



UNITED NATIONS
BELARUS



UN BELARUS RESULTS REPORT

2021



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FOREWORD BY UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN BELARUS

In 2021, the UN system continued to deliver development assistance to Belarus and contributed to implementation of the global Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. In line with the vision of sustainable development outlined in agency Country Programmes and in the draft Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025, the UN provided support to the long-term development process in Belarus, responded to COVID-19, and a refugee and migration crisis in Belarus.

Our vision is simple – human-centred development that protects at the same time the people and planet. We believe that everyone should benefit from economic growth, but growth which is “green” and inclusive, and happens through constructive and inclusive engagement between the Government, private sector, small businesses, and the citizens.

We clearly see the urgent need to invest in climate action. Belarus, like every other country in the world, must take steps to reduce CO₂ emissions and enhance measures that will allow for rapid climate change mitigation and adaptation.

For the sake of future generations and demographic security, the needs of children and youth must be a priority. This requires continued investments in healthcare, promotion of healthy lifestyles and responsible behaviours. It requires creation of modern health services for all, services that will be accessible, inclusive, and friendly, tailored to the needs of the



young generation, but also tailored to the future needs of an ageing society.

The welfare of future generations depends on many variables but two of them are particularly important – education and social services. Belarus prides itself, rightly so, on achievements in the areas of health, education, and social protection. We believe that major investments are needed to sustain the level of services and further modernize these sectors.

Digitalization plays an important role in every sphere of life. We see how information and communication technologies help to tackle the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone also is aware of the potential destructive and dangerous side of information technologies, e.g. on privacy, protection of children rights, etc. As UN, from the development point of view, we see major untapped opportunities that Belarus should embrace to create a digital ecosystem that will work for all. Smart, sustainable cities, effective provision of

administrative and other services online, innovations in how people learn and take part in public debates and decision making – all these could accelerate development and make Belarus a continuously attractive and competitive place for investments and new talent to grow.

We also believe in equal opportunities of men and women, at home, at work and in the society.

This is the ambition encapsulated in UN’s priorities for cooperation in Belarus. We are committed to pursuing these long-term goals despite challenges in terms of limited expert capacity of civil society organizations and decreasing donor funding.

We are also addressing new priorities, such as COVID-19 and refugee and migration crisis which were very much in the focus of our work in 2021. In response to COVID-19, the UN has not only supported the health sector and promoted vaccination. In the spirit of “leaving no one behind” we are helping to address the socio-economic implications of the pandemic in the long-term.

In response to the migration crisis in 2021, the UN system provided humanitarian goods, technical expertise, legal support, and financing to the Belarusian Red Cross and other humanitarian relief efforts. This report provides details of the joint work of all UN agencies, including those which are represented in Belarus and non-resident ones.

To all our partners in the country – the Government of Belarus, civil society organizations, businesses, academia, all media partners, and the international donor community – on behalf of the UN Country Team, I want to thank you for collaboration, support, and partnership in the joint effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Belarus.

Special thanks also to UN personnel working in Belarus who make a truly professional team, focused on doing their job, in line with the UN values and mandates, and with unwavering commitment to human rights and “leaving no one behind” in every area of development work.



Joanna Kazana-Wisniowiecki
UN Resident Coordinator in Belarus

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN BELARUS 10

CHAPTER 2

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK 12

2.1. OVERVIEW OF COOPERATION FRAMEWORK RESULTS 13

2.2. COOPERATION FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES, AND OUTPUTS 16

2.2.1. UN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 39

2.2.2. UN RESPONSE TO THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN 2021 44

2.3. SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING THE 2030 AGENDA 50

2.4. RESULTS OF THE UN WORKING BETTER TOGETHER: UN COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS, AND EFFICIENCY 54

2.5. EVALUATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED 58

2.6. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION 61

CHAPTER 3

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2022 66

UN COUNTRY TEAM

UN entities contributing to results in 2021:



KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

International partners and donors:



In 2021 the UN system worked in coordination with the following Government ministries, institutions, and companies:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Architecture and Construction
- Ministry of Communication and Informatization
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry for Emergency Situations
- Ministry of Energy
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
- Ministry of Sports and Tourism
- Ministry of Transport and Trade
- National Academy of Science
- National Assembly
- National Reference Laboratory
- National Statistical Committee
- National Scientific Centre of Health Technologies
- Investigative Committee
- Minsk Regional Centre of Narcology
- Prosecutor General's Office
- Republican Centre for Emergency Medical care
- Republican Centre for Medical Response
- Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Medical Technologies, Informatization and Healthcare Economy
- State Border Committee
- State Customs Committee
- State Committee on Science and Technology
- State Committee on Standardization, Department for Energy Efficiency
- oblast executive committees, other local and regional government institutions
- healthcare providers
- Belarusian Fund for Financial Support to Entrepreneurs
- OJSC "Giprosvjaz"
- Republican Unitary Enterprise «Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant»
- Republican Unitary Enterprise Centre for International Environmental Projects, Certification and Audit "Ecologiainvest"
- State Institution "N.N. Alexandrov National Cancer Centre"
- State Enterprise "Academpharm"

We also partnered with think-tanks, academia and universities:

- Academy of the Ministry of Interior
- Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education (BelMAPO)
- Belarusian State Academy of Telecommunications
- Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank
- Belarusian State University
- BEROC Economic Research Centre*
- Institute of Sociology
- IPM Business School*
- Polessky State University
- Republican Institute for Vocational Education

* Organizations dissolved or in the process of dissolution in 2021.

We supported and implemented our programmes in cooperation with civil society organizations:

- APB Belarus ("Protection of Motherland Birds")
- Association Education for Sustainable Development*
- Association of Life-Long Learning and Enlightenment*
- Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities
- Belarusian Association of Persons with Disabilities
- Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs
- Belarusian Bar Association
- Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers
- Belarusian Society of Red Cross and its regional branches
- Belarusian Helsinki Committee*
- Belarusian Young Women Christian Association (Homiel branch)
- Business Women Club Brest
- Centre for Environmental Solutions*
- Centre for Promotion of Women's Rights Her rights*
- Consultation and Information Institution "Social Changes" (La Strada Belarus)*
- DOBRA Foundation*
- Gender Perspectives*
- Global network of people living with HIV*
- Human Constanta*
- International educational public association Act*
- Legal Initiative*
- MamaPro
- Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
- People Plus
- Positive movement
- Province*
- ProWomen
- Radislava*
- Republican Association of Wheelchair Users
- Republican social public association Your Chance
- Republican Volunteers Centre
- Street medicine*
- UN Global Compact Local Network
- World Without Borders
- youth centres

The UN system's private sector partners in Belarus are:

- A1
- Cipla
- EPAM Systems
- Itransition
- KPMG
- Life
- LigaturaBel
- MTS
- NotaKitchen
- Oyper
- Priorbank
- SATIO Civitta Group
- SoftTeco
- Viber
- Wargaming

We collaborated with online and printed media.

And with our beneficiaries – the vulnerable groups and key populations.

* Organizations dissolved or in the process of dissolution in 2021.



KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN BELARUS

The work of the UN in Belarus in 2021 has been influenced by several factors and key events that took place during the year concerning the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a challenging regional and economic context.

The economy grew by 2.3 per cent in 2021, driven by external demand, and the foreign trade surplus reached USD 4 billion. However, growth has been slowing down in the last quarter, with the manufacturing and construction sectors being the most negatively impacted. Growth in exports contributed to strengthening the country's macroeconomic stability¹, which nevertheless remains fragile. Whereas the budget of the state sector ended the year with a surplus of BYN 0.9 billion, the Government budget for 2022 was approved with a deficit of about 1.5 per cent of GDP. Furthermore, some BYN 6.9 billion is envisaged for the repayment of the state debt and about BYN 3.5 billion for its servicing, which may compromise recent achievements in terms of reduction of poverty and inequality.


The country continued to be significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 alone, 500,000 new cases of COVID-19 and 4,000 deaths have been reported in Belarus². Whereas the numbers of registered new cases and deaths have

been below the national average of neighbouring countries and the European region, the pandemic has still presented challenges on many fronts, including equal access to healthcare across the country, the economic activities of small and medium-sized businesses, and access to state support. Vulnerable groups most affected by the pandemic saw their livelihoods affected (the groups included the unemployed, elderly, people in detention, persons with disabilities, informal workers, and people from rural areas, among others). The pandemic has also highlighted structural gender inequalities, such as performance of low-paid or unpaid care and domestic work, pervasive gender pay gaps, and gender-based violence.

While positive steps have been taken by Belarus in advancing the SDGs and Agenda 2030, some SDGs may have been adversely affected by the events in 2021, including SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Over 15 organizations working as the UN implementing partners were dissolved and major donors have either suspended or discontinued their activities altogether.

¹ The reserves grew by almost USD 1 billion, amounting to USD 8.425 billion as of 1 January 2022.

² Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/belarus/>



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

2.1. OVERVIEW OF COOPERATION FRAMEWORK RESULTS

The UN in Belarus is guided by the 2030 Agenda, its core principles, and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as prime instruments that can allow Belarus to effectively achieve its development aspirations.

In 2021, the efforts of the UN in Belarus to support the country in the achievement of SDGs were largely guided by the priorities of the draft UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (UNSDCF), the main cooperation agreement between the UN and the Government of the Republic of Belarus.

The document is aligned with the National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2035 and includes four strategic priorities to help achieve the long-term development vision for the attainment of the SDGs while leaving no one behind.

During the first year of the draft UNSDCF 2021-2025 implementation, the UN focused on aligning itself to deliver initial results to achieve the following five broad outcomes under the four strategic priorities.

FOUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND FIVE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES DEFINE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UN'S WORK FOR 2021-2025:



Green transition for inclusive and sustainable growth

- **OUTCOME 1:** By 2025, all people, including adolescents, young men and women, men and women aged 65 and older and other vulnerable groups benefit from green and inclusive economic development, realised through comprehensive regulatory frameworks, promotion of business activities, private sector partnerships, and increased participatory decision-making
- **OUTCOME 2:** A significant contribution to climate action is made by 2025 through the introduction of key measures of climate change adaptation and mitigation



Future generations orientation: adolescence and youth

- **OUTCOME 3:** By 2025, adolescents, youth, families with children and vulnerable groups practice safer and healthier behaviours, enjoy better access to gender-responsive, inclusive, and quality healthcare services, inclusive education, labour-market-oriented education, improved social protection system, more restorative approaches to justice, and opportunities to strengthen their families' resilience

Digital transformation and social innovation

- **OUTCOME 4:** By 2025, foundations of an efficient digital ecosystem are formed, including as part of smart sustainable cities, enabling interaction of the state, society, and business, with equal participation of women and men, adolescents, youth, and representatives of vulnerable groups

Gender equitable society

- **OUTCOME 5:** By 2025, improvements in data collection, gender equality policies, and child and gender budgeting have created conditions for men and women of all ages, including those aged 65 years and older, as well as girls and boys, to better realise their rights and increase the quality of their lives, including through increased opportunities for employment and better protection from gender-based and domestic violence



In addition to the priorities and results outlined in the draft UNSDCF 2021-2025, the UN also supported socio-economic and humanitarian response to emergencies, most prominently the continued COVID-19 pandemic and a migration crisis on the border of Belarus with the European Union.

In delivering the UNSDCF results, the UN relied on its key core competencies as well as thematic policy expertise, including expertise on international norms and standards, access to international best practices, coordination and convening capacity based on a diverse network of national and international partners, and project design and implementation services. That led to the development and adoption of several policy documents to guide the country's sustainable development, the launch of several studies and assessments to inform future efforts of both the UN and national partners and address the needs of the most vulnerable groups in Belarus.

Belarus has a comprehensive institutional architecture to manage the process of achieving the SDGs. In 2021, the UN continued to support its functioning to ensure the enabling environment for sustainable development. In particular, UN events and projects brought together about 700 participants in different fora in Belarus to discuss issues and find solutions to development challenges of sub-national, local, and cross-border communities such as the Chernobyl affected areas and thematic issues such as climate change and green economy as well as children and youth. The UNCT participated in two National Sustainable Development Council meetings in 2021, which discussed the country's progress toward SDGs, ways to address challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda, national participation in the

UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), and the contribution of young people to climate action.

Even though the prospects of sustainable development were significantly challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and complex regional geo-political context, national priorities such as the transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy), inclusive and productive employment, and decent incomes, effective state targeted social assistance, inclusion of children with disabilities, accessible healthcare services, remained relevant and got translated into several sectoral state programmes, action plans, practical recommendations and concrete projects, some of which were adopted and implemented with the support of the UNCT. These measures include the Action Plan for Development of Green Economy 2021-2025, the state programmes for Small and Medium Entrepreneurship (SME) 2021-2025, Public Health and Demographic Security 2021-2025, Digital development of Belarus 2021-2025, recommendations for corporate and policy measures to build capacities of healthcare system, accelerate SMEs' recovery and resilience in the COVID-19 context, implementation of green, digital and COVID-19 safe border crossing procedures, measures to foster ecotourism development, smart manufacturing, and food safety, promote support to families with children, advance distant counseling and gender disaggregation of data, etc. More details of UN work in four strategic priorities of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025, humanitarian response to COVID-19 pandemic and a migration crisis are presented further in the report.

2.2. COOPERATION FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES, AND OUTPUTS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

GREEN TRANSITION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

As to **Outcomes 1 and 2** (green and inclusive economic growth), UNCT helped support evidence generation and analysis on labour migration issues, green growth, smart industries in the real sector and volunteerism. As a result of these efforts, dozens of income and jobs generating initiatives, including social enterprises, including for persons with disabilities, have been launched at the local level in rural areas and small towns. An innovative Chernobyl Investment Platform has also been established to promote green and inclusive innovative development in the Chernobyl-affected areas.

Significant efforts were undertaken by the UN system to assist Belarusian authorities in planning and implementing actions to tackle climate change. The joint work resulted in a more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution of Belarus to combating climate change, with a new CO2 emission reduction target of 35 per cent set and submitted to the UNFCCC by Belarus. Several important studies have

been conducted to strengthen the evidence basis for the climate policy. They include an assessment of the country's technological capacity to implement a national low-emission development strategy, an analysis of the national climate-related legal and regulatory framework and fiscal policy, an overview of the best available technologies for waste management, a baseline report on disaster risk reduction, and a review of the status of land use and land degradation. In addition, practical pilot projects have been implemented to show the advantages of climate-friendly actions, including in small towns, and benefiting vulnerable groups: energy efficient street lighting, new approaches to urban transport systems, supply of measuring equipment for wind energy installations, and demonstration of opportunities of resource-efficient and cleaner productions. The UN also helped to strengthen national capacities for sustainable use of hydro-forestry reclamation systems, environmental impact assessments, phytosanitary control.



OUTCOME 1:

By 2025, all people, including adolescents, young men and women, men and women aged 65 and older, and other vulnerable groups, benefit from green and inclusive economic development, realised through comprehensive regulatory frameworks, promotion of business activities, private sector partnerships, and increased participatory decision-making.

Contributing UN agencies in 2021:

IOM, FAO, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNICEF, UNIDO

Impacting the following SDGs:



2021 Expenditures:

4,650,177 USD

Focus areas of UNCT work:

- Strengthening country capacity in price and market information systems and policy monitoring in response to COVID-19 and other shocks
- Supporting the national SDG architecture
- Green transition
- Economic development, ecotourism and entrepreneurship in the tourism industry at the local level
- Health and socio-economic response to COVID-19
- Leveraging the Fourth Industrial Revolution to foster smart manufacturing
- Strengthening the national food safety governance framework and food control functions
- Empowering youth as agents of change in the fight against human trafficking
- Maximizing the impact of migration and labour mobility for sustainable development
- Interconnecting the national customs system with the eTIR international system for contactless, paperless, and seamless border crossing operations – digital, green, and resilient to COVID-19
- Strengthening the country's capacity to accede to the World Trade Organization

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents adopted with UN support:

- National Action Plan for Development of Green Economy 2021-2025
- Recommendations for corporate and policy measures to accelerate SMEs' recovery and resilience in the COVID-19 context

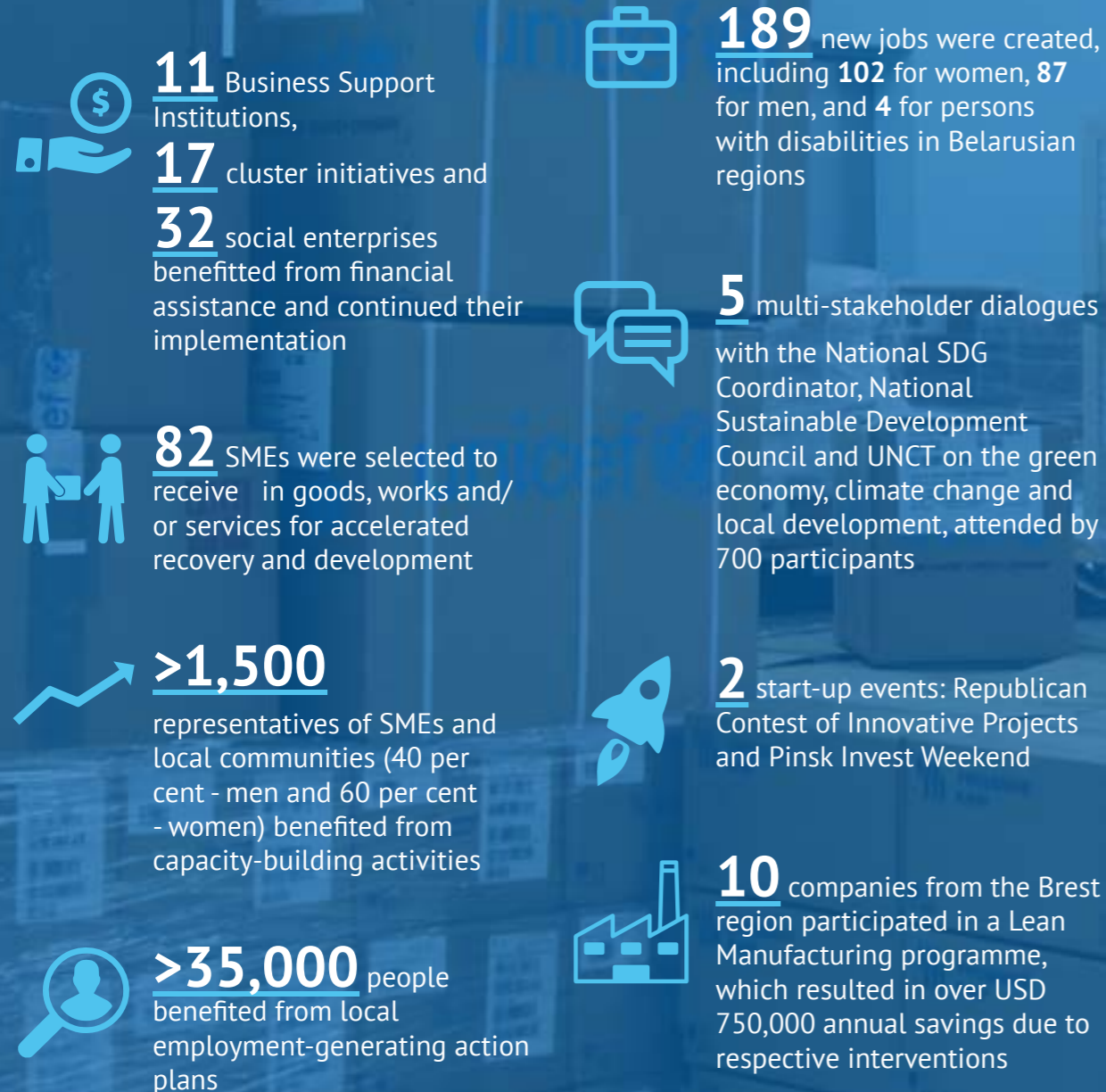
Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Integration of labour migration issues into economic development strategies, including gender aspects
- SDG alignment of the state programmes budgets
- Potential for a smart industry in the real sector of the economy of the Brest region, assessing the replication possibility in the real sector of the regions of Viciebsk and Mahilioŭ
- Needs and capacities of volunteers and volunteer coordinators in the educational institutions



UN WORK IN FIGURES

GREEN TRANSITION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- Government professionals trained in Food Price Monitoring and Agricultural Market Information Systems in Europe and Central Asia
- National WTO Centre launched and 846 representatives of government bodies, local authorities, members of parliament, business community, independent experts and academics expanded their knowledge of the process, status, and impact of WTO accession
- The electronic procedure of the UN TIR convention for the seamless harmonized electronic exchange of data in digital transport corridors, border crossings without a physical inspection of papers, goods, and vehicles
- 18 aspiring young leaders from across Belarus took part in the 5th Youth Summer Camp LEARN.ACT.SHARE to get equipped with vital skills and knowledge to conduct their peer-to-peer activities geared to the topic of human trafficking prevention.

CASE STUDY

ENGAGING YOUTH TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN BELARUS (2017-PRESENT)

Leveraging a network of activists, the **LEARN.ACT.SHARE.** camp led by IOM in Belarus with support of the UN Country Team engages young people in the prevention of human trafficking presenting information in a way that promotes clarity, awareness, and action. As of January 2021, the camp alumni had reached out to 4,380 peers with their campaigns and received positive feedback demonstrating young people's behavioural change stemming from their participation in the project. Alumni of the programme also contribute to community discussions and debates about human trafficking serving as a testimony to the project's sustainability.

[United Nations Behavioural Science Report 2021¹](#)

SUPPORTING SMEs DURING COVID-19

In 2021, UNDP continued supporting SMEs through the Local Economic Development project and [Business-19](#) capacity building platform². The platform is designed to help businesses adapt to COVID-19, accelerate recovery from the effects of the pandemic, and increase the resilience of SMEs to future crises. Business-19 platform features online business courses and guidelines on business digitalization. One of the key knowledge products of the platform in 2021 was [research](#) on the impact of the

¹ https://www.uninnovation.network/assets/BeSci/UN_Behavioural_Science_Report_2021.pdf

² <https://бизнес19.бел/>



COVID-19 pandemic on Belarusian SMEs to develop recommendations for corporate and policy measures to accelerate SMEs' recovery and strengthen their resilience³. The long- and short-term recommendations are based on the application of four SDG accelerators for Belarus. The business community and government agencies that implement the recommendations in the context of these priorities will contribute to sustainable recovery and achievement of the SDGs.

³ https://www.by.undp.org/content/belarus/ru/home/presscenter/pressreleases/covid19_business_recommendations.html



OUTCOME 2:

A significant contribution to climate action is made by 2025 through the introduction of key measures of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Contributing UN agencies in 2021:

FAO, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNICEF, UNIDO

Impacting the following SDGs:



2021 Expenditures:

3,441,100 USD

Focus areas of UNCT work:

- Greenhouse gas emissions trading and measurement, reporting and verification system for greenhouse gas emissions
- Persistent organic pollutants legacy and sustainable chemicals management

- Involvement of civil society organizations in environmental monitoring and improvement of environmental governance at the local level
- Waste management
- Resource-efficient and cleaner production technologies
- Collection, safe handling, and environmentally sound disposal of ozone-depleting substances and persistent organic pollutants
- Integrated application of eco-industrial park strategies
- Disaster risk reduction in the agricultural sector
- Wind power development
- Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands
- Enhancement of national plant pest surveillance and phytosanitary certification system
- Assessment and inventory of land degradation
- Reducing the advance of antimicrobial resistance in food and agriculture in Belarus
- Capacity development for the implementation of the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and UNECE-WHO Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health and the 2030 Agenda

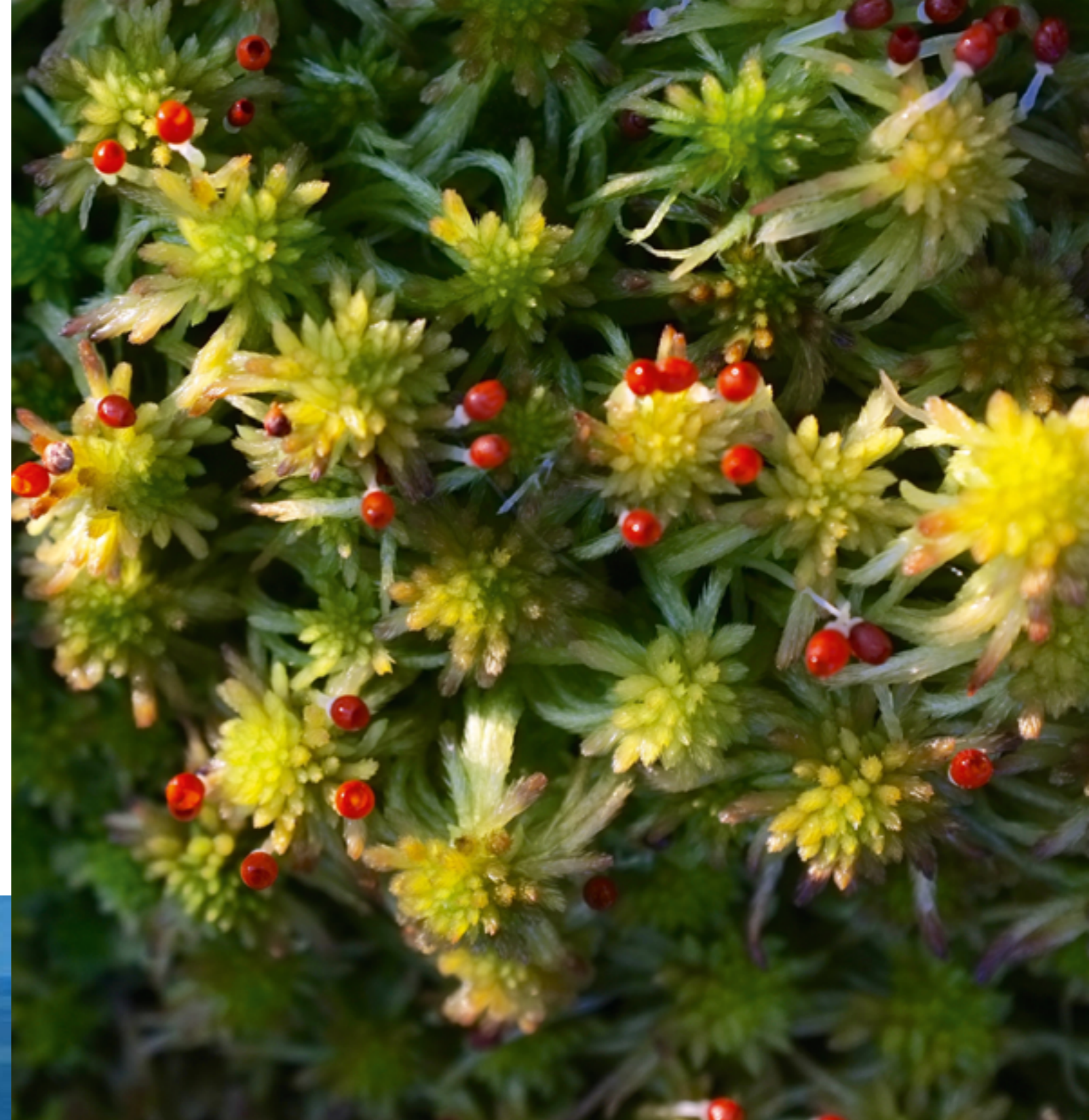
RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents adopted with UN support:

- Recommendations for the establishment of a greenhouse gas emissions trading system
- Nationally Determined Contribution with a higher emission reduction target of 35 per cent submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Draft Strategy for Belarus' long-term development with low greenhouse gas emissions up to 2050
- Digital Wind Atlas for potential investors and wind energy developers
- Updated regulations on wildlife resources

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Best available technologies for waste treatment and waste incineration
- Country baseline report on disaster risk reduction
- Study on the impact of energy transition and post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery on women
- Review of the status of land use and land degradation assessment capacities and information
- Assessment of institutional capacity for rapid response to pest outbreaks (bark beetle attacks)



UN WORK IN FIGURES

GREEN TRANSITION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



97 tons of obsolete pesticides exported and destroyed environmentally safely



2 resource-efficient and cleaner production clubs were launched in Orsha and Maladzyechna for private companies



6 kindergartens, one in each region of Belarus, became resource centres on «green schools» curricular

Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- Greenhouse gas emission model until 2050 is developed including three scenarios to set sectoral emission targets
- Training and demonstration programme on resource-efficient and cleaner production
- Scheme for sustainable use of hydro-forestry reclamation systems
- Assistance in finalizing the legal reforms on strategic environmental assessment and transboundary environmental impact assessment provided
- Training for phytosanitary laboratory staff

CASE STUDY

YOUTH INVITED TO JOIN WORK ON BELARUS' GREEN ECONOMY PLAN

Future generations' orientation is one of the accelerators in achieving the SDGs and underlines the importance of including adolescents and youth in the development and implementation of national plans related to the SDGs. UNDP and UNICEF joined their efforts in promoting participatory green economy development by organizing a youth forum **Green Economy-Successful Future**.

Attended by a hundred adolescents aged 14-18 from all over the country, the forum provided a platform to engage with the National SDG Coordinator, discuss the second National Action Plan on Green Economy 2021-2025 with a specific proposal shared with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection for inclusion into the Plan. Participants have also formulated a few personal action points to implement at the local level.



NEW NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION TO REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

As climate change worsens, serious efforts should be made to limit the increase of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Belarus to avoid negative consequences for the country's economy and ecosystems. With the support from UNDP expertise provided to the Government of Belarus, the country set the new unconditional target to reduce GHG by at least 35 per cent of the 1990 emissions by 2030, including the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector. The new conditional goal calls for a decrease in GHG emissions of at least

40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030, including the LULUCF sector.

UNDP organized consultations on the matter with representatives from governmental institutions, academia, CSOs, and international organizations (76 per cent of female participants), who participated in oral and written discussions as part of the Nationally determined contribution preparation process. During the consultations, the stakeholders negotiated policy analysis, methodology, and debate on developed mitigation scenarios for each sector (energy, industrially processed and product use, waste, agriculture, LULUCF) and cumulative scenarios for the mitigation target. Additional steps to be implemented in the future to meet the next, more ambitious GHG reduction target.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

FUTURE GENERATION ORIENTATION: ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH

In delivering the **Outcome 3** (future generations and vulnerable groups) results UN agencies focused on large-scale assistance to the system of public health, especially concerning COVID-19 pandemic mitigation measures. At the strategic level, the UNCT contributed to developing a state programme on Public Health and Demographic Security 2021-2025, including a sub-programme on countering the spread of tuberculosis, facilitated assessments on the treatment of tuberculosis, COVID-19 socio-economic impact on families with children. The first consolidated multidisciplinary study of

the national drug policy of Belarus was conducted as a result of institutional cooperation of the national experts from the Academy of the Ministry of Interior, National Institute of Sociology and Minsk Regional Centre of Narcology with the international experts, OHCHR and UNODC. In the context of HIV prevention, the UN helped increase access of people living with HIV to COVID-19 vaccination in all regions in Belarus. Support has been also provided to develop the national system of early childhood intervention and strengthen systems for child protection, inclusive education, and positive parenting.



OUTCOME 3:

By 2025, adolescents, youth, families with children and vulnerable groups practice safer and healthier behaviours, enjoy better access to gender-responsive, inclusive, and quality healthcare services, inclusive education, labour-market-oriented education, improved social protection system, more restorative approaches to justice, and opportunities to strengthen their families' resilience.

Contributing UN agencies in 2021:

IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO

Impacting the following SDGs:



2021 Expenditures:

6,235,220 USD

Focus areas of UNCT work:

- COVID-19 response
- Support for migration management, including vulnerable groups
- Assistance to victims of human trafficking, including labour exploitation
- Humanitarian aid to over 1,000 migrants stranded at the border
- Identification and integration of migrants' health priorities into the state health system
- Mental health and psychosocial well-being of adolescents
- Access to HIV prevention, testing, counselling, and social support programmes
- Coordination between infectious and tuberculosis (TB) services and provision of antiretroviral treatment to patients with HIV/TB co-infection
- Data analysis and publication cycle of the STEPS 2020 survey
- Healthcare system's capacity to communicate prevention and infection control messages and engage community members

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents adopted with UN support:

- Development of a state programme on Public Health and Demographic Security 2021-2025, including a sub-programme on countering the spread of tuberculosis
- UN Country Network on Migration supported the development of a concept for migration policy in Belarus

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Operational research on TB and COVID-19 co-infection
- Socio-economic assessment of the COVID-19 impact on well-being in Belarus with a focus on families with children
- Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on labour migrants in Belarus
- Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on returning Belarusian migrants
- Rapid assessment of Middle East migrant children's learning and initial psychological needs
- Assessment of the capacity of the general secondary and vocation-technical and specialized secondary education systems of the Republic of Belarus to develop in students the transferable/21st-century skills
- In-depth analysis of the national survey on people with disabilities
- Multidimensional child poverty in Belarus: attitude of parents towards deprivations and social assistance
- Joint rapid assessment of maternal, perinatal/neonatal care among migrant women
- Study on measuring public child-focused expenditure (child budgets) in Belarus at the national and subnational levels
- Comprehensive assessment of the national drug policy of Belarus
- External quality assessment for the National TB Laboratory
- Operational study on the use of modified shortened non-injection regimens for the treatment of rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis
- Needs and opportunities for volunteers and volunteer coordinators in educational institutions

Evaluations:

- Evaluation of the project "Prevention of child disability and social inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs in the Republic of Belarus"
- Final review of the project "Expanding access of at-risk adolescents and those from vulnerable groups to the youth-friendly health services"

UN WORK IN FIGURES

FUTURE GENERATION ORIENTATION: ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH



>1,600 units of high-precision medical equipment were procured, including lung ventilators, video laryngoscopes, high-tech intensive care beds, pulse oximetry devices, isolated stretchers, and acid-base balance analysers



34.5 million pieces of laboratory medical equipment procured, including consumables for automated RNA extraction and for conducting studies to determine coronavirus by PCR, distributed to **>150** medical institutions all over the country



66 returnees to Belarus were provided with reintegration assistance, including access to medical services, basic housing needs and income-generation/micro-business opportunities



10 returnees to Belarus took advantage of vocational training instrumental in facilitating effective post-return employment in Belarus



381 migrants returned to their countries of origin or legal residence from Belarus as part of assisted voluntary return



4,436 Belarusian and foreign migrants received access to the services of a safe migration hotline



139 vulnerable migrants/victims of trafficking, including **45** children, received protection assistance



The **#InternetWithout Bullying** campaign, launched in cooperation with the telecommunication company MTS, included videos and quizzes to test kids' knowledge about staying safe online. It covered **212,000** individuals



>3,000 adolescents received psychological counselling in crises to reduce stress and prevent self-harming



10 anonymous consultative centres opened to provide HIV prevention services, testing, social support, and referral to specialists



Coverage of young people (10-24 years) **was doubled** due to a new outreach approach piloted in **2** youth-friendly health clinics to enhance the access for at-risk adolescents



2,000 people received HIV prevention services and social support



The national campaign **Just Children at School** promoted the inclusion of children with disabilities, resulting in a **6%** decrease in negative associations and a **5%** increase in respondents who believed that children with disabilities should study with other children



2,000 people received HIV testing and know their status, 100 per cent of those with positive results were referred to the healthcare institution and linked to care



>850,000 women were reached by a digital awareness campaign addressing cervical cancer prevention patterns and behaviour



>11,500 students from 5th to 9th grade in **26** schools have gained skills on how to set classroom rules of respect and restore values when violations take place



>11,000 women and men completed at least one module of the online pregnancy school Programme for birth preparedness improving their knowledge of health-related issues during pregnancy and childbirth



50 new volunteers of peer-to-peer education in reproductive health were trained

Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- **12,700** medical professionals gained knowledge and skills on effective diagnostic approaches and treatment of COVID-19
- **6,590** psychologists and social pedagogues received knowledge and developed skills in specialised psychological assistance, strengthening their capacity to serve frontline health workers, families with children and populations in need
- **350** preschool and school nurses, specialists in infection control, epidemiologists and education administrators trained on implementing COVID-19 prevention outreach to children at preschools and schools, reaching at least 70,000 children and adolescents with safe behaviour skills
- **11** CSOs' psychologists raised their skills in providing efficient psychological assistance to victims of human trafficking in the context of emerging challenges, such as COVID-19, to ensure effective victims' protection and minimize re-trafficking risks
- Strengthened national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking through convening **6** regional-level multi-disciplinary group meetings for **112** governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to fast-track joint counter-trafficking actions in each region of Belarus
- **115** district-level labour, employment and social protection officials of Belarus were trained in the identification, referral, and reintegration of victims of human trafficking with a focus on victims of labour exploitation, to strengthen Belarus' anti-trafficking capacity
- Strengthened capacity of the Belarusian Red Cross, improving logistics, relief measures for migrants, and volunteer solutions for better preparedness
- **150** pedagogy students and **>200** psychologists and social pedagogues trained on crisis psychological assistance to adolescents and suicidal behaviour prevention
- **75** specialists in responsive and inclusive nutrition and feeding practices from early childhood intervention centres and baby homes were trained by SPOON Foundation and Republican Centre of Palliative Care supporting the health sector's capacities in nutrition
- **37** multidistrict early childhood intervention centres (ECI) across Belarus were certified. E-counselling modality was piloted, making it possible to continue using ECI services remotely and establishing 'routine-approach' counselling to increase children's access to services during COVID-19
- Homiel region case management project showed a **35%** reduction of children in the baby home, where **67%** of children left without parental care in oblast were placed in family-based care without being placed in the baby home
- **168** tuberculosis doctors, infectious disease specialists and epidemiologists trained in effective coordination between infectious and TB services and provision of antiretroviral treatment to patients with HIV/TB co-infection
- Electronic systems for monitoring of adherence to dispensary observation and antiretroviral treatment of people living with HIV
- Integration of multidisciplinary teams consisting of social workers and health practitioners into the system of dispensary observation of patients living with HIV
- Online course for psychological support of adolescents and young people living with HIV

- Training of trainers on the diagnosis and treatment of common mental disorders using WHO recommendations
- **150** healthcare managers were trained on applying digitalization in public health

CASE STUDY

MULTIDIMENSIONAL CHILD POVERTY: KEY RISKS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND APPROACHES TO IMPROVING THE STATE TARGETED SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The welfare of families with children and effective state targeted social assistance were the focus of the UN Joint SDG Fund project implemented by UNICEF in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus. In 2021 the UN agencies and the World Bank worked with the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, National Statistical Committee, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy to inform the coming legislative revisions of the state Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) programme through technical discussions.

The majority (around 90 per cent) of TSA beneficiaries in Belarus are families with children. There are 1,266,600 households with children, which account for 45 per cent of the country's population. [According to Belstat¹](#), in 2020, the share of children living below the national poverty line (SDG indicator 1.2.1) reached a historic low of 9.1 per cent. The decrease in the child poverty rate is taking place against the background of the growth in real incomes of families with children. However, the income gap persists for families with and without children. In 2020, families with children had an average of 14.4 per cent fewer disposable resources than the national average.

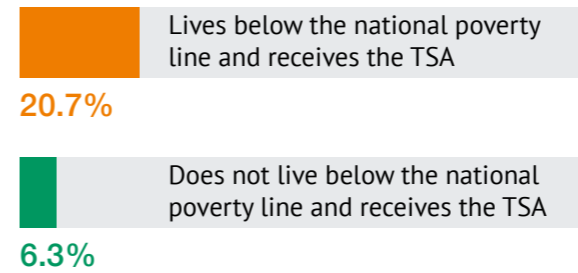
The state targeted social assistance, expanded in 2020 to support large families during the pandemic, is considered an efficient tool to combat child poverty. A UNICEF [first measurement²](#) of the multidimensional child poverty indicator contributed to that reform by simulating the TSA payments to low-income families with children in the form of a minimum flat-rate amount. The policy relevance of the multidimensional child poverty was proved through policy simulations of improving the social protection system coverage, including through the expansion of the state targeted social assistance to families with children. Estimates have shown that the cost of halving child poverty by 2030 can cost 0.3 per cent of GDP annually and that phasing out inefficient utility subsidies is the most effective way to increase fiscal space for reducing child poverty.

¹ <http://sdgplatform.belstat.gov.by/en/sites/belstatfront/index-info.html?indicator=1.2.1>

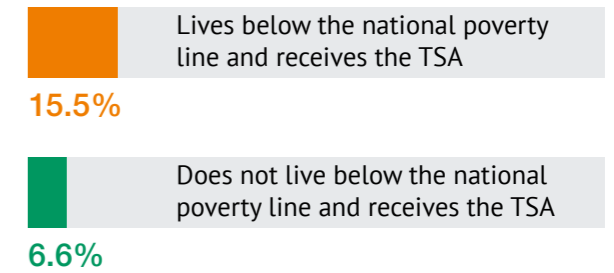
² <https://www.unicef.by/uploads/models/2021/11/child-poverty-and-tsa.pdf>



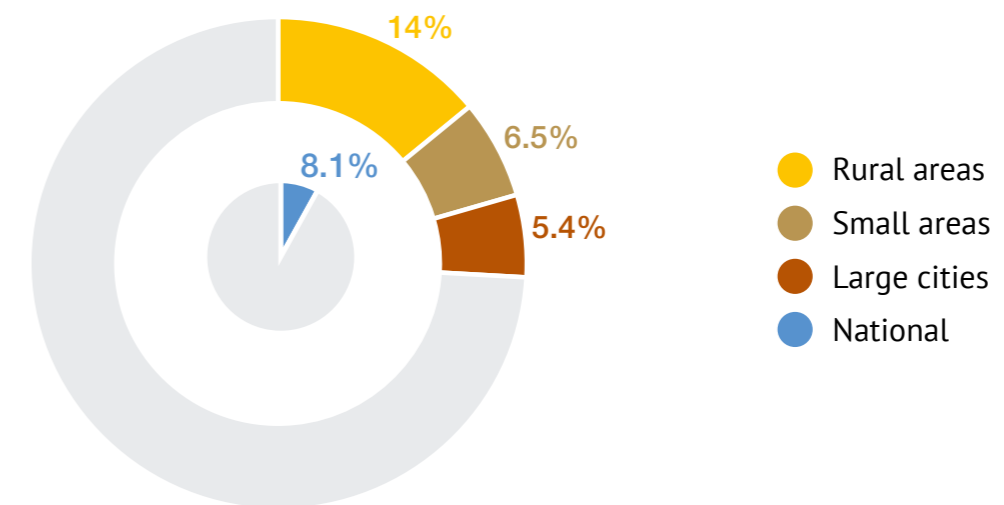
If a child lives **below the national poverty line**, he/she is more likely to receive the TSA



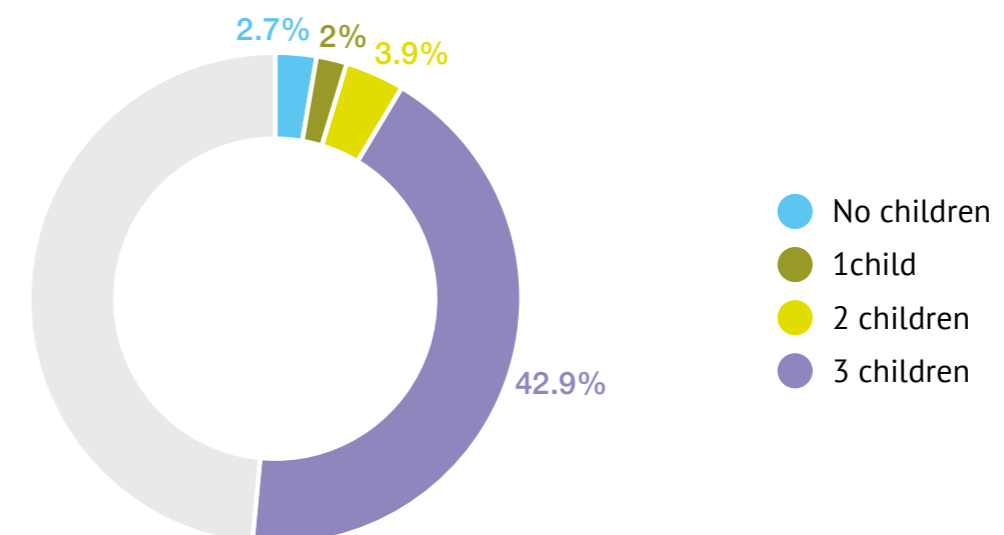
If a child is **multidimensionally poor**, he/she is more likely to receive the TSA



Children **living in rural areas** are more likely to receive the TSA



The more children a family has, the more likely it is to receive the TSA



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

UN work under **Outcome 4** (digitalization) contributed to several policy-level documents to advance smart cities, green urban development plans and digital development in 2021-2025. Several innovations have been launched, including a behavioural trial encouraging women to start studies and apply for technical roles in the IT sector and a mobile application for travellers to digitize data and document exchange. Part of the work also concerned the protection of vulnerable groups in the

online environments increasing awareness of the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse online. Belarus benefited from a regional baseline assessment of ICT accessibility policy and regulatory framework overview in the CIS region. The assessment provides an overview of good practices and strategies in the CIS region, covering international approaches to ICT accessibility and highlighting the role of the SDGs, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



OUTCOME 4:

By 2025, foundations of an efficient digital ecosystem are formed, including as part of smart sustainable cities, enabling interaction of the state, society, and business, with equal participation of women and men, adolescents, youth, and representatives of vulnerable groups.

Contributing UN agencies in 2021:

IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNECE, UNHCR, UNODC, WHO

Impacting the following SDGs:



2021 Expenditures:

3,049,007 USD

Focus areas of UNCT work:

- Digital trade facilitation
- Effective public information services
- Border management
- Sustainable housing and urban development, innovative financing of smart sustainable cities
- Green urban development in small and medium-sized cities
- Economic empowerment of women
- Online safety and information security in educational cyberspace for children and teachers
- Digital gender gap reduction

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents adopted with UN support:

- State programme Digital development of Belarus 2021-2025
- Action Plan for the Implementation of Smart Cities of Belarus

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Smart Sustainable City Profile of Hrodna, including a chapter on socio-economic resilience to COVID-19 and other emergencies
- Concept paper for the development of smart cities
- Behavioural trial encouraging women to start studies and apply for technical roles in the IT sector
- UNECE Sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook for countries in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, including Belarus¹
- Regional baseline assessment ICT accessibility policy and regulatory framework overview in the CIS region²

UN WORK IN FIGURES

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL INNOVATION



1 mobile application for travellers developed by IOM together with the State Border Committee



1 information campaign on COVID-19 prevention and rules of the border crossing during the pandemic was conducted



7 green urban development plans (for Zelva, Haradok, Karma, Krychaw, Polatsk, Navapolatsk, Navahrudak) adopted to promote principles of sustainable spatial urban development



Hundreds of parents, children aged 6-13 and specialists working with children benefited from increased awareness of the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse online



53 digital solutions developed, offered, and implemented for local development initiatives

¹ https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/UNECE_Sub-regional_IPO_2020_Publication.pdf

² https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/D-PHCB-ICT_ACCESS_CIS.01-2021/

Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- On-line course incorporating modules on social media management, effective communication, and information campaigns was developed for the State Border Committee
- Digitalization of data and document exchange in multimodal transport using international (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business) standards in the Black to Baltic Sea corridor
- New Risk Analysis System for State Border Committee was launched, complemented by the capacity building activities in developing IT products related to border risk analysis
- Infrastructure for sustainable urban mobility (bike infrastructure, traffic movement) developed for Polatsk and Navapolatsk to create more comfortable movement conditions, decrease air and noise pollution, improve road safety
- Annual ITU Forum on Smart sustainable cities provided a platform to discuss the organizational and technical aspects
- Training materials for ICT accessibility

CASE STUDY

LEVERAGING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR IMPROVED HEALTHCARE

COVID-19 has increased the demand for distant counselling services among residents, especially disadvantaged groups of the population, such as older adults, children and adults with disabilities, people with intellectual impairments and people living in remote areas, and from the side of healthcare professionals. This response is specifically relevant to the older population observing COVID-19 safety measures, who are homebound and highly care-dependent due to health or social reasons.

The Ministry of Health explores opportunities to develop e-counselling services to expand access, respond to the eminent need during COVID-19, and provide more systematic responses for more inclusive and accessible services. Several institutions have started piloting new approaches to tele-counselling and patient management. For example, a UNFPA project on online counselling,



training, and preparation for childbirth for pregnant women helped reduce the risks of getting infected pregnant women. Likewise, UNICEF has initiated tele-counselling for early childhood intervention services for children with complex disabilities to ensure continued service with reduced risk of infection. The WHO supported the Belarusian Association of Hearing-Impaired Persons and equipped twenty-five workplaces of sign language interpreters with tablets and Internet access. About 10,000 persons with hearing impairments in Belarus could benefit from this innovative approach and feel more included at the challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

GENDER EQUITABLE SOCIETY

Under **Outcome 5** (gender equitable society), the UN results included both strategic interventions (such as the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, alignment of public budgeting with SDGs, concept paper on involved fatherhood) and practical solutions (such as Gender Data Portal and guidelines for social service providers on multisectoral response to domestic violence case with a focus on

the protection of persons of older age and persons with disabilities). In addition, active communication campaigns on social and economic benefits of men's engagement into childcare, advancement of gender equality and tackling gender stereotypes, migrants, and COVID-19, addressing the issue of xenophobia all contributed to high results.

OUTCOME 5:

By 2025, improvements in data collection, gender equality policies, and child and gender budgeting have created conditions for men and women of all ages, including those aged 65 years and older, as well as girls and boys, to better exercise their rights and increase the quality of their lives, including through increased opportunities for employment and better protection from gender-based and domestic violence.

Focus areas of UNCT work:

- SDG performance-based budgeting that prioritizes vulnerable populations
- Addressing vulnerabilities, stigma, and discrimination of migrants, in particular women and girls, in the context of COVID-19
- Improving gender statistics
- Strengthening the capacity of the national statistical system to collect, analyse and disseminate demographic data for sustainable development
- Improving national capacity for evidence-based migration and labour rights protection policies for the benefit of migrants
- Using data on population dynamics for policy development and implementation
- Addressing gender stereotypes and gender-based violence
- Advancing gender equality

Contributing UN agencies in 2021:

IOM, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women

Impacting the following SDGs:



2021 Expenditures:

1,237,795 USD

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents adopted with UN support:

- Recommendations on the improvement of child-focused public expenditure measurement drafted and child budgets piloted in four Child and Adolescent Friendly Cities, including Minsk
- Guidelines for social service providers on multisectoral response to domestic violence cases with a focus on the protection of persons of older age and persons with disabilities

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Study to identify challenges of integrating migrants into the society
- Assessment of Belarus' progress towards SDGs in 2015-2020
- Survey on fathers' role in Belarusian families
- Concept paper on involved fatherhood
- Collection of qualitative and quantitative data to analyse gender stereotypes that impede the realization of the rights of adolescent girls (15-19) and form discrimination

UN WORK IN FIGURES

GENDER EQUITABLE SOCIETY



22,000 persons were reached by digital communication materials on the social and economic benefits of men's engagement in childcare



1,000,000 young people are covered by a digital communication campaign to advance gender equality and tackle gender stereotypes

Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- Communication products to provide reliable information about migrants and COVID-19, addressing the issue of xenophobia
- **130** representatives of national government institutions and statistical offices of CIS countries trained in the use of the Belarus Census Data Access System
- **10** Belarusian academics subsidized for membership in the International Union for Scientific Study of the Population

CASE STUDY

DATA PORTAL ON GENDER STATISTICS¹

To strengthen Belarus' data use and monitoring capacity, on SDG 5, the UN facilitated the establishment of a Data Portal on Gender Statistics owned by the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus.

It is a universal tool for popularizing and disseminating information on progress in achieving gender equality in Belarus.

The portal contains up-to-date official statistical data and administrative data on gender issues and is an open information resource for all categories of users dealing with gender equality issues. The Gender Statistics web portal was developed by Belstat with the support of UNICEF and UN Women. It is available in Russian, Belarusian and English and contains data on 168 indicators.
















¹ <http://gender.belstat.gov.by/home/>

Leaving No One Behind

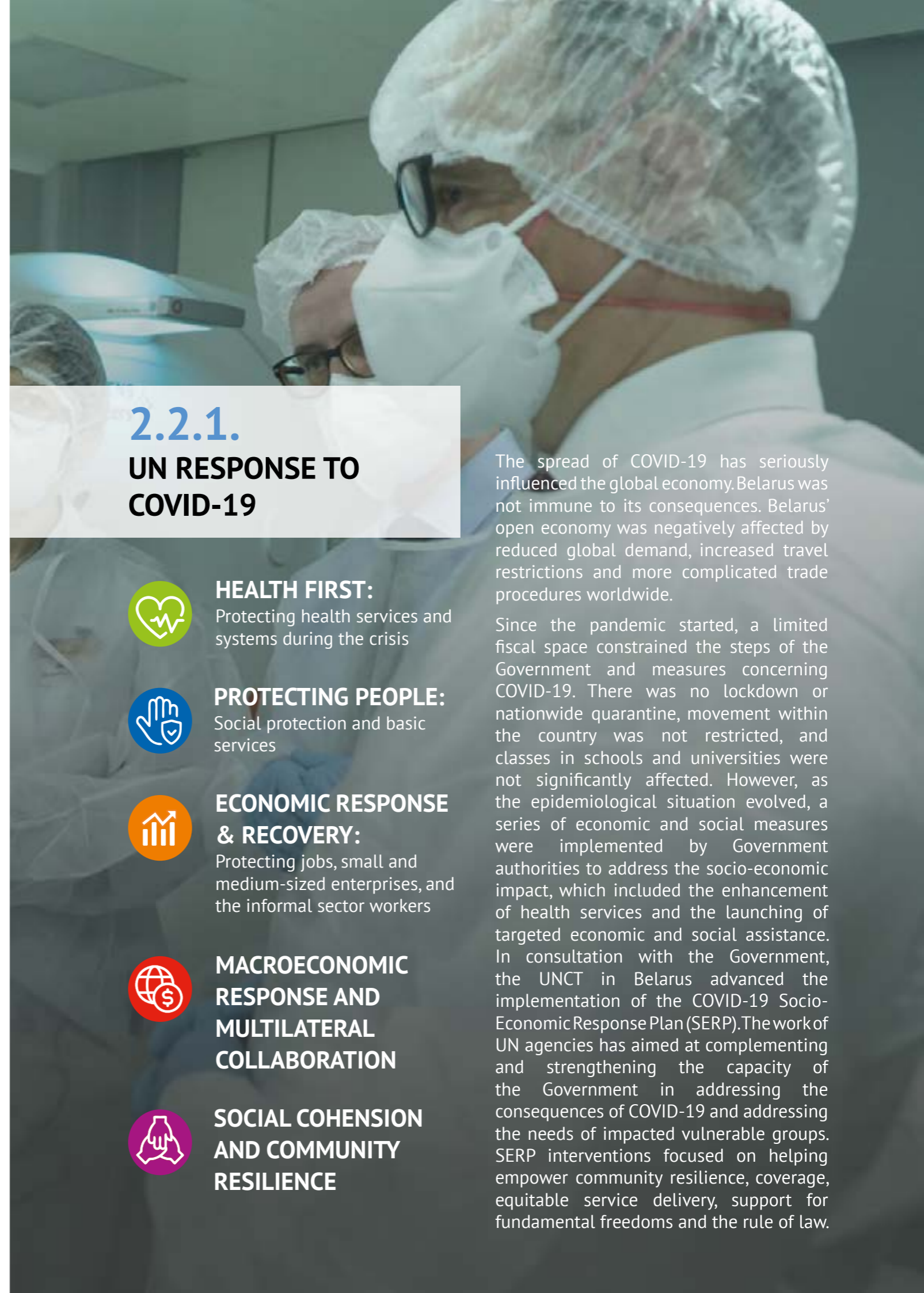
The priorities of UNCT work mainstream the principles of equality and non-discrimination and ensure the leaving no one behind approach. The choice of strategic pillars allowed us to, directly and indirectly, address the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the negative consequences resulting from the aftermath of the events of 2020 and 2021. The efforts of the UNCT contributed to the achievement of SDGs 1, 5, 10 that directly relate to the interests and rights of vulnerable groups.

At the same time, the UNCT will be taking additional steps to support the Government in addressing the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review outcomes, and other relevant recommendations of human rights mechanisms addressed to Belarus, as needed. This approach aims to contribute to achieving SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and promoting a human rights-based approach. In 2021, the UNCT also worked to improve the capacity and expertise of the UN staff in the country in the application of a human rights-based approach in programming.

Key vulnerable groups for the UN work in 2021

 Incoming and outgoing regular and irregular migrants	 Refugees and asylum seekers	 Stateless persons	 Men, women and children with disabilities
 Elderly workers and persons of older age	 Residents of Chernobyl-affected areas	 Key populations and vulnerable groups in the context of HIV* and TB, including adolescents and young people living with HIV	 Front-line healthcare workers
 Victims of human trafficking	 Children, adolescents and young people at risk	 Young men and women resident in rural areas	 Vulnerable groups for risk of severe COVID-19 infection
 Families with vulnerable children			

*In the context of HIV transmission, key populations refer to groups who, due to specific higher-risk behaviours, are at increased risk of HIV, irrespective of the epidemic type or local context; vulnerable groups refer to groups particularly vulnerable to HIV infection in certain situations or contexts.



2.2.1. UN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

-  **HEALTH FIRST:**
Protecting health services and systems during the crisis
-  **PROTECTING PEOPLE:**
Social protection and basic services
-  **ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY:**
Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector workers
-  **MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION**
-  **SOCIAL COHENSION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

The spread of COVID-19 has seriously influenced the global economy. Belarus was not immune to its consequences. Belarus' open economy was negatively affected by reduced global demand, increased travel restrictions and more complicated trade procedures worldwide.

Since the pandemic started, a limited fiscal space constrained the steps of the Government and measures concerning COVID-19. There was no lockdown or nationwide quarantine, movement within the country was not restricted, and classes in schools and universities were not significantly affected. However, as the epidemiological situation evolved, a series of economic and social measures were implemented by Government authorities to address the socio-economic impact, which included the enhancement of health services and the launching of targeted economic and social assistance. In consultation with the Government, the UNCT in Belarus advanced the implementation of the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP). The work of UN agencies has aimed at complementing and strengthening the capacity of the Government in addressing the consequences of COVID-19 and addressing the needs of impacted vulnerable groups. SERP interventions focused on helping empower community resilience, coverage, equitable service delivery, support for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

The impact of COVID-19 also had an unequal gender dimension, affecting both women-led companies and women-headed households. The pandemic has put women's human development at risk by exacerbating existing disparities. Companies headed by women have been more adversely affected than companies led by men since women usually own and/or manage businesses in industries most impacted by the pandemic (e.g., tourism, retail, catering). As to the impact on households, during the pandemic, women faced additional responsibilities to care for sick relatives and look after children who did not attend educational institutions, which also had a significant impact on their work.

Over 2021, the UN agencies focused on emergency aid, raising awareness, and specific policy guidance and technical support provision. Notably, several interventions have been undertaken through assistance in the procurement of health products and medical equipment, enhanced communications, and in-depth assessments of the socio-economic impact of the epidemic on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as well as on the situation of vulnerable groups, including the unemployed, informal workers, women, families with children, migrant workers, refugees and persons with disabilities.

CASE STUDY

MAINSTREAMING COVID-19 AWARENESS AMONG THE POPULATION

The priorities of UNCT work mainstream the principles of equality and non-discrimination and ensure the leaving no one behind approach. The choice of strategic pillars allowed us to, directly and indirectly, address the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the negative consequences resulting from the political crisis in the country. The efforts of the UNCT contributed to the achievement of SDGs 1, 5, 10 that directly relate to the interests and rights of vulnerable groups.

The visuals feature the main COVID-19 measures of safety such as: wearing masks, keeping physical distance, practising good hand hygiene, staying home if sick and getting tested, etc.

The offline campaign featured billboards, citylights and transport information leaflets in all cities in Belarus. The campaign posters were also uploaded online on the UNCT in



ВМЕСТЕ ПРОТИВ
COVID-19
Организация Объединенных Наций
United Nations

Регулярно мойте руки
с мылом и водой
не менее 20 секунд

Belarus website so that the city cafes and public spaces could download them freely and place them in their venues. Focusing on online awareness-raising, UNCT has led several informational campaigns on social media to promote the protective measures against the virus and the ways to prevent its spreading. UN agencies have organized

a series of online discussions with experts on a wide range of topics related to COVID-19: starting with the effect of the pandemic on vulnerable groups up to environmental issues and business in Belarus. The campaign received positive feedback from the citizens and massive media coverage in the Belarusian press.

CORONA QUESTION PODCAST SERIES

A series of podcasts, Corona Question, was launched by UNDP to spotlight the impact of the pandemic across different communities and professional groups and showcase innovative solutions that allowed people to get their businesses back on track. The nine-episode media product explores how businesses and various vulnerable groups, education and the environment adapted to the new reality and found new innovative ways of overcoming the challenges that COVID-19 brought to society and the economy. Thousands of people got a deeper insight into the impact pandemic had on small and medium businesses, women-led enterprises, farmers, the elderly, people with disabilities, people living with HIV, and whole sectors like informal education and the environment. Each episode provided a comprehensive case that examined the pandemic's challenges and opportunities through the eyes and the stories of experts, entrepreneurs, ordinary people, all of those who didn't give up but found solutions to adapt to the pandemic and move forward.



The podcast series Corona Question is a partnership product of the UN agencies, national partners, CSOs, academia and private businesses. The podcast season is now on [Soundcloud](https://soundcloud.com/corona-podcast), in Apple and Google Podcasts¹.

¹ <https://soundcloud.com/corona-podcast>

Undertaking impact assessments

Several impact assessments conducted by IOM, UNECE, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and other agencies helped reassess priorities for intervention and focus policy advice on the following areas:



Enhancing public health capacities and the importance of fostering vaccination campaigns



Identifying the main drivers of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on MSMEs and entrepreneurship in Belarus



Addressing key aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic social impact on families with children



Identifying specific vulnerabilities in gender disparities related to domestic work, education, and healthcare



Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on young children, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities and persons living with HIV, homeless persons, and former convicts

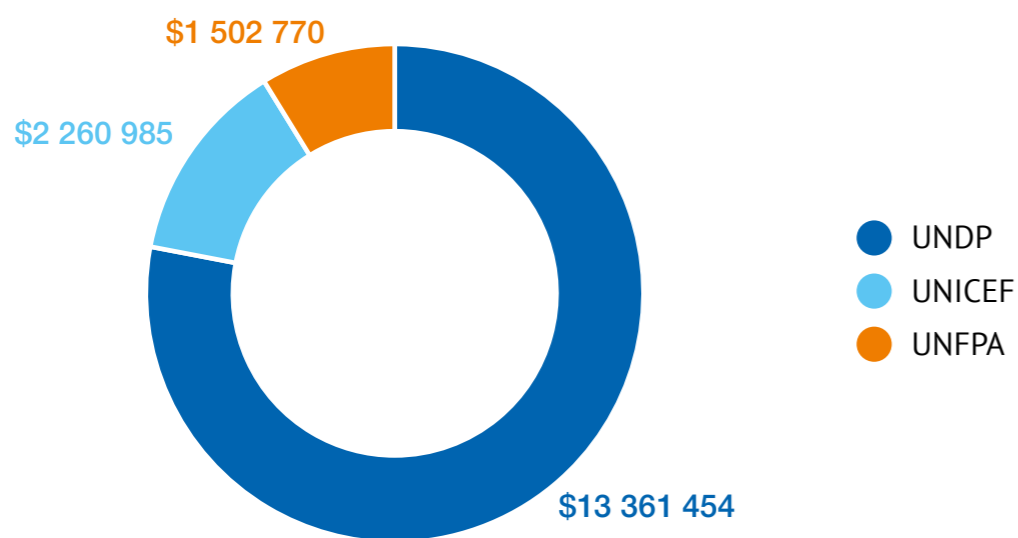


Addressing the impact and needs of migrants, stateless persons, and refugees

Emergency COVID-19 response: The World Bank loan

In May 2020, the World Bank approved a EUR 90-million loan (USD 100 million equivalent) for the Belarus Emergency COVID-19 Response Project. Under the World Bank loan and the procurement plan, the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Medical Technologies, Informatization, and Healthcare Economy signed agreements with three UN agencies for the medical products and PPE supply.

WB loan implementation in 2021



PROCUREMENT UNDER THE WB LOAN COMPLETED IN 2021



20,000,000
nitrile gloves



1,030
oxygen concentrators



20,000
protective goggles



2,060
venturi face masks



Medical ventilators, video laryngoscopes, high-tech intensive care beds, pulse oximetry devices, isolated stretchers, acid-base balance analysers, and laboratory medical equipment (consumables for automated RNA extraction and for conducting studies to determine coronavirus by PCR)

The procured equipment was supplied to over **150** medical institutions all over Belarus. Numerous patients (including critically ill patients) all over the country received improved healthcare due to better access to advanced lifesaving medical equipment.



2.2.2.

UN RESPONSE TO THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN 2021

In 2021, a high number of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants, the majority from the Middle East countries, have reportedly crossed into the European Union through Belarus. The total number of people who have arrived in the border area since August 2021 remains unconfirmed. According to open sources, approximately 2,700 Iraqi nationals have returned home via charter flights organized by the Government of Iraq. After August 2021, between 1,500 and 2,000 people remained on the border of Belarus and Poland and were housed by the Belarusian authorities in the logistics centre warehouse located in the vicinity of the border. Furthermore, an unknown number of people remained stranded in the forest near the border with Poland. The persons at the border area, including women and children, mostly from Iraq, Syria, and several African countries, also sought advice on alternative options, as their chances to cross into the European Union were limited. Migrants and refugee arrivals created humanitarian and protection concerns at the border of Belarus, to which the UNCT jointly responded.

Timeline of migrant and refugee crisis

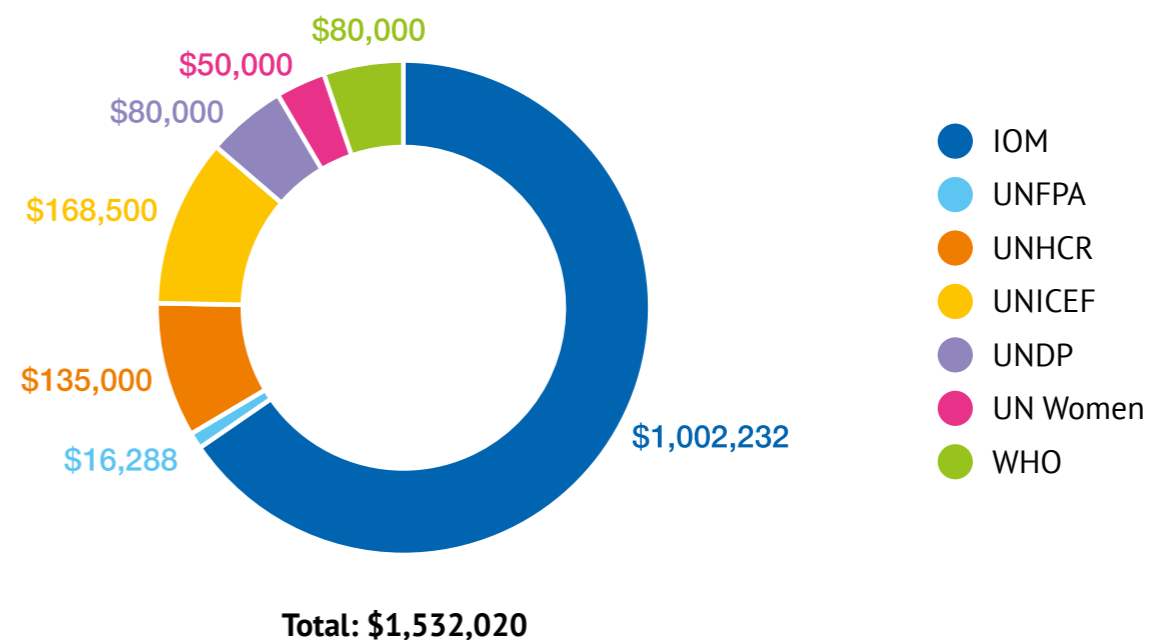
2021				2022	
JUN	8 NOV	10 NOV	18 NOV	JAN	22 MAR
Several EU countries witness a sharp increase in the number of migrant arrivals from Belarus	2,000 people converge on Belarus-Poland border crossing, settle down in makeshift camp	Crowds gather at Polish border near Kuznica Bialostocka-Bruzgi border crossing	Migrants relocated to logistical center near border crossing	600-700 people remain in the logistical center, and more reside in state-run and private reception centres	Living facilities in logistical center were dismantled, all migrants left its premises

In connection with the migration situation, the UN agencies, funds and programmes have supported the immediate response efforts of the Government and the Belarusian Red Cross by providing humanitarian assistance to the persons in the border area (WASH, health, food, and shelter), assisting voluntary returns of those migrants who choose to return home and also supporting people who wanted to apply for asylum in Belarus. The UN agencies have mobilized expert capacity from other countries to support the development of medium-term solutions

to address the issues of the migrants temporarily remaining in Belarus.

The UN system played a supporting role, while the Government and the Belarusian Red Cross led the efforts to manage the response. The UN system supported the Belarusian Red Cross humanitarian relief effort and emergency response by providing humanitarian items, technical expertise, funding, and engaged with the Government to establish an effective coordination mechanism and service delivery in Minsk and the regions.

Total assistance provided and allocated



At the onset of the crisis, a series of high-level UN visits, field missions and meetings took place. The participants included IOM Regional Director Renate Held, WHO Regional Director Dr Hans Kluge and UNHCR Deputy Director for Europe Angela Li Rosi. They aimed to assess the situation and the needs of the migrants who remained on the EU border and work with local authorities and partners to recommend and implement concrete emergency response actions. UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF and WHO deployed humanitarian response experts to Belarus with experience in managing similar responses, with language skills and knowledge that could help design proper medium-term solutions. The UN agencies established a Refugee and Migrant Task Force to help the authorities manage the response activities by facilitating coherent and well-coordinated knowledge management

and analysis, strategic planning, and operational response to the situation of refugees and migrants in Belarus. A Joint UN Project Office was established in the border city of Hrodna to better respond to the needs close to the border.

In terms of immediate relief and humanitarian supplies, the UN agencies have transferred and allocated aid of a total value of over USD 1.5 million to Belarus.

The UN efforts seek to ensure decent emergency shelter conditions, proper food and nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene and COVID-19 prevention, child protection, access to essential health services, women's health, and prevention of gender-based violence and other protection risks at the temporary shelter for migrants and refugees at the border area.



FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 AUGUST 2021 TILL 25 FEBRUARY 2022, THE UN SYSTEM AGENCIES HAVE PROVIDED:



6.5 tons of food



400 Recreational Kits for 4 age groups of children,

500 family hygiene kits,

100 hygiene kits for babies



27.5 tons of humanitarian aid, including non-food items such as hygiene items, warm clothes, blankets, sleeping mattresses, blankets, pillows, tents, etc.



Humanitarian supplies for **mothers and babies**, equipment, and food for the crisis room in Hrodna for mothers and 6 newborns



Hygiene items and warm clothes for **women**



Capacity building of service providers and frontline responders; transport vehicles, stationery, methodological materials, food supply for **teachers and volunteers**



Warm clothes, hygiene products, toys, and didactic materials for at least **150 children**



Psycho-social first aid and mental health and psycho-social support



2 containers for providing psycho-social/educational support equipped with TV sets, radiators, web cameras, laptops, disinfection lamps, printers, supplies for education and recreation activities



Referrals of **migrants** with serious medical conditions to local healthcare facilities



Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) services to **579** vulnerable migrants, including **497** Iraqi nationals

To provide medium-term solutions, the UN agencies developed a humanitarian assistance plan and offered expertise to ensure the proper provision of humanitarian assistance, repatriation, and international protection to the few thousand migrants stranded in Belarus.

UN agencies with the global humanitarian mandate (IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR and WHO) mobilized resources and staff capacity from regional and national offices with experience in migration crisis management in Europe and the Middle East. Partnership and engagement of experts with experience in similar emergency responses helped improve the effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response. It also allowed the Belarusian Red Cross to conduct proper needs assessment and communication with the refugees and migrants in languages that they understand, considering peculiarities of nationalities and the origin of migrants.

The UN, through its protection mandate (UNHCR and IOM), assisted in cases of applications for asylum in Belarus, family reunification and assisted voluntary return (AVR) of migrants to their home countries, following the consequent reintegration of

migrants. One of the main elements of the crisis response was ensuring proper access to legal aid for the migrants. UNHCR, as the lead agency, supported local authorities in providing legal consultations to the people on their rights and possibilities considering the existing rules. According to the national legislation of Belarus and international norms, people are entitled to apply for asylum in Belarus or voluntary return with the help of IOM in Belarus. Basic legal materials were translated into Arabic, Kurdish Sorani and Kurdish Badini. In 2021, the legal advisers of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers consulted 724 foreign citizens (551 families) from 44 countries and redirected them to IOM on the issue of voluntary return to their homeland, in addition to 248 visited detained migrants provided with consultations on their legal status by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus. A strategic paper of durable solutions available for refugees and migrants has been elaborated on and shared with the Government of Belarus to agree on the way out of the situation.

Despite constant attempts of the UNCT to address the humanitarian needs of

the migrants, they continued to stay in the conditions with limited access to health services, clean water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. The number of migrants stranded across Belarus and on the border was gradually decreasing, from up to 2,000 to approximately 400 people. On 22 March 2022, the living facilities in the temporary shelter were dismantled and the authorities confirmed that all foreign nationals who were temporarily

accommodated in the warehouse had left its premises.

Remaining supplies procured and donated to the migrants by UN agencies, including the WHO medical supplies (600 hygienic kits, 5,000 rapid COVID-19 tests, drugs, equipment, consumables, and diagnostics to provide medical care for 10,000 people for 3 months) have been transferred to the south of Belarus to be utilised by refugees from Ukraine.

CASE STUDY

HELPING MINORS GET HOME SAFELY OUT OF THE MIGRATION CRISIS

During the harsh humanitarian situation in the autumn of 2021, when thousands of migrants attempted to cross the border into the European Union from Belarus but remained stranded on the territory of Belarus, the Embassy of Iraq in Moscow referred a child in need of assistance to IOM Belarus. A boy of 17 years old from Duhok in Iraqi Kurdistan arrived in Belarus in October 2021. Together with a group of friends and relatives, he attempted to cross the border with Poland. In the process, he got separated from his group. Seeing an unaccompanied minor, other Kurdish people got in touch with the Iraqi Embassy. IOM Belarus accommodated the child in a hotel in Minsk and ensured that the boy gets regular meals, access to clean water and sanitation, medical support and mental health and psycho-social services, which are crucial in this case, and other necessary assistance, such as clothes, including those suitable for cold weather conditions unfamiliar for the person from a typically warm country. As mentioned by the child, back in Iraq, he has an uncle who acts as the boy's caregiver. The boy stated his willingness to return home.

To evaluate whether a voluntary return to Iraq is in the child's best interests, IOM initiated the Best Interest Determination (BID) procedure. It was the first time in Belarus that such a procedure was organized for a minor migrant. Through conducting the family tracing and assessment, IOM made sure that the boy's uncle and his family are ready to accept and take care of the child and are waiting for his return.

A special BID panel consisting of IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, and relevant representatives of public associations, was convened to discuss various options available for the child: voluntary return to Iraq, relocation to another country and local integration. Based on the family tracing results, the willingness of the minor to reunite with his family and the community, irregular status in Belarus, lack of other legal options for continuing the journey, and risks related to the irregular migration, the BID panel concluded that voluntary return to Iraq is the best option for the boy. His return would ensure his psycho-social stability, preserve his supportive family relations, and give him a better chance to successfully reintegrate into the community.

The child returned to Iraq on a direct charter flight from Minsk to Erbil organized by IOM with the support of the European Union and was met by IOM Iraq staff and his uncle, who took him home to Duhok.



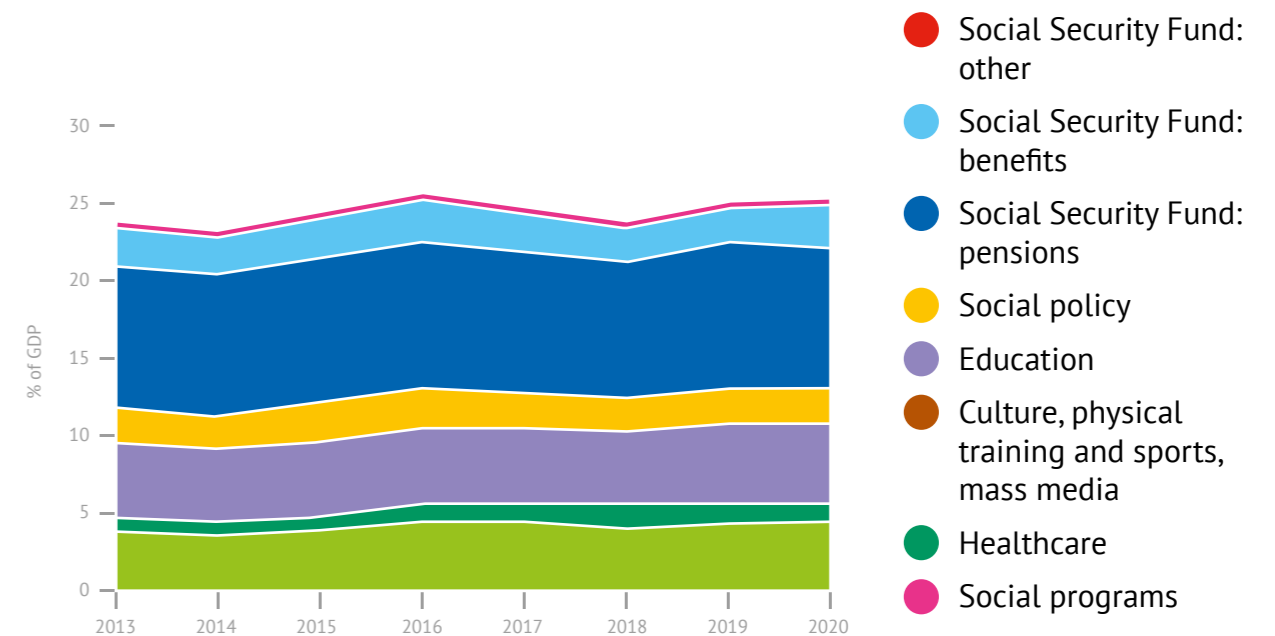


2.3. SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING THE 2030 AGENDA

In Belarus, public monies remain the main source of SDG Financing in the country. SDG spending through the public budgets amounts to between 23-25 per cent of GDP annually and is channelled through Social Security Fund (i.e., pensions, child-care, benefits), republican budget, and local budgets (i.e., education and health care expenditures).

Government social spending as a percentage of GDP

Consolidated budget and SSF spendings on social programmes as % of GDP



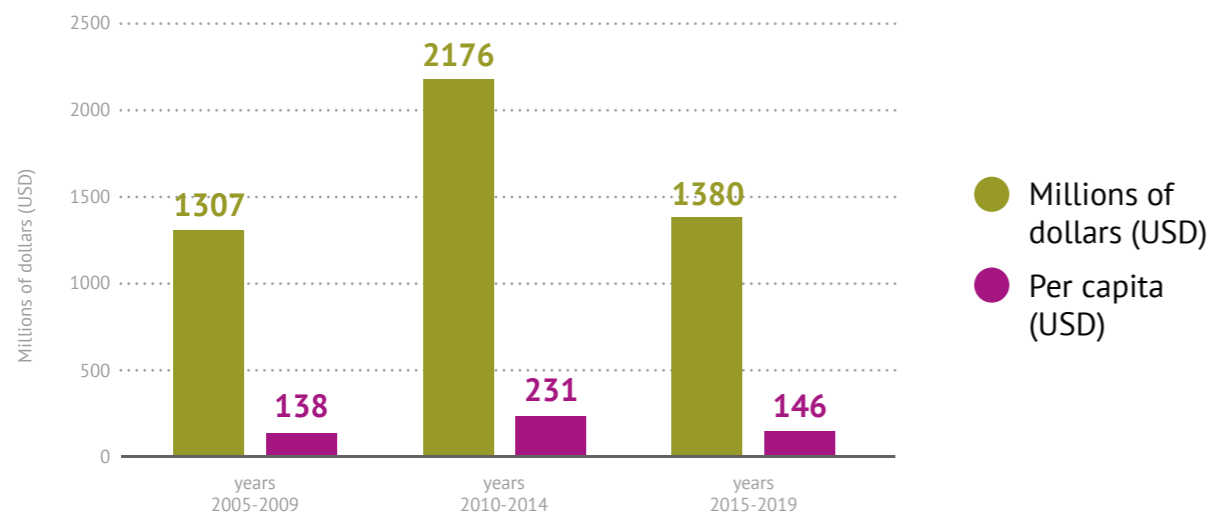
State programmes cover 63 per cent of public finance expenditure and outline private financing goals.

The private sector investment in Belarus has been increasingly focused on sustainable development over the recent years, on green transition (green energy, circular economy) and digitalization. Corporate social responsibility mostly included internal activities and enterprise-level social investments. Domestic CSOs have been increasingly relying on crowdfunding lately. Since 2020, crowdfunding efforts reportedly raised over USD 300,000 to fight COVID-19.

External private finance also plays an important role in SDG Financing in Belarus. Special economic zones became focal points for FDI, with a significant number of projects focused both on digitalization and Green Economy projects.



Average inflows of FDI to Belarus



Source: UNCTAD

On the other hand, the remittance inflows in Belarus have played an important role in supporting vulnerable households in economically depressed regions. As COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted and migration outflow from Belarus increases, the remittances are projected to increase in 2021-2025.

The level of external public finance in form of official development assistance (ODA) grants and ODA loans has been decreasing. Until 2021, EU was the top donor for Belarus, followed by Poland, Germany, the United States, Sweden, and the Global Fund. The Russian Federation has been increasing its grant support to Belarus over recent years. ODA grants focus on support to education, social infrastructure, and economic infrastructure. The World Bank, EBRD, and Eurasian Development Bank played an important role as a sources of ODA loans. Regretfully, most projects of the World Bank focused on education, healthcare, and utility efficiency, and EBRD cooperation with Belarus on water, energy and transport infrastructure were either suspended or altogether discontinued.

Despite the country's potential, overall, the financing landscape analysis underlines important gaps in some SDG-related strategic priorities. The Green Transition priority enjoys support from all types of financing flows, although there are some gaps related to the financing of regional and local development, biological and landscape diversity, preparedness towards climate-related hazards, where most of the financing potential is coming only from the external public sources. The high potential source of financing for Future Generations priority is mostly focused on domestic public sources, while the private sector financing potential is low. The Digitalization priority enjoys the equal potential of financing through private sources as well as from domestic public sources. Finally, the Gender Equality priority has a relatively low potential of financing through private sources, and only medium potential from domestic public financing, leaving the largest gap to be covered by external public financing.

CASE STUDY

MAINSTREAMING RESULTS-BASED BUDGETING IN BELARUS

In 2021, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA undertook activities within the framework of the **UN Joint SDG Fund programme on promoting new tools of sustainable development budgeting** that prioritize vulnerable populations in Belarus. The UN agencies implement their parts across various thematic areas with UNDP playing the coordinating role and working with other UN agencies on specific components to ensure continuity across SDGs.

UNICEF undertook measurements of child-focused public expenditures in four municipalities to strengthen the capacity of performance-based budgeting for integrated state support and social services. Qualitative data on multidimensional child poverty and targeted social assistance were collected through focus groups discussions and in-depth interviews with parents. A roundtable among key stakeholders on

improving the welfare of families with children and the effectiveness of targeted state social assistance was conducted, resulting in an agreement to establish an inter-sectoral working group with the participation of the National Statistical Committee (Belstat) in the joint validation of indicators and updating measurements of multidimensional child poverty.

UNFPA contributed to the development of a normative budget planning method focused on the cost of budgetary services per consumer, in particular capacity building of health managers and the development of new financial frameworks in healthcare with the focus on reproductive health and gender sensitivity.

UNDP initiated work on conducting the Finance Assessment (FA) on environmental protection and rational use of natural resources. An international expert was hired to carry out the analysis of Belarusian green growth, the existing costs and future financial needs to address environmental challenges in Belarus. The results of the analysis of green economy development will be used as a data source for development finance (DF) analyses on Climate and Earth-related SDG financial flows.





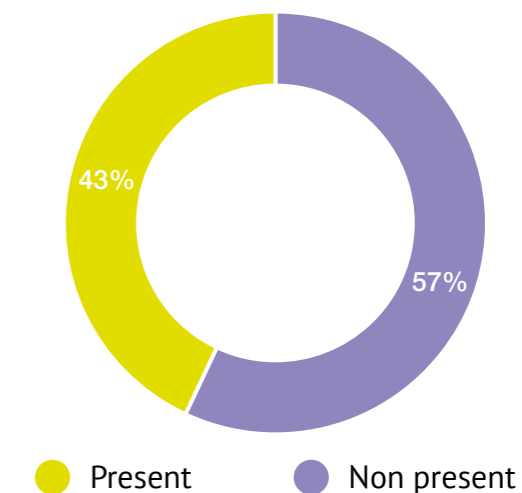
2.4. RESULTS OF THE UN WORKING BETTER TOGETHER: UN COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS, AND EFFICIENCY

The UN Country Team implemented the newly developed UNSDCF 2021-2025, prepared in line with the UN Development System Reform and worked jointly to launch the new programmes and adjust the ongoing projects to the changing country context. The UNCT continued its enhanced collaboration in analysis, monitoring and results reporting and aligned all activities of the joint work plans with the national priorities and corresponding SDGs. The UN entities prioritized joint programming efforts and resource mobilization for strategic SDG-oriented initiatives and encouraged further work on simplifying and joining the back-office operations.

Preparation of the draft UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 for Belarus

Draft UNSDCF was supported by twenty UN entities and agreed upon by the national counterparts at the level of strategic priorities, outcomes, and outputs. The complete list of UNSDCF planned signatories includes the following UN entities: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITC, ITU, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women, and WHO. 43 per cent of them have a physical presence in the country. The UNSDCF outcomes will be directly addressed by the agencies in the joint work plans, agency-specific country programmes and other planning frameworks.

Physical presence of UN agencies



Policy Support and Advice

UN engaged in a multi-dimensional dialogue with the national and international stakeholders, prompting them to take advantage of the current issues to revitalize the national discussion on sustainable development, reformulate the response to the emerging challenges, push for structural reforms and, ultimately, build back better through a greener and more inclusive economy. The UNCT came up with a set of detailed recommendations and comments on a number of the state programmes, strategies, concepts and action plans related to a green economy;

SMEs recovery and resilience in the COVID-19 context; development of smart cities; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; promotion of wind energy use; public health and demographic security, including countering the spread of tuberculosis; socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on families with children; national drug policy; women's engagement into IT sector; improvement of child-focused public expenditure measurement; multisectoral response to domestic violence cases; involved fatherhood; gender equality and gender statistics.

Joint Work Programming

With the collective implementation of the UNDS Reform and RC system repositioning on the ground, noticeable progress has been made at the level and scope of joint work programming. The UN entities collaborated more effectively and more efficiently, undertaking collective actions to accelerate the progress toward national

sustainable development targets. The COVID-19 response has shown the potential for enhancing joint work and created many opportunities for partnerships and resource mobilization. There is also an increasing interest of donors in the advantages of joint programming, as shown by the increasing number

of donors' decisions to channel funds through joint UN initiatives, like joint UN implementation of a World Bank loan, the Joint Programme on promoting new tools of sustainable development budgeting funded by the UN Joint SDG Fund and a pipeline joint project on nationalisation and localisation of SDGs supported by the Russian Federation. The UN continued to

be engaged in the national structures for the response to HIV/AIDS coordination with governmental and non-governmental partners. UN Country Network on Migration, including the UN entities, state authorities and non-governmental partners, continued its operation and contributed to the conceptual development of migration policy in Belarus.

Joint Operations

On the operations side, UNCT implemented a new generation Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0 that was designed to facilitate strategic planning, management, monitoring, and reporting of the UNCT's joint support to programme delivery. The BOS 2.0 reflected a rather moderate scale of UN operations in Belarus and the fact that the resident UN agencies did not have common premises, with a few of them co-located in the same buildings and some having separate office premises. That made the economy of scale and the development of joint services quite challenging. Regardless, the BOS 2.0 design and implementation still helped UNCT make gains with efficiency and enhance internal transaction cost avoidance and improve the quality of services, including cost savings on externally sourced goods and services. It included such joint services as accommodation and event management, travel, reception, rate harmonization and HACT management. The total estimated labour benefit amounted to about USD 35,000. The savings came from the common negotiation of joint Long-Term Agreements, thus saving staff time and leveraging the common negotiating power leading to receiving better value for money and enhanced quality of service. A positive side-effect was the spirit of collaboration and the dynamics to boost further

interagency cooperation. Positive dynamics in the cooperation between the UN entities showed in the coordination of response to the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of both health relief and socio-economic aid to the country and the duty of care for UN personnel. The former part was addressed through the joint procurement of medical and personal protective equipment (PPE) and the rollout of services to vulnerable populations; the latter was implemented through a complex of measures, including the adoption of a One UN Business Contingency Plan and business continuity plans of each agency, procurement of oxygen concentrators and PPE, hiring of a medical coordinator and a stress management counsellor, arrangements for diagnostics and treatment of staff members and dependents, development and implementation of the COVID-19 MEDEVAC protocol. The coordination of activities was performed through inter-agency task forces including those on Health, Social and Economic Impact, Vulnerable Communities & Human Rights, Risk Communication, Procurement of COVID-related Medical Supplies, Donor Coordination and Partnerships and Staff Safety and Security. These task forces proved to be an important mechanism in ensuring coherence and coordination of UN agencies in the COVID-19 response.



Joint advocacy and communication

Response to the COVID-19 pandemic was also an opportunity for UNCT to improve collaboration between the agencies on communication through the UN Communications Group and otherwise, ensuring the synergy of their communications efforts to make the UNCT's voice stronger through communicating with the same, coherent message. UNCT started an information campaign to promote vaccination among the population, given a high level of hesitancy. RC also led the UNCT in Belarus to conduct a series of online UN discussions about the COVID-19 response and other urgent social issues that the UN is working on in Belarus and globally. The chosen themes covered the COVID-19 agenda, issues of global solidarity and crisis of multilateralism,

gender equality in the new post-COVID-19 world, climate change, inclusive education, HIV/AIDS prevention, and protection of key populations during the pandemic, anti-discrimination, and human rights. The discussions were a brand-new example of communication and advocacy products that promote relevant themes among the UN in Belarus target audience.

UN Country Team engaged with the [Issue-based Coalitions](#) (IBCs)¹ for the Europe and Central Asia region and participated in the capacity building activities hosted by the IBC on Environment and Climate Change; Large Movements of People, Displacement and Resilience; and Gender Equality, as well as with the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia.

¹ <https://unece.org/issue-based-coalitions-and-groups>



2.5. EVALUATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

An independent evaluation of the previous cooperation framework of the United Nations and Belarus (UN Development Assistance Framework 2016-2020, or UNDAF) was conducted in 2019. It has provided several recommendations and lessons learned to improve the design and implementation of such cooperation frameworks in the future. The draft UN-Belarus Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 was developed with a view to these recommendations and lessons, and they will continue to guide the implementation of the cooperation framework for the next four years. Highlights of the recommendations are given below along with the actions taken to address them.

Continue a more explicit focus on the vulnerable groups

Focus on vulnerable groups and the principle of leaving no one behind is one of the central aspects of Agenda 2030. The UN already supports Belarus in its respective efforts to implement this principle. Several groups have been identified as vulnerable through a comprehensive approach based on various vulnerability factors. Particular attention is paid to people affected by multiple vulnerabilities at the same time, especially at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthen delivery of results through improved partnerships

The UN has secured a broad landscape of partnerships in Belarus, including national governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, local authorities and a range of international multilateral and bilateral partners and financial institutions. Looking forward, the UN will continue to find ways and provide platforms to bring stakeholders together.

Demonstrate UNSDCF added value to the national partners and ensure that all partners are involved in UNSDCF development, implementation, and monitoring

Starting from 2020, the UN is publishing annual results reports to communicate key results to the public and partners and gradually expanding its presence in media channels to demonstrate an added value. The UNCT works with the National SDGs Coordinator and National Sustainable Development Council to outline priorities, oversee progress, and discuss the delivery of UNSDCF results.

Continue focus on root factors impeding progress towards SDGs and inclusion of vulnerable groups

Through various studies, reviews, and assessments in the first year of the UNSDCF implementation, the UN is positioning itself to identify the root factors that impede progress towards SDG, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mainstream the human rights perspective to ensure that needs of vulnerable groups are addressed

Belarus is a party to seven out of nine major international treaties of the United Nations in the field of human rights. The UN remains committed to supporting the country in strengthening national capacities for their implementation and uses the human right-based approach to development in the implementation of the UNSDCF.

Shift focus from actual project delivery towards policy advice, analysis, and research

In the past few years, the UN has contributed to important policy discussions on sustainable development and directly supported the development and adoption

of respective policy documents, such as the National Strategy of Sustainable Development 2035, state programmes and action plans on the green economy, SMEs development, migration management, gender equality, in the field of healthcare and the rights of various vulnerable groups. The UNCT will continue to move increasingly towards policy advice, analysis, and research during the implementation period of the UNSDCF.

In line with other recommendations following the UNDAF evaluation, the UN will take efforts to advance integrated UN cross-agency planning, implementation, and communication; improve the UNSDCF M&E system; provide more responsibility to national partners for programme implementation, and support Belarus in transferring its best practices, solutions, and innovations to other countries to facilitate sustainable development.



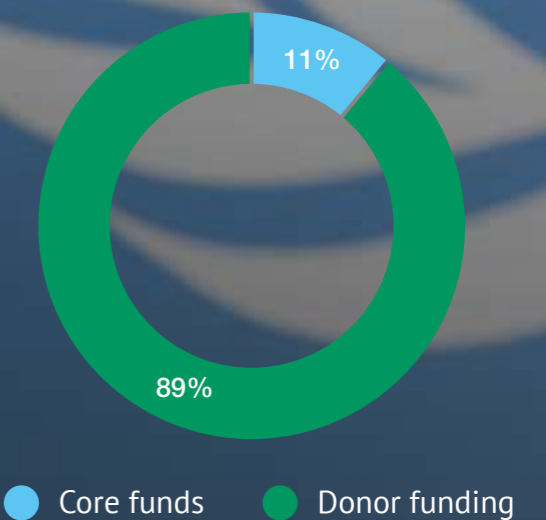
2.6. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The amount of financial assistance that the UN system could allocate to an upper-middle-income country such as Belarus remained limited. Therefore, the UN agencies focused on using their comparative advantages, preparing joint funding proposals, ensuring a broad-based partnership with donors, and mobilizing resources from third-party cost-sharing, global trust funds, foundations, and private sector enterprises.

Despite constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and declining donor attention to Belarus, in the first year of the UNSDCF implementation, the UNCT contributed **USD 2,133,449** of core resources and mobilize **USD 16,479,850** of donor funding.

In addition, the UN agencies in Belarus implemented the World Bank loan of a total **USD 17,125,209** in 2021.

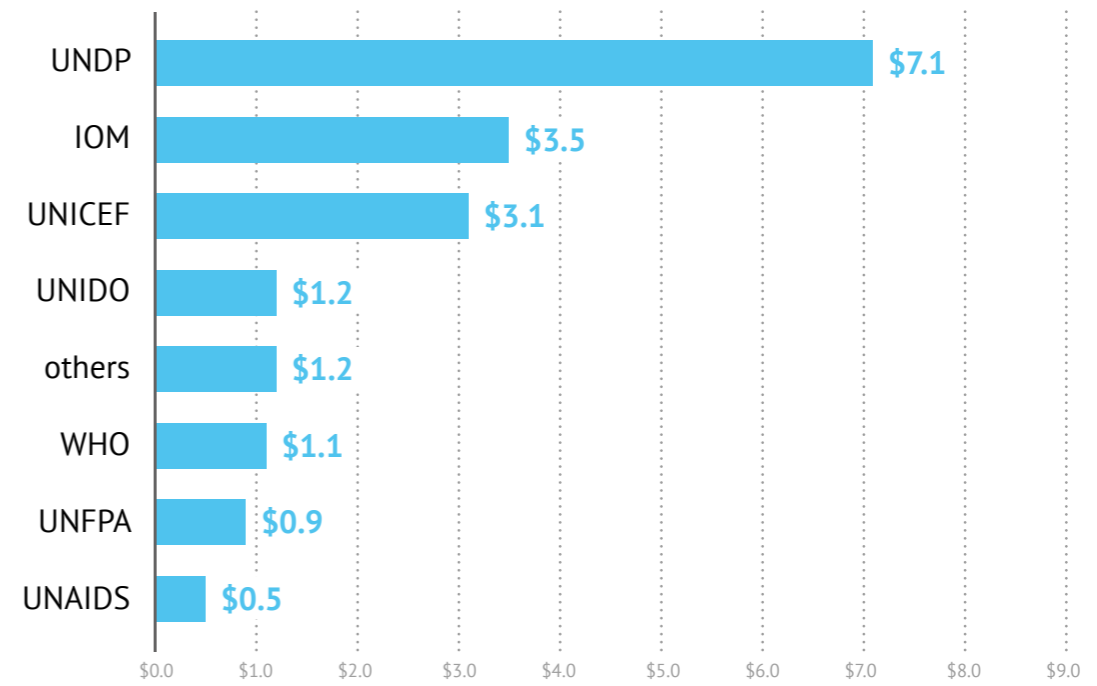
2021 UN development assistance



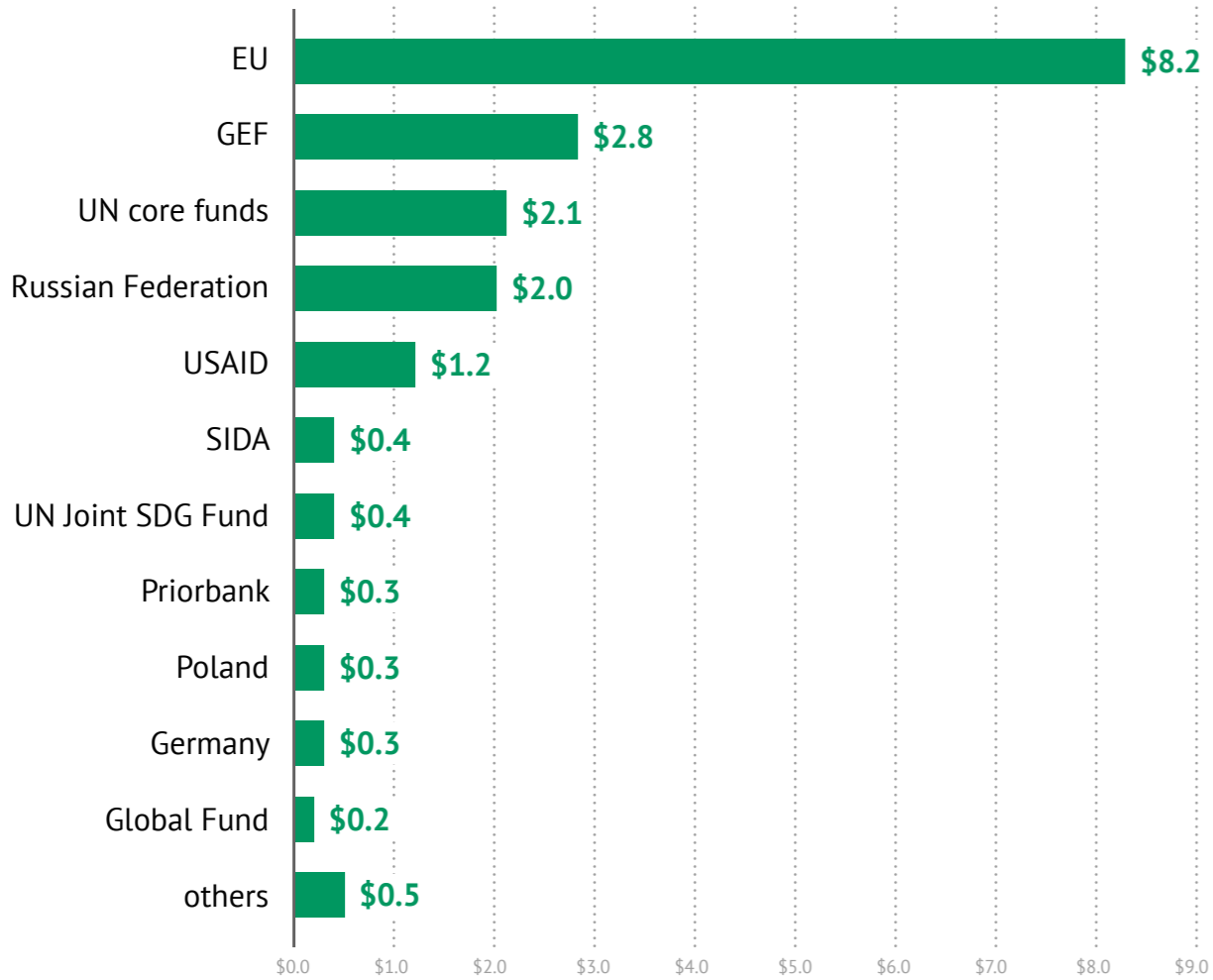
Main donors that provided funding to support the UN-Belarus Sustainable Development Framework implementation in 2021 included the multilateral donors: European Union, Global Environmental Facility (GEF), UN Joint SDG Fund, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); bilateral donors: Russian

Federation, USAID, SIDA, Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, Norway, and others. The UN agencies also managed to mobilize additional resources through partnership with the private sector and the use of special funds of the agencies obtained on a competitive basis and aimed to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 Expenditures per UN entity (\$m)



2021 Expenditures per donor (\$m)



The UN's ability to mobilize financial resources for UNSDCF implementation is influenced by multiple factors, including reduced corporate core resources, declining donors' interest, and minimal cost-sharing with the national partners. The UN agencies aimed to use all opportunities to demonstrate the effectiveness of their systems and large-scale savings that the public budget can achieve in several areas by implementing its programmes through the UN. The flagship Joint Programme aimed at promoting new tools of sustainable

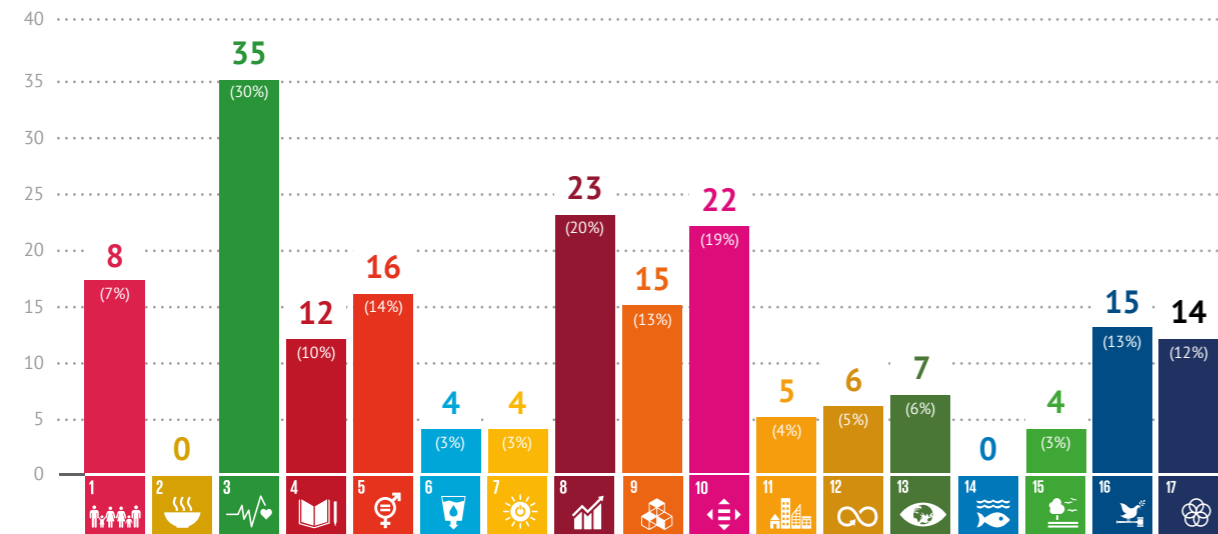
development budgeting that prioritize vulnerable populations in Belarus was implemented in 2021 by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and sponsored by the UN Joint SDG Fund. One of the successful partnerships in 2021 was the implementation of the World Bank loan by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF as per agreement with the Ministry of Health to procure medical products, personal protective equipment, high-precision and laboratory equipment to strengthen the healthcare system in Belarus.



The UN Country Team activities in 2021 contributed to the implementation of almost all SDGs with most of the financial support directed towards achievement of the SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being),

SDG 8 (Decent Jobs and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

116 Activities in Joint workplan of UN Country Team



Key challenges

The year 2021 saw several challenges that slowed down the progress to sustainable development and prompted UN entities and the national and international partners to reconsider their approaches and operational modalities. The fallout from the challenging issues in the world and Belarus in 2021 will continue to influence the UN work in the years to come. Some of the key challenges include:

- The continued impact of COVID-19. The pandemic continues to claim lives and impact vulnerable groups socially and economically.
- Restrained fiscal space due to the impact of sanctions imposed by the West in response to several events that have taken place in the country.
- Liquidation and reduction of civil society organizations continued to pose challenges to thematic expertise, reaching vulnerable and marginalized groups, and implementing the capability of the UN and other development actors.



UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2022

The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 and its four strategic priorities will guide the UN in its development work in Belarus in the second year of its implementation. This work will take place in the continued context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications of the war in Ukraine and will be geared toward supporting the country in addressing its diverse impacts. Therefore, the UNCT in Belarus will be guided by the following three priorities:

1. Achieving the Global Goals and helping partners address the triple planetary crisis.
2. Focusing on Belarus-specific SDG accelerators/UNSDCF priorities.
3. Pursuing the leaving no one behind principle.

While pursuing these priorities, the UNCT will focus on the following:

- Continuing close collaboration with the Government on the COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response Plan and the UNSDCF implementation.
- Strengthening the UN's role in convening key stakeholders in the country.
- Collaborating with the country on SDG implementation, including working through the SDG architecture and the VNR process.
- Supporting Government programmes for the sustainable development of the country.
- Maintaining the existing platforms for communication with partners and creating new formats.
- Considering various approaches to restore the resource base, including non-traditional donors, pooled funding, HQ and regional level funding, multi-country programmes, joint programmes, and optimization of business practices.



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
BID	Best Interest Determination procedure
BOS	Business Operations Strategy
COP26	UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CO2	Carbon dioxide
CSO	Civil society organization
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
ECI	Early childhood intervention
eTIR	United Nations Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (UN TIR Convention), implemented by means of electronic data exchange
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gases
Global Fund	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus infection
IBC	Issue-based coalition
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry sector
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEDEVAC	Medical evacuation
ODA	Official development assistance
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction

PPE	Personal protective equipment
RCO	UN Resident Coordinator's Office
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SERP	Socio-Economic Response Plan
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises / small and medium entrepreneurship
STEPS	WHO STEP-wise Approach to NCD Risk Factor Surveillance
TB	Tuberculosis
TSA	Targeted social assistance
UN	United Nations
UN RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization



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