



UNITED NATIONS
AZERBAIJAN



2023 Annual Results Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR	3
UN COUNTRY TEAM	4
KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	4
CHAPTER 1: KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT	5
CHAPTER 2: UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK	7
2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results	7
2.2. Cooperation Framework priorities, outcomes and outputs	10
2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda	24
2.4. Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency	24
2.5. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization	25
CHAPTER 3 : UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR NEXT YEAR	26

Cover photo: Member of the pioneering women demining team, established for the first time in 2023. Photo credit: UNDP/Mammad Aliyev/2023

Resuming after a 23-year hiatus: Capturing crucial data on maternal and child health and more, the MICS team canvassed 12,320 households, bringing vital insights to light
Photo credit: UNICEF/Zhala Rzayeva/2023

FOREWORD BY THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR



2023 was a year of resilience and collaboration for the United Nations in Azerbaijan. This Annual Results Report offers a window into our collective agility and flexibility that enabled results to be delivered across various sectors, even when faced with challenges. Our results were made possible by our shared commitment to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leave no one behind.

Through partnerships with the Government, academia, civils society, media, private sector, and other partners,

we supported national development priorities focusing on five pillars: inclusive growth and decent work; effective public and social services; data and policy analysis; climate action; and gender equality.

As interconnected pillars, together they contribute to the overall national vision for a prosperous and peaceful Azerbaijan. In support of accelerated progress of the SDGs through multi-stakeholder partnerships, the high-level SDG Dialogue platform, established in 2022, continued to serve as a vital forum for inclusive policy

dialogues. The policy recommendations emerging from the SDG Dialogues have been instrumental in shaping Azerbaijan's national commitments on SDG transformation presented at the SDG Summit in September 2023.

Continued investment in human capital through quality education, health and social protection services was key to SDG progress. For example, inclusive education expanded to 18 additional schools and the Universal-Progressive Home Visiting model reached approximately 46,000 families.

Our efforts to enhancing capacities of stakeholders to meaningfully participate in the UN human rights mechanisms and climate action have yielded concrete results. The completion of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and the strengthening of national capacities for food safety controls exemplify our efforts to inform better policy formulation and monitoring.

In tandem, our work in environment and climate action, highlighted by supporting the revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), showcases shared commitment to safeguarding our planet for future generations.

The empowerment of women and girls remained at the forefront of our work. Through the Women's Resource Centres and vocational training programs, we reached over 7,600 women, bolstering rural livelihoods and advocating for gender equality through the Women's Empowerment Principles.

Turning to 2024, we are looking forward to a year of opportunity and transformation. The hosting of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 29) by Azerbaijan presents a unique opportunity to amplify our collective efforts in addressing climate change and advancing sustainable development. I extend my gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan, our partners, and the dedicated UN staff for their unwavering support and



In 2023 the United Nations in Azerbaijan remained steadfast in its commitment to support the Government and people of Azerbaijan towards building a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable society.

contributions throughout the year. The accomplishments detailed in this report are a testament to the power of collaboration, resilience, and shared vision.

The United Nations in Azerbaijan remains resolutely committed to supporting the Government and people of Azerbaijan in their journey towards a sustainable future, grounded in the principles of equity, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship.

Vladanka Andreeva
UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan

UN COUNTRY TEAM

18 UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes - bring strong passion and expertise to advance achievement of SDGs. Our collective efforts support Azerbaijan's national ambition to become

an inclusive, equitable society that leaves no one behind, and a development partner in the region and globally.



KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	
		✓									✓
				✓						✓	
		✓						✓			
	✓				✓					✓	

■ Outcome 1.1: Inclusive growth and decent work
 ■ Outcome 2.1: Social protection and quality public and social services
 ■ Outcome 2.2: Data for decision-making and policy
 ■ Outcome 3.1: Climate action and the environment
■ Outcome 4.1: Gender-equitable society



Fun-filled moments in Guba, Azerbaijan, as the Shelter Azerbaijan Children Union hosts leisure activities for kids
 Photo credit: IOM/Rufat Zakizada/ 2023

CHAPTER 1

COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

SDG progress

In 2023, Azerbaijan continued to demonstrate its commitment to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. The country was one of the 40 countries in the world that submitted their [National Commitments to SDG Transformation](#) at the 2023 SDG Summit. The high-level political commitment has translated into sound progress in a number of SDG indicators. According to the [SDG progress analysis by UNESCAP](#) for the period 2015-2023, of the total 248 global SDG indicators, on 61 Azerbaijan has shown progress¹. To further accelerate [SDG progress](#), concerted efforts and investments in the targeted SDGs could trigger progress across all SDGs in Azerbaijan.

Socio-economic overview

The latest [Human Development Index \(HDI\) \(2022\)](#) shows progress for Azerbaijan, which improved its global ranking 89 (out of 191) compared to 2021. When adjusted for inequality, the HDI declines to 0.70, revealing challenges related to disparities within the country. The regional disparities are observed across a number of key socio-economic indicators, including availability of pre-school facilities and secondary schools, healthcare facilities and health professionals, access to improved living conditions and access to finance. Moreover, despite notable advancements, the latest [Gender Inequality Index \(GII\) \(2022\)](#) indicates that there remain gaps in gender equality, including in access to reproductive health care and in political and labor force participations.

Azerbaijan's macro-economic situation remained robust in 2023. Following a strong post-pandemic rebound, the economic growth was at a slower pace at 1.1 percent in 2023, in comparison to 4.6 percent in

2022². This was due to slight contraction of GDP in the oil and gas sector and a deceleration of growth in non-energy sectors. Around 37 percent of the country's GDP and 90 percent of exports originate from the oil and gas sector. Starting in January 2023, the Government implemented several fiscal policy measures, such as raising the minimum wage, pensions, and subsistence minimum, aimed at mitigating the effects of increased prices on vulnerable populations. In February 2023, the Central Bank of Azerbaijan endorsed the "[Sustainable Finance Roadmap for 2023-2026](#)," which aims to catalyze the growth of sustainable finance, prioritizing considerations of climate resilience, environmental conservation, and the integration of social and governance principles. Continuation of the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) process could be catalytic for more coordinated actions on financing for sustainable development.

Post-conflict recovery

The recovery and reconstruction of the regained territories continued to be one of the top priorities of the Government in 2023. Between 2021 and 2023, the total investments from the Government to the regained territories amounted to approximately USD 7 billion, and an additional investment of USD 2.4 billion are estimated in 2024. Most of the investments are for mine action and rebuilding of the regional infrastructure to enable the sustainable return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). As of end January 2024, a total of 5,354 IDPs (1,360 households) have returned to the regained territories. The pace of demining will determine the timing, sequencing and scale of all recovery and reconstruction efforts. Mobilization of private investments in the recovery process will be key in the coming period.

Environment and climate action

"[Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development](#)" and the "[Strategy of Socio-Economic Development in 2022-2026](#)" identified a clean environment and country of "green growth" as one of the five priority directions of the country's development up to 2030. Under the Paris Agreement on climate change the country has committed to a 35% emission reduction target by 2030 compared to the base year of 1990 with renewed commitment in 2023 as 40% by 2050. The energy sector continues to be the largest GHG emitter in the country accounting for 80% of total emissions. The adoption of the Law on renewable energy coupled with large scale renewable energy projects that are now in progress, are expected to significantly boost the share of renewables in the coming years. Many parts of Azerbaijan are increasingly prone to flooding, resulting in landslides and mudslides through its mountainous terrain, and prolonged summer droughts. Land degradation is further attributable to overexploitation of land (including overgrazing), deforestation, and poor irrigation methods. Agriculture, health, water resources, forestry and tourism are some of the sectors most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. As the incoming presidency to COP 29, Azerbaijan is scaling up its commitment to green transition.

1. At the same time, it needs to be highlighted that Azerbaijan had prioritized 119 SDG indicators as part of its national SDG monitoring framework, thus national SDG reporting is based on these prioritized indicators, not the global set of SDG indicators.

2. The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
3. State Statistical Committee

Demographic & Social Indicators

Population (2023) (SSC 2023) ³	10,1 million
Life expectancy (2022)	76 Total, 73.6 M, 78.4 F
Poverty rate (national) (2022)	5.5% Total, 5.6% M, 5.1% F
Maternal mortality rate (2022)	14.7%
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) (2022)	7.8 Total, 8.0 M, 7.6 F
Enrollment Rate (% gross) (2022)	54% pre-primary (net %) 87% primary and secondary; 41% tertiary (gross %)
Proportion of women in managerial positions (2022)	35.4%

Macroeconomic Indicators

GDP per capita (2022) (SSC 2023)	USD 7,797
Government Budget Expenditure (2022)	22.5% on social protection 4.3 % on health 11.6 % on education
Unemployment Rate (2022)	5.6% Total, 4.8% M, 6.5% F

Selected Global Rankings

Economic freedom Index (October 2023)	Score: 61.6 Global rank: 70/176 Regional Rank: 34/44
SDG Index (2023)	Score: 73.5 points Global Rank: 53/163
Global Gender Gap Index (2023)	Score: 0.692 Global Rank 97/146
Environmental Performance Index (2022)	Score: 38.6 Global Rank 104/180



CHAPTER 2

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

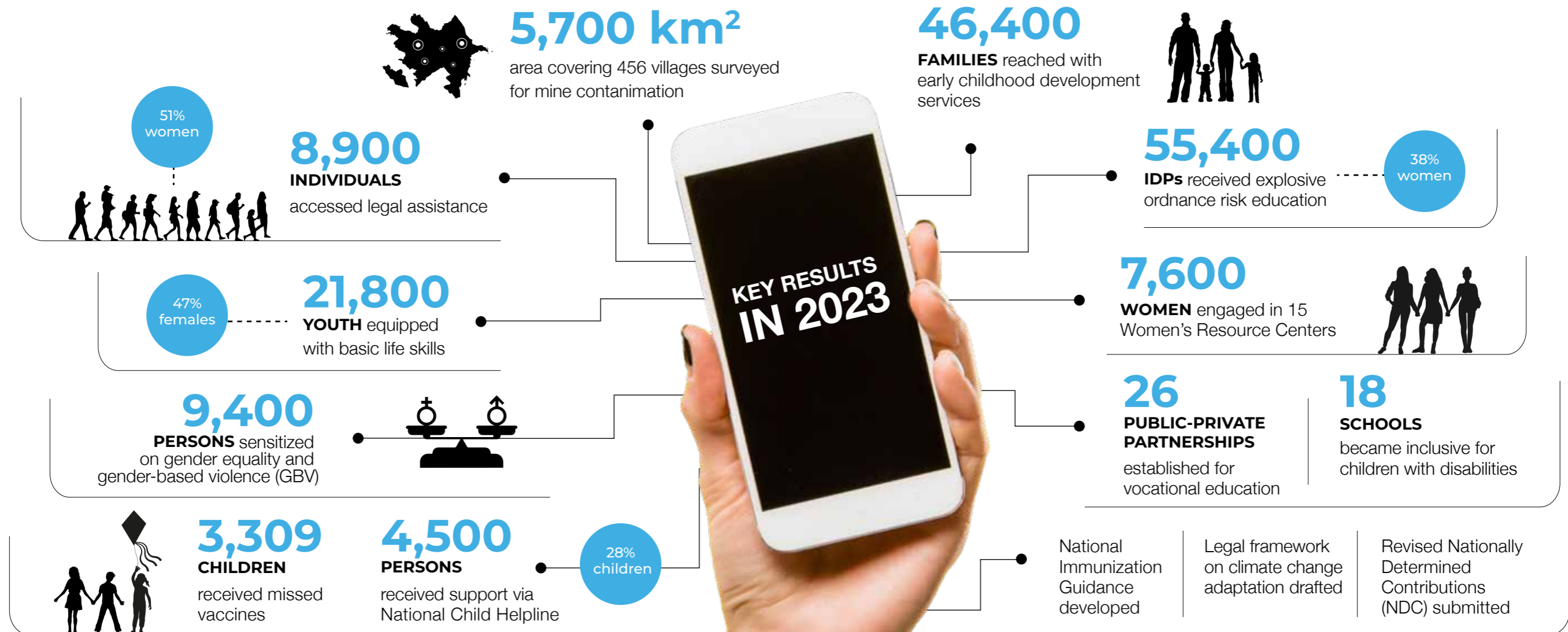
2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

The UN-Azerbaijan Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2021-2025 established the priorities of cooperation between the UN and Azer-

baijan along four priority areas and five outcomes: i.) inclusive growth and decent work; ii.) social protection, quality public and social services; iii.) data-driven decision-making and policy; iv.) environment and climate action and v.) gender-equitable society. In 2023, the UN in Azerbaijan, in collaboration with partners, prioritized

catalyzing policy-level changes and institutional capacity-building that aligned closely with Azerbaijan's Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2022-2026) and other key national documents. Targeted interventions at the grassroots level directly engaged local communities, addressing their specific needs and challenges.

This combination of top-down policy work with bottom-up community interventions underscores the comprehensive and inclusive nature of the UN's efforts in Azerbaijan, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development.

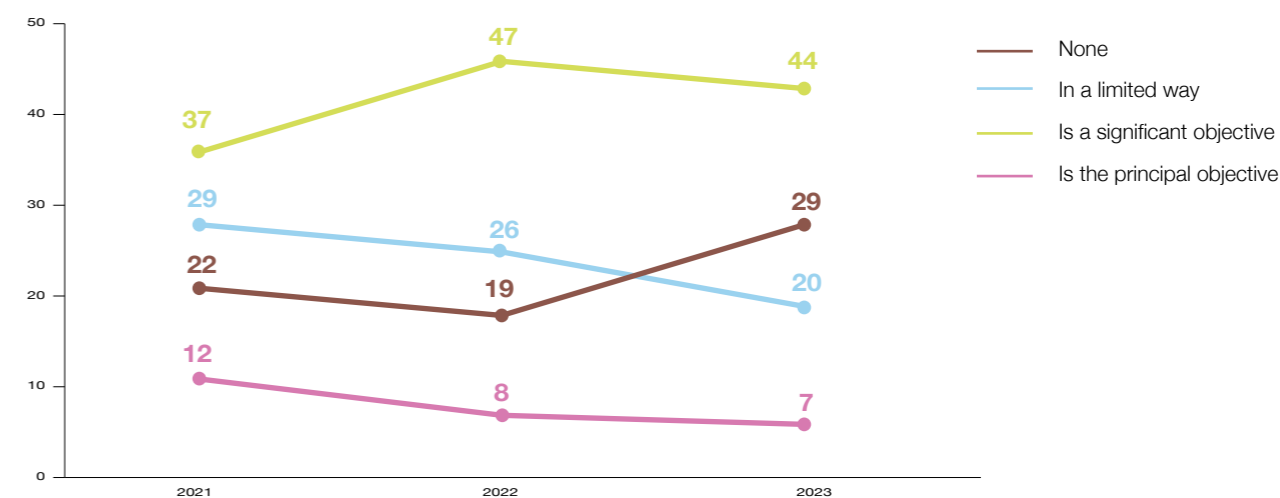


Cooperation Framework Outcome Indicator Progress Chart⁴

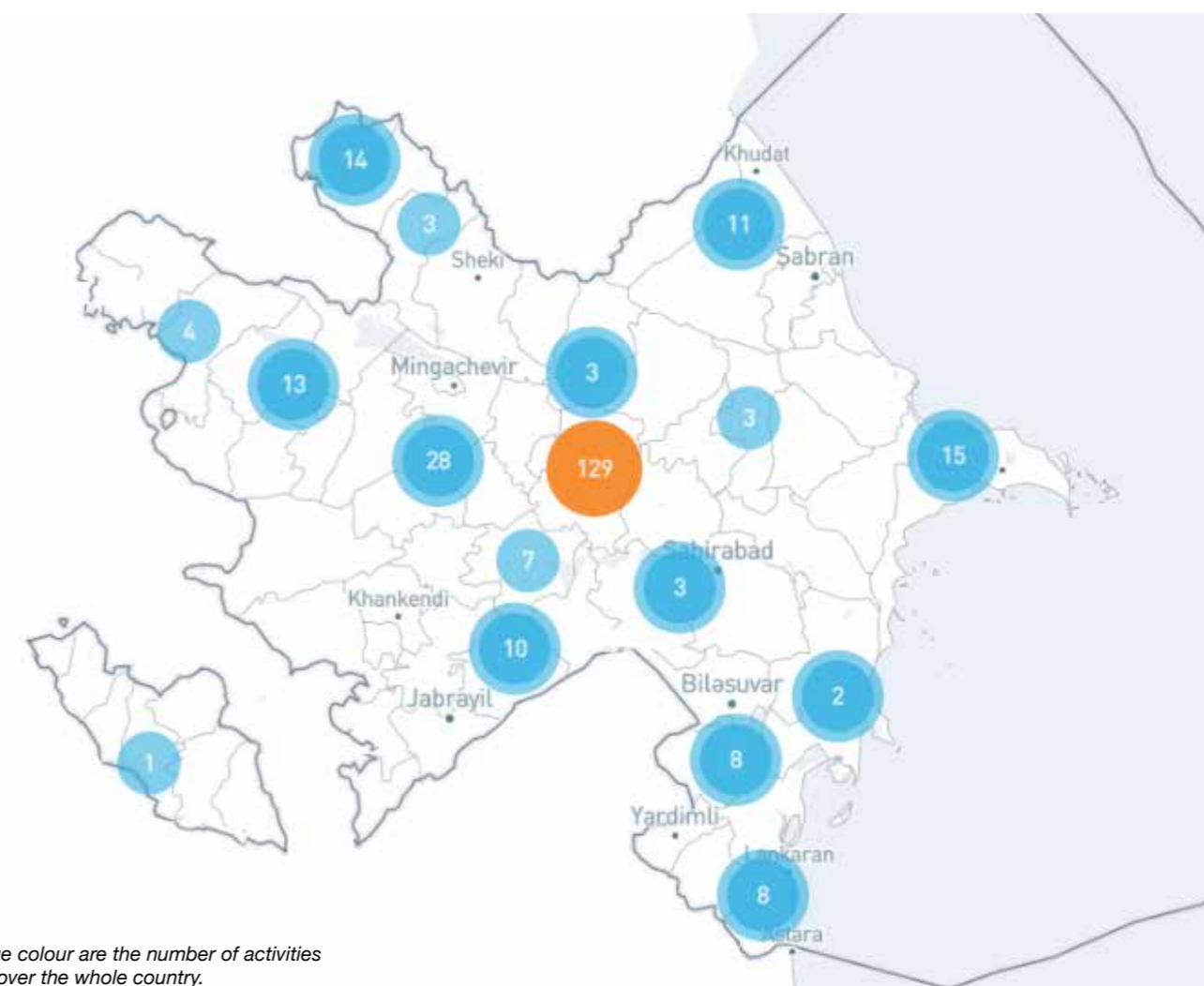
Indicators	Baseline	2021	2022
Share of MSMEs in economy	16.7 (2020)	16.4	13.9
SDG 8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training	23 % (2017)		total 19,8% women 49,7% men 50,3%
SDG 8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees	total 5 AZN women 4 men 5.6 (2020)	total 4.9 AZN women 3.8 men 5.6	total 5.6 AZN women 4.4 men 6.3
SDG 3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (per 100,000)	total 449.1 women 436.4 men 462 (2019)	total 557.5 women 550.9 men 564.4	total 448.3 women 426.8 men 469.9
SDG 1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on education, health and social protection	total: 32.4 healthcare : 3.4 education:8.6 social protection and social security: 20.4 (2019)	total: 40.6 healthcare : 5.7 education:11.5 social protection social security: 23.4	total: 38.4 healthcare : 4.3 education:11.6 social protection and social security: 22.5
SDG 17.18.1 Statistical capacity indicator for SDG monitoring Proportion of SDG indicators data available for	34.8% (2020)	43.3 %	48.8% (2023)
SDG 13.2.1 Azerbaijan reports its nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans, strategies	no		2023: yes
SDG 15.3.1 Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area	9.6% (2020)	11.4%	12.9%
SDG 6.4.1 Change in water-use efficiency over time (USD/m ³)	3.73 (2020)	4.49	6.57
SDG 7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP (kg oil equivalent/1000 manat)	316.3 (2020)	316.1	320.9
Sex ratio at birth in the population	114 boy per 100 girl (2019/2020)	116 boy per 100 girl	112 boy per 100 girl
SDG 5.5.2 Proportion of women in leadership and managerial positions	34.6 % (2020)	35,5%	35,4%
Number of local and national mechanisms created to address gender-based violence in Azerbaijan	0	2	2
SDG 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments	18.2 % (2019)	18.5 %	18.6 %
SDG 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10–14 years; aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	15-19: 39.6% 23.2% (urban) 58.1% (rural) 2020	15-19: 29.7% 16.7% (urban) 44.7% (rural)	15-19: 37.3% 20.6% (urban) 56.9% (rural)

4. The indicators with available data are presented. The latest data points are for 2022, as 2023 National SDG Progress report provided data until 2022.

Gender Equality Marker (GEM) analysis below shows that only 7 percent of expenditures in 2023 were for activities that had gender equality as their principal objective, while 44% of expenditures significantly focused on gender mainstreaming. GEM analysis across 2021-2023 shows regress in gender equality contribution, while principal and significant contributions dropped, the expenditure with no contribution increased.



Where we work: UN activities in 2023. For details please visit [UNINFO.ORG](https://uninfo.org).



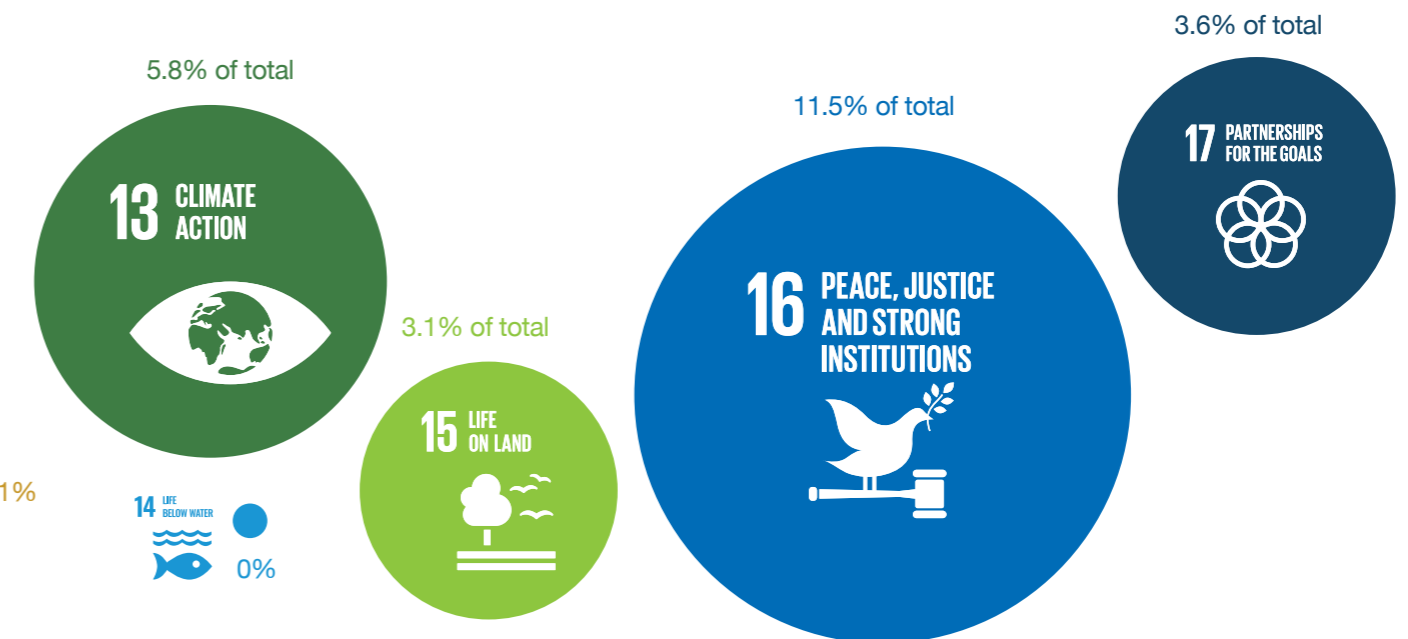
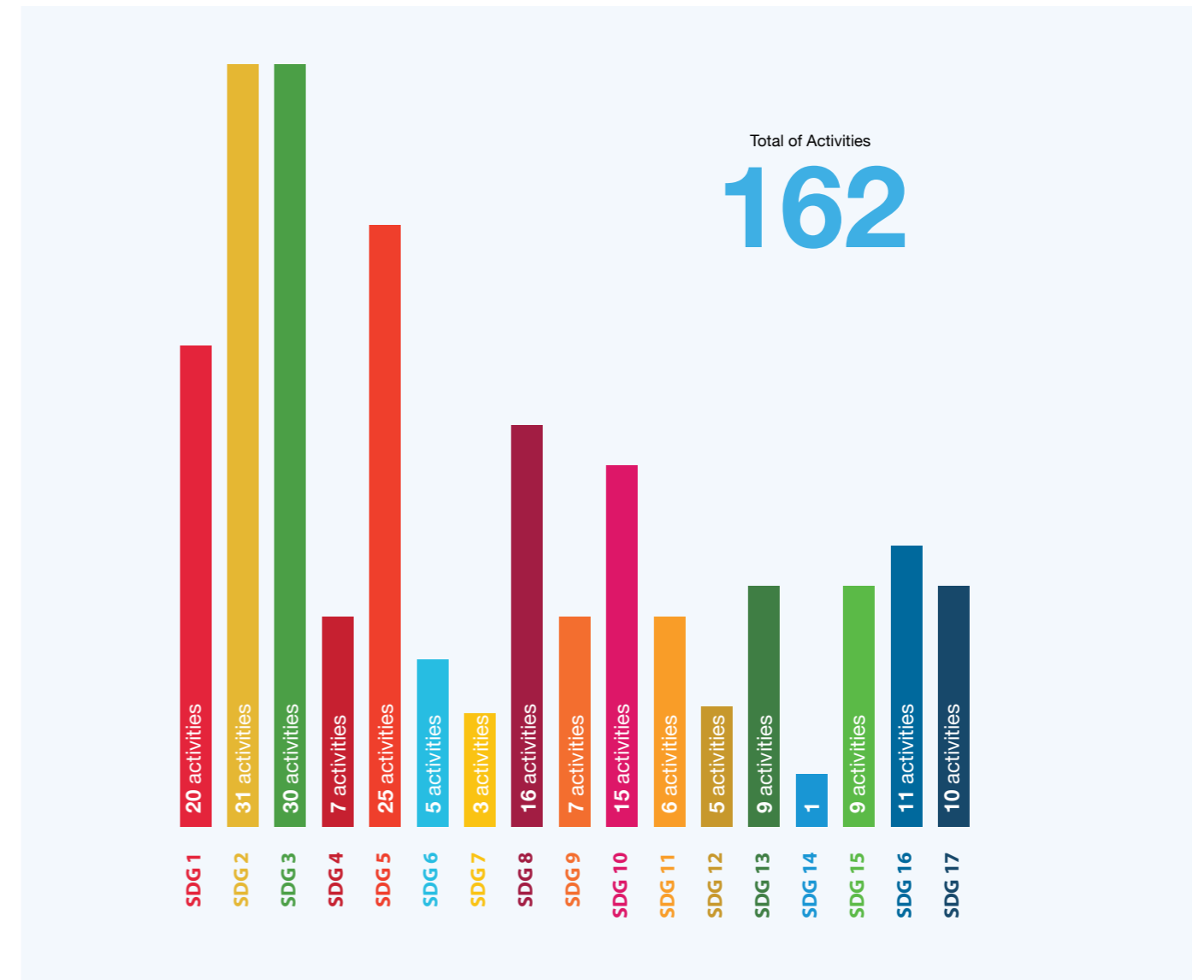
Orange colour are the number of activities that cover the whole country.

Contribution to SDGs

Per share of budget



Per number of activities





OUTCOME 1.1

INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND DECENT WORK

People furthest behind participate in and benefit from a diverse and innovative economy encompassing a future-oriented labour market and access to decent work

In 2023, the UN continued to work with national partners through programmes aimed at promoting job creation and improving labour market outcomes, targeted support for MSMEs, vocational education and training, and targeted support in rural value chain development.

Support for MSMEs and Women's Empowerment

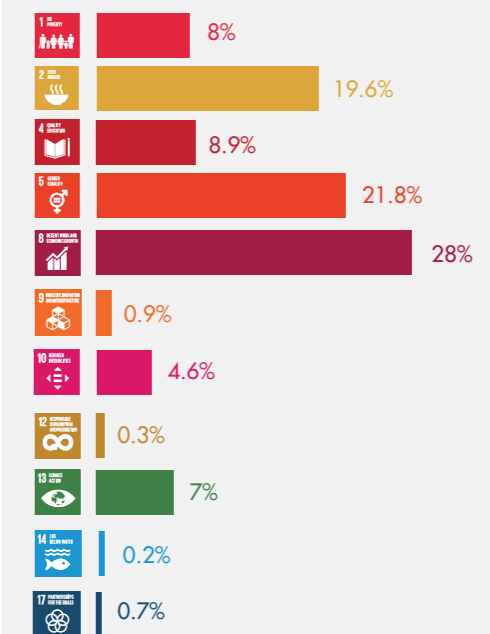
The UN helped to set-up and sustain MSMEs, which are key drivers of employment. For example, 184 persons with disabilities from 11 regions received the necessary tools, equipment and livestock to launch their businesses, and 82 women-led Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) were established (including 48 by GBV survivors and women vulnerable to trafficking in person).

The Women's Resource Centres (WRCs) continued to promote gender equality and foster inclusive and sustainable development. Fifteen (15) centres, including Community Resource Hubs, expanded to the conflict-affected regions, engaging 7,600 members. Over 926 rural women from four districts received vocational skills to engage in economic activities, and 46 percent are now employed.

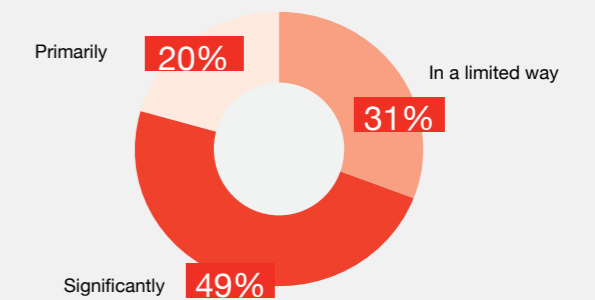
In partnership with the State Agency on Vocational Education (SAVE) and Barda Vocational Lyceum, 360 women in four regions benefited from courses in hairdressing, tailoring, beekeeping, clerical work and basic accounting and computer skills.

The UN facilitated the empowerment of the most vulnerable refugees by providing employment opportunities to 25 individuals (including 12 women), delivering skills training to 46 refugee youth (38 women), and extending cash assistance to 280 refugees (42% women).

Contribution to SDGs in 2023 (% of budget)



Expenditure to Gender Equality in 2023



Funding in 2023

Delivery: 92%



CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



International Labour Organization



IOM
UN MIGRATION



UNDP

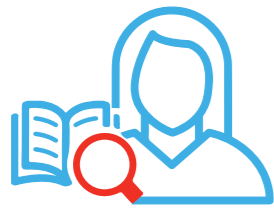


UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



unicef
for every child

Rufana, a proud graduate of the dual VET program, showcasing her talent in draping design learned at Jalilabad State VET Centre
Photo credit: UNDP/Mammad Aliyev/2023



1,286
WOMEN
enhanced vocational skills (140 GBV survivors)



20
PRIVATE COMPANIES
signed the [Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\)](#)



6,128
FARMERS
connected in digital fruit and vegetable database



Natig's hazelnut farm sees growth with improved methods, indicating increased yields
Photo credit: FAO/Shahin Huseynzada/2023

Rural livelihoods and agriculture

In the agriculture sector, capacity-building efforts focused on enhancing expertise across the potato and hazelnut value chains and livestock sectors. The UN enhanced capacities in disease-free seed potato production, variety testing and seed certification. Extensive work with partners contributed to updating seed certification legislation based on international procedures and standards.

This work included the publication of educational materials, and study tours to Hungary and Turkey for valuable insights into advanced agricultural practices, which enables the production of 15,000 metric tons of disease-free potato seeds.

The capacities were improved for phytosanitary inspection and diagnostic services in accordance with the [International Plant Protection Convention](#) for export processing, border controls and laboratory management. In the livestock sector, productivity was enhanced by

increasing national capacities in modern sheep husbandry practices and improving the management of feeding, milking and processing along the value chain. The development of breeding strategies and improvements in assisted reproduction practices for livestock further contributed to these advancements.

Additionally, two dairy processing units in Aghdam and Balakan districts (each with clear business, management, and ownership plans) were established, and six farmer field schools and six business schools for animal husbandry were introduced.

The UN also contributed to strengthening the capacity of smallholder farmers to increase productivity and improve the quality of hazelnut production. Almost 1,000 beneficiaries (30 percent women) underwent training on [Good Agricultural Practices \(GAP\)](#) for hazelnut management in collaboration with local extension institutions. A dedicated brand was created to streamline the marketing and promotion of 100 local food products, consolidating them under a unified brand. The Fruit and Vegetables Value Chain

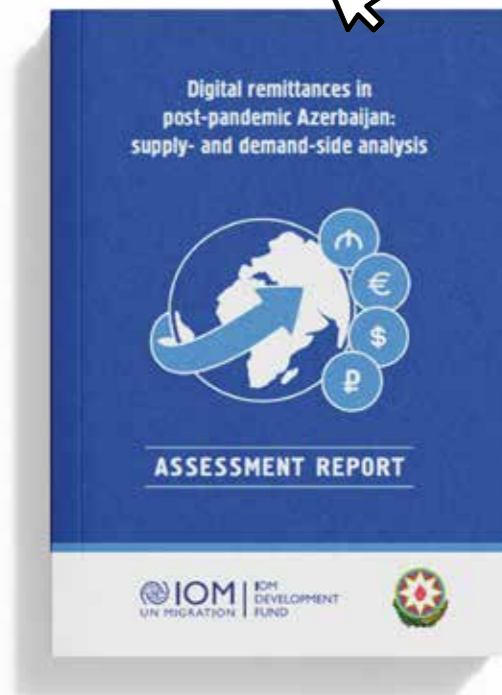
database that was updated with UN support with 6,128 farmers registered. With the help of this database, 110 farmers, including 24 women, formed cooperative connections with processing companies. Moreover, a comprehensive assessment was undertaken to analyze current and future demand for agrarian credit and investments and understand the larger context for agricultural finance. The recommendations will help the Government improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agrarian Credit and Development Agency.

Advancing Youth Agenda

In 2023, the UN Youth Advisory Council was revitalized to enable the UN to collectively engage more youth in its work. 17 young people (15-29 years old)-10 women, 2 persons with disabilities and 5 youth from the regions- were selected to advise the UN in Azerbaijan on integration of youth voices into UN strategies and

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DIGITAL REMITTANCES
IN POST-PANDEMIC
AZERBAIJAN: SUPPLY- AND
DEMAND-SIDE ANALYSIS

programmes. In addition, the [Basic Life Skills Education \(BLSE\) program](#), a foundational soft skills initiative, has expanded to nine new Youth Houses covering a total of 15 Youth Development and Career Centres, 32 Youth Houses and one Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institute.

This informal learning opportunity reached around 21,720 youth (47 percent girls) in 2023. The UN also supported the 99th International Session of the European Youth Parliament that brought together 250 youth from 35 countries including a specific session on "SDGs for the Future" engaging in dialogues on the crucial role of education in shaping a sustainable future.

In addition, the UN launched the [UpShift programme](#), a social innovator accelerator for young people aged 10-24 years, and the first cohort of educators were trained. Furthermore, the UN built capacities of 630 young people on explosive ordnance risk education, community building and mental health and suicide prevention to contribute positively to the post-conflict and reconstruction efforts.



UN involved in promoting explosive ordnance risk education in schools, especially in areas affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war

Photo credit: UNICEF/2023



Stories of Hope

Overcoming Boundaries: Zabihullah Qambari's Journey

Zabihullah Qambari, a refugee from Afghanistan, arrived in Azerbaijan in early 2020. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Afghanistan, he faced the daunting task of adapting to a new country and learning a new language.

Language barriers posed a significant challenge, but Zabihullah was determined. With hard work and dedication, he learned Azerbaijani within just five months, reaching an intermediate level. "Moving to a new country is tough, but with dedication, even language barriers can be overcome," Zabihullah reflects.

Today, Zabihullah describes his life as stable. He focuses on his education, pursuing a bachelor's degree and nurturing aspirations for the future. He is grateful to the UN as he was admitted to the DAFI (Albert Einstein Academic Refugee Initiative) Scholarship in 2022. "Without this support, I couldn't have afforded my bachelor's study" says Zabihullah.

DAFI Program offers qualified refugee students the possibility to earn an undergraduate degree in their country of asylum. In 2023, 52 refugee students (25 women) accessed tertiary education through scholarship support.



1,993

**REFUGEES AND
ASYLUM SEEKERS**

(60% women) benefited from food assistance



1,600

PERSONS

(27% women) trained in agricultural practices

Advancements in Labour Rights and Financial Inclusion

Through UN support, the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs Organization improved its capacity to create and manage local online platforms for learning and customer relationship management.

The UN also provided technical support in application of international Convention No.105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour and strengthened the capacities of the Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation on just transition and trade union modernization.

In addition, the UN contributed to enhancing financial inclusion and the use of digital financial services among

migrants and remittance recipients in Azerbaijan. The reports on '[Digital remittances in post-pandemic Azerbaijan: supply- and demand-side analysis](#)', Stakeholder Analysis and Mapping and the roadmap 'Increasing the Uptake of Digital Remittances in the Republic of Azerbaijan' were released.

Recommendations from these documents were incorporated into the Draft State Program on Financial Inclusion for 2023-2026 (developed by the Central Bank of Azerbaijan), which will feed into the Migrants Integration Strategy by the State Migration Service.



OUTCOME 2.1

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND QUALITY PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES

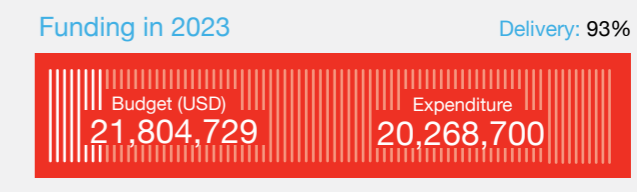
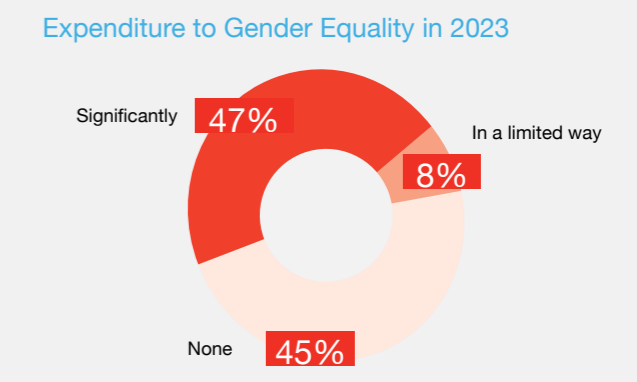
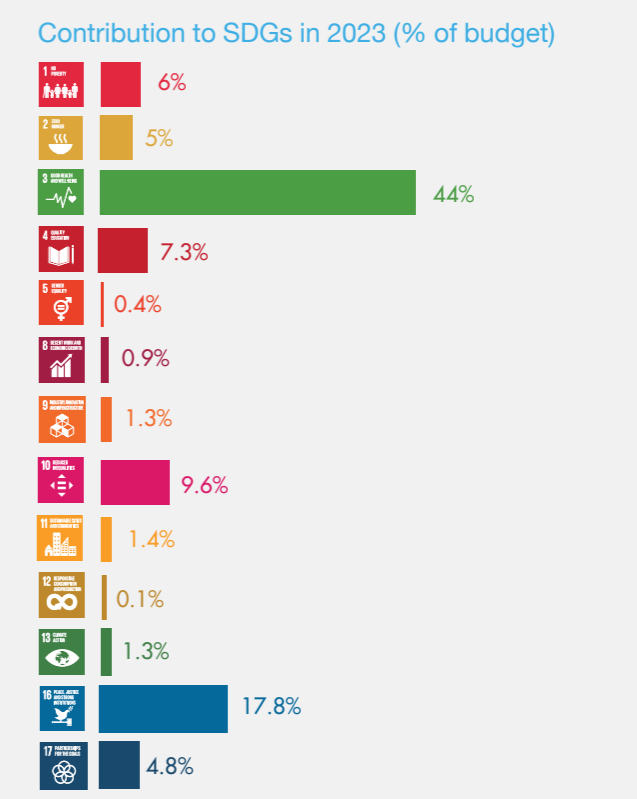
People furthest behind benefit from enhanced national capacities and governance structures for social protection and quality public and social services, in line with Azerbaijan’s international commitments

Post-conflict recovery response

In response to the request from the Government of Azerbaijan, in 2023 the EU, the UN and the World Bank undertook a Joint Recovery Needs Assessment (JRNA) in the districts of Aghdam, Fuzuli and Jabrayil, focusing on four pillars: i) institutional support and inclusive planning; ii) social services and sustainable returns; iii) resilient economic development; iv) environmental recovery and sustainable energy transformation. The JRNA was based on the analysis of needs for recovery and reconstruction and identified priorities for the short- (until 2024), medium- (until 2026), and long-term period (until 2030).

UN continued scaling up its contribution to mine action in Azerbaijan by supporting Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) with technical expertise, equipment, capacity development and financial resources. In 2023, the focus was on increasing international awareness of the landmine issue through the Landmine Free South Caucasus campaign. In all of Azerbaijan, between 2020 and 2023, 90,408 explosive devices and 869 unexploded ordnances were disposed of. In 2023, the Second International Conference on ‘Mine Action—the Path to Reaching SDGs’ was held in Baku and Aghdam, the Government formally announced the adoption of the national SDG 18 on Mine Action, and a [Declaration on Mine Action](#) was adopted, which called for joining and fully implementing the existing international instruments, strengthening existing partnerships and building new platforms.

In addition, the UN continued its support to the IDPs. Six community centres were established in Mingachevir, Yevlakh, and Goranboy districts that assisted 372 IDPs (52 percent women). 7,557 IDPs (48 percent women) benefitted from micro-projects related to improving the potable or irrigation water supply, the construction of bus stops, restoration of sewage pipes, road construction or repair.



CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES





7,557

IDPS

(48% women) benefitted from microprojects



1,784

PEOPLE

in 20 villages of Fuzuli, Terter and Aghjabadi regions received livelihood support



275

MINE RISK AWARENESS BILLBOARDS

installed for public awareness

Excerpt from the Declaration for Mine Action:

To accelerate progress towards a mine-free world, we, the participants in the Second International Conference on 'Mine Action—the Path to Reaching SDGs', agree to take bold actions to advance global mine action, inter alia by:

- Recognizing that humanitarian mine action is one of the prerequisites for sustainable development in mine-impact countries, progress towards achievement of the SDGs, accelerating peace processes and sustaining peace;
- Sharing the principles and values of the existing international legal instruments that regulate or ban the use of landmines, cluster munitions and other ERW, while encouraging all to take steps towards formal adherence to these instruments, including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction ('Ottawa Convention') and the Convention on Cluster Munitions ('Oslo Convention')

Volunteer fosters joy to the children in shelter through recreational activities
Photo credit: IOM/Rufat Zakizada/2023



Inclusive education

The UN worked with the Government to improve access to quality inclusive education for children with disabilities, increasing the number of inclusive schools from 22 to 40, enrolling over 250 children with disabilities, including 120 girls. Over 840 schoolteachers, school leaders and psychologists received inclusive education training to deliver quality inclusive education services for all children, particularly children with disabilities. 120 teachers in inclusive schools participated in a mentorship programme through continuous professional development. More than 1,000 children, parents, school staff, and local community members engaged in school and community activities addressing stigmas, stereotypes and negative social norms related to gender and disability. Comprehensive research on Early Childhood Education and Care Financing began, and once finalized, the study will provide a clear, comprehensive roadmap with policy options and solutions to effectively finance preschool education services.

Vocational education

The UN continued to enhance capacities in vocational education by providing technical expertise, skills training and partnership opportunities. The State Agency for Vocational Education (SAVE) expanded its capacity by 10 percent, offering 25,420 places in 128 specializations across 66 institutions. Twenty-six (26) public-private partnerships were established to modernize vocational education centres and promote capacity-building measures for both vocational education and private sector stakeholders. Nearly 570 people, including teachers, mentors, special educators, students and representatives of 28 employers benefited from trainings on enhancing vocation education to match labour market needs. More than 150 graduates (60 women) of dual vocational education and training (VET) programmes found employment.

Education in agriculture

The School of Agricultural and Food Sciences (SAFS) at ADA University was established in 2023 in Baku, Gazakh and Ganja. It offers Bachelor's and Master's degrees, as well as non-degree certificate programmes in agricultural and food studies. The UN will partner with the university to establish academic programmes and organize thematic workshops and capacity-building seminars on agri-food systems. Also in 2023, a forum on Innovation and Science in the Agricultural sector was organized in partnership with Azerbaijan State Agricultural University (ADAU), and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is in the process of development to enhance knowledge exchange and collaboration in rural development, sustainable value chains, land management, horticulture and veterinary services.



Stories of Hope

Beyond Expectations: Aytan Ismayilova's Quest in Breaking Stereotypes

"My name is Aytan, and I am one of the first women deminers in Azerbaijan," proudly declares Aytan Ismayilova, a young woman originally from the Gazakh Region located in north-western part of Azerbaijan.

Thanks to theoretical and practical trainings conducted by the international experts of the Mine Advisory Group (MAG), the first teams of women deminers acquired the foundational knowledge, skills and required code of conduct to recognize, detect and mark mines and unexploded ordnance, and to provide first aid.

"My family has always been working in the army. I wanted to follow in their footsteps. I lost my uncle during the war, my cousin sustained injuries in a mine explosion in Lachin. When I first heard that ANAMA was hiring women deminers, I wanted to apply for the job," she said.

"At the beginning it was very difficult. Thanks to the continuous trainings we receive, I feel more and more confident to do my job in the best way possible."

[READ MORE](#)

Education for health

To address the pressing need for capacity building in emergency medicine aligned with international health regulations, faculty members from the Azerbaijan Medical University received training on the development of the Emergency Medicine (EM) Clerkship Curriculum through UN support. The UN also conducted a survey to assess the public health competencies of senior medical students and faculty members using the competency framework of the [Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region \(ASPHER\)](#). The results will be used to identify learning needs, inform the curriculum development process and contribute to strengthening public health education.

Maternal and child health

Following the successful pilot of the Universal-Progressive Home Visiting (UPHV) programme in four regions, the programme was expanded to an additional 10 regions, reaching 46,321 families and benefiting 67,337 children aged 0-3 (including 311 children with disabilities) and 11,993 pregnant women nationwide. The model employs a gender-transformative (through fathers' involvement in childcare) and gender-responsive (through focus on maternal health needs) approach for maternal and child services. In addition, the UN supported the revitalization of the [Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative](#) in 10 maternity wards (with around 16,700 births annually) to deliver gender-responsive services for pregnant women and new mothers. Moreover, 600 health care workers across the country participated in a breastfeeding seminar during World Breastfeeding Week.

Support to primary health care

To strengthen the emergency care system, preparedness and response to health emergencies, health care workers received training in Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support. Selected Hygiene and Epidemiology Centres in the Sabunchu, Sabail, Ganja, Masalli, Astara districts were assessed to determine their institutional capacities to deliver essential public health functions and identify the necessary structural and functional reforms. A comprehensive 'hospital package' guideline for infection prevention and control was developed.

Immunization and vaccination

To improve vaccination coverage, the immunization Information System in Azerbaijan was assessed, and roadmap with set of recommendations was developed. National Immunization Guidance was also developed, and national capacities were supported on vaccine forecasting and vaccine procurement.



Citizen of Lankaran meeting a psychologist discussing psychosocial support especially the stigma around mental health
Photo credit: WHO/Javid Gurbanov/2023



250
CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES

(120 girls) accessed
inclusive education

372
REFUGEE AND ASYLUM
SEEKER CHILDREN

(158 girls) received primary
or secondary education

358
STUDENTS

joined dual VET
programs

Qualitative research was conducted with health workers, caregivers and central/regional stakeholders working in the administration of childhood immunization to understand the barriers and enablers to positive vaccination behaviours. To support the national efforts on ensuring the successful uptake of routine childhood vaccination, the capacities of health care workers were strengthened in the four regions and two cities with the lowest vaccination rates among children under six years old. Over 3,300 children received missed vaccines during European Immunization Week through a joint UN campaign in Mingachevir, Gobustan, Goygol and Yevlakh districts, which have the biggest backlog in vaccine coverage.

Capacities were also strengthened for updating national policies on surveillance of an adverse event following immunization to detect, respond, assess causality and communicate effectively to the public. Media professionals received training on infodemic management to enhance skills in identifying and combating misinformation and disinformation related to vaccination, especially concerning its impact on public health. The Government of Azerbaijan also engaged in a study assessing national curricula on interpersonal communication for immunization. Amid the measles outbreak in autumn 2023, the UN provided technical support to the Government, including advising on priority response actions and executing awareness campaigns and risk communications through digital platforms.



Stories of Hope

From Threads to Teaching:
The Journey of Ozjan Ibrahimov

18-year-old Ozjan Ibrahimov is simultaneously a talented tailor, a teacher's assistant, a self-taught writer, and a young man who earns a living from his favorite profession.

Ozjan studies at the Ganja State Vocational Education Center on Industry and Technologies, which has benefitted from UN support. He has finished his three-year tailoring faculty and currently works as a dress cutter in one of the city's prestigious clothing stores.

"I like to create a new style, a new design, and the best aspect of this art is that everything depends on you. You can create whatever you want," he says. "Based on my experience, I can tell my peers that everyone should do the work they love."

READ MORE



7,867

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

had access to medical products and pharmaceuticals



2,852

IDPs, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

(1,416 women) received eye-screening/eye-glasses support



12,000

PREGNANT WOMEN

and 67,000 children benefited from home-visiting in 14 regions



926

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

(458 women) accessed health care services or medicines

Social protection of children

The UN continued to promote [Azerbaijan National Child Helpline](#) services, strengthening the awareness of children and families on violence against children as well as the culture of reporting violence cases and getting professional support. The number of calls/applications to the helpline were 4,453 in 2023. Twenty-eight (28) percent were calls by children themselves and 25 percent involved cases of violence against children. (Violence against children cases constituted only 0.9 percent of all calls in 2020.) The Child Safeguarding system, which identifies, reports and responds to cases of violence against children, including gender-based violence, reached 51 schools in Baku and three other districts, providing access to school-based child protection for over 52,000 children and reporting 422 child safeguarding cases during the year.

Progress has also been achieved in integrating community-based social services with the pilot schools through referrals of high-risk cases from schools to social services. Furthermore, a set of proposals on updating national legislation on the prevention of violence against children was developed and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for further revision and submission to the Parliament for final endorsement.

Social protection for vulnerable groups

Twenty-three (23) representatives (19 women) from seven CSOs that assist survivors of trafficking and GBV increased their skills on and mental health and psychosocial support, and 263 Government officials and judges were trained on refugee status determination and asylum and migration issues in line with international standards.

Monitoring visits by the UN to the migrant holding centre and refugee status determination department helped to assess the existing methods and procedures and to provide relevant guidance. Law enforcement officials were sensitized on border management to handle complex situations at border crossings with sensitivity and efficiency.

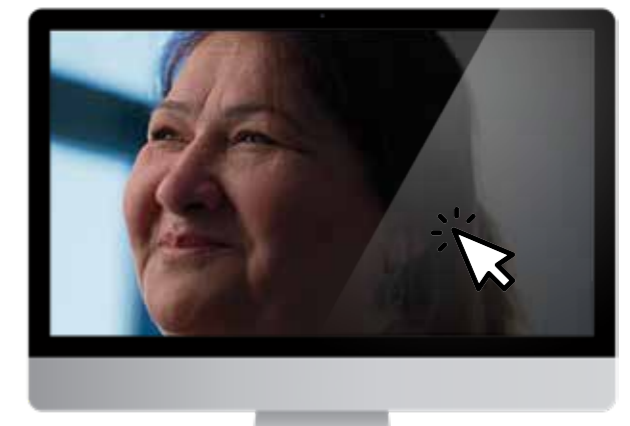
[The regional conference on statelessness](#) recognized and commended Azerbaijan's exemplary efforts and best practices in reducing and preventing statelessness. The conference also provided an opportunity to gain insights into the experiences and challenges encountered by other countries in the region.

A universal home visiting model encourages fathers to join hands with mothers in nurturing their children
Photo credit: UNICEF/Mammad Aliyev/2023



Advancing disability inclusion

The UN in Azerbaijan revitalized the Disability Inclusion Taskforce in May 2023 to improve the implementation of the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy \(UNDIS\)](#) and turn it into practical actions. The UN partnered with ADA University and a student initiative 'Compassion Gap' in April to organise a Trust Walk and raise awareness about building an inclusive society. Following this, the UN, together with Government and partners, organized a campaign on disability inclusion in the format of Trust Walk on the occasion of UN Day to promote disability inclusion. The event also featured speakers and performance artists with disabilities. And in the framework of the 75th anniversary events for the Universal Human Rights Declaration, the UN also promoted disability inclusion by including guest speakers and performance artists with disabilities. Moreover, disability inclusion was one of the cross-cutting pillars of the JRNA and was covered in the CCA analysis. The UN worked collaboratively to prepare for the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)-funded initiative to carry out an Induction Workshop for Cross-cutting Approaches and Preconditions for Disability Inclusive Development and the Situational Analysis to examine the key systemic obstacles/gaps and to develop concrete, actionable recommendations to the UN and its development partners.



ROAD TO CITIZENSHIP

The inspiring stories of former stateless persons who have overcome numerous challenges and transformed their lives after obtaining Azerbaijani citizenship and now proudly say [#IBelong](#).

Advancing Human Rights Agenda

The UN, together with the Bar Association, CSOs and Baku State University's law faculty, developed recommendations to improve access to justice in civil cases by persons in situations of vulnerability. Four public discussions with 45 stakeholders (including judges, lawyers, members of the Parliament, Ministry of Justice, CSOs and academic institutions) were held to elaborate these recommendations, which were submitted to the Centre for Legal Examination and Legislative Initiatives.

In 2023, the UN continued enhancing the capacity of national stakeholders in their engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms to promote and protect the human rights of vulnerable groups. Over 830 representatives of the civil society organizations, penitentiary staff, lawyers, local administrations, organizations for persons with disabilities (PWDs), and journalists enhanced their skills on the UN human rights mechanisms, treaty bodies, the Universal Periodic Review, the prevention of torture, the rights of PWDs, and the economic and social rights of vulnerable populations. The Resource Centre provided space for human rights-re-

lated events, engaging 140 participants from eight NGOs specializing in disability, women's rights, and social rights, including youth organizations. More than 800 translated publications and educational resources on human rights were disseminated to stakeholders. Police, prosecutors, and advocates in six regions were sensitized on human rights principles, specifically the right to liberty and security. Judges, lawyers, government authorities and academics strengthened their capacities to improve the access of asylum seekers and stateless persons to the Azerbaijani justice system in line with international guidelines and recommendations. A [virtual library](#), providing access to free legal materials easing access to legal knowledge and information, was established in collaboration with the Law Human Rights Institute.

Between 18 May-18 June, the UN, along with the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Bar Association, organized a one-month legal aid campaign for persons in situations of vulnerability in 13 regions. To mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Law Faculty of Baku State University and UNCT together created 30 educational videos, each exploring a specific article of the UDHR, which were shared on UN Azerbaijan's social media platforms, targeting young audiences.



1,556
REFUGEES

(630 women) verified their records



263
STATE OFFICIALS AND JUDGES

trained on refugee, asylum and migration management



51
SCHOOL

covered with child safeguarding practices



Stories of Hope

Breaking Barriers: Sara's Journey in Inclusive Education

Sara, 11, enjoys classes and socializing with classmates at her school in Baku. Besides her interest in sports and gymnastics, Sara likes reading and spending time with her friend Melissa. Sara's school is one of 40 schools in Azerbaijan that provide inclusive learning spaces, teaching and development support to children with disabilities, helping them to learn, grow and develop side-by-side without exclusions. "She has the same interests and dreams as other children," says Sara's mother Nurlana. When Sara was born, Nurlana was worried about educational options for her daughter. She is thankful that Sara can go to an inclusive school with her peers.

The expansion of inclusive schools has been spearheaded by the Ministry of Science and Education with support from the UN, enabling children with disabilities to learn together with their peers. "The impact of this programme is much wider," says Nurlana.

"It changes our society, as children are raised seeing diversity in the classroom and accepting it as the social norm."

[READ MORE](#)

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ASSESSMENT REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF LEGAL AID MECHANISMS IN THE FIELDS OF CIVIL LAW AND ADMINISTRATIVE LAW FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS OF THE POPULATION (IN LIGHT OF UN AND COUNCIL OF EUROPE STANDARDS)

Jamila Mammadli, disability inclusion activist, sheds light on challenges faced by persons with disabilities at the Trust Walk campaign for UN Day 2023 Photo credit: Youth Fund/Maharram Aliyev/2023



Cross-border initiatives

The UN developed the subnational [INFORM model for the South Caucasus](#) region, including Azerbaijan, as a tool to facilitate coordinated preparedness efforts, with the aim of enhancing collaboration between humanitarian and development stakeholders in the region to effectively manage risks and bolster resilience.

The INFORM model's primary function is to pinpoint areas at high risk of humanitarian crises in Azerbaijan, which are more likely to necessitate international assistance.

In addition, a policy brief was produced on trade facilitation that helps to identify progress and gaps, as well as good practices and lessons learned for advancing digital and sustainable trade facilitation in the Central Asian countries, including Azerbaijan, in their accession process to the WTO.

Food safety and security

The capacities of the Agrarian Services Agency and its agrochemical laboratories, seed certification centres and variety testing stations were strengthened through the development of an effective management and oversight system, technical capacity-building, the provision of necessary equipment, the adoption of new methodologies, international certification and ensuring the delivery of these services to farmers via an online platform.

During 2023, the UN also focused on strengthening the national capacities on food safety controls and [Codex processes](#); a food control system assessment was initiated, which will feed the development of a similar mechanism in the country; and a strategy on food loss and waste prevention and reduction was developed, which advocates for transitioning to a circular value chain to alleviate pressure on the food system caused by factors like population growth, increases in incomes, urbanization, and evolving consumption preferences.

Sustainable urban planning

Within the [Mayors for Economic Growth \(M4EG\)](#) initiative that is focused on reimagining urban and local spaces, an Electronic System for Urban Planning Control was developed to streamline and enhance the management and oversight of urban planning processes.

[The Urban Learning Centre \(ULC\)](#) approach was presented to the municipalities. Meanwhile, the Icherisheher Administration and Khirdalan Municipality



A laboratory staff participates in hands-on training on contamination and mitigation in hazelnut production, as part of the agreement with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Photo credit: FAO/2023

designed the Urban Transformation Portfolio to initiate a comprehensive revitalization plan aimed at enhancing infrastructure, improving public spaces and promoting sustainable urban development. The first municipal job fair attracted over 1,000 participants and engaged 28 companies and organizations, marking the first step in activating Khirdalan's Urban Transformation Portfolio. In addition, a draft national action is in progress to improve urban mobility in Azerbaijan, and the [LearnITC platform](#) has been introduced to national stakeholders to improve national capacities for sustainable inland transport connectivity. [The Second Azerbaijan National Urban Forum](#) on the theme 'Resilient Cities as a

Driving Force of Economic Development and Fighting Inequalities' brought together around 800 participants, including urban experts, architects, city and government representatives, and stakeholders from 53 countries. The forum also provided the platform for hosting the High-Level Ministerial meeting on Sustainable Urbanization with the Organization of Turkic States. Baku also hosted the first celebration of World Habitat Day in the Caucasus and Central Asia region, which attracted 1,000 participants from 108 countries in-person and online. The celebration focused on the pivotal role of resilient cities in fostering economic development and post-pandemic recovery and post-crisis reconstruction.

831

INDIVIDUALS

(40% women) strengthened their skills on UN human rights mechanisms

8,919

PERSONS

accessed legal assistance in Baku and 11 regions, namely Masalli, Barda, Imishli, Gabala, Sheki, Ganja, Guba, Mingachevir, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Tartar including 4,580 women, 173 PwDs, 1,450 unemployed, 232 elderly, 5,567 IDPs, 507 refugees and asylum-seekers, 990 stateless persons





CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



Little steps, big impact. Here, a child takes part in the MICS field visit, helping gather crucial data for children health
Photo credit: UNICEF/Zhala Rzayeva/2023

OUTCOME 2.2

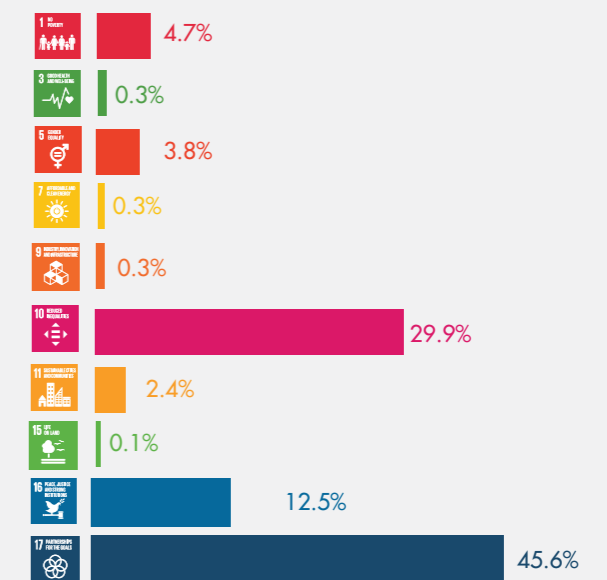
DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING AND POLICY

Quality, disaggregated and timely data are available and used to inform decision-making and policies that leave no one behind

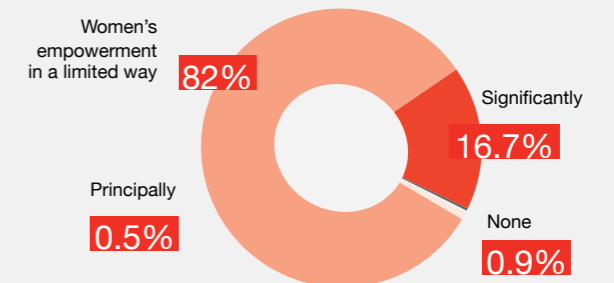
The UN continued to strengthen institutional capacities to improve SDG monitoring, reporting and data availability and, thus, inform evidence-based policies and decision-making. Capacities were developed for the production and analysis of data and information on food and agriculture, helping guide policy reforms and investment decisions in this direction. Through UN support, the State Statistics Committee strengthened its capacity in data collection on SDG indicators (5.a.1, 4.1.2, 12.4.1) and the Digital Agri-Census. The UN also collaborated with custodian agencies for SDG indicators, working with the Statistical Committee to address data inconsistencies and gaps, while analysing data trends in the [SDG Index report](#) with relevant counterparts.

After a 23-year break, fieldwork for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was completed, and for the first time, it also covers the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. For this, 115 professionally trained fieldworkers collected data from 616 clusters and 12,320 households. The MICS provides comprehensive, statistically reliable, disaggregated and internationally comparable data on roughly 200 indicators on vital topics as maternal and child health, nutrition, learning skills, water quality, social transfers, clean fuels and technology in the country. The UN also supported the efforts of the Government to enhance evidence based decisions by improving availability of disaggregated data and facilitating integration of 10 new sex-disaggregated indicators into the national statistics database. Furthermore, 56 state officials strengthened their capacities on the Application of the Degree of Urbanisation (DEGURBA) for production of comparable urban data. The UN continued to support the Government with population projection production, following the protocol of intent to produce regional population forecasts and build a system of official population forecasting in the country. This contributes to proper planning, formulation and implementation of population-oriented social and economic policies and programmes in Azerbaijan. The UN provided practical recommendations on National Transfer Accounts (a framework to measure and analyze the relation between age, gender and economic behaviour) to inform public policy reforms on pensions, health, education and taxes. This is particularly relevant in the contexts where fertility is decreasing, and the population is rapidly aging.

Contribution to SDGs in 2023 (% of budget)



Expenditure to Gender Equality in 2023



Funding in 2023





OUTCOME 3.1 CLIMATE ACTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

People, including those left behind, benefit from climate strategies and environment protection policies that ensure natural resources are sustainably managed, livelihoods are protected, and resilience strengthened

Climate action

In 2023, the UN continued to strengthen institutional capacities to plan, track and report on climate change and to access climate finance and technologies. In October 2023, with UN support, the Government submitted its revised [Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDC\)](#), and work is underway with the NDC Finance Strategy and Investment Plan.

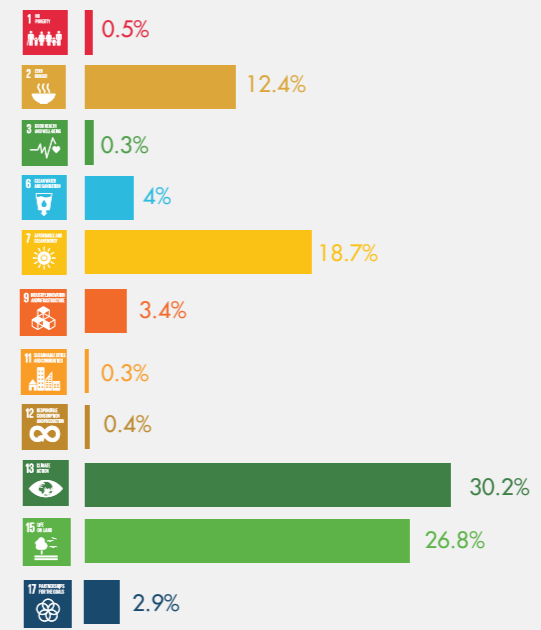
Key highlights from the revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) that was submitted in 2023

- Azerbaijan's revised NDC commits to a 40% reduction in emissions by 2050, compared to 1990 levels, conditional on international support.
- The sectors identified for mitigation measures include energy, industrial processes and product use, agriculture, land use, land use change, forestry and waste.

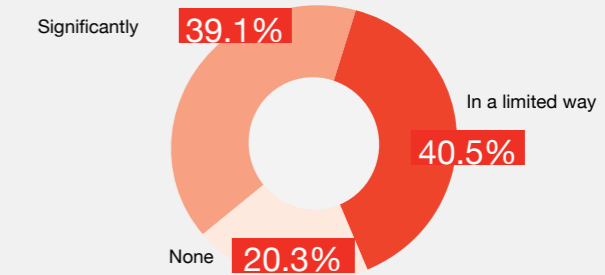
The revised NDC also confirms that the country will continue to plan and implement appropriate adaptation measures for particularly vulnerable sectors like agriculture.

The UN also developed smart climate investment tools, including guidance for efficient fiscal planning and investment in climate-related initiatives, and drafted a legal framework focusing on climate change adaptation, marking a significant advancement in the regulatory approach to address climate-related challenges. Related training materials were developed for Government in-

Contribution to SDGs in 2023 (% of budget)



Expenditure to Gender Equality in 2023



Funding in 2023

Delivery: 81%



CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



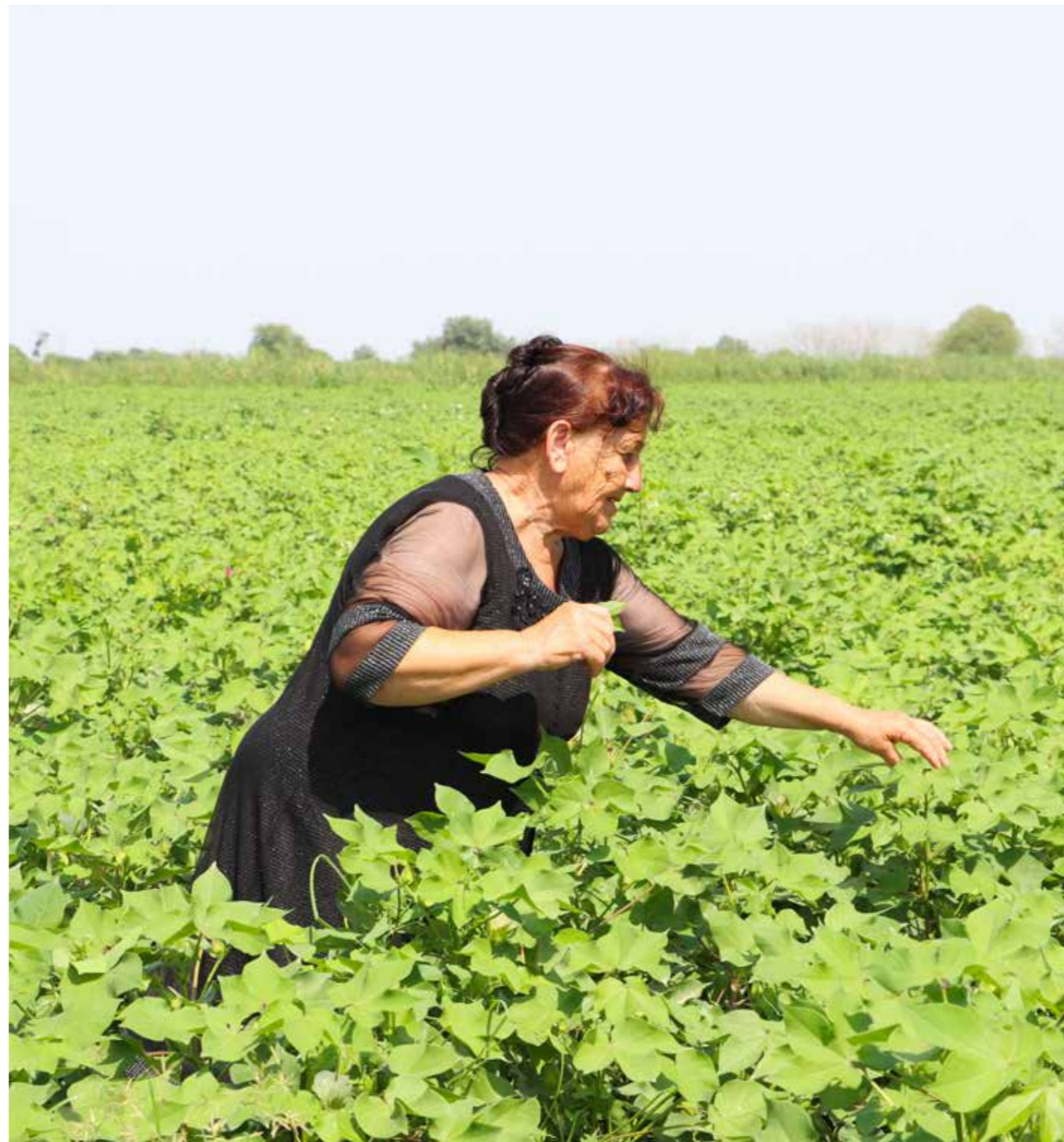
Gozal Humbatzada, one of the 19 climate volunteers and youth leaders selected as youth climate envoys to identify green solutions in support of the climate agenda. Photo credit: UNICEF/Adil Chalabiyev/2023

stitutions and private sector stakeholders on measurement, reporting and verification. The Climate Web Portal, which serves as a central repository for climate data and helps inform decision-making and policy development, was launched. It has significantly streamlined communication among Government entities working on climate change. 75 staff of relevant state institutions studied the regional climate challenges in the Guba-Khachmaz, Gobustan-Shamaxi and Neftchala-Salyan regions. In addition, a meeting of the expert group to study the causes of Caspian Sea level fluctuations and develop climate scenarios and adaptation measures improved regional awareness and fostered better cooperation among coastal communities and policymakers. Beyond strengthening Government capacities, 175 farmers were sensitized on climate adaptation and resilience-building practices, and 324 stakeholders attended 15 demonstration activities and trainings on adaptation and resilience-building measures for climate action. Moreover, World Environment Day celebrations raised public awareness and engagement in environmental issues.

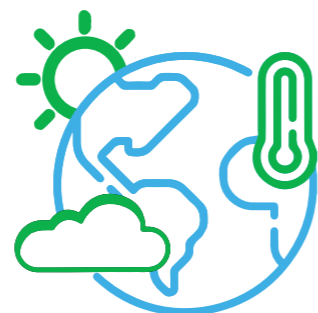
Water management

Through UN support, the private sector, farmers and the Government strengthened their capacities in analysis, planning and coordination for the improved governance of water resources. A report entitled 'Improved water governance: Towards sustainable agricultural development' was prepared to analyse the gaps that exist within the water sector and determine the issues linked with water resource management; the 'Analysis of the agricultural and irrigation possibilities in new areas' report was submitted to the Government; and the study '[Developing Water Availability Scenarios for Azerbaijan](#)' was completed. The outcomes will aid authorities in determining the impact of water efficiency measures on water supply and guide the development of effective policies to address water security challenges in the future. Through UN support, a crop-water productivity model [AquaCrop](#) was introduced, and national stakeholders strengthened their capacities in its application to optimize crop-water productivity and make informed decisions regarding water resource management.

During 2023, six Kahrizes (traditional, sustainable water supply systems) were rehabilitated, ensuring water security for 190 households. 270 farmers (35 percent women) in more than 10 regions were sensitized on efficient usage of water resources. Additionally, a side event was organized by Azerbaijan during the United Nations Water Conference, in which various Government agencies demonstrated the importance of coordinated work to address water resource availability challenges.



Farmers, engage in a study tour to understand and implement climate adaptation and resilience-building practices in farming
Photo credit/UNDP/2023



**CLIMATE
WEB PORTAL
LAUNCHED**

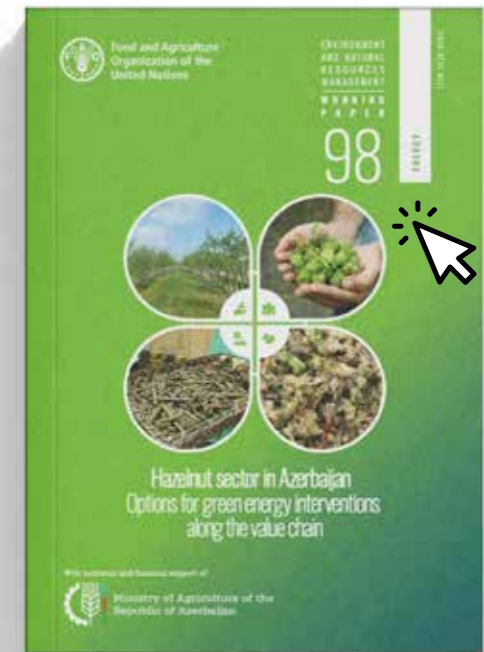
**574
INDIVIDUALS**

sensitized on climate resilient measures

**665
INDIVIDUALS**

benefited from energy efficiency measures

Click to read



HAZELNUT SECTOR IN AZERBAIJAN
OPTIONS FOR GREEN ENERGY
INTERVENTIONS ALONG THE VALUE
CHAIN

Energy efficiency practices

The UN also carried out a thorough assessment of the hazelnut value chain as a possible source of bioenergy and calculated the estimated required investment for scaling-up identified technologies for potential GHG emissions reduction.

In Barda, energy efficiency measures were implemented that resulted in a 30 percent reduction in bills due to decreased energy consumption and improved living conditions for 62 low-income families, 240 individuals, and 425 secondary school students.

Preserving biodiversity and forests

The UN continued to support biodiversity conservation efforts through strengthening the effectiveness of Azerbaijan's Protected Area system in Hirkan and Shirvan National Parks, both of which are Priority Conservation Areas in the Conservation Plan for the Caucasus. Additionally, the UN completed socio-economic valuation assessments for ecosystem goods and services in the Hirkan and Shirvan National Parks.

The Ecosystem-based Monitoring Framework for the country's Network of Specially Protected Natural Areas was finalized and is currently undergoing review by the Government.

The development of a landscape-scale spatial conservation plan for Azerbaijan was launched to guide the implementation of national actions to support the establishment and effective management of the larger transboundary ecological network for the Caucasus ecoregion.

Four management modules—environmental inventory and monitoring data, digital library, geospatial data, and park management planning and operations—were tested. [Guidelines on the Implementation of Nature-based Solutions](#) to Combat the Negative Impact of Climate Change on Forestry were developed.

The sustainable management of chestnut and pine forests in the country was improved by providing field demonstration trainings to approximately 90 stakeholders; a roadmap for effective management of forest habitats for honeybees and wild pollinators was developed; and national capacities strengthened on the use of the updated 'Guidelines for Preparing Multifunctional Forest Management Plans in Azerbaijan'.

Reducing environmental hazards and pollution

The UN supported the Government in the preparation of the country's ratification of the Rotterdam Convention, which helps parties protect themselves against unwanted imports of hazardous chemicals.

Government stakeholders were sensitized on the development of air pollutant emission inventories in accordance with the requirements of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. Awareness-raising sessions on Strategic Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments were organized in Ganja, and a national action plan on integrated pest management that proposes alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides use in Azerbaijan was developed.

A trial disposal of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in cement kilns was successfully completed, technical guidelines for their safe disposal developed, and investigations into POP-contaminated sites conducted, leading to the formulation and submission of restoration and rehabilitation plans to the Government. As a result, 220 tons of liquid POPs and other obsolete pesticides were safeguarded. Moreover, a health care waste management assessment was conducted in 24

health care facilities across seven districts, and three private companies responsible for transporting and disposal of medical waste enhanced their knowledge and practices in health care waste management.

Cleaner production/ consumption practices

To advance [resource-efficient and cleaner production \(RECP\)](#) practices and technologies to increase efficiency and reduce risks to humans and the environment, two RECP clubs were set-up in Baku and Ganja, 15 RECP assessments were finalized and over 30 business cases were developed. In addition, the work of more than 30 enterprises implementing RECP action plans were monitored and 17 new enterprises were sensitized.

Through UN support, [Product Environmental Footprint \(PEF\)](#) practices (a multi-criteria measure of the environmental performance of a good or service throughout its life cycle) were introduced, and the UN provided support in developing the 'National Strategic Program and Emergency Plan on Wheat Rust Control in Azerbaijan', which identified institutional opportunities for preventing rust disease problems and creating effective control mechanisms.



Stories of Hope

From Observation to Action:
Leyla's Journey

Leyla, an 18-year-old climate activist, reminisces about her childhood walks with family, noting the distressing pollution in local water basins: "This made me worried as waste is not only damaging the beautiful view but makes life difficult for all the creatures living there." Determined to make a difference,

Leyla and her friends brainstormed solutions. "We saw that the cleaning of rivers can be dangerous for people working in polluted areas," she noted.

Their efforts bore fruit as they developed a water-cleaning prototype, earning recognition in a local competition. Inspired by this success, Leyla joined the Youth Climate Envoys program, eager to contribute further.

"I think if every young person will work harder to solve this problem, then we can make our future more sustainable," she passionately declares, envisioning a collective effort toward a greener tomorrow.

[READ MORE](#)

Youth from Azerbaijan Calls for Climate Action



Click to play video

- Ecosystem-based Monitoring Framework for protected areas finalised
- Guidelines for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) on Forestry produced
- Roadmap for forest management for honeybees and pollinators formulated
- National action plan on integrated pest management developed
- 220 tons of liquid POPs and other pesticides safeguarded
- 24 healthcare facilities in 7 districts assessed for healthcare waste management



CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES



Papa Schools help to defy stereotypes and empower fathers to embrace their crucial Role in homecare and family dynamics. Photo credit: UNFPA/2023

OUTCOME 4.1 GENDER-EQUITABLE SOCIETY

Women and girls, including those furthest behind, benefit from enhanced national mechanisms that ensure they are protected from discrimination and violence and empowered to participate in all spheres of life

In 2023, Azerbaijan ranked 97 out of 146 countries, with a score of 0.692 on the [2023 Global Gender Gap Index](#), a slight improvement from 2022. The UN in Azerbaijan continued its work with partners to eliminate gender-based discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for everyone.

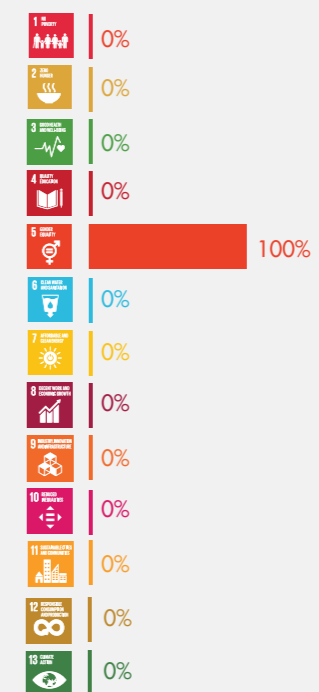
Response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

In 2023, the UN continued to support strategic interventions for the elimination of GBV and other harmful traditional practices, including: dialogue with the Government to ensure sustainability of policy actions to prevent and address GBV, advocating for effective institutional mechanisms to address GBV and its consequences, strengthening capacities of 50 representatives of local GBV monitoring groups in charge of response coordination efforts, maintaining the national three-digit hotline for victims (which served nearly 300 people), offering legal support to ensure referrals to a range of services provided by the hotline staff, and mapping a case management system on GBV response.

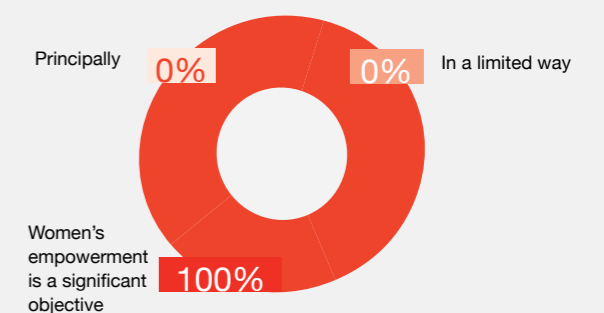
Throughout the year, Women Resource Centers continued to support GBV survivors, through organizing informative seminars about the consequences of GBV on parenting, and involving the survivors in capacity-building events.

The annual commemorations of the International Women's Day, the International Fathers' Day and the International Girl Child Day were used to further raise awareness about GBV prevention.

Contribution to SDGs in 2023 (% of budget)



Expenditure to Gender Equality in 2023



Funding in 2023

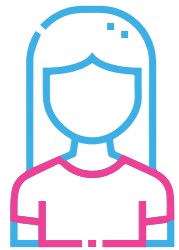




1.5M
PEOPLE
reached through
campaign on gender
stereotypes



400
HEALTH CARE WORKERS
trained on engaging men
during pregnancy and
childbirth



275
GIRLS
engaged in
STEM programs



Girls engage in STEM activities at the International Family Day Camp

Challenging discriminatory gender norms and practices

To support efforts in minimizing processes and practices that contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequalities in schools, trainings were organized for mentors, school personnel, and content developers for textbooks. Ten (10) secondary schools piloted interventions to create an enabling environment to sustain gender-responsive practices through engaging teacher personnel and non-teaching staff and parents.

Information sessions for more than 6,800 adolescent girls raised awareness on the prevention of violence and harmful practices and the role of reproductive health. Awareness-raising activities that promoted the value of girls in society and addressed gender-based discrimination, GBV and early marriage reached 2,547 people in five districts.

Men for Gender Equality

The concept of responsible fatherhood was significantly promoted and the International Father's Day was used as an occasion to encourage stronger bonds between fathers and their kids, with special focus on a girl child.

In 2023, 333 young fathers and fathers-to-be benefitted from the Papa School sessions delivered in 10 regions of Azerbaijan. Special Family rooms were established in three health care institutions (Goychay, Lankaran, Baku) to promote the engagement of men in antenatal and childcare services under the supervision of a core group of experts from the public health institutions; 400 health care workers were trained on engaging men during pregnancy and childbirth; and 1,500 informative materials on topics of male involvement in antenatal and childcare services and responsible fatherhood were disseminated among the target audiences.

Moreover, the UN continued to advocate with parliament members and representatives of line ministries for the endorsement of paid paternity leave policies. The 'Breaking The Ads' campaign engaged more than 50 influencers and 10 popular social media pages challenging stereotypes in the local advertisement industry. The campaign reached about 1.5 million people with two million impressions on social media. In addition, a virtual social media platform 'Men for gender equality' was the main online resource hub for information, news, blogs, videos and articles on the interlinkages between gender equality and faith.

Girls in STEM

UN continued to support participation of young women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). In 2023, 125 adolescent girls benefitted from STEM programmes, and an online course was developed to raise awareness on STEM careers among schoolgirls.

Over 150 girls participated in the Women In STEM programme, which paired them with mentors who provided guidance, support and advice in various aspects of their personal and professional lives. In addition, the 'HeForShe' educational programme in southern regions of Azerbaijan enhanced awareness among over 200 girls about STEM careers and sensitized fathers on action for gender equality.

300 PEOPLE

received support via
GBV hotline

GBV monitoring
groups in 10
regions were
capacitated



BREAKING THE ADS CAMPAIGN

Men actively engaging in household chores and childcare are challenging the prevalent stereotype that confines women to the role of sole caregivers depicted in many commercials.

Stories of Hope

From Darkness to Light:
Nargin's Journey

Like any other young girl, at the age of 21, Nargin (not her real name) believed that when she got married, she would have a happier future. However, her husband, mother-in-law and sister-in-law began to threaten and use physical violence against her. Unable to see her three children, Nargin was also kicked out of the house. Through the advice and support from the Women's Resource Center in Aghjabadi, she met with a psychologist. The Center coordinator and psychologist were there to bring her back from the brink of suicide. "The first thing she said to me was that life was not over and I could fight for my children," Nargin said. She learned that she could reunite with her children and that legal services would be provided to her. She joined the career development trainings and courses on basic computer skills and soon got a job. **"I got a lot from this center," said Nargin. "I learned to stand on my own feet. Here I saw that our women, no matter the difficulties, discovered themselves. Thanks to the Center, their outlook on life changed."**

2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

Sustainable financing

Building on the success of the First Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in October 2018, the [Second Baku Forum on Sustainable Development](#) was held on 15-16 November 2023 and served as a continuation of the high-level dialogue initiated at the global SDG Summit 2023.

Two analytical tools were presented and discussed in the Forum: (1.) [The Azerbaijan SDG Investor Map](#), which pinpoints 10 investment opportunity areas within four key national priority sectors (infrastructure, renewable resources and alternative energy, food and beverage, and services/tourism), and (2.) the Impact Investing Ecosystem Study, which offers a comprehensive stakeholder mapping of potential areas for ecosystem growth, by harnessing technology for development and mobilizing private sector solutions.

The UN also galvanized high-level political commitment to the SDG financing agenda, specifically to earmark funds for SDG efforts in the state budget (SDG tagging; which started in 2024). Furthermore, the UN supported the development of the Mainstreaming Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Framework, which includes a roadmap on ESG mainstreaming for the Entrepreneurship Development Fund. This was realised within the framework of the UN support to the Government to develop its first Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) with financial support from the UN Joint SDG Fund.

The global [SDG Finance Academy](#), launched in Azerbaijan in 2023, equipped young people and stakeholders with the necessary knowledge, skills and training to understand various financial tools, their alignment with the SDGs and the implications for policy reforms.

SDG Policy Dialogues

In support of the SDG acceleration agenda, the UN and the National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development (NCCSD) continued a multi-stakeholder high-level policy discussion platform, the SDG Dialogue series in 2023. The second SDG Dialogue [Towards 2030: socio-economic inclusion in Azerbaijan](#), held in June 2023, examined Azerbaijan's progress on inclusive growth using an Inclusive Growth Index (IGI), and reflected on additional [policy measures](#) needed



UN honors partners as 'SDG Champions' at UN Day with recognition certificates for their outstanding contributions to advancing SDGs in the country. Photo credit: UN/Aziz Karimov/2023

to enhance the inclusiveness of economic growth and progress toward the SDGs. The third SDG Dialogue on ['Reflections on the Outcome of the Global SDG Summit 2023 and the role of Supreme Audit Institutions in SDGs implementation'](#), held in October 2023, facilitated a multi-stakeholder forum to exchange information and discuss the outcomes of the Global SDG Summit 2023 and review [the role of Supreme Audit Institutions](#) in monitoring the performance of government institutions in SDG implementation, as well as the effectiveness of public expenditures on SDGs.

Corporate sustainability

After the reinvigoration of [UN Global Compact](#) (UNGC) activities in Azerbaijan in 2022, the membership saw a sixfold increase, reaching a total of 34 members as of March 2024. This is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative calling companies to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labor, environment, anti-corruption, wider societal goals and SDGs.

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

With support from UN, Azerbaijan was one of 40 countries globally who submitted its national commitments ahead of the SDG Summit.

The UN supported the Secretariat of the Council to develop the commitments titled ['Accelerated Pathways to SDG Progress: Azerbaijan's National Commitments for Sustainable Development and SDG Advancement'](#) building on the priorities of key national development strategies and programmes, the findings of the ['Integrated SDG Insights' report](#) of UNDP, the recommendations from the UN-led SDG Policy dialogues, the [Second International Conference on Mine Action](#), an illustrative list of policy actions and investments from the Special Edition of the SDG Progress Report, and the UN High Impact Initiatives.

Building on national trends and priorities, the [Integrated SDG Insights analysis](#) highlighted the following SDG pathways as the policy choices with the greatest potential to accelerate national progress towards the SDGs:

- Target 2.2: End all forms of malnutrition
- Target 4.3: Equal access to affordable technical, vocational and higher education
- Target 6.1: Safe and affordable drinking water
- Target 7.2: Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
- Target 8.6: Substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- Target 9.2: Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization
- Target 10.4: Adopt fiscal and social policies that promotes equality

Following the SDG Summit, the third SDG dialogue on 24 October 2023 provided a forum to exchange information and discuss the outcomes of the Global SDG Summit 2023 and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The UNCT also agreed to integrate the [Six Transitions](#)² into the Annual Review and Planning meeting of the Result Groups.

National, regional and global experts from UN entities, the EU and the World Bank teamed up with 21 Government institutions to produce the Joint Recovery Needs Assessment. The JRNA was accompanied by comprehensive training on the methodology for all involved and followed by intensive analytical work led by the Pillar teams, including a 10-day mission to Azerbaijan and the three districts affected by conflict. The process was overseen by the Steering Committee, composed of senior Government representatives from the Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, as well as the Resident Coordinator, the World Bank Country Manager, and the EU Head of Delegation. Based on the analysis of needs, priorities have been identified for the short- (until 2024), medium- (until 2026), and long-term (until 2030), in line with the timeframe of the national strategies and plans.

The joint UN-Government Annual Review Process in 2023 was led by the four UN entities co-chairing the five Result Groups, together with the Deputy Ministers from Government agencies. This review was based on the priorities of the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026, the Great Return Program, and the findings of the CCA annual update to guide the discussions and planning process. In addition, UN entities joined efforts to ensure [UNINFO](#) was updated with the latest and correct data and that accountability to stakeholders, Government and the public was ensured through the development of the Annual Report.

Moreover, the Annual High-level Strategic Consultation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the UN took place in Aghdam in March and served as a crucial platform for strategic dialogue, particularly considering the dynamic country context and notable progress in recovery and reconstruction efforts. The meeting facilitated discussions on evolving priorities and opportunities for strengthened cooperation and partnership in 2023.

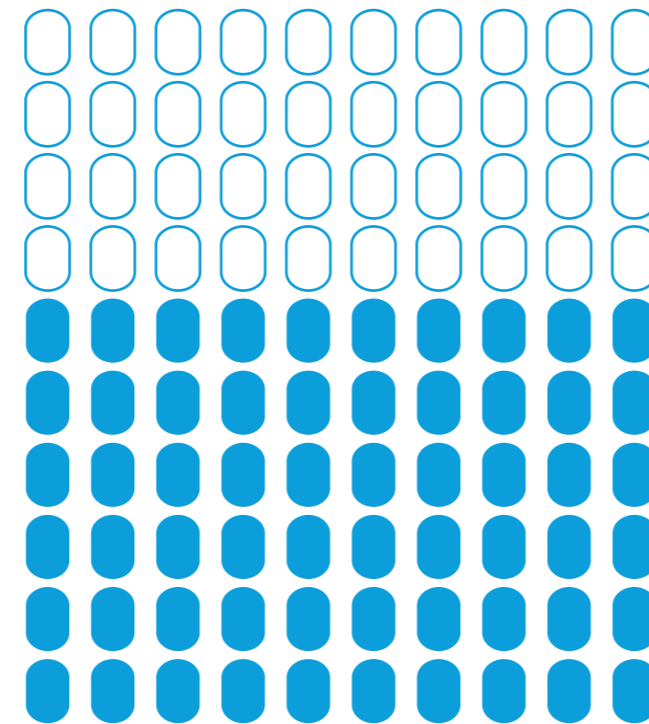
Beyond engagement with the Government, the UN in Azerbaijan worked together for greater results and efficiencies. The Inter-agency Task Force carried out the

2. (1.) food systems; (2.) energy access and affordability; (3.) digital connectivity; (4.) education; (5.) jobs and social protection; and (6.) climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution

Common Country Analysis (CCA) annual update for 2023 with specific focus on socio-economic analysis of economic regions. On the sidelines of the SPECA 2023 Economic Forum, a joint technical meeting of the UNECE and UNESCAP experts and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) economists from SPECA countries took place focusing on trade and transport, energy connectivity and green transformation.

An annual progress assessment was initiated by the UN in 2023 to spur progress towards meeting and exceeding the minimum performance requirements of the UNCT-System Wide Action Plan Scorecard for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. The results indicate that 9 out of 15 indicators either meet or exceed the minimum requirements.

Gender Scorecard



60%

9 OUT OF 15 INDICATORS

MEET OR EXCEED
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Communicating as One

The 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence campaign, '[Unite to end violence against women and girls!](#)', led by UN agencies and the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children's Issues in Azerbaijan, consisted of discussions on legislative frameworks and the psychological impact of gender-based violence, sessions to educate young people on gender equality and gender-based violence referral systems, and social media challenges and events throughout the country, including at Women's Resource Centers.

The TV programme '[UN-Azerbaijan: Towards Sustainable Development Goals](#)' released 13 episodes in 2023, hosting key experts from the UN and the Government and covering topics on food and agriculture, sustainable cities, vocational education, explosive ordnance risk education, environmental protection, health, migration, Human Rights, gender-based sex selection and combating gender-based violence.

Moreover, UN Azerbaijan's social media pages continued to show the work and results of the UN in Azerbaijan and supported the joint campaigns such as the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Trust Walk disability inclusion campaign and Others.

Promoting peace and social cohesion

The UN in Azerbaijan, with support from the Office of the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG) and in line with the [United Nations Strategy and Action Plan on Hate Speech](#), developed a context-specific Action Plan. It aims to contribute to the de-escalation of conflict, counter and address hate speech to prevent violence, and advance peace and security in Azerbaijan and the wider region.

The Joint UNDP- DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities on Conflict Prevention has undertaken catalytic projects to support digital peacebuilding initiatives and enhance the capabilities of young peacebuilders. These initiatives involved the allocation of small grants, organizing workshops on digital peacebuilding and connecting project beneficiaries with experts from global UN networks, as well as social media monitoring and hate speech analysis to enhance situational awareness. A noteworthy grassroots initiative within this framework has successfully created a platform for peaceful dialogue and discussions between Azerbaijani and Armenian users on social media, garnering positive public reception from both sides. The previous sections of the report encompass UN collaborative efforts aimed at advancing human rights, empowering youth, promoting disability inclusion, and facilitating post-conflict recovery initiatives.

This year's UN Day featured a Trust Walk campaign for disability inclusion, aiming to raise awareness and foster understanding about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Photo credit: Youth Fund/Maharram Aliyev/2023

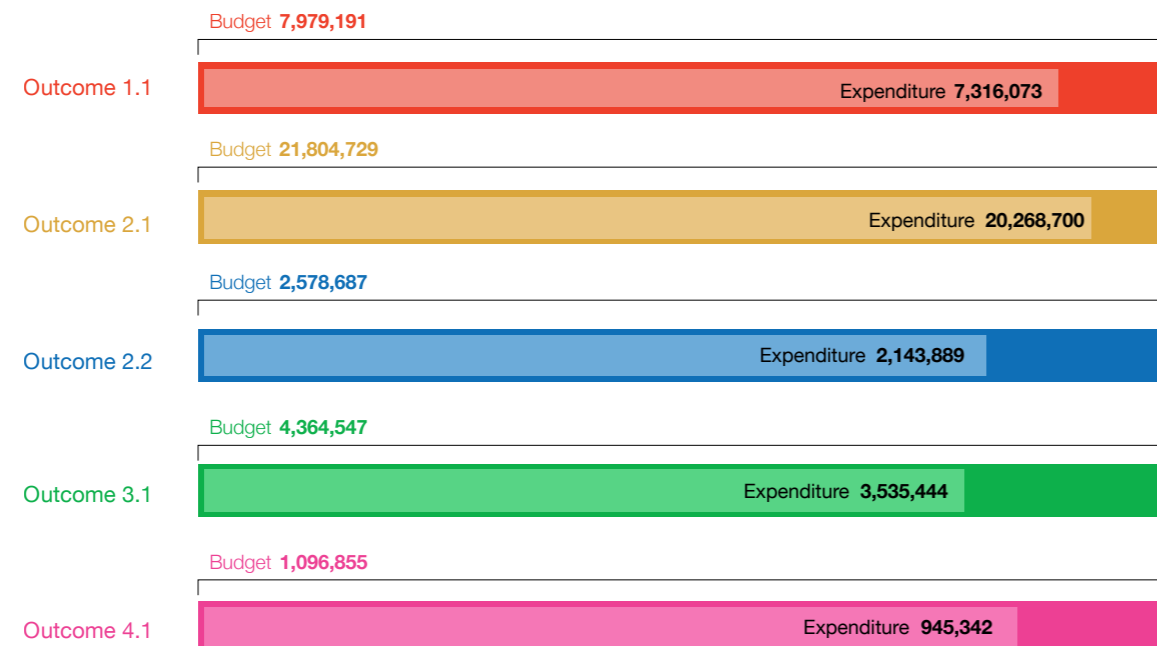


2.5. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

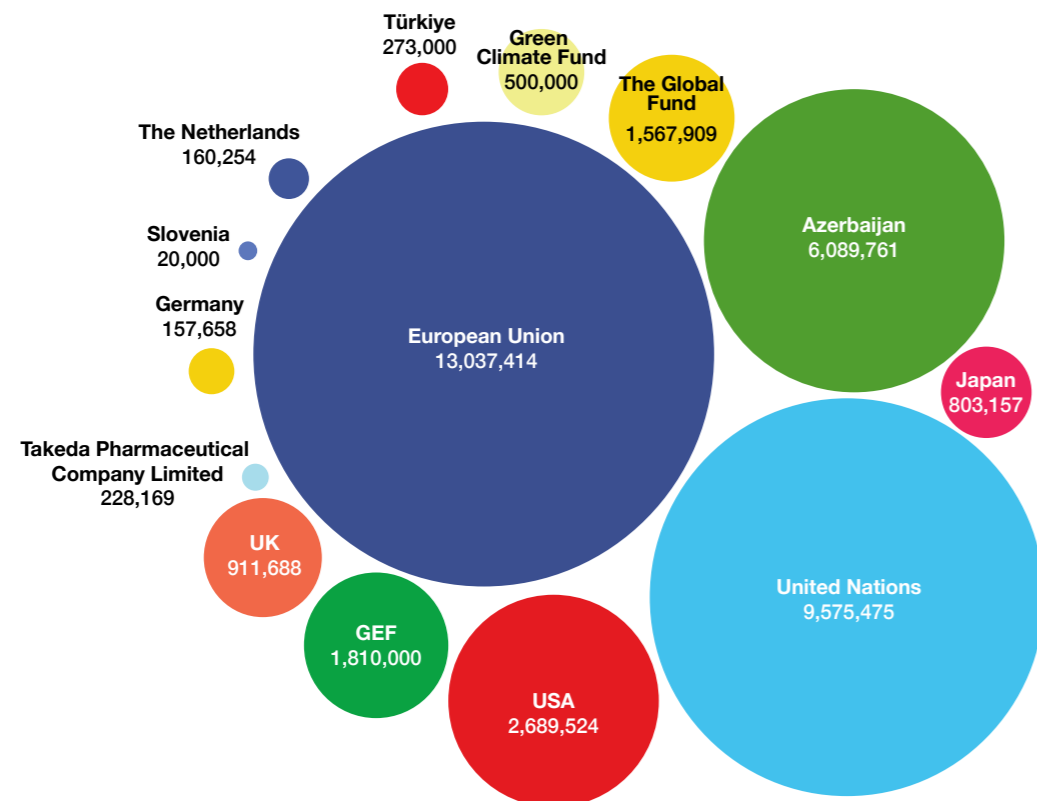
Total Budget
37,824,009

Total Expenditure
34,209,448

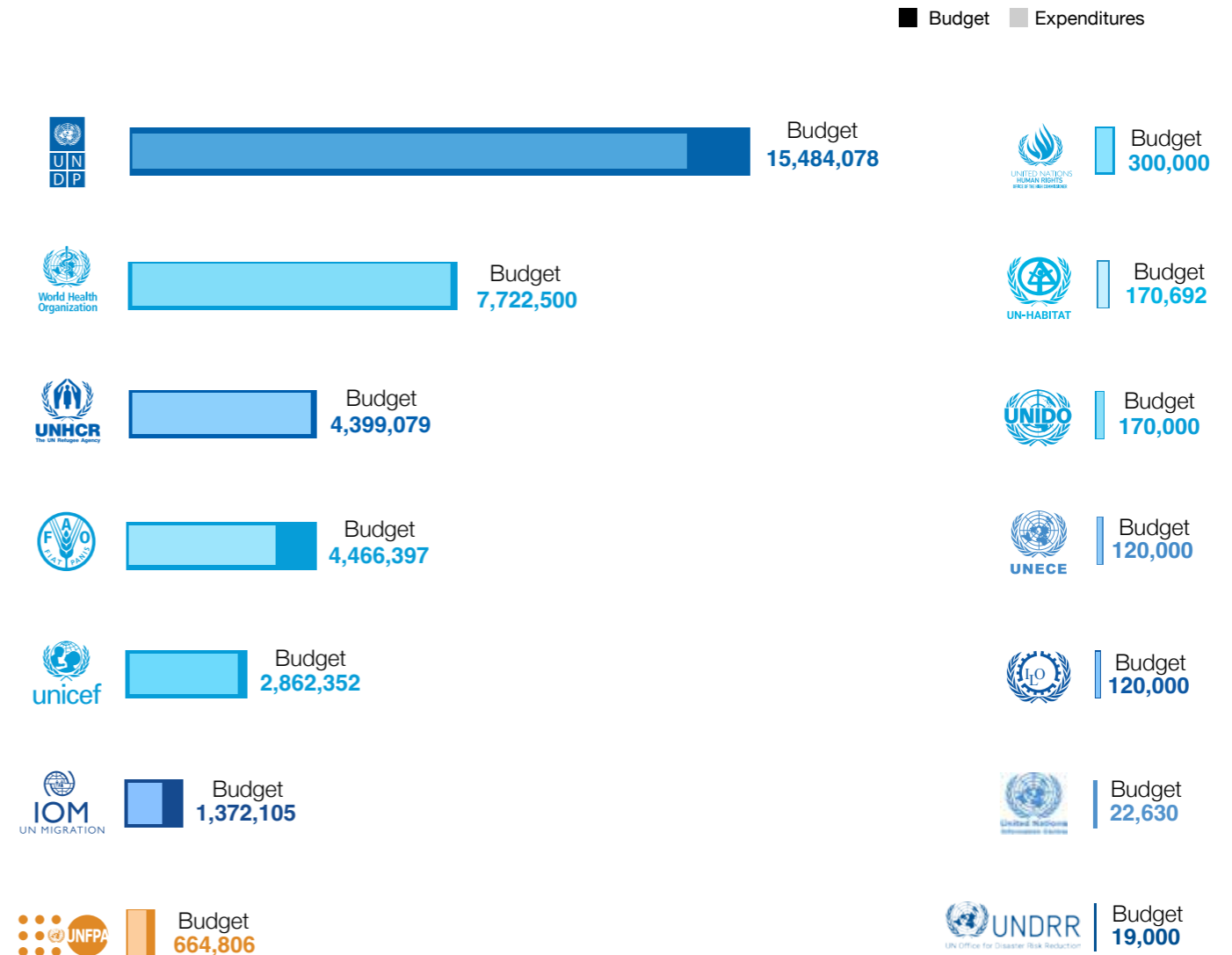
By Outcome (USD)



By Funding Source (USD)



By Agencies (USD)



2.5.2. Resource mobilization

The UN in Azerbaijan has mobilized and allocated over US\$92 million between 2021-2023 (39 percent of the total resources required for implementing the UNSDCF). Notably, the Government of Azerbaijan ranked among the top three contributing partners. UN also invested its core resources, particularly during periods of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict. UN also succeeded to mobilise around 1 mln USD from Joint SDG Fund to support the Government in developing the Integrated National Financing Framework.

Although there were approximately 15 contributing partners, including the UN, three funding sources—the UN, the EU and the Government of Azerbaijan—collec-

tively accounted for 70 percent of all funding. The majority of contributions originated from Member States, with only three vertical funds (the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria) contributing. Moreover, from 2021-2023, only two private sector companies participated. This all underscores the imperative for greater diversification of and more substantive partnerships. The challenge for resource mobilization in Azerbaijan is multifaceted, stemming from its status as an upper-middle-income country, the limited number of contributing partners within the country, the absence of joint fund initiatives, and the diverging attention of contributing partners due to other needs in the region due to emerged conflicts.

CHAPTER 3

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR NEXT YEAR

The UN in Azerbaijan is gearing up for an impactful 2024, not least as Azerbaijan will be hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku in November. Recognizing the importance of COP29 and the opportunity it provides to scale-up climate action in Azerbaijan, the UN will be providing system-wide support to the COP29 Presidency and engaging with all stakeholders.

Beyond COP29, UNCT will kick off the final evaluation of the current UNSDCF and the development of the next CCA, laying the groundwork for the new cycle of UNSDCF 2026-2030. In addition, UNCT will also support the Government as it prepares to participate in the 2024 Summit of the Future.

Addressing post-conflict recovery will remain a top priority for the UNCT, with a focus on mine action and facilitating the sustainable return of displaced persons based on the findings and recommendations of the JRNA. Economic recovery initiatives will target medium-sized and small enterprises, informal sector workers and vulnerable populations at risk of livelihood insecurity, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas.

Efforts to improve policies and financing for climate action, promote alternative energy sources, and safeguard biodiversity will remain integral to the UNCT's agenda, as will efforts to strengthen primary health care, education and social protection systems. Furthermore, the UNCT will advance its normative mandate through youth empowerment, gender equality promotion, human rights advocacy, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and disability inclusion initiatives, fostering inclusive and sustainable programming.

Engaging in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, the UNCT will support SDG data analysis for the National SDG Tracker and facilitate South-South cooperation through knowledge sharing. The UN SDG policy dialogues in 2024 will continue to provide a platform for high-level discussions with Government stakeholders, academia, CSOs and media on gender equality, VNR and climate action.

Through these multifaceted efforts, the UNCT in Azerbaijan will continue supporting national development priorities and accelerating progress towards the SDGs, in line with the national commitments, fostering a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future for the Azerbaijani people.



UN supports early childhood development initiatives to ensure every child has a strong foundation for lifelong learning and well-being

Photo credit: UNICEF/2023



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