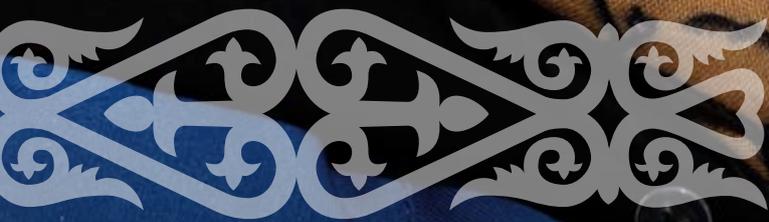




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ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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FOREWORD

This report focuses on the calendar year of 2021, a year that, in many ways, was very challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all aspects of life and governance as schools remained closed for parts of the year, social restrictions were in place as needed and the economy showed limited signs of recovery. However, Kazakhstan continued to advance its development agenda, whilst finding innovative ways to manage the epidemiological situation.

The year also marked the start of our new Development Cooperation Framework with the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. As an active and committed partner in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the onset, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Kazakhstan, together with the Government, defined a new Cooperation Framework implementation strategy to operationalise the 2030 Agenda — the 'United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025'.

The UNSDCF has three thematic areas — Human Development and Equal Participation; Effective Institutions, Human Rights and Gender Equality; and Inclusive Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability.

Several key achievements were realized through UN programmes and interventions. For example, 20,000 children in rural schools gained

access to broadband internet; about 4,000 vulnerable youth benefited from social infrastructure creation projects (e.g., youth centres); 191 additional previously banned occupations were opened to women; and over 2.9 million personal protective equipment (PPE) items and 21,000 pieces of equipment were distributed to fight COVID-19.

The partnership between the UN and Kazakhstan has been evident not only in the UN's support to the country, but also in Kazakhstan's support to the UN. In August 2021, as the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated rapidly, Kazakhstan swiftly offered support by receiving some of the international staff of the UN in Afghanistan who needed to temporarily relocate.

The UNCT in Kazakhstan stands committed to working with Kazakhstan to strengthen social cohesion, enhance inclusion and further the normative agenda as the country also seeks to achieve its ambitious development goals. The UNCT will continue to support the country across programmatic commitments to ensure a healthy and educated population, green economy and sustainable agriculture, thriving businesses and guaranteed human rights for all through economic, social and political modernization based on human rights and inclusive national dialogue, gender equality and the empowerment of all people (focused on leaving no one behind).



Michaela Friberg-Storey
UN Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan
March 2022

UN COUNTRY TEAM

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) works with the people and the Government of Kazakhstan, along with other development partners, to ensure more prosperous and more secure lives for every woman and man, girl and boy, particularly the most vulnerable populations. The UNCT supports the country's development agenda, including economic, social and political modernization, building an inclusive society, ensuring equal rights for all, and deepening multilateral and regional cooperation.

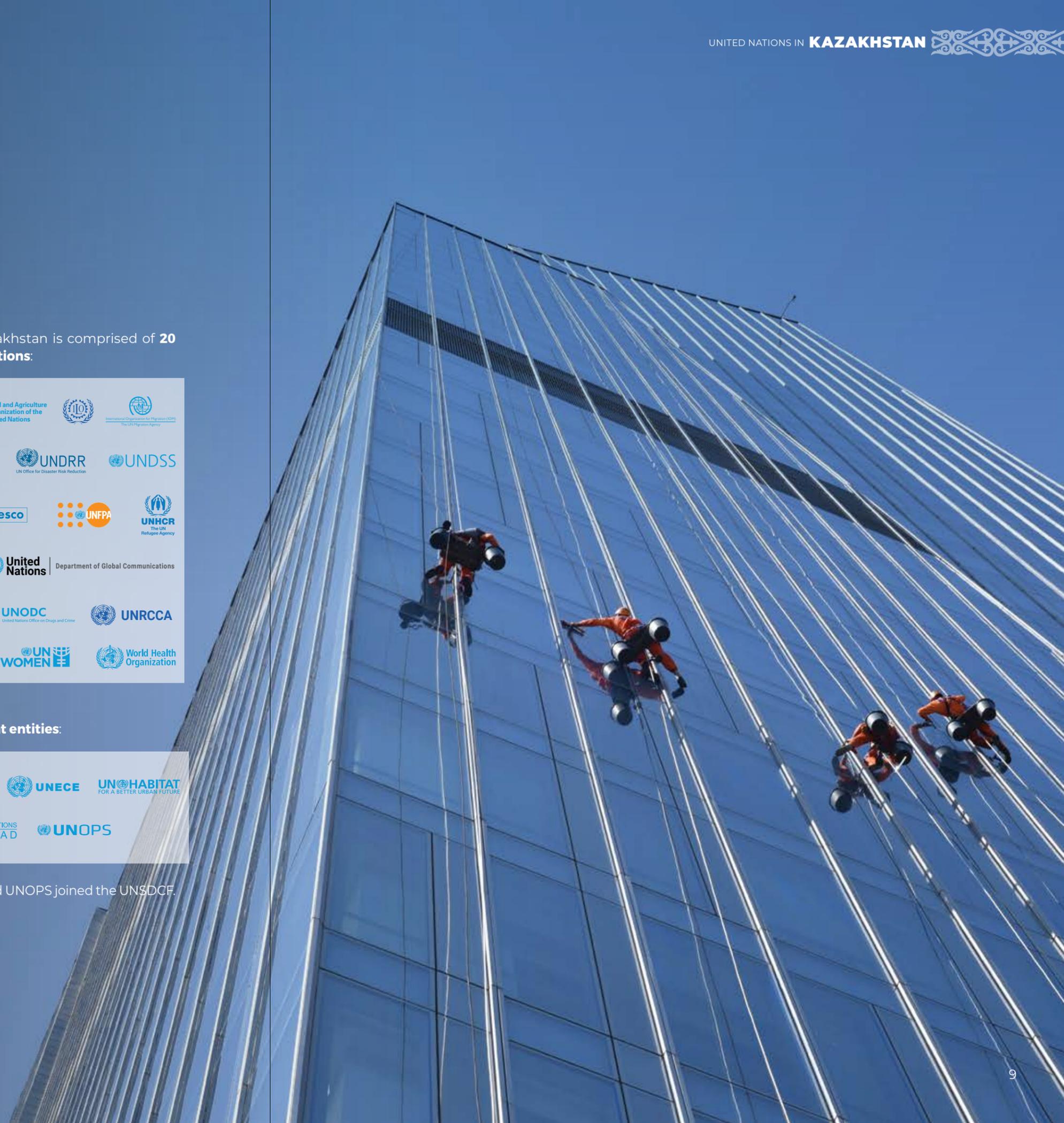
The UNCT in Kazakhstan is comprised of **20 resident organizations:**



and **7 non-resident entities:**



In 2021, ILO, ITU and UNOPS joined the UNSDCF.



KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS OF THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN KAZAKHSTAN

The UNCT Kazakhstan's key development partners in implementing the UNSDCF 2021-2025 include government bodies, civil society organizations, local NGOs, educational institutions and the private sector. The partners support programmatic commitments and the normative agenda through financial resources and advocacy, policy dialogues, exchange of knowledge and information, capacity development, technical collaboration and innovation.

National partners

- Administration of the President
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the coordination body for access to other state entities
- The Ministry of National Economy, a secretariat for the SDG National Architecture in Kazakhstan
- Other key Government Ministries, Agencies and Commissions
- Parliament
- Senate
- The Supreme Court and local courts
- Universities and schools
- Akimats (municipalities) of selected regions

Non-government partners

- Civil society (NGOs, academia, think tanks, women's groups, etc.)
- Trade unions and employers associations
- Private sector, including technology start-up hubs
- Religious leaders
- LGBTI community
- Vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities (PWDs) and people living with AIDS (PLWAIDS)
- Kandas (ethnic Kazakh returnees)
- Educational institutions
- Innovation labs
- Youth and youth organizations
- Artisans

Contributing partners in 2021 included the Government of Kazakhstan; the Asian Development Bank; the Governments of Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States; the European Union; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Global Environment Facility; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Joint SDG Fund; the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; and the United States Agency for International Development.





1

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT



The economy of Kazakhstan rebounded after the COVID-19-related drops in GDP seen in 2020 (down by 2.5 percent), expanding by four percent in 2021. This was in part due to strong policy measures implemented by the Government to support economic recovery. However, the annual inflation rate reached 8.4 percent — the most significant increase since 2016. The sharp rise was driven by imbalances in commodity markets, global supply chain disruptions, pent-up domestic demand for non-food products after the pandemic and increased tariffs for utilities.

Analysts point to an uneven recovery as the pandemic led to an erosion of per capita income gains and an increase in poverty levels. The World Bank has predicted that poverty and inequality could grow due to the protracted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kazakhstan made a strong commitment globally towards reducing greenhouse emissions and decarbonizing the economy. In October 2021, the President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced Kazakhstan's plan to become carbon neutral by 2060 at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26).

During 2021, several political reforms took place, including the adoption of a draft law on the Ombudsperson for Human Rights; the move towards abolition of the death penalty; and the first-ever direct elections for 730 rural/district akim (mayors) (out of 2,345 total) in July. Although these reforms all contribute to the SDGs, much remains to be done to ensure the comprehensive vision of human rights and gender equality that the Government has expressed.

Afghanistan/UNAMA

In August 2021, the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated rapidly and elements of the UN presence in the country needed to temporarily relocate. Kazakhstan swiftly agreed to receive international personnel. From August to December 2021, Almaty served as a temporary hub for UN staff to rotate in and out of Afghanistan. The air-bridge, established by UNAMA in close collaboration with the Resident Coordinator's Office and all relevant authorities in Kazakhstan, allowed the UN to keep delivering vital assistance to the people of Afghanistan with minimum disruption. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a crucial role in enabling this endeavour.

2

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK



2.1 Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

The UN system in Kazakhstan stands firmly in support of the country's commitment to achieve the SDGs. The 'United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025' places a strong emphasis on the transformative nature of the SDGs, reaffirming that the aim is to not only improve sustainable economic conditions to enable the Government to reach the SDGs, but also to empower people by giving them a voice and agency to be active participants in making decisions.

In 2021, the UNCT in Kazakhstan worked to strengthen cooperation with the Government, civil society, private sector, academia, media outlets, and other partners under the Cooperation Framework.

Several of the challenges faced by Kazakhstan are linked to common development challenges identified in the countries of the subregion, many of which are related to their landlocked status. UN support for Kazakhstan's participation in sub-regional cooperation activities and initiatives facilitates SDG achievement in areas such as water, energy, environment, sustainable transport, transit, connectivity, trade, statistics, knowledge-based development and gender equality.

The UNSCDF is organised around three Strategic Pillars:

- 1. People.** Human Development and Equal Participation
- 2. Peace.** Effective Institutions, Human Rights and Gender Equality
- 3. Prosperity and Planet.** Inclusive Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability

Six Outcomes were adopted under these Pillars, and these guided the UNCT's work in the country during 2021:

- **Outcome 1.1.** Effective, inclusive and accountable institutions ensure equal access for all people.
- **Outcome 1.2.** People are empowered with knowledge and skills to contribute to sustainable development.
- **Outcome 2.1.** All people are protected and enjoy full human rights, gender equality and a life free from discrimination.
- **Outcome 2.2.** State institutions design and implement gender-sensitive, human rights-based and evidence-based public policies and provide quality services.
- **Outcome 3.1.** Inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic development with improved productive capacities, skills and equal opportunities.
- **Outcome 3.2.** Increased climate resilience, sustainable management of the environment and clean energy, and sustainable rural and urban development.



The governance structure for the UNSDCF 2021-2025 was developed in line with the national SDG implementation coordination mechanisms to promote effective strategic alliances between the UNCT and partners. The UNSDCF governance structure includes a high-level Steering Committee and three Result Groups to create greater coherence with the national SDGs implementation coordination mechanisms and to enhance joint monitoring and accountability for achievement of SDG targets.

During 2021, the UNCT effectively leveraged its comparative advantages as an impartial provider of policy advice based on international experience and good practices and as a provider of high-quality technical expertise in specific areas. Support from the UN has been requested from over 25 Ministries and governmental institutions.

Guiding Principles

The UNSDCF is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and thus has an integrated and multidimensional programming approach—in line with the “five P’s” of the 2030 Agenda (people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships).

The Cooperation Framework’s strong emphasis on the UN’s normative role means that the guiding principles of leaving no one behind, gender equality and women’s empowerment, resilience and the human right-based approach are hardwired into each step of the process.

These principles involve the mainstreaming of **results-based management, environmental sustainability, and gender-sensitive programming.**

The Cooperation Framework also reinforced the country’s Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy to advance human development and equitable

economic growth through capacity development; to strengthen transparency and accountability systems; and to deliver quality social services. The UNSDCF also reinforced the crosscutting principles for action outlined in ‘Kazakhstan 2050’: to move away from service delivery support and further focus on upstream policy and advocacy work to strengthen the overall enabling environment for development, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Through the Cooperation Framework, there is an emphasis on ensuring balanced and sustainable economic growth, social well-being and environmental management, taking into consideration the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

Forging partnerships to achieve the 2030 Agenda requires closer engagement with all stakeholders through free, active and meaningful participation, particularly of those who are most marginalized. There is greater attention to inclusion, gender parity, youth, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.



Achievement Highlights

As a result of UN programmes and interventions in 2021:





Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan

The Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan, primarily funded by the European Union and led by the UN Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan, aims to create an environment where there is zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and harmful practices. Key achievements of the Programme in 2021 include:



- The Regional Civil Society Reference Group and community service organizations (CSOs) in the region developed a unified methodology for conducting review of national legislation and law-enforcement practices on SGBV and their alignment with international norms and standards to guide national SGBV legislation.

- Based on the abovementioned methodology, review drafts of the national legal frameworks governing the elimination of violence against women and girls (EVAWG) and harmful practices in Central Asia were developed.

- The Programme supported publication of a series entitled 'Calling in' that highlights the work of crisis centres and services in Central Asia in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

- 38 representatives from Central Asia of youth-led and youth-serving organizations attended a regional forum where they shared experiences, strategies and best practices on SGBV prevention and improved their strategy and communication skills.

- A database of over 600 women's CSOs and activists was created, and a grant making manual was developed.



Results achieved in the implementation of the COVID-19 response

During 2021, 1,035,496 cases of COVID-19 were reported in Kazakhstan, and the number of reported deaths among these cases was 15,149. As a result of an increase in new daily COVID-19 cases and a significant shift in the severity of the disease and its clinical manifestations, the need for advanced hospital treatment, post-hospital follow-up and rehabilitation; the number of requests from beneficiaries; and the demand for other services (except webinars) increased.

A key task in 2021 was to sustain the competencies and expertise put in place after the outbreak of the pandemic and to ensure that the COVID-19 response was further strengthened. The UN was successful in mobilizing over US\$8.6 million, which helped fulfil demand for medical supplies for health care workers and COVID-19 patients.

As a result of these interventions, the UN was able to accomplish the following:

- Distributed over 2.9 million PPE items and 21,000 pieces of equipment (including more than 98,100 surgical masks to refugees and asylum-seekers, and 6,500 surgical masks to undocumented stateless persons).
- Delivered 190,000 medical kits to vulnerable families.
- Distributed 40,000 health manuals to most health facilities in Kazakhstan.
- 4,500 health care workers trained on treatment of patients with COVID-19.
- Over 2,000 health professionals trained in COVID-19 vaccine administration and ultra-cold chain management.

- Eight national treatment and IPC evidence-based guidances developed jointly with the Ministry of Health.
- 47 laboratories participated in the External Quality Assurance programme.
- Six field missions conducted to provide targeted technical support for local health care professionals on COVID-19 and strengthened public health systems.
- Procured and donated IT equipment to all 17 regional departments of sanitary-epidemiological control.

Furthermore, the UN was successful in applying to the COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) with a proposal to accelerate delivery of the Digital Social Services Model to address the needs of the most vulnerable in Kazakhstan. This project is leveraging existing digital tools to deliver a platform capable of rapidly and efficiently collecting, integrating and processing information about the most vulnerable groups in Kazakhstan. This information is then fed into the broader partner ecosystem that analyses, targets and processes support for vulnerable groups in an integrated manner.

In the area of duty of care for its own personnel, the UNCT established the First Line of Defence (FLOD) project that, since May 2021, has delivered COVID-19-related reliable health services in Kazakhstan and was funded through the UN's cost-sharing mechanism. As there were escalations of care, significant attention was committed to following up with all beneficiaries who were treated in hospitals and who needed continued medical guidance and support after discharge. The project has been extended for six months until 30 April 2022.

2.2 Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs

OUTCOME 1.1

Effective, inclusive and accountable institutions ensure equal access for all people



Over **75,500** people visited the first national website devoted to vaccine information



80,000 people received pre-marriage consultation materials on family values, prevention of GBV, and responsible parenthood



274 refugees and asylum-seekers received cash grants for essential services



40 NGOs combined their efforts to create a Knowledge Action Portal

Throughout 2021, the UN supported Government and national strategies related to equal access and effective social protection programmes and services. To this end, the UN reviewed national frameworks, conducted gender-based assessments, offered legal analysis and supported data collection, analysis, and presentation.

For example, the UN provided technical support to the Government for the development of a social code to enhance the social protection legal framework (including a section on categories of recipients of social assistance, conditions of their inclusion, and amount of benefits) to be submitted to Parliament at the end of 2022. The UN also provided technical support to the development of a migration policy for 2022-2026 and to the development of a social code to enhance the national legal framework on asylum, facilitating refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to state social protection services — both of which are expected to be approved by the Government in 2022.

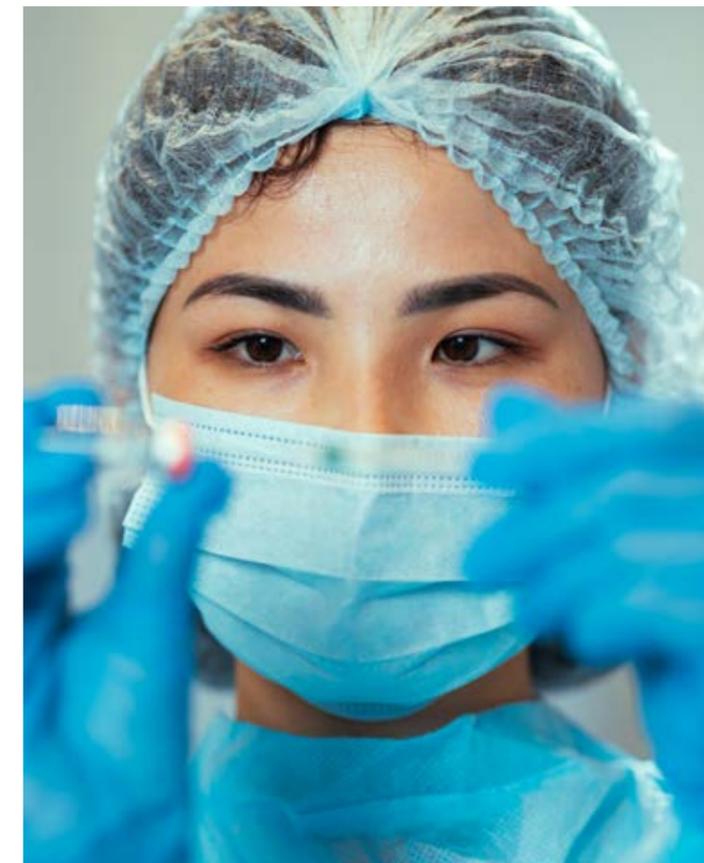
During 2021, over 2,000 people received capacity-building training from the UN to help ensure equal access for all. More than 15 trainings covered wide-ranging topics from 2021 Global AIDS Monitoring Reporting to effective antenatal care. For example, 400 adolescents living with HIV and other chronic diseases learned about self-management and healthy living, and 40 psychologists and social workers learned about medical services for gender-based violence survivors. In addition, 258 local government officials, health care and psycho-social service providers, police and justice officials, and staff from crisis centres and CSOs learned the principles of a functioning multisector response to domestic violence in five pilot regions.



To reach wider audiences, reproductive health information was translated into **Braille** and easy-to-read format and was shared via videos in Kazakh and Russian sign languages. The UN also developed 11 videos on vaccines and immunizations, curricula related to quality management of inpatient perinatal care, training materials for the application of child nutrition indicators, and the first national website devoted to information on vaccines that was visited by over 75,500 people.

Key challenges

- **Complexity and peculiarities of national legislation around medical product procurement.**
- **A lack of commitment and capacity to promote gender mainstreaming in policies.**



Helping Stateless Children

Three-year-old Timur and his four-month-old brother were born in Kazakhstan, but because their mother crossed illegally into the country, they did not have citizenship. As a result, they were not given birth certificates, which means neither boy could receive educational, legal or social assistance. Soon Timur will need to start school, but without legal papers, he will not be able to. However, with UN support, the legal team at the local NGO "Sana Sezim" has been helping Timur's mother obtain birth certificates and citizenship for her children and a place in kindergarten for Timur.



Total expenditures **\$6.37 million**



SDGs supported



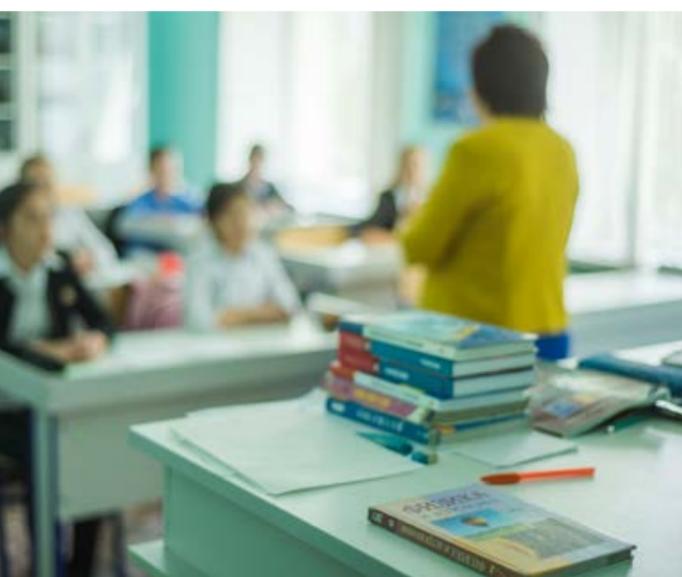
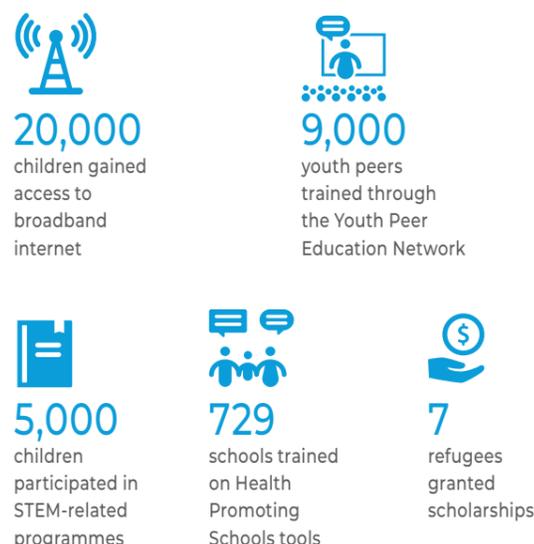
UN entities contributing to outcome





OUTCOME 1.2

People are empowered with knowledge and skills to contribute to sustainable development



Over 22,000 people built their capacities and raised their awareness through UN workshops and courses in areas such as job skills, student health and 'Education for Justice' tools. For example, nearly 7,000 primary and secondary school teachers became skilled in digital blended learning, and 9,000 youth were trained to become Y-PEER peer educators on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention.

Increasing technological knowledge and capacities figured prominently in UN activities. The Giga Initiative's goal is to connect every school to the internet and every child to information, opportunity and choice, and in 2021, a national-level Giga Initiative steering committee was established. In addition, 20,000 children in 38 rural schools gained access to broadband internet; 7,400 schools were mapped to show their connectivity status; and the UN supported a five-year national roadmap (2021-2025) to institutionalize STEM education and skill development at the preschool, secondary school and TVET educational levels. Moreover, 5,000 children and youth participated in nansats, volunteering, and social innovation and social entrepreneurship programmes.

Increasing awareness and practices towards sustainability was also a priority. 13,850 children became more aware of and knowledgeable about climate change and conscious water consumption thanks to the #BeGreen initiative. The UN also conducted a review of primary and secondary school curricula and provided recommendations for improvements and the incorporation of Education for Sustainable Development principles into curricula.

In response to COVID-19, the UN also mobilized 1,803 online civil society volunteers for activities related to the prevention of bullying in schools, reduction of plastic use, raising awareness on children's rights and disaster risk reduction.

Beyond STEM and sustainability, the UN also held meetings with Government officials, Members of Parliament, the Human Rights Ombudsman and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the current situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Kazakhstan, gaps in national legislation preventing them from access to education, and steps needed to improve their situation and ensure their rights.

Key challenges

- **Unequal access to the internet, which led to declines in the quality of education and educational achievements due to COVID-19-related shifts to online classes.**
- **Low youth participation in civil society initiatives.**
- **Need to strengthen national legislation to advance Gender Equality and Womens' Empowerment.**

Sustainability Begins with Me

Islam Dzhergalbayev, a 16-year-old student, thought he was merely supporting his college applications when he joined the Republican Transformational Marathon, 'Sustainability begins with me', organized by the UN. However, he quickly realized he was learning lifelong skills in nutrition, sports, ecology and mental health, including how to plan his daily menu and sort out waste. More than 1,400 participants aged 12 to 45 from all over Kazakhstan joined the marathon to develop a new perspective on their mental and physical health, healthy eating and behaviour. "I concentrated on my own desires and goals and was gaining the knowledge to achieve them," says Islam.



Total expenditures **\$1.67 million**



UN entities contributing to outcome





OUTCOME 2.1

All people are protected and enjoy full human rights, gender equality and a life free from discrimination



3.1
million people targeted through campaigns to prevent violence against children



20,000
school children and 3,000 parents reached through the anti-bullying BeKind Initiative



191
occupations opened to women



54
media outlets and NGOs learned about ethical reporting on migration issues

During 2021, the UN contributed to the development of the National Action Plan 2022-2025 for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and to a national plan of priority measures in human rights in Kazakhstan, which was adopted by the Parliament.

The UN also fostered national gender-responsive budgeting, provided integrated policy advice to improve national and local budget planning and oversight, provided legal analysis of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence in Kazakhstan, and organized a series of public meetings to boost participation in the development of a draft law for advancing gender equality. Due in part to UN advocacy, the President of Kazakhstan reaffirmed the country's commitment to address gender-based violence and advance economic justice and rights, and a labour code prohibiting women from 191 professions was repealed.

In 2021, 51 representatives from ombudsperson's offices, human rights institutions, government, civil societies, international organizations, and gender experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan met and identified prospects for cooperation on improving the rights and status of women and ensuring gender equality. Regional efforts also included an online regional training course on gender mainstreaming and upholding human rights in law enforcement agencies for over 60 law enforcement officers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

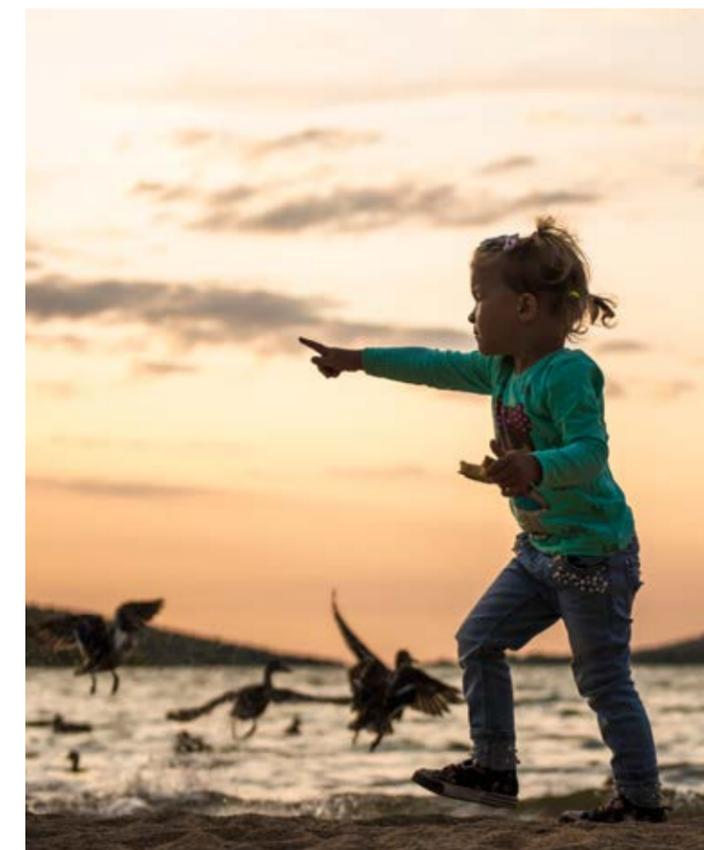
Throughout 2021, the UN encouraged the freedom of expression, access to information and safety of journalists through workshops with the Judiciary on international and regional legal frameworks; supporting the establishment of the Network of Media Lawyers in Kazakhstan; and organizing a seminar to finalize a report assessing journalists' safety in Kazakhstan.

The UN, jointly with the Bureau of National Statistics, rolled out information and capacity-building activities to improve quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations, including a training of enumerators on nationality and statelessness matters. The UN also registered more than 6,000 persons of undetermined nationality, and the stateless identification campaign was extended until May 2022.

In 2021, the UN also supported the Government's, trade unions' and employers' organisations' compliance with amendments to the Law on Trade Unions and Labour Code, Criminal Code and Law on the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs (NCE) on Freedom of Association, ensuring the right of workers to establish and join organisations of their own choosing.

Key challenges

- Difficulties imposed by COVID-19 pandemic.
- A shift in Government priorities in order to respond and recover from COVID-19.
- Limited availability of donor support for the implementation of planned initiatives.



Total expenditures
2.22 million



SDGs supported



UN entities contributing to outcome





OUTCOME 2.2

State institutions design and implement gender-sensitive, human rights-based and evidence-based public policies and provide quality services



2,512
migrants in vulnerable situations received protection and assistance



1,500
public employees improved their case management and social work skills



8
grassroots CSOs improved their technical and managerial skills



25
journalists learned about the rights of older people and age-related stereotypes



Throughout 2021, the United Nations fostered gender-sensitive and human rights-based policies and quality services related to children by evaluating the system for the prevention and response to violence against children; drafting strategy documents to strengthen the system; identifying gaps in legislation and developing recommendations to inform amendments to laws protecting children affected by migration; providing a legal review of the Draft Rules on Social Rehabilitation of Children Affected by Terrorist Activities; and developing the methodology for the 2022 Violence Against Women and Girls survey and data collection instruments, sampling, and questionnaire.

In addition, 230 specialists strengthened their capacities on identification, referral and response to cases of violence against children, and over 250 justice practitioners enhanced their skills on comprehensive and sustainable multi-sectoral approaches in response to the situation of children who have returned from conflict zones.

To assist policies and services for older adults in Kazakhstan, the UN supported the development of the national Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPPA) report and the statistical yearbook 'Older people of Kazakhstan'; provided technical assistance to the Bureau of National Statistics (BNS) to improve statistical data systems on ageing issues; and produced communication and advocacy materials on the status, needs and interests of older people that were disseminated through websites, social media and a live TV news broadcast. In addition, 78 policy and decision makers, academia and CSOs specialists learned more about and developed their skills in relation to the status, needs and interests of older people in the country.

In addition to these efforts, the UN supported the development of per capita costing of HIV prevention services that led to a 14 percent increase in Government funding; developed and produced a video course on gender-responsive budgeting; developed a system of proctoring over the entrance examinations of candidates for civil service; launched a training programme for government officials on design thinking and change management; and trained over 2,500 prison officers on the UN Standard Minimum Rules on Treatment of Prisoners and 120 Government staff on the Community Police Model to increase police compliance with human rights standards.

Furthermore, the UN conducted an assessment of gaps between identification, investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons in Kazakhstan, which was included in the National Adaptation Plan; promoted inclusive policies for learners with disabilities; and supported participants of the Crowdfunding Academy to enable them to start crowdfunding their socially targeted projects.

Key challenges

- **High turnover of representatives of state bodies.**
- **Slow responsiveness of state bodies due to priorities related to COVID-19 response.**
- **Limited donor support to implement planned initiatives.**



Total expenditures
\$6.66 million



SDGs supported



UN entities contributing to outcome





OUTCOME 3.1

Inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic development with improved productive capacities, skills and equal opportunities

4,000
vulnerable youth benefited from social infrastructure development projects

50
Afghan women received scholarships to pursue degree studies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

44
tailored individual coaching missions delivered to SMEs

3
centres for women's entrepreneurship were opened

314
products covered by the Trade Facilitation Portal



Capacity-building trainings and webinars were offered to youth, women entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), museum staff, farmers, NGO staff, cultural experts, World Heritage Site managers, and Government officials on topics ranging from diversification of sectors to disaster risk reduction, from gender-responsive trade facilitation to digital skills. In addition, a Virtual Learning Space for the Cross-Border Management Curriculum was established, and four courses (Rules of Trade, Export Process, EU Market Requirements, and Quality and Conformity Standards) were uploaded onto the platform.

More than 150 entrepreneurs received microcredits, and 39 rural entrepreneurs received \$521,000 in funding to start sustainable businesses. The UN also conducted an analysis of financial literacy and remittance management policy, and provided technical assistance to the National Project on Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex for 2021-2025 and the Concept for Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex for 2021-2030—both were approved by the Government in 2021.

During 2021, the UN strengthened the capacity of Kazakhstan to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and provided assistance for trade facilitation among the customs services in the region. The UN also established a National Trade Facilitation Portal for Kazakhstan (TFP). 314 products (or about 12.14 percent of all cross-border operations in SME-intensive sectors) are now covered by the TFP.

The UN also provided technical assistance to the State Revenue Committee of the Ministry of Finance by establishment of a new Air Cargo Control Unit in Almaty Airport to detect, investigate and prosecute crime, corruption and drug trafficking with minimum disruption to legitimate trade.

With the UN's technical support, Kazakhstan joined the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Women's Economic Justice and Rights to deliver concrete and transformative change for women and girls. In addition, 16 female entrepreneurs

contributed to an initiative to develop financial products and electronic commerce to support women's businesses in Kazakhstan.

In partnership with Kostanay engineering and economics university, the UN started delivering a comprehensive digital skills programme. Almost 300 5th-8th grade students learned about child online safety and improved their digital skills.

Key challenges

- COVID-19 restrictions and limitations to organizing field missions and events.
- Participants' fatigue with online meetings.
- National partners need more support and incentives in their efforts to scale up successful pilot actions.

Crowdfunding Academy Empowers NGOs

Thanks in part to the UN-supported Tadamon Crowdfunding Academy, Gulmira Parmysheva, founder of the Kishkentai project, has been able to continue producing and even expand her line of eco-toys for the rehabilitation of children with special needs—despite COVID-19 restrictions.

During the pandemic, crowdfunding became an alternative source of funding for many NGOs, as it provides more flexible, faster and more reliable financing. Through the training, national and international experts helped 29 organizations obtain funding, increase the visibility of their projects and build relationships with donors, partners and beneficiaries.

"Participation in the Tadamon Academy taught us to constantly search for new ways of doing things and how to develop our communications strategy. We also received support from a team of mentors who were passionate about our cause," says Gulmira. "And all the homework made us into superheroes."



Total expenditures
\$2 million

SDGs supported



UN entities contributing to outcome





OUTCOME 3.2

Increased climate resilience, sustainable management of the environment and clean energy, and sustainable rural and urban development



10,000
people learned how to identify and reduce losses from seasonal hazards



A five-year regional climate vulnerability reduction project launched



Protected land area increased to **9.65 %** of total land mass



New State National Nature Park created



In an effort to increase sustainable management of the environment and support sustainable development, the UN enhanced the capacity of scientists and government officials to reduce water-related risks; enhance collaboration and cooperation on weather and climate monitoring; scale up climate-smart agriculture technologies and sustainable land management approaches; and collect data related to sustainable energy and water resources management and monitoring.

The UN supported the development of the 'Zhasyl Kazakhstan' (Green Kazakhstan) project, the adaptation section to the updated Nationally Determined Contributions, and legislative proposals on biodiversity offsetting and supported Kazakhstan in establishing compliant national Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) systems with a view to implementing its new Environmental Code.

708 civil servants received training on "Sustainable Recovery: Opportunities for a Green, Low Carbon and Circular Economy in Post-COVID-19" through the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) Programme. The UN also supported the revision of the Green Economy Concept and the adoption of the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2060.

Moreover, the UN undertook studies to identify policy options to support improved energy productivity and decarbonization of industry; analyze sustainable and clean energy development; and analyze national legislation and stakeholders in disaster risk reduction systems in Kazakhstan.

In April 2021, the UN launched a five-year regional project 'Reducing vulnerabilities of populations in the Central Asia region from glacier lake outburst floods (GLOFs) in a changing climate', which aims to strengthen adaptation to climate change through improved monitoring, advanced early warning systems and improved analytical and response capacities.

The UN also deployed de-risking investments and other financial instruments that led to the construction of a solar power station with a potential reduction of 70,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions, as well as the first green bonds in Kazakhstan (\$500,000 for construction of a solar power station).

Key challenges

- **Institutional transformations in the Government that make the development of certain policies and rules a challenge, as relevant legal mandates are transferred from one state body to another.**
- **COVID-19-related travel restrictions.**

Restoring Water Resources

Farmers in the Baiterek rural district have been experiencing problems with irrigation for many years, but through financial support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the UN reconstructed critical ponds and built capacities in water-saving technologies. Now, more than 300 farmers have access to an uninterrupted water supply—even during the peak irrigation season in summer.

Thanks to training and improved equipment, the farmers have abandoned wasteful irrigation methods, created sustainable irrigation systems and saved up to 20 percent on water purchases. In addition, over 1,400 hectares of land have been put into circulation. "Once the farmers became able to regulate the water supply, they started diversifying their crops, depending on the market demands," notes Zvoida Orazbakova, a farmer and chairman of the Margulan Rural Consumer Cooperative.



Total expenditures **\$4.77 million**



SDGs supported



UN entities contributing to outcome





Progress on 'Leave No One Behind'

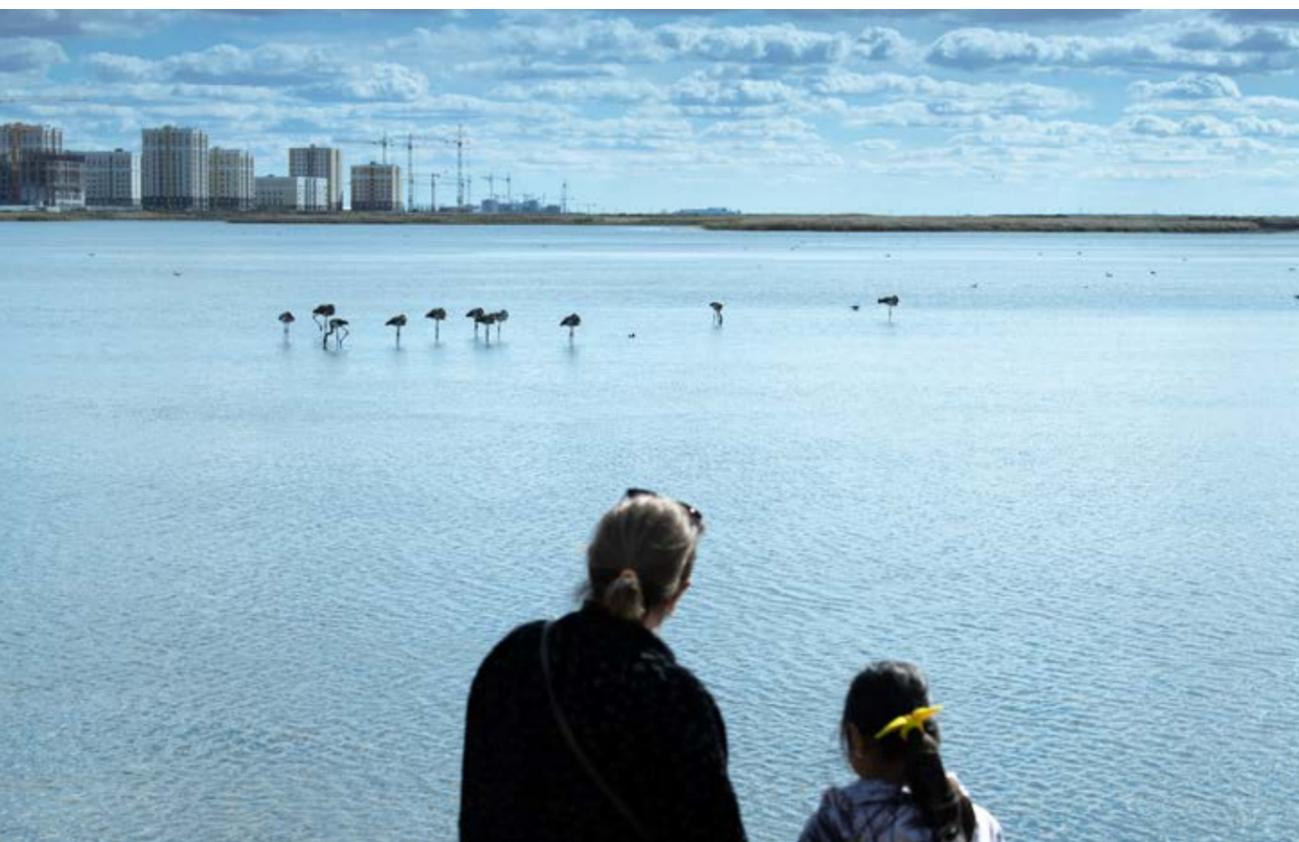
The UN in Kazakhstan is focusing on “leaving no one behind” in the implementation of SDGs. This pledge is a key element of the 2030 Agenda and has also been highlighted in the UNSDCF as a priority, as large regional differences in Kazakhstan pose critical challenges to addressing inequalities.

Despite the high number of women in the labour force and education, women in Kazakhstan continue to face discrimination, including exclusion from certain occupations, discrimination due to maternity or marital status, and a difference in wages. Women often carry the double burden of unpaid domestic work and official employment, and the average

woman makes only 67.8 percent of what the average man does. Due to lower economic participation and limited opportunities for women, Kazakhstan dropped eight points from 72 in 2020 to 80 in 2021 on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2021.

In terms of persons with disabilities (PwD), the key challenges include stigma, discrimination and a lack of institutionalization, as well as a gap in the adaptation of information and infrastructure to meet the needs of PwD.

In terms of the Global Youth Development Index, Kazakhstan ranked 70 out of 181 countries in 2020. Despite nearly 100 percent of children and adolescents attending school, Kazakhstan's



educational system faces some issues. Before COVID-19, six out of 10 students were functionally illiterate, according to the World Bank, and the pandemic threatens to push another 100,000 into functional illiteracy. As a result of the pandemic, the World Bank estimates that learning will decline by eight points on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). And even short-term school closures are likely to widen the reading achievement gap by 18 percent between children from poor and rich households.

Low PISA scores, in turn, may indicate that the Government will face additional challenges in reaching its SDGs and the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy for human development. As a result, the most vulnerable may be “left behind.”

Both mobile and fixed broadband Internet access cost less than the UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development

affordability target for 2023, and both are affordable for the poorest 20 percent of income earners. However, broadband speed remains slow, and the low density of Kazakhstan's population poses a challenge. The state programme 'Digital Kazakhstan' focuses on expanding infrastructure by deploying fixed and mobile broadband networks, and a new national project, 'Technological breakthrough due to digitalization, science and innovations', has been extended to 2025.

During 2021, the United Nations provided technical support for the development of multidimensional poverty statistics to complement monetary poverty indicators and guide policy. For specialists at the Bureau of National Statistics (BNS), the UN also developed the methodology of 2022 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) survey and assisted BNS in launching the first phase of the National Prevalence Study of VAWG aligned with international standards.



2.3 Support to Partnership and Financing the 2030 Agenda

Both the United Nations and the Government underscore the importance of diversifying resources and partners, particularly from the private sector, to best implement the current strategic frameworks, including the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 priorities. Identifying current and new partnerships that add value and locate sources of financial and political support is vital for the UN System in Kazakhstan.

A Joint Programme (JP), 'Aligning policy and financing with SDGs towards adopting an Integrated National Financing Framework', continued to support the Government of Kazakhstan.



unicef
for every child



The JP is expected to result in the Government:

- Addressing knowledge gaps around the scale and types of funding gaps Kazakhstan faces to achieve the SDGs and align these with sectoral policies and financing approaches.
- Piloting SDG budgeting with a specific focus on mainstreaming gender and child dimensions.
- Increasing transparency and accountability around the alignment and impact of all financial and non-financial means for the SDGs.
- Systematizing existing public-private dialogue mechanisms to inform sectoral financing policies.

Overall governance of the project is carried out by the JP Steering Committee, which includes representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of National Economy, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union and the United Nations. The JP has led to further enhancement of institutional coordination and decision-making at the Government level. Through the JP, it became possible to launch some important initiatives to support the process of aligning strategic and budgeting planning with SDGs.

For example, the Economic Research Institute (ERI), with the UN's technical support, developed important tools for integrating SDGs into the national budgeting system, enabling the identification of public financing allocations across various SDGs. To support the Government's agenda on climate action, the formulation process of the SDG-aligned climate finance strategy was launched at the end of 2021. In addition, an SDG budgeting roadmap was developed to provide step-by-step algorithms on how the Government of Kazakhstan could fully shift to an SDG-accountable budgeting system. Each of these components is an integral part of the holistic SDG financing strategy. Moreover, in 2021, the budget for children (a child-focused public finance management system to monitor effectiveness of SDG financing for children) was drafted.

During the 5th SDG Coordination Council meeting, the list of nationalized SDG targets and indicators was approved by the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also the Chair of the Council. State bodies will integrate these into the strategic planning system.

The UN, jointly with the SDG Coordination Council Secretariat, started work on SDG budgeting with a focus on gender and child

dimensions. The results were presented to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy. Methodology will be further elaborated together with state bodies and presented during the next SDG Coordination Council Meeting.

The JP contributed to the Government's use of alternative tools for monitoring and assessment of the financing landscape, including the replication by ERI of Development Finance Assistance (DFA) 'pilots' in three regions — Almaty (city of republican significance), Karaganda (industrial) and North Kazakhstan (agricultural) — to see how financing opportunities differ regionally.

With a budget of \$1,000,000, the JP was scheduled for two years (07/2020-06/2022). However, due to reforms in the State Planning System during 2021, the participating UN organizations have requested an extension of the JP until the end of 2022.



In addition to the Joint Programme, an agreement was signed with the European Union Delegation to support the establishment of a regional SDG knowledge-sharing platform for Central Asia in July 2021. The SDG Platform supports Central Asian governments' ability to track the effectiveness of socio-economic policies and to adjust those policies vis-à-vis the SDGs and integrated national financing frameworks for SDG-aligned policies.

An inter-agency second voluntary national review (VNR) support task force was established to support the Government in its efforts to prepare the second VNR on SDGs. The VNR structure and a concept have been approved by the Government, and discussion is ongoing on the alignment of Kazakhstan's development strategy with the SDGs in terms of priority goals and approaches to cooperation with stakeholders in order to collect the necessary data for the second VNR.

Initial contacts have been established with the Kazakhstan Agency for International Development (KazAID) and further discussion will take place on the best avenues for United

Nations support. Also in 2021, the Akimat of Nur-Sultan appointed a focal point for coordination of cooperation with the United Nations. The Akimat expressed willingness to join the Making Cities Resilient Campaign and formed a technical working group consisting of representatives from Akimat departments, various city departments and line ministries.

In addition, the UN partnered with the World Bank and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) to support national partners (the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources and JSC Zhasyl Damu) with the revision of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.

In September 2021, the Government of the Republic of Korea, Astana Civil Service Hub and the UN launched a regional project on digitalization and innovation in the public sector in Central Asia and the Caucasus aimed at building capacity and enhancing knowledge of government officials on innovative approaches to governance and digital solutions in public services.



2.4 Results of the UN Working More and Better together: UN Coherence, Effectiveness and Efficiency

In 2021, UNCT members continued efforts to make their joint work more effective and aligned with evolving country development priorities. To support these efforts, some changes have been introduced to the inter-agency architecture. The UNSDCF Result Group Terms of Reference has been revised to ensure regular and substantive collaboration throughout the year.



Several new inter-agency groups and task forces have been established such as:

- **The Extended Gender Theme Group:** This group's main objective is to strengthen the cooperation between the Government, the UN system in Kazakhstan, the broader international community and other partners (as relevant) in the area of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
- **The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) Inter-Agency Task Team:** In June 2021, the task team was established to provide updates on COP26-related work and discuss inter-agency initiatives.
- **The VNR Inter-Agency Group:** Established in September 2021, this group ensures inter-agency collaboration in support of the VNR development by the Government to be presented at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2022.
- **The UN Thematic Group on Human Rights:** In line with the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, this group aims to coordinate human rights risk and opportunity analysis, related activities and advocacy efforts of UN entities that are implementing or providing financial support to human rights-related projects and activities in Kazakhstan.
- **The Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Team:** This team is responsible for the development and monitoring of the UNCT action plan on PSEA.
- **The UNJT on HIV/AIDS Group:** This group coordinates the work of the UN and donors in the field of HIV/AIDS.

Implementation of Business Operations Strategy

UNCT members actively work to ensure a more unified presence in a cost-effective manner in the UN Common Premises in Almaty and Nur-Sultan. The UNCT continues harmonizing business operations at the country level to generate further efficiencies, savings and cost avoidance.

To that end, the Kazakhstan Business Operation Strategy (BOS) 2.0 was finalized in August 2020, with new common service areas identified for 2020-2021 implementation. The UNCT in Kazakhstan is ahead of many countries, with many service lines already in place, including common administrative services such as common premises and common ICT systems and services. Despite challenges due to the global pandemic and related restrictions, the UN Country Team has managed to fully implement the following services in 2021, which are expected to further reduce costs for participating agencies:

- Database for long-term agreements (LTAs)
- Application for booking common services
- LTA for mobile services

Activities related to environmentally-friendly waste management in the UN common premises are also being implemented. Moreover, a new LTA procurement of hotel and travel management services has been initiated, which will enable all agencies to leverage the economy of scale, reduce processing time and harmonize rates for these services.

Aside from the Kazakhstan BOS 2.0 outlined common operations areas, the UNCT has initiated the process of improving accessibility for people with disabilities at the UN House in Nur-Sultan and UN premises in Almaty. A Terms of Reference for the assessment of both premises has been developed. A person with disability has been contracted on a part-time basis to support the Operation Management Team with an assessment of premises and subsequent improvements in 2022.





LSSC rollout

In 2021, the UNCT started a rollout of a local service shared centre (LSSC) in Kazakhstan. A LSSC, previously known as common back office (CBO), refers to location-dependent, non-programmatic, back-office services at the country level. The LSSC workstream seeks several benefits, primarily efficiency gains and enhanced quality of service.

The UNCT has signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with the Development Coordination Office (DCO), committing UN entities in Kazakhstan to support the LSSC roll-out in the country. Furthermore, the UNCT has appointed LSSC focal points from participating UN agencies to be trained in LSSC data collection. Once data collection is completed in 2022, the DCO/LSSC team will organize a scoping exercise, a workload and functional analysis, the design of the future LSSC Kazakhstan structure and its budget, including the selection of a hosting entity to run the LSSC in-country and set up the appropriate cost-recovery mechanism.

Communicating and advocating together

Communications and advocacy efforts in 2021 were focused on strengthening the UNSDCF. The Joint Communications and Advocacy Strategy 2021-2025 and Joint Annual Communications Plan were adopted, further enhancing interagency coordination and conveying the One UN message.

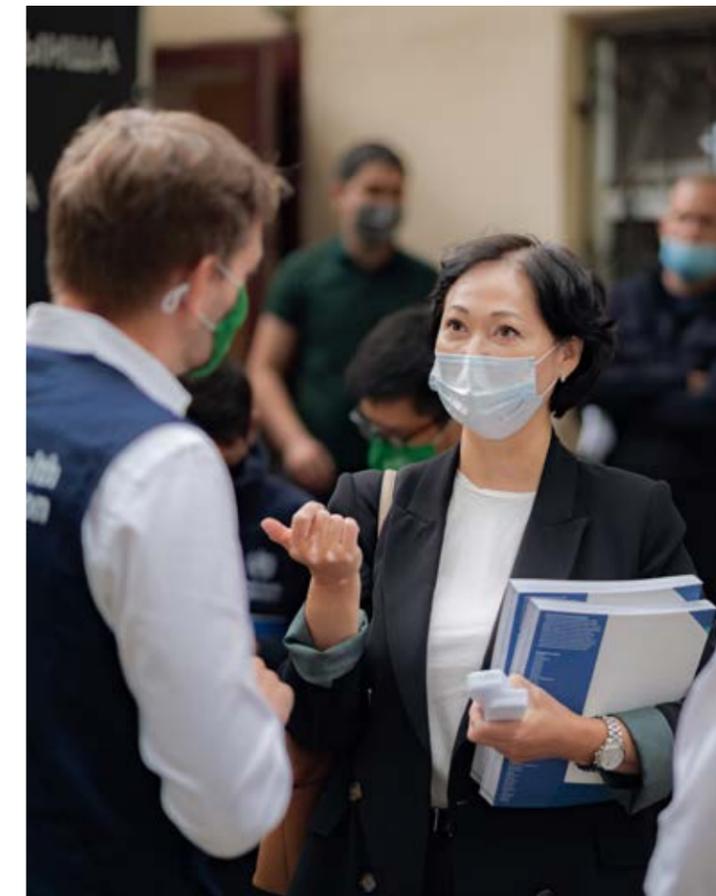
Joint Communications Plans included the development of UN joint outreach activities and the pooling of human and financial resources. Regular communications continued around COVID-19 risk reduction and the advantages of vaccination, as well as the regular UN observance days. Special focus was on climate change and issues related to COP26, International Women's Day, Nauryz, Nelson Mandela Day, International Day Against Nuclear Tests, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign and the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's Independence. These efforts included media contests, a press tour to COP26 in Glasgow, Model UN, a photo exhibition for the 16 Days campaign, a visit of the popular singer Manizha to Kazakhstan, and media coverage of high-level UN visits, such as the visit by President of the United Nations General Assembly Volkan Bozkir.

To further enhance support for UN Youth 2030 and the SDGs, UN communications, outreach and advocacy also included a close cooperation with universities in Kazakhstan. For example, the UN Academic Impact Global Hub on Sustainability is hosted by the al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

In addition, crisis communications were activated during the UNAMA relocation to Almaty, including coordination and timely liaising with local media and the organisation of press briefings.

Throughout 2021, the UNCT also focused on enhancing collaboration with local media outlets and worked with regional media and communities during visits to Mangystau, Turkestan. The UN was well-represented at the Astana Media Week and Eurasian Media Forum as the keynote speakers.

Traditional and social media coverage of the UN in Kazakhstan increased significantly in 2021, resulting in a total of 17 million views and an engagement rate of 941,000.



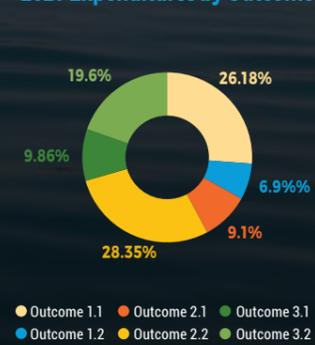
2.5 Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

2.5.1 Financial Overview

Total 2021 Required and Available Resources and Expenditures by Cooperation Framework Output (in USD)

UNSDCF outputs	Required	Available	Expenditures
Outcome 1.1	8,989,452	5,564,302	6,373,172
Outcome 1.2	3,638,756	2,305,605	1,671,388
Outcome 2.1	2,622,313	2,582,313	2,224,844
Outcome 2.2	7,657,328	7,939,828	6,902,438
Outcome 3.1	3,469,524	3,529,524	2,400,046
Outcome 3.2	7,327,358	7,191,858	4,772,383
TOTAL	33,704,731	29,113,430	24,344,271

2021 Expenditures by Outcome



2021 Budget Breakdown by Agency (in USD)

Agency	Total required	Available	2021 expenditures
FAO	1,194,350	1,254,350	798,602
IOM	2,177,036	1,657,036	1,331,961
ITC	615,643	615,643	293,000
ITU	149,900	149,900	135,500
OHCHR	40,000	40,000	15,880
UN Women	883,853	873,853	475,378
UNAIDS	97,000	97,000	250,814
UNDP	1,585,521	1,585,521	1,357,7028
UNDRR	96,000	96,000	96,000
UNECE	350,000	350,000	350,000
UNEP	106,500	106,500	106,500
UNESCO	1,632,067	545,281	689,237
UNFPA	332,200	332,200	441,176
UNHCR	1,029,771	1,029,771	1,075,604
UNICEF	5,706,686	2,975,181	2,175,000
UNIDO	650,000	650,000	179,604
UNODC	1,722,194	1,68,2194	1,553,500
WHO	1,063,010	800,000	799,487
Total	33,704,731	29,113,430	24,344,271

2.5.2 Resource mobilization

The current COVID-19 crisis may have unprecedented consequences that could affect the current Cooperation Framework during its cycle. Despite confirmations from donor countries that they will strive to protect their overseas development assistance (ODA) budgets, bilateral aid commitments reported to the International Aid Transparency Initiative in the first five months of 2021 were about 30 percent lower than during the same period in 2019. Some of the largest donor countries have announced international support measures in response to COVID-related crisis, but this is not sufficient to sustain pre-crisis ODA levels.

Moreover, the increase in emergencies associated with the climate change in the region and Kazakhstan in particular (and the complexity and duration of many of these crises) demonstrates the urgency of strengthening the integration of crisis response and development efforts.

To this end, in 2021, the UN focused on developing its new Resource Mobilization and Partnership Building Strategy, which includes the following:

- Support the Government in aligning its policies and financing strategies with the 2030 Agenda and towards adoption of an integrated national financing framework (INFF).
- Expand and deepen relations with strategic partners.
- Invest in relations with emerging donors.

- Strive to expand the donor base globally through new funding streams, including partnering with international financial institutions and multilateral funds.

- Mobilize strategic advocates.

The UNCT was successful in exploring opportunities for funding through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) mechanism. A proposal to accelerate a digital social services delivery model to address the needs of the most vulnerable in Kazakhstan received \$850,000 in funding from the COVID-19 MPTF. Meanwhile, a joint proposal of the five Central Asian UNCTs, coordinated by the UN in Kazakhstan, to support the governments of Central Asian states in the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) was put in the Migration MPTF funding pipeline.

The UN will seek to further strengthen its engagement with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to enhance its mandate and funding opportunities. Partnerships with the European Union (EU), international development financial institutions (DFIs) and international financial institutions (IFIs) need to be strengthened to promote SDG financing through regular bilateral and multi-party consultations.

The UNCT will also explore new opportunities with the private sector, thematic funds, UN SDG Joint pooled funds, foundations or philanthropic organizations.

3

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR THE NEXT YEAR



As 2021 came to an end, several indicators pointed in the right direction for the development of Kazakhstan, but in January 2022, the country witnessed severe unrest that began after the Government lifted price controls on liquefied petroleum gas. The protests were especially violent in Almaty, the largest city of the country and its former capital. Demonstrations that were initially peaceful and around economic issues transformed into violent clashes with the law enforcement and looting of administrative buildings and businesses. Over 200 persons tragically lost their lives, and thousands were arrested.

In light of the unrest, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev outlined a set of government policies and measures aimed at addressing the root causes of the protests.

These proposed policies and reforms create new entry points for the United Nations to support strengthening social cohesion; encouraging productive dialogues between people and the Government; fostering the reform of the public administration and economic diversification; addressing regional disparities; strengthening the rule of law and human rights; and promoting youth employment, among other priorities.

The unrests in January reconfirmed the relevance of the UNCT configuration in the country, and the geopolitical situation in the wider region underscores the complexities of development.

The United Nations will continue supporting the country in its efforts to address gaps in ensuring human rights and freedoms, and to foster the gender equality agenda in Kazakhstan, while working towards sustainable economic development for the people and for the country.



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Production: Julie Pudlowski Consulting

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