		
Ministry of Economy	National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan (NAYORA)		
Ministry of Education	National Paralympic Committee		
Ministry of Emergency Situations	Regional Development Enlightenment Public Union		
Ministry of Energy	Regional Development Public Union (RIIB)		
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Regional Gender Center Public Union		
Ministry of Health	Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC)		
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Special Olympic Committee		
Ministry of Justice	Youth Contribution Public Union		
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population	Union of Disabled People Organizations of Azerbaijan (UDPO)		
Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies			
Ministry of Youth and Sports			
National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organizations			
National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development			
Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson)			
Parliament			
Public Health and Reforms Center			
State Agency for Mandatory Medical Insurance			
State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations (ASAN)			
State Border Service			
State Committee for Refugees and IDPs			
State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs			
State Committee for the Work with Religious Organizations			
State Customs Committee			
State Housing Development Agency			
State Migration Service			
State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan			
State Security Service			
State Statistical Committee			
State Tourism Agency			
State Vocational Education Agency			
TABIB (Administration of the Regional Medical Divisions)			
Tripartite Commission on Social and Economic Issues in the Republic of Azerbaijan			



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[TheUNAzerbaijan](https://www.youtube.com/TheUNAzerbaijan)