2023 UN COUNTRY ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

Armenia, March 2024

UNITED NATIONS
ARMENIA

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Contents

Photo @UN Armenia/ avedisiian

Foreword

We are pleased to share the UN Country Team (UNCT) Results Report 2023, highlighting the efforts of the UN in close partnership with the Government of Armenia (GoA), the civil society, the private sector, and the international development community. The report captures our key achievements, challenges, and collaborative efforts throughout 2023.

2023 proved exceptionally challenging for Armenia. The 10 month-long disruption of the Lachin Corridor was followed by a serious escalation of conflict in the region and led to the influx of over 115,000 forcibly displaced people into Armenia. Vulnerable groups such as refugee women, children, and the elderly were disproportionately affected. Working with our partners, the UN Country Team in close cooperation with the Government of Armenia responded to the crisis rapidly, launching an inter-agency Refugee Response Plan. We addressed the urgent humanitarian needs, concurrently advancing more durable solutions and fostering resilience in the face of adversity.

In a pivotal moment in 2023, the GoA and the UNCT strengthened their partnership with the launch of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) Joint Steering Committee (JSC). Under co-leadership of Armenia's Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), the JSC decisions put an emphasis on shared leadership. We believe this shift is a significant move towards advancing Armenia's sustainable development agenda.

This report captures our shared achievements in 2023, spanning from impactful policy initiatives to the real-life experiences of the people of Armenia. As we enter 2024, we will continue to work together and improve the well-being and capabilities of the people of Armenia, foster green economic transformation, strengthen responsive and effective governance systems, and enhance gender equality. We will continue to address the humanitarian and socio-economic needs of refugees with a central promise of leaving no one behind and nurturing social cohesion.

Vahan Kostanyan
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia

Nanna Skau
UN Resident Coordinator a.i. in Armenia

United Nations Country Team in Armenia

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Armenia is comprised of all the UN agencies, funds and programmes active in Armenia; and is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), the designated representative of the UN Secretary General for development operations.

In June 2021, the Government of the Republic of Armenia (GoA) and the UNCT signed the 2021-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Armenia. Twenty resident and non-resident UN entities joined the compact to contribute coherently and effectively to the achievement of the results set in 2021-2025 UNSDCF.

Resident UN Agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations · IOM UN MIGRATION · UNIDO · World Health Organization · UNAIDS · UNDP · UNFPA · UN WFP World Food Programme · UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency · unicef

Non-Resident UN Agencies

United Nations Human Rights · UNESCO · UNODC · ILO · UNCTAD · UN WOMEN · UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE · UNECE · UNDRR · IFAD Investing in rural people

Figure 1: UNCT in Armenia
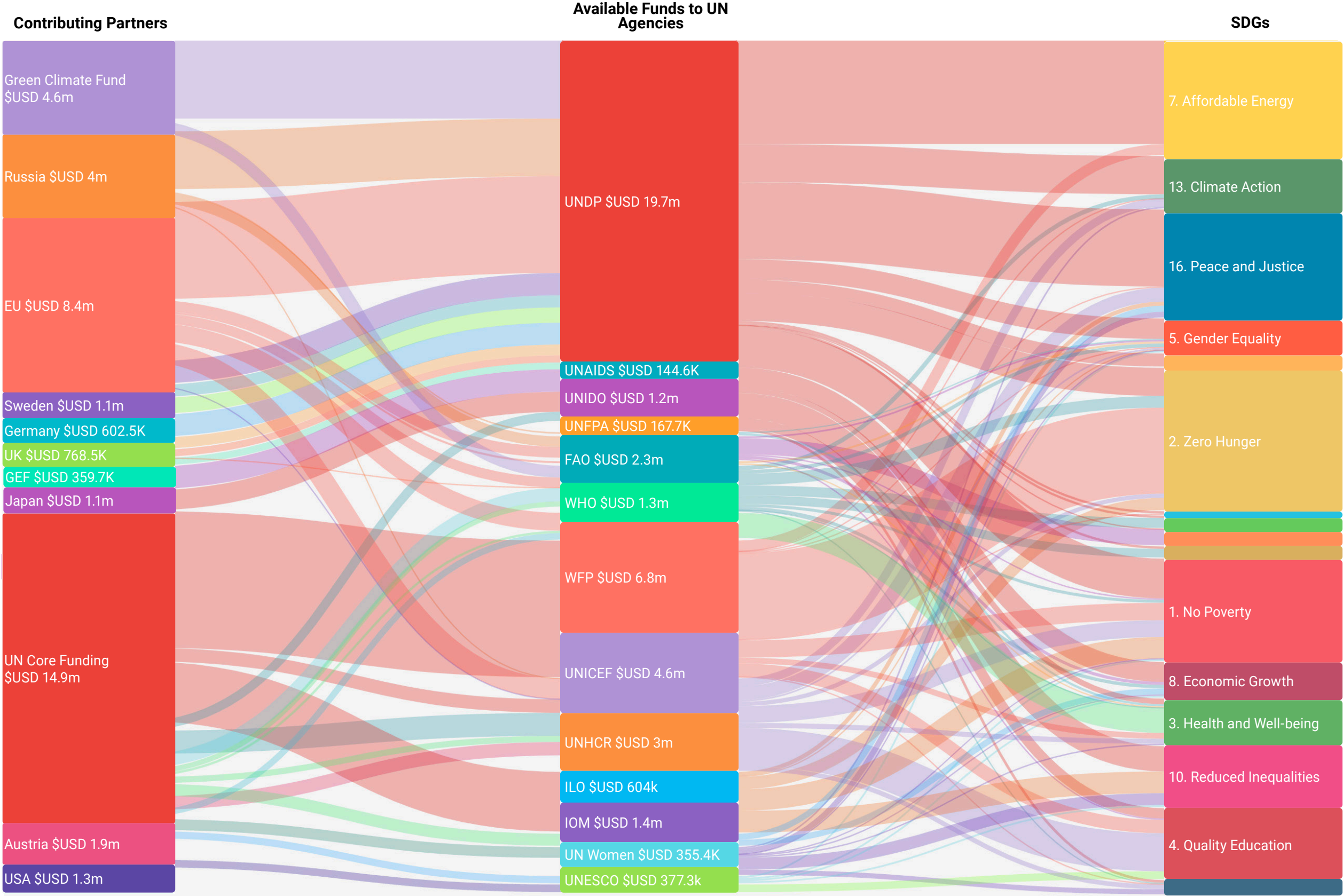
Key Development Partners

Partnerships are essential to the UNCT Armenia's achievements in advancing Agenda 2030. We closely collaborate with the Government, international financial institutions, development partners, private sector entities, academia, and civil society organizations (CSO).

In 2023, core resources from UN Agencies remained the primary funding source for UNSDCF implementation, totaling $15 million USD. The European Union (EU) and the Russian Federation (RF) maintained their positions as the leading international partners, contributing $6.5 million USD and $3.9 million USD, respectively. These investments were predominantly allocated to flagship programs aimed at enhancing human security, fostering gender equality, managing migration, upholding human rights, and more. We extend our gratitude to our partners for the productive collaboration.

The graphic below shows how investments are contributing to the work of different UN agencies to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The width of the lines in the graph represents the relative amount of resources being contributed.

Figure 2: UNINFO Visual 1: Linking Investments, Partners and SDGs in Armenia

The figure displays the top 20 contributors in the left side based on [UN INFO data](#) as of March 20, 2024. It excludes some contributing partners and agencies due to data visualization limitations. For more details, please visit UNINFO and download the UN Armenia's joint workplan from [UN INFO Data Explorer](#).

Contributing Partners

- Green Climate Fund $USD 4.6m
- Russia $USD 4m
- EU $USD 8.4m
- Sweden $USD 1.1m
- Germany $USD 602.5K
- UK $USD 768.5K
- GEF $USD 359.7K
- Japan $USD 1.1m
- UN Core Funding $USD 14.9m
- Austria $USD 1.9m
- USA $USD 1.3m

Available Funds to UN Agencies

- UNDP $USD 19.7m
- UNAIDS $USD 144.6K
- UNIDO $USD 1.2m
- UNFPA $USD 167.7K
- FAO $USD 2.3m
- WHO $USD 1.3m
- WFP $USD 6.8m
- UNICEF $USD 4.6m
- UNHCR $USD 3m
- ILO $USD 604k
- IOM $USD 1.4m
- UN Women $USD 355.4K
- UNESCO $USD 377.3k

SDGs

- 7. Affordable Energy
- 13. Climate Action
- 16. Peace and Justice
- 5. Gender Equality
- 2. Zero Hunger
- 1. No Poverty
- 8. Economic Growth
- 3. Health and Well-being
- 10. Reduced Inequalities
- 4. Quality Education

Key Developments in the Country and the Regional Context

Since 2018, Armenia has undergone a profound transformation catalyzed by the "Velvet Revolution." Transparent and trusted parliamentary elections were held in December 2018 leading to the formation of a new government which launched an ambitious reform agenda characterized by a renewed commitment to democratic reforms, human capital and institutional development, good governance, rule of law and justice, inclusive economic growth, and the realization of human rights. Since then, the country has faced a number of serious humanitarian and security challenges and obstacles for development, including confronting the Covid-19 global pandemic in 2019, the large-scale military hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 as well as intermittent escalations between Armenia and Azerbaijan along the border and inside Armenia in 2021 and 2022.

In 2023, the 10 months-long disruption of the free movement along the Lachin Corridor had severe humanitarian impact on the population. In September, another episode of violent escalation of the decades-long conflict in the region led to the forced displacement of more than 115,000 people from Nagorno-Karabakh. Women and girls comprised approximately 52% of the refugee population, children about 31%, and older persons around 18%. The Government of Armenia adopted the Decree No. 1864 on October 28, 2023, granting temporary protection of persons forcibly displaced for a period of one year with a possibility of extension. In support to the Government of Armenia, UNHCR, the UN Agency mandated for refugee protection and solutions, with the support of the Resident Coordinator's Office, coordinated the refugee response and launched the Armenia Refugee Response Plan (RRP).

The refugee response has focused on enabling protection and the delivery of life-saving assistance. It also took into consideration the inclusion and resilience from the onset, with a longer-term view of strengthening social cohesion and public services. By the end of December 2023, over 98,000 refugees and vulnerable host community members had received critical humanitarian assistance provided by 43 partners working across eight sectors and in all regions of Armenia.

In May and July 2023 the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed in Brussels on normalization of relations based on the mutual recognition of territorial integrity in line with the 1991 Almaty declaration, delimitation and demarcation of the borders on the basis of the same declaration and opening of the regional communications based on the respect for the states' sovereignty and jurisdiction and on principles of equality and reciprocity. Contentious issues persist and peace negotiations with Azerbaijan are ongoing. The borders with Türkiye remain closed, with no advancements made in 2023 towards their reopening and the normalization of relations.

In October 2023, the Government of Armenia introduced the "Crossroads of peace" initiative aimed at strengthening regional interconnectivity and highlighting the role of transport connectivity for regional stability, security, peace and cultural ties between peoples. The project envisages that all infrastructure, including roads, railways, airways, pipelines, cables, power lines, must operate under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the countries through which they pass. Each country, through its state institutions, ensures border control, customs control and security of all infrastructures, including the passage of citizens, goods and vehicles through its territory.

In 2023, the EU civilian mission was established with a two-year mandate, covering the entire length of Armenia's border areas with Azerbaijan. The mission aims to promote peace process between both sides. The first Armenia-EU Political and Security Dialogue was held providing an important platform to discuss issues of international and regional security. Later in the year, a delegation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission visited Armenia to explore avenues for strengthening EU-Armenia relations in all dimensions including under the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Additionally, the Armenia-EU Investment Coordination Platform was launched, aimed at expanding EU investments in Armenia through the Economic and Investment Platform.

Amid turbulent geopolitics, Armenia saw a notable 8.7% GDP increase in 2023, demonstrating economic resilience, among others. Challenges persist, including a high level of structural unemployment, limited foreign direct investment, human capital constraints, connectivity issues, and an export base with limited diversity. On the environmental front, the development of Armenia's draft climate law marked an important step, aiming to establish the necessary legal foundation for effective climate policies, mainstreaming climate considerations into sectoral policies and integrating climate financing into the public finance management system.

In 2023, Armenia maintained its commitment to democratic reforms with the Government displaying political will and resilience in advancing reforms across various sectors including justice, education, healthcare, anti-corruption, and human rights. These reforms have led to improvement in specific democratic metrics. For instance, Worldwide Governance Indicators such as voice and accountability rose from 40.39% in 2020 to 51.21% in 2023; while control of corruption increased from 42.79% to 56.13% during the same period. According to the Freedom in the World 2024 Report, Armenia was classified as partially free. In December, on the occasion of 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Armenia submitted five pledges. The pledges focus on enhancement of international human rights system and multilateral response to gross human rights violations and genocide prevention, establishment of national mechanism for reporting and follow-up of human rights obligations, fight against discrimination and extreme poverty and protection of fundamental human rights, including cultural rights of refugees.

Armenia: A Glance at 2023

POPULATION

- Neonatal mortality rate: **4.4%**
- Maternal mortality rate: **26%**
- Sex ratio: **110.7 boys per 100 girls**
- Infertility: **15%**

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: PER WB WORLDWIDE GOVERNANCE INDICATORS

- Voice and accountability: **51.2%**
- Control of Corruption: **56.13%**
- Government Effectiveness: **39.15**
- Rule-of-Law Index: **46.23%**

FREEDOM IN ARMENIA: PER FREEDOM HOUSE NATIONS IN TRANSIT 2024 REPORT

- Global freedom score: **54/100**
- Political rights: **23/40**
- Civil liberties: **31/60**

ECONOMIC PROFILE

- Poverty rate **24.8%**
- Inflation: **2%**
- Unemployment: **13.4%**
- Non-agricultural Informal employment: **17.3%**
- Real GDP (percent change): **8.7%**
- Real GDP projected for 2024 (percent change): **5.0%**

GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE:

- Gender Gap rank: **61**
- Seats held by women in national parliament: **36.45%**
- Women in managerial positions: **29.2%**
- Women in local community councils thanks to gender quota: **30%**

COUNTRY RISKS PER 2024 WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

1. Interstate armed conflict
2. Labor shortage
3. Geo-economic confrontation
4. Involuntary migration
5. Economic downturn

Photo @Manuel Will

UN Development System Results

2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

The ongoing crisis has had a significant impact on Armenia's human security, disrupting the pace, dynamics, and direction of the development agenda and programming. The Nexus approach facilitated synergies among Humanitarian, Development, and Peace interventions within convergence areas, empowering the UN to deliver a comprehensive and integrated, effective response to the challenging circumstances on the ground, while simultaneously advancing longer-term development goals as outlined in the UNSDCF Theory of Change (TOC).

The TOC centers around four core priority areas: enhancing well-being and capabilities, promoting economic "green" transformation, and strengthening governance systems, with a strong emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment, as both a standalone outcome and a cross-cutting theme. Eight outcomes directly align with these four priorities to advance Armenia's development trajectory towards 2030.
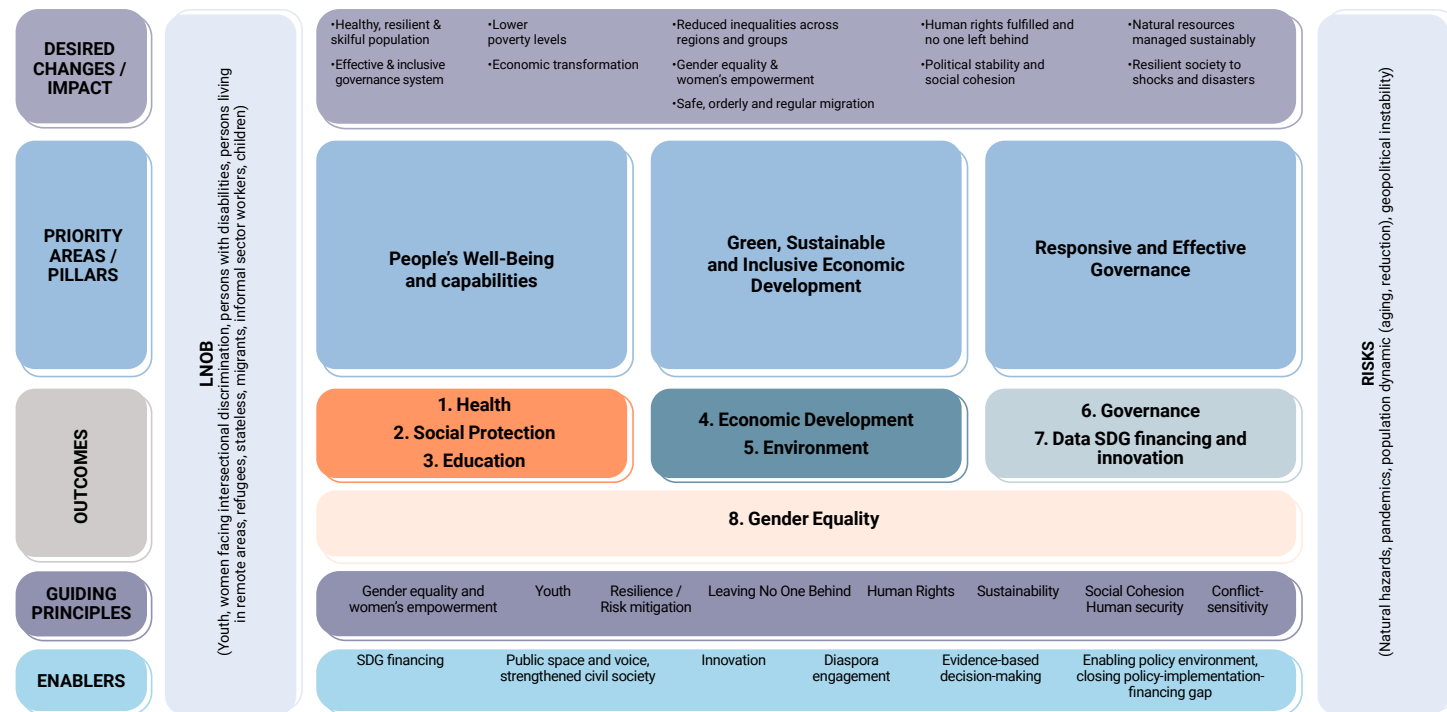
Figure 3: 2021-2025 UNSDCF Theory of Change (TOC) diagram

UNSDCF Financial Delivery*: A Glance at 2023

2023 Planned Budget	2023 Available	2023 Expenditure
49,725,768	42,025, 335	39,864,729

The financial delivery in the 2023 UNCT Annual Results Report does not include expenditure incurred under the Refugee Response Plan and related Funding Appeal.

Human Rights (HR) Marker
Expenditure in 2023 (USD)

Limited contribution to HR $12.08M
Principal Contribution to HR $5.35M
Significant contribution to HR $18.06M
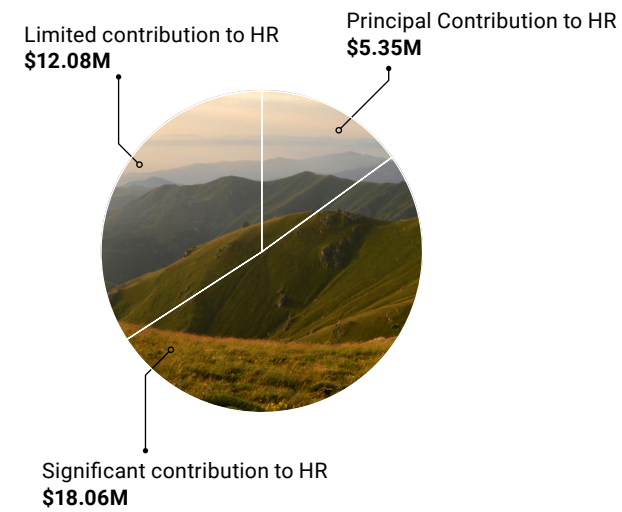
Gender Equality (GE) Marker
Expenditure in 2023 (USD)

Principal Contribution to GE $4.06M
Limited contribution to GE $12.65M
Significant contribution to GE $23.35M
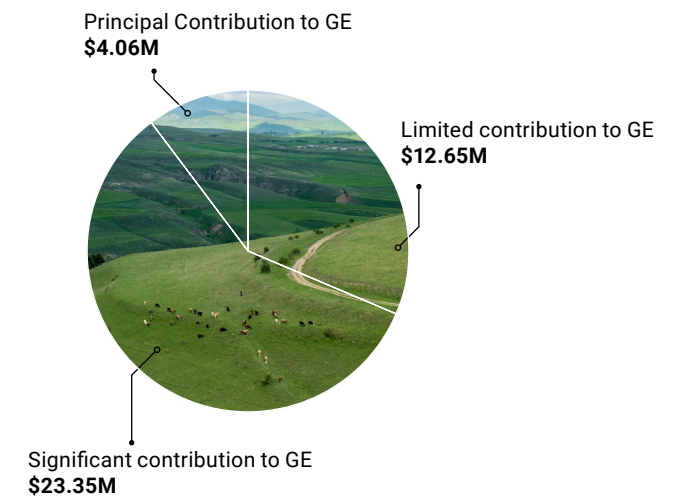
Type of UN Support in 2023 (QCPR function)
Expenditure in 2023 (USD)**

0 — 30 (mil.)

- Direct Support / Service Delivery **$6.58M**
- Policy Advice and Thought Leadership **$14.13M**
- Normative Support and other support functions **$10.28M**
- Convening / Partnerships / Knowledge Sharing **$12.02M**
- Data Collection and Analysis **$13.88M**
- Capacity Development/ Technical Assistance **$29.88M**
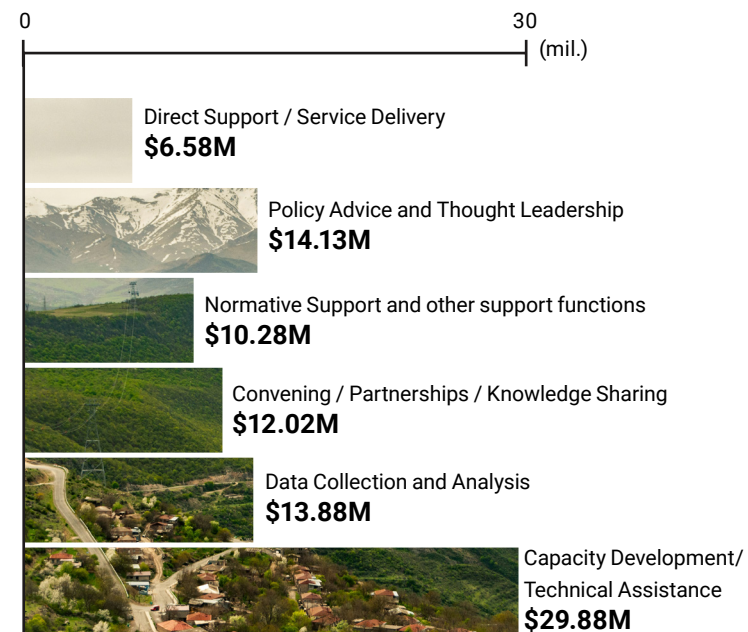
Focus on beneficiaries
Expenditure in 2023 (USD)

0 — 10 (mil.)

- Children **$4.72M**
- Persons with disabilities **$0.61M**
- Women and girls **$5.98M**
- Displaced, stateless, refugees and migrants: **$3.01M**
- Youth **$4.35M**
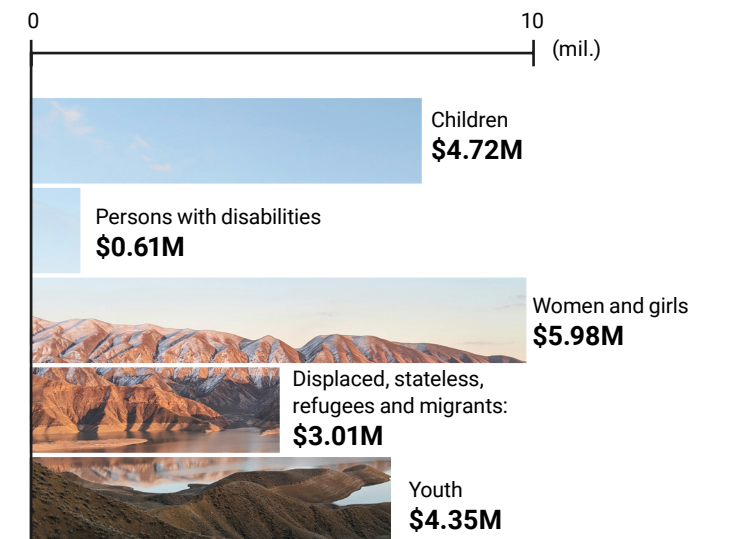
**Please note that one and the same UN intervention may belong to more than one type of support (QCPR function).*

UNSDCF Governance Architecture

From the outset of the UNSDCF design stage, dedicated Results Groups (RGs) were established for each of the four pillars, taking on the responsibility for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the UNSDCF priority areas.

In November 2023, a significant milestone was reached whereby the Government of Armenia and the UNCT formally launched the UNSDCF Joint Steering Committee (JSC). This high-level committee, chaired by Armenia's Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), brought together representatives from government ministries, and heads of UN agencies, funds, and programs. As the highest governing body of the UNSDCF, the JSC assumed the crucial role of ensuring strategic oversight and direction of the UN's central strategic framework.

The JSC endorsed a revamped UNSDCF governance architecture, with two key objectives: Firstly, it placed heightened attention and oversight on the eight UNSDCF outcomes, to strengthen cohesion and identify opportunities for programming. Secondly, it invited government representation and active engagement across the three tiers of UNSDCF governance, as illustrated in the diagram below:

TIER 1: Executive Level
Joint Steering Committee Co-Chaired by Deputy PM and UNRC

Composition: UN Country Team, Deputy Ministers, and Development Partners (upon invitation)
Secretariat: MFA and RCO
Frequency of Meetings: Annual

TIER 2: Strategic Level
Co-Chaired by MFA and UNRCO

Composition: UN Head of Agencies and Deputy Ministers
Secretariat: RCO
Frequency of Meetings: Semi-Annual

TIER 3: Programmatic Level

Composition: 8 UN Outcome Leads, Members and Ministry Technical Advisers / Focal points
Secretariat: Outcome Lead Agencies with support of RCO
Frequency of Meetings: Quarterly

WHO (alt. UNAIDS) and MOH: Outcome 1 on Health	**UNICEF (alt. UNHCR) and MoLSA:** Outcome 2 on Social Protection	**UNICEF (alt. UNFPA) and MoESCS:** Outcome 3 on Education	**WFP (alt. UNDP) and MinEc:** Outcome 4 on Economy
UNDP (alt. WFP) and MinEnv: Outcome 5 on Environment	**UNDP (alt. UNHCR) and MOJ:** Outcome 6 on Governance	**IOM (alt. UNICEF) and Armstat:** Outcome 7 on Data and SDG Financing	**UNFPA (alt. UNDP) and MoLSA:** Outcome 8 on Gender Equality

Figure 4: Three-Tier Governance Structure of 2021-2025 UNSDCF

Following the decisions made by the JSC, a significant restructuring occurred within all eight UNSDCF outcome groups. Notably, each group was reformed with shared leadership and representation from both the UN and Government officials, highlighting a significant shift towards national leadership and unprecedented Government involvement.

The inaugural meetings of Outcome Groups as part of the UNSDCF 2023 Performance Review showcased the collaborative spirit driving this initiative. Through a joint assessment of progress and the setting of collective goals, UN and Government representatives laid the groundwork for impactful interventions in 2024. This process of collective review and planning was agreed to be iterative, reinforcing the commitment to mutual accountability, transparency, and partnership in advancing Armenia's sustainable development agenda.

UNSDCF Joint Steering Committee Inaugural Meeting

Launch of reformed UNSDCF outcome groups co-led by GoA and the UN

Armenia Refugee Response

The Government of Armenia has reported the presence of 115,183 refugees who have arrived in Armenia since September 2023. The Government granted temporary protection status to these individuals. This status recognizes them as refugees and provides them with the legal guarantees outlined in national and international law, both within and outside Armenia's territory. Temporary protection has been granted for one year, starting from 28 October 2023, with the possibility of extension based on the Government's decision.

To manage the influx of refugees, a separate inter-agency structure Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF), led by the Government of Armenia and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (UNHCR), working closely with UN Resident Coordinator's Office, has been established, consisting of six sectoral working groups and two cross-sectoral working groups. The RCF ensures a unified strategy and vision among partners, aligned with Government priorities and the needs of refugees and host communities.

The [Armenia Refugee Response Plan](#) (RRP), launched in October 2023, outlines the comprehensive response and activities to support Government of Armenia in protecting and assisting refugees. RRP partners support government-led efforts through a multisectoral approach focusing on protection (including gender-based violence and child protection), education, health, food security, shelter and non-food items, resilience, as well as cash assistance for the most vulnerable groups and for individuals with specific needs, including both refugees and host communities. The RRP brought together 60 partners, including 11 United Nations (UN) agencies, six international NGOs, 41 national NGOs, and two refugee-led organizations. This number has since increased to over 100 partners contributing to the response and to coordination activities. Synergies between humanitarian and development partners have been ensured from the onset.

As of the end of 2023, $39 million has been mobilized, out of the $97 million appealed for by humanitarian partners[1] in the RRP. These funds support refugee and host families and communities, and government coordination efforts. Refugee response partners have provided protection services and humanitarian assistance to over 100,000 refugees, along with support for approximately 10,000 hosting refugees. The Refugee Response Plan is a distinct yet complementary mechanism to the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework, contributing significantly to the UN's collective work and achievements in 2023. A separate report will comprehensively detail the humanitarian response efforts in support of refugees in the Republic of Armenia by the UN and other humanitarian partners.

For further details: [ODP Armenia](#)

Testimony of refugee

"We are deeply grateful to the Government of Armenia, the compassionate host communities, and the efforts of humanitarian organizations for extending their hands to us during our most trying times. As refugees, arriving with scarcely more than the clothes on our backs, the assistance we received was not merely helpful but lifesaving. From vital cash aid to the provision of basic necessities like foldable beds, mattresses, kitchen sets, hygiene items, and warm clothing, every gesture made us feel valued and cared for.

As we chart our path ahead, we hold onto dreams of stability, opportunities, and a place to truly belong. We long for meaningful work and a home to rebuild our lives with dignity and strength. Though the road may be uncertain, the kindness we've experienced fuels our hope and fortifies our determination to carve out a brighter future".

Mariam, a mother of five children and a refugee, living in Gyumri.

Inter-Agency Refugee Response Plan – Funding Received[2]

Source: Refugee Funding Tracker, data as of 31 December 2023

$97M Total required

Received in 2023 40%

Gap 60%
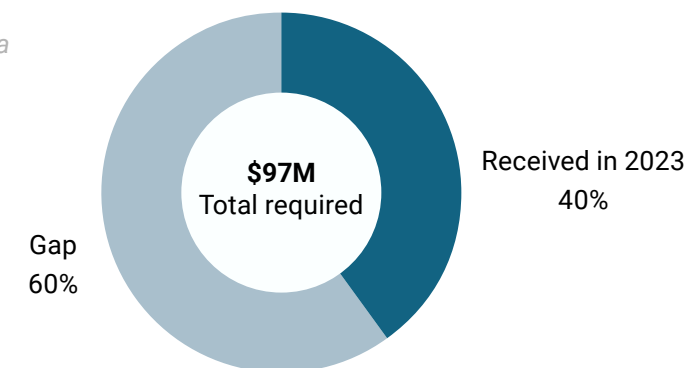
Figure 5: RRP Financial Delivery as of 31 December 2023

Photo @UN Armenia

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Carving out a new life in Armenia @UNFPA

Read more
Strengthening the capacity of social workers @UNHCR

Read more
Guardians of hope for refugees @UNICEF

Read more
Supporting refugees in Armenia @WFP

People's Well-Being and Capabilities

UNSDCF OUTCOME 1:

People benefit from a universal, affordable, accessible and quality health system, while adopting healthy lifestyle practices.

Co-Lead Agencies:

Contributing Agencies:

From Stigma to Strength: Uplifting Women with HIV

"Inner stigma was horrible. I planned a few times to poison myself. But I was pregnant…so I didn't attempt anything of the sort."

"My child was born. I asked, can I touch her? Meaning, I felt so filthy, so rotten, so useless, that I didn't even deserve to touch my baby."

"My mother in-law used to say, it is just a flu and that it will go away."

Here there are - the real stories of the real women who live with HIV and who we support to live a normal life, go to work, have healthy kids and be full members of society. "I hope that one day I will photograph a woman [with HIV] who will no longer wear a veil …that these women will no longer be afraid [to show their faces]," shared Nazik Armenakyan, the photographer who captured these sentiments in our exhibition, "Veiled Faces, Open Wounds: The Red, Black & White Of Women With HIV."

Photo @UNAids

23,000+
healthcare providers, teachers, students, parents capacitated

8,000+
persons provided mobile primary healthcare services

14,000+
individuals reached with health education campaigns

Key Outcome-Level Indicators

SDG 3.2.2. Neonatal mortality rate
↑ **4.4%**

Percentage of children under five who are stunted
= **9%**

Contributing to SDG 1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on health:
↓ **5.65%**

Key Contextual Challenges:
- Mental stress due to security situation
- Delays in customs clearance for emergency aid
- Absence of documented vaccination records for refugees
- Healthcare access for asylum seekers, refugees, displaced populations, and migrants

2023 Expenditure
$2,886,430

Armenia has made significant progress in enhancing its HIV response, including doubling the coverage of antiretroviral therapy and aligning with the UN protocols for HIV prevention. In 2023, the UN's support enabled the GoA to adopt a crucial amendment to the law, granting people living with HIV access to safe shelters and dedicated care centers. This milestone marked a significant move towards eradicating stigma and discrimination.

Meanwhile, the country advanced towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC), a key government priority in the health sector, by approving the UHC concept note. To facilitate the introduction of the Comprehensive Health Insurance (CHI) system, the UN provided health financing to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National Institute of Health. Additionally, around 100 algorithm-based protocols were developed for managing childhood diseases and pathological conditions, ensuring consistent treatment standards across all healthcare facilities.

The UN's involvement extended also to other policy fronts, including the formulation of strategies for antimicrobial resistance, child and adolescent health, and the tobacco control and monitoring system. Notable actions were taken, such as: the Amendment of Decree N32 to regulate school feeding norms, the joint order of Minister of Health and Minister of Economy on Approving the program for antimicrobial resistance control and prevention and intersectoral action plan 2024-2027, development of a National Program to reduce C-Section rates, and an adoption of a Law on Health Workers' Licensing. Additionally, there was a full transition of school feeding implementation and management as well as a rollout of national guidelines on surveillance of Vaccine-Preventable diseases. All of these initiatives reflect the UN's comprehensive approach to public health enhancement.

In parallel, the UN continued to play an important role in fostering healthy food and lifestyle initiatives, recognizing the crucial link between food standards and public health. This included conducting the Fifth Food Security and Vulnerability assessment to understand the impact of winterization on household food security levels. Collaborative efforts with the GoA resulted in the adoption of a gender-sensitive Food Security Strategy and Action Plan for 2023-2027. To enhance positive behavior change, the UN partnered with the MoH to implement healthy lifestyle initiatives. These included co-creation projects and awareness campaigns targeting school children to encourage healthy dietary habits and nutrition.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MoESCS) spearheaded the implementation of a vibrant healthy lifestyle curriculum, tailored for grades 5 and 7 students nationwide. This curriculum, developed in collaboration with the UN, integrates modules on nutrition and physical activity, nurturing a culture of well-being among the youth. The UN made sure that mentors receive thorough training and that strict standards are maintained, empowering the next generation with the knowledge for a healthier future. Arev Nersisyan, Principal of Berd School No. 3, has witnessed firsthand the impact of the UN's "Healthy Lifestyle" Club: *"It tackles crucial topics and equips students to face any situation and make informed decisions. 'Healthy Lifestyle' equips them for the real tests – the emotional, physical, and social hurdles they'll face."*

For decades, the UN has supported Armenia in vaccine procurement, complemented by training of health personnel, health education, and upgrading the national surveillance system. In 2023, when Yerevan was hit by a wave of severe viral infections, we were again able to help maintain vaccine supplies and high immunization rates. *"When you weigh the options of spending half a day taking your child to the polyclinic for vaccination, thus protecting them and dozens of other children, versus leaving it to chance, you naturally get your child vaccinated,"* explains Ofelia, mother of the eight-year-old Alla who survived measles amidst the outbreak. With the UN's support, the Ministry of Health (MoH) digitalized the overall immunization system and endorsed the updated national routine immunization schedule, now including catch-up opportunities for children, adolescents and adults. A communication campaign continues to combat the decreased routine immunization coverage seen in 2023.

Along with our regular development work in the health sector, the arrival of refugees in 2023 prompted an immediate adjustment in priorities. On September 25, as thousands of people were moving towards Armenia, an explosion at a fuel storage depot claimed over 200 lives and left over 300 seriously injured. To support the burns survivors, the Emergency Medical Teams Coordination Cell was activated and teams from several countries were quick to arrive. Bert Torfs, Team Lead of the B-FAST Medevac team was shocked by the scale of the injuries, *"In normal circumstances in Belgium, doctors see 1 of these severely burned people once a month. But here you see 200 of those patients at once."* The UN deployed Mobile Pediatric Units in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and regional authorities, integrating these teams into the national health system for effective referrals and providing holistic care to refugee children and caregivers. The UN also made sure to reinforce health systems' emergency preparedness and resilience and will continue integrating relevant capacities into the national framework.

Read more
Food standards save Lives
@FAO

Read more
Immunization: caring for children at-risk
@UN Armenia

Read more
"Live without Fear"
@UNAIDS

Watch more
European Immunization Week
@WHO

Read more
Cervical Cancer Elimination Day of Action
@WHO

Disclaimer: up (arrow): progress, down (arrow): regress, =: no change
*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 1

People's Well-Being and Capabilities

UNSDCF OUTCOME 2:

People benefit from a progressively universal, inclusive, and shock-responsive social protection system across the lifecycle.

Co-Lead Agencies:

Republic of Armenia Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs   unicef✿

Contributing Agencies:

Republic of Armenia Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs   Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia   unicef✿   UN WFP World Food Programme

UNDP   ILO   Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations   UNODC   UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency   IOM UN MIGRATION

Rebuilding Lives: Social Protection for Families in Crisis

Sahakyan family sought refuge in Armenia following the military offensive in their home community in late September. Vladimir, the father, suffered severe injuries, lost his home and underwent multiple surgeries following the 2020 large-scale military offensive. He rebuilt his home, only to leave it as he and his family fled to Armenia in 2023.

Vladimir's son, 9-year-old Noy, struggled with trauma and socialization issues. Startled by loud noises and hesitant to engage with others, he was reluctant to attend school without his mother. However, Zarine, a social worker, received a warm welcome from Noy. "Zarine arrived and assured us that we can overcome this together. When you witness Noy's current joyful state, know that it results from tremendous effort — countless challenging days and numerous unsuccessful attempts," says Noy's mother.

Amidst hardships, the UN remains committed to supporting the Sahakyan family and others navigating similar struggles. By working across the humanitarian-development nexus with the government, the UN aims to ensure equitable access to protection services, mental health support, social assistance, as well as continued strengthening of community-based services for long-term resilience.

1 NO POVERTY   8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH   10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES   16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Photo @UNICEF
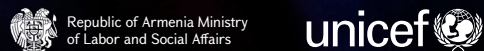
160+
social workers and other professionals trained

6,400+
recipients of "Food cards".

70+
laws and bylaws amended to incorporate disability-related clauses

Key Outcome-Level Indicators

SDG 1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on social protection

↓ **26.5%**

Existence of integrated social services system countrywide:

↑ Moderate: ISS system in place
Score 2

Shock-responsive SP:

↑ Moderate: SP policy or strategy in place, and partially adapted to make it shock responsive
Score 2

Key Contextual Challenges:

- Limited progress in reducing in the number of children with disabilities in residential care.
- Weak data systems in social sectors, particularly noticeable in emergencies.
- Human resource constraints and lack of Government dedicated focal points for UN programs.
- Delayed reforms, exacerbated by the ongoing emergency situation.

2023 Expenditure
$7,142,921

Navigating recent emergencies, social protection reforms encountered obstacles since the focus shifted to humanitarian relief. Nonetheless, the UN's sustained partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), coupled with prior efforts to enhance shock-responsiveness, facilitated a swift return to reform processes. Strengthening the social protection system in 2023 involved developing strategic and legal frameworks, restructuring information systems, generating evidence on needs of the population, including refugees, and enhancing technical capacity to alleviate poverty, deprivation, and shocks in Armenia. Consultations around the new Law on Social Assistance, Child Rights Law, Family Code and the Integrated Social Services (ISS) strategy continued to guide the modernization of the legal framework and related by-laws for improved service delivery. The UN, the GoA, partners and community social workers gathered under one roof to outline key reform directions, *"The state is working towards establishing a social worker institute… the community social worker positions have been created within the community workforce. In addition, detailed job descriptions have been developed and shared with communities. We hope that this will enable social workers to closely work with partners leading to effective solutions for social problems,"* noted Gnel Sanosyan, Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI).

In 2023, the UN initiated a comprehensive functional review of Unified Social Service (USS) headquarters and territorial centers to align with social protection reform agenda. The review includes gap analysis and proposals for reform, contributing to the development of the USS's new institutional model and capacity enhancement which is expected to be implemented in early 2024. Additionally, a partnership with Nork Technology Center was launched to improve data quality and visualization for evidence-based decision-making and digitized service delivery in the social sector.

The UN's policy work was complemented by capacity-building efforts for the USS and community social workers. This included case management for refugees and trainings on the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers aimed to explore durable solutions. *"Social workers are on the frontline of forced displacement and outreach, identifying and addressing the needs of people forced to flee. It is our obligation to facilitate their work by offering advanced tools and identify points for improvement,"* said Inga Harutyunyan, MoLSA. In 2023, the capacity development of social workers also focused on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), child-friendly justice processes and food security assessments for the service.

The collaboration between the UN and MoLSA yielded two other significant outcomes. Firstly, MoLSA endorsed the Results-Based Financed Active Labor Market program (ALMP) which is a new scheme as part of the National Employment Strategy aimed at fostering a competitive labor force and high-productivity job opportunities. Secondly, in coordination with MoLSA, the scope of the functional review for the Social Housing Management Model was finalized, which proposes an innovative management model that aims to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

In parallel, the UN expanded its "Food Cards" social service initiative in collaboration with MoLSA across six regions and benefiting 6,408 recipients of state social assistance programs. Targeting criteria included families with three or more children, elderly individuals living alone, and families with a member with disabilities. *"Someone extending a hand means the world to people like me…this brings hope and shows that we're not alone in this big world,"* shares Ofik, an 80-year-old recipient of the "Food Cards" project. In 2023, comprehensive evidence was gathered to guide the nationalization of the service, with the draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the service currently under consultation with stakeholders. Additionally, robust technical support was provided to integrate food security tools into the national family social needs assessment system.

In 2023, the UN's sustained advocacy led to increased state financing for foster care and community-based day-care services, resulting in over a 50% rise in foster care placements compared to 2022, alongside an uptick in child reunification cases. Strong collaboration with MoLSA continued to bolster child protection policies and programs, further supporting the development of the draft new Law on Child Rights and Child Protection System. This legislation, pending submission to Parliament, aims to clarify roles, enhance local child protection functions, prohibit corporal punishment, prevent unnecessary child-family separations, and prioritize family-based alternative care options. Legal and policy gaps in online child protection were also analyzed for future reforms. Collaborating with state agencies and CSOs, the first Barnahus-type facilities were established. These facilities provide a comprehensive approach where children can be interviewed and examined for forensic purposes, undergo thorough assessments, and receive crisis intervention services from appropriate professionals. *"We are full of hope that this multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approach will improve conditions to provide child victims or witnesses of violence with better protection, in line with best interests of the child,"* stated Narek Mkrtchyan, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA).

During 2023, there were significant efforts to operationalize the National Disability System reform, aligning sectoral policies with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to shift perceptions towards persons with disabilities (PwD) and provide the Government clear strategies for community-based services. Initiatives included training personal assistants, piloting the Personal Assistant service for children and adults with disabilities, strengthening the disability assessment and certification scheme, and developing an e-disability information system. Efforts also extended to generating country-specific evidence on assistive technologies and child disability assessments to support policy development for enhanced functioning and social inclusion from early years to adulthood.

A partnership with the Republican Pedagogical and Psychological Support Center enhanced the pedagogical-psychological support system for children with special educational needs, including hearing impairments, through the application of a revised toolkit for Special Educational Needs assessment in secondary schools. Additionally, innovative service provision models were introduced, including the first Armenian language augmentative and alternative communication application and the establishment of a Special Equipment library for children with disabilities. The UN also created a platform to engage in consistent consultations on disability matters with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). The platform will facilitate the validation of legal and policy reform documents and disability service models, promoting inclusivity and rights realization for all.

Disclaimer: up (arrow): progress, down (arrow): regress, =: no change
*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 2

People's Well-Being and Capabilities

UNSDCF OUTCOME 3:

People exercise their talents and skills, benefitting from age-appropriate, life-long learning, inclusive, and quality education in an enabling and safe environment.

Unlocking Potential through STEAM Education

"Girls, this is our time to be the coders, designers, and leaders! This is our chance to shatter stereotypes, and let our strong voices be heard. The game is about to change…" It is in this spirit that the UN teamed up with the gaming industry and Game Changers Coalition to bridge the gender digital skills gap, equipping adolescent girls to become leaders of a more inclusive, diverse, and safe digital future. The teams developed unique video games and a special STEAM curriculum based on game development was designed to be adopted by Armath Labs in Armenia.

"It is remarkable that the involvement of girls and women in the IT sector in Armenia exceeds the global indicator. Yet, we mustn't rest on these achievements. I am confident that the programme's participants will use the acquired knowledge to become game-changers in the international market," believes Davit Sahakyan, the Deputy Minister of High-tech Industry.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Photo @UNICEF
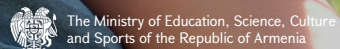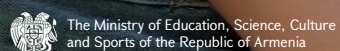
2,500+
children benefitted from new facilities and strengthened capacities

2,200+
teachers, parents, school administrators, primary health care doctors and nurses and other practitioners strengthened capacities

4,750+
school children participated in healthy lifestyle campaigns.

3,000+
young people and students engaged in non-formal trainings.

Key Outcome-Level Indicators

SDG 1.a.2: Proportion of total government spending on education
↑ **8.9%**

National proxy of SDG 4.2.4: Gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education:
↓ **36%**

Number of small-size rural schools benefitting from the government's Safer School Budget Programme:
↑ **116**

Key Contextual Challenges:
- Insufficient support for students with disabilities in education, lacking essential resources like language interpreters and mobility assistance
- Intersectoral coordination deficiencies, notably in information exchange and referral procedures

2023 Expenditure
$3,383,987

According to the World Economic Forum 2023 report, the rapidly evolving job market seeks individuals equipped with analytical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, leadership, communication, and self-education skills. The UN's UPSHIFT program is empowering young people with these exact skills. *Rafi and his team are tackling community challenges head-on. Faced with diminishing land and grass supply for livestock, they have devised a clever solution—a device that transforms three kilograms of wheat into eighteen kilograms of grass in just five to six days*. Syunik's border communities mark the destination of UPSHIFT programme, where young individuals come together to access non-formal education and create innovative solutions. The UN has also initiated the establishment of two youth and art houses in Shirak and Syunik regions. Expected to benefit 1200 adolescents yearly, these centers aim to enhance non-formal educational opportunities, particularly for girls and boys in remote areas.

UN's advocacy and dialogue spurred significant advancement in Armenia's national adolescent and youth agenda in 2023. This included a breakthrough decision by Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MoESCS) to improve the legal foundations of the state youth policy and the development of the Youth Policy Law. The UN provided technical support for this initiative and facilitated experience-sharing missions to Latvia and Lithuania. Apart from policy work, we continued efforts to foster youth engagement in decision-making processes and community solutions. For this purpose, we organized youth campaigns, contests and engagement events like the International Youth Day in Metsamor, the "My Green Alaverdi" Youth Idea competition, aimed at climate action in the Alaverdi community, and the "Climate Gambit 2023" chess tournament, in celebration of the UN World Chess Day. All of these initiatives underscored the importance of youth engagement in climate agenda and healthy lifestyle.

Meanwhile, the November 23, 2023, Government session witnessed a unique occurrence: thirteen young members of the Human Rights Defender (HRD) public council on children's and youth rights joined the session. *Their mission: to engage directly with the Prime Minister and government officials, voicing pressing concerns and posing thought-provoking questions. At the session, these young advocates called for further improvement of education services, particularly for students with disabilities, and the need to address bullying in schools and increase support for refugee children and their families*.

In times of conflict, children bear the heaviest burden. This rings true for the 30,000 children who fled their homes, after the military offensive, in less than a week, after the escalation of hostilities in their home communities. Now, living as refugees in Armenia, they face the challenge of rebuilding their childhoods. *"It's been hard times, so I don't what others to see what we have seen, especially the newborns. We are behind [at school] and we forgot everything. I want to study, I love it,"* says Zhenya, 13 years old, who, like many of her peers has experienced disruptions in education due to the war. The UN has worked with the GoA to eliminate such disruptions and ensure that refugee, stateless and asylum-seeking persons have the opportunity to access quality education, regardless of circumstances. Most refugee children in Armenia are now enrolled in national school systems. Investment must be made to ensure that schools are inclusive for all children, including for the one-third of refugee children not enrolled in education.

Access to inclusive pre-primary education plays a crucial role in a child's development, and we continued strengthening policy frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and data systems to ensure that access. In the 2022-2023 academic year, preschool facilities expanded by 10%, and enrollment for children aged 0-6 years old rose to 36%, up from 32.3% the previous school year. The UN established 9 new alternative preschools, which also empowers women caregivers to participate in income generation, utilize their full potential and boost economic independence. *"This preschool is vital for both myself and my son. It provides him with important learning experiences that I can't teach at home. Because of this kindergarten, I found a job and now I am working, knowing that my child is learning and developing during that time,"* says Hasmik, mother of a preschooler Garnik. Nationwide, financial mechanisms were introduced to promote inclusion at the preschool level.

On the road towards an enabling, safe, and inclusive educational environment, we played a pivotal role, conducting an independent evaluation of the State Program for Development of Education until 2030 and supporting the development of the comprehensive costed Action Plan 2023-2026 adjacent to the State Program. This strategic roadmap, endorsed in March 2023, delineates clear targets and timeframes for implementation, setting the stage for a progressive educational landscape. Through the production of reports such as the Education Budget Brief and the Education Sector Plan Appraisal, the UN provided crucial recommendations that shaped reform decisions. One such recommendation was investing in data systems like the Education Management Information System (EMIS) leading to the introduction of a new management model for public educational institutions, separating educational and administrative-economic processes and thus streamlining roles and responsibilities for clearer organization.

In 2023, the Law on Vocational Education and Training (VET) was revised. *"This law will completely change the VET framework, the paradigm I guess, the ideology and the principles – they are very different from the current law*, believes Robert Stepanyan, ESCS Department Head of Development Programs and the Government's co-chair of UNSDCF Education Outcome, *"The Law addresses the human resource concerns, the rights and obligations of students, the social partnership, the cooperation with employers. It implies radical changes."* Along with the support on the revision of the Law, the UN provided trainings for VET career counselors on career guidance and professional orientation, enhanced VET education facilities through renovations, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, furnishing, computers and STEM equipment. Additionally, research was conducted on VET and employment linkages and 3-month internship programs were coordinated for regional VET graduates. *"Thanks to the internship at the milk processing enterprise, I gained new skills, and started working with technologies that I had never used before,"* shared Haykaz, a new VET graduate and beneficiary of a UN internship program.

Read more — SDGs through Childhood Games @UN Armenia

Read more — Strengthening education in Goris @UNICEF

Read more — Armenian youth lead climate action @UNICEF

Disclaimer: up (arrow): progress, down (arrow): regress, =: no change
*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 3

Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Development

UNSDCF Outcome 4:

People, communities, and regions benefit from equitable economic opportunities, decent work and sustainable livelihoods, enabled through competitiveness and inclusive green growth.

Co-Lead Agencies:

World Food Programme · Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia

Contributing Agencies:

Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia · Ministry of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia · World Food Programme · UNDP · unicef · Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations · UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency · UNECE · IOM UN MIGRATION · UNESCO · ILO · UN WOMEN · Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia

Meet Maral, a craftsman and entrepreneur of Syrian-Armenian descent. After fleeing the Syrian war with her family in 2015 and settling in Armenia, Maral made it her mission to revive the lost art of Armenian embroidery, turning her passion for handcrafting into a successful business. Maral and her team of skilled artisans merge tapestry and Armenian embroidery techniques to create a variety of products, ranging from tablecloths, jewelry, and necklaces to clothing, bags, shoes, toys, and decorative pieces. Currently, Maral collaborates with museums across different regions of Armenia and partners with businesses abroad.

Reflecting on her journey, Maral shares, "Armenian culture has always held a special place in my heart, even from a young age. My mother and grandmother taught me the fundamental techniques of Armenian embroidery, which allowed me to create home decor and clothes for my children. When I began participating in exhibitions in Armenia, I was overwhelmed by the tremendous appreciation I received. This further fueled my passion to transform my hobby into a thriving business."

Maral is an inspiring entrepreneur, one among many, who have been guided by the UN's seasoned professionals and has elevated her business to new heights.

1 NO POVERTY · 2 ZERO HUNGER · 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH · 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Photo @UNHCR

6,000+
persons, including farmers benefitted from income generating activities and access to finance

7,500+
people with increased agricultural productivity

60,000+
people gained access to improved local services and production assets

Key Outcome-Level Indicators

SDG 1.2.1 adapted: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line
↓ **24.8%**

SDG 8.5.2 adapted: Unemployment rate
↑ **5%**

Per capita average monthly gross income level of rural population (AMD):
↑ **65.837**

Key Contextual Challenges:
- Geopolitical tensions and market volatilities create huge uncertainties
- Shrinking development funding, outmigration and thinning human resource in the country
- Adjustment in development priorities due to refugee crisis

2023 Expenditure
$8,511,255

In 2023, the UN led transformative income generation initiatives throughout Armenia. These initiatives included the expansion of value chains, investments in logistic hubs and processing facilities, and provision of solar power and modern equipment to boost productivity and employment prospects. Additionally, the UN implemented "Green Revolving Funds" interventions in food-insecure communities, invested in irrigation system construction and canal rehabilitation, supported the demining of mined and contaminated agricultural lands, and developed livelihood restoring initiatives for these regions.

Committed to fostering economic resilience, inclusivity, and empowerment at the community level, the UN focused on the vital support for microbusinesses as a catalyst for job creation. This support has involved enhancing the productive capacities of microenterprises by providing comprehensive training, facilitating access to finance, and equipping them with the necessary skills and assets for production. *"'Within just a month and a half, I was able to substantially expand my entrepreneurship, improve my services, and reach new quality benchmarks in my business,"* shares Nikolay, a beneficiary of the UN's business development grant, who has witnessed a 30% increase in turnover.

The UN's efforts in generating new economic opportunities also facilitated individuals' return and reintegration into their communities. Gerasim, who returned from Belgium through a well-supported reintegration program, exemplifies this impact. *"I had zero money and opportunities. Now I already have cows and will get a new profession [furniture making],"* he shares. With these newfound prospects, Gerasim has no intention of leaving his homeland again.

In 2023, UN worked to bridge humanitarian and development efforts and ensure the resilience of conflict-affected households. The UN enabled livelihood enhancements across numerous households through a series of targeted interventions, such as revitalizing agricultural activities with beehives and greenhouses, providing seeds and fodder, establishing flour mills and other production facilities, and enhancing access to essential services via infrastructure rehabilitation, including water supply systems, local ambulatories, green energy, housing for refugees and renovation of private and public facilities in conflict-affected border communities. This holistic approach formed a cornerstone of the economic revival for border communities by addressing immediate nutritional needs while also promoting socio-economic recovery and refugee integration, particularly in the Syunik and Gegharkunik regions. Highlighting the immediacy and impact of this support, Werner Thut, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Switzerland in Armenia, noted the swift provision of aid as part of a broader strategy to rebuild life prospects for families who sought refuge in Armenia.

Despite the refugee crisis, the UN remained steadfast in supporting local initiatives for sustainable territorial development. Through the establishment of Local Action Groups (LAGs), the UN fostered cooperation among civil society, local businesses, and community administrations, strengthening the social fabric and fostering development amidst the crisis. LAGs have financed hundreds of joint projects, including those led by women and youth, addressing various challenges and driving innovation and value creation in sectors like tourism, IT, and agriculture. *"The school greenhouse, and the knowledge gained by the students will contribute to the development of agriculture*

in the community," explains the headmaster of Shnogh secondary school, which received a LAG grant to establish a school greenhouse and promote agricultural education.

As an EU Neighborhood Policy member, Armenia is dedicated to enhancing trade competitiveness and promoting sustainable industrial growth. Yet, its underdeveloped metrology infrastructure frequently forces the industries to seek calibration services from overseas suppliers, usually at high costs due to transportation. In 2023, the UN played a key role in advancing Armenia's metrology system through legal framework analysis, international membership decisions, and equipment procurement. Efforts also focused on enhancing leadership within the National Bureau of Standards and Metrology, establishing the Metrology Board, and raising stakeholder awareness. *"Compliance with rigorous metrology standards is essential for the Armenian food industry to gain consumer trust and access international markets. We welcome the efforts of Armenia in reforming and improving the national metrology system and we are supportive in this process,"* highlighted Frank Hess, the Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Armenia, in support of UN's efforts to establish a needs-based metrology system.

To facilitate informed policymaking, aid farmers in vineyard management, and ensure quality assurance in wine production we established a sustainable vineyard registry system (VRS) in 2023. This involved capacity-building for VRS utilization and the creation of a mobile application to improve farmers' access to digital services and enhance productivity.

Fashion and textile industry development was another highlight of the UN's work last year. Armenian talents benefitted greatly from exposure and networking opportunities at international exhibitions, along with increased access to cutting-edge technologies. The UN's support extended to capacity strengthening for refugees, including Tsovinar, a teacher with 26 years of experience who found new career prospects through UN-sponsored training, *"After being displaced, I never imagined I could sit and sew, but this training sparked interest in me."* Through a strategic blend of training, innovation, and market access, the UN continues to support the growth and competitiveness of Armenia's fashion and textile sector, setting the stage for sustainable development and long-term success.

Read more
Integrating international labour law @ILO

Read more
Reintegration assistance @IOM

Read more
Weather forecasting revolution @UNDP

Read more
Supporting quality Infrastructure in Armenia @UNIDO

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*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 4

Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Development

UNSDCF Outcome 5:

Ecosystems are managed sustainably, and people benefit from participatory and resilient development and climate smart solutions.

Co-Lead Agencies:

UNDP · Շրջակա միջավայրի նախարարություն

Contributing Agencies:

Ministry of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia · UNDP · unicef · UN WFP World Food Programme · FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations · Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure

UNECE · IOM UN MIGRATION · UNDRR UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction · UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency · Շրջակա միջավայրի նախարարություն · Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia · Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia

Green Innovators for Sustainable Ecosystems

Narek and Yerazik, both 18, are the first young delegates to represent Armenia at the UN Climate Change Conference, COP27. Inspired by their experience, they are now revitalizing Climapolis, their innovative startup game, into a Climate Champions Academy to help more youth learn about climate change.

Aram and his classmates have created a groundbreaking robot prototype. By incorporating sensors and specialized coding, this robot can identify materials and sort them accordingly. Aram's vision is to secure funding to bring their invention to life, revolutionizing waste management.

Henry and Milena are on a mission to tackle climate change. They have formed volunteer groups to spread awareness and make their community greener. Their advocacy is bold: use composting instead of burning waste, impose fines for burning garbage, build waste processing facilities, champion proper waste sorting and minimize plastic usage.

The UN supports these dynamic youth, amplifying their voices and mobilizing them for impactful climate action.

1 NO POVERTY · 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY · 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES · 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION · 13 CLIMATE ACTION · 15 LIFE ON LAND

Photo @UNDP

5,000+

individuals in 17 conflict-affected settlements benefitting from greening and street lighting systems and over 600 solar-powered luminaries

900+ kilowatts

of solar stations installed, enabling annual savings of USD 163,000 reinvested in climate-change adaptation

14.3+ hectares

of contaminated agricultural land from mines, earning a "Green Label" for cultivation

Key Outcome-Level Indicators

SDG 9.4.1. adapted: CO2 emissions per GDP (in PPP)

↑ **0.19**

SDG 7.1.2 adapted: Number of people benefitted from affordable/clean energy technologies

↑ **28,999**

Number of public residential buildings with improved energy efficiency:

↑ **222**

Key Contextual Challenges:

- Shifted priorities of governmental and non-governmental partners towards social security needs of refugees
- Initial sectoral adaptation plans (agriculture, health, energy, tourism) recommended by the GoA for integration into broader sector development action plans

2023 Expenditure
$10,003,191

Climate change has emerged as one of the most important issues facing humanity in the 21st century. Armenia is undertaking ambitious efforts to adapt to climate change and reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 40% from 1990 emission levels by 2030. With the UN's support, the country has taken actions to implement the Paris Agreement and improve climate policies and legislation.

In 2023, the UN played a pivotal role in shaping Armenia's climate agenda by supporting the development of crucial documents such as: the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Implementation Plan, Financing Strategy and Investment Plan, the first-ever Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy of Armenia 2050 approved by the GoA, the latest Armenia's GHG Inventory Report submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Additionally, the UN supported a draft Climate Law of Armenia, and draft Government Decree on "Establishing Procedure for GHG Inventory Preparation" as well as a legal package for continuous collection of information on mitigation policies and actions.

By 2030 the GoA has set a goal to increase the share of solar energy in total energy production to 15% or 1.8.bln kWh. Therefore, favorable conditions for businesses and communities were ensured by the legislation, employing a guaranteed tariff mechanism. In addition to supporting the harmonization of climate change policies, the UN has backed green investments and solar-powered solutions. One notable example is the installation of over 600 solar-powered luminaries for street lightning in local communities. "*The solar luminaries are making a difference in people's lives. Despite the frequent and lengthy power outages in the settlement, the street lighting no longer goes off,*" says Sevak, The representative of Sotk settlement where infrastructure was heavily damaged due to 2022 September military offensive. The UN has stepped in with sustainable solutions to rehabilitate the street lighting system, expedite post-conflict recovery and improve the livability of conflict-affected settlements.

The UN continued energy efficient retrofitting of buildings in Armenia, resulting in 40-60% energy savings in residential and public buildings. Efforts also included revising construction codes, installing solar systems in critical public infrastructure, and providing essential circuits such as lighting and communications to local communities.

Armenia's rural population heavily relies on fuelwood for their energy needs. Building on forest-energy nexus, the UN's investment of over 18 million USD in Armenia's forests aims to integrate community needs with afforestation efforts. Through the Forest and Landscape Restoration approach, it targets the restoration of degraded landscapes in Armenia, ensuring ecological, social, and economic balance. Key 2023 achievements in the field included establishing nurseries and essential infrastructure for seedling growth, testing innovative planting methods, alongside extensive stakeholder training. Additionally, sustainable forest governance guidelines were drafted to inform Forest Management Plans, while collaboration with the Armenian government on the National Forest Monitoring System signified a crucial step towards effective forest management and climate resilience.

Resilience to natural hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has been another focus of the UN's efforts. Installation of Automatic Weather Stations and the development of unified information management system for the Hydrometeorology and Monitoring Center has increased Armenia's modernized weather monitoring coverage to 80% and enhanced the accuracy of weather monitoring and forecast. Additionally, the creation of the Natural Hazard Risk Index provides decision-makers with valuable insights into regional susceptibility to hazards like landslides and rockfalls. Climate Change Risk Atlas for Shirak and Lori provinces released for public use showcasing the vulnerabilities of the regions.

The UN's focus on resilience is vital for tackling the environmental challenges of Lake Sevan. 2023 was pivotal in shaping the future of Lake Sevan's ecosystem through comprehensive studies and strategic planning. It facilitated the creation of a Long-term National Vision for Lake Sevan, setting environmental, economic, and social goals up to 2050. This vision is supported by a detailed strategy to address policy, legal, and institutional challenges. Additionally, the UN spearheaded the development of the Sevan National Park Management Plan, incorporating zoning and park border adjustments based on the National Vision.

Resource scarcity and the drive for sustainability are critical in transitioning to a green Circular Economy. The UN has aided Eastern Partnership industries in adopting practices like Circular Economy and Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP). A recent event in Armenia showcased the potential of the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology for SMEs, assessing environmental impact and promoting resource efficiency. Spearheading PEF adoption in Armenia and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, the UN fosters sustainable practices and economic growth.

Read more

Forest landscape restoration
@FAO

Read more

World Bicycle Day
@UN Armenia

Read more

From despair to resilience
@UNDP

Watch more

Taking actions against climate change
@UNDP

Disclaimer: up (arrow): progress, down (arrow): regress, =: no change
*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 5

Responsive and Effective Governance

UNSDCF Outcome 6:

People benefit from effective and accountable governance systems and institutions that safeguard human rights and uphold the rule of law; and a public administration that ensures effective and human-centered service delivery for all.

Co-Lead Agencies:

Republic of Armenia Ministry of Justice · UNDP

Contributing Agencies:

Republic of Armenia Ministry of Justice · UNDP · unicef · UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency · Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia · UNDRR UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction · United Nations Human Rights · UN WFP World Food Programme · IOM UN MIGRATION · Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia · ILO

Armenia's Police Reform: Safeguarding Rights and Safety

"I like maintaining everything in order and I am quick to detect any deviations. If there is an attempt to bend the rules, I am no stranger to enforcing discipline. I am a patrol police officer. This means I no longer silently walk away when I encounter problems. My role is about aiding people and safeguarding them from possible harm. And now, I do not express my love for the country solely by words. Instead, I show up to perform my service."

Armenia is transforming its police service with the launch of the Patrol Service, a specialized police unit trained to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The UN's pivotal role in this transformation has included training patrol officers in human rights and non-discrimination, enhancing police abilities to enforce new criminal procedural laws for monitoring human rights in closed institutions, functional review of the Police Educational Complex, revising police curricula enhanced with virtual reality technology, piloting Gender Seal methodology application readiness review in the Police, and introducing a crisis management framework for the Patrol Police. This reform is grounded in the vision of a human rights-focused, democratic police force aligned with European standards and gender balance within the force.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Photo @UNDP

1,000+
patrol officers trained

135,200 m²
cleared and over 7000 people reached in mine-action affected regions

Key Outcome-Level Indicators

Voice and accountability:
↑ **51.21%**

Control of Corruption:
↑ **56.13%**

Government Effectiveness:
↓ **39.15%**

Rule-of-Law Index:
↓ **46.23%**

Key Contextual Challenges:

- Strategic uncertainties and security challenges impacting pace and resource allocation for governance reforms.
- Protection of refugee rights, pending the approval of related legislation amid a refugee crisis.
- High turnover of staff in partner institutions hindering sustainability and effectiveness.
- Need for improved interagency collaboration and coordination within the sector.

2023 Expenditure
$3,040,909

Despite facing significant security challenges and a refugee crisis, Armenia remained committed to improving governance systems and institutions. The country continued to prioritize strengthening human rights, upholding the rule of law, and enhancing public administration throughout 2023. Positive progress was evident in key indicators such as voice and accountability, and control of corruption, as reflected in the Worldwide Governance Indicators.

The UN continued to enhance the institutional capacities of Armenia's legislature, resulting in significant improvements in legislative oversight and policymaking. The UN supported the Constitutional Reform Commission in conducting a comprehensive analysis and consolidating proposals for a draft Concept Paper on the reform. The UN facilitated initiatives to advance climate democracy, develop the drafts laws of the Republic of Armenia "On Cybersecurity" and "On Public Information", improve IT infrastructure through the Digital Transformation of the National Assembly, introducing web portal, e-Session Management, e-Learning, e-Library, e-Archive, and other electronic systems, as well as expanded civic space within Parliament. Notably, the UN introduced the Index of Parliament Perception (IPP), which provided periodic polling of public sentiment on parliamentary processes, aiding in identifying areas for improvement. *"I am grateful for the cooperation [with the UN]. This is not the first time it has yielded tangible results for Parliament. Thanks to the technical assistance, the transparency of Parliament's standing committees will be more visible to the electors,"* highlights Alen Simonyan, President of the National Assembly of Armenia.

The UN's technical support to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO) also yielded positive outcomes for the government's human rights protection agenda. This included the development of the Human Rights Action Plan for 2023-2025; and the UN facilitated a multi-stakeholder dialogue for the plan's development, leading to its adoption in mid-2023. Additionally, with UN assistance, a new regional office of HRDO was established in the city of Vanadzor, Lori region, that aims to strengthen capacities for human rights monitoring. The UN also deployed high-level missions to Armenia, underscoring its commitment to addressing the multifaceted dimensions of the crisis and related human rights implications.

With the UN's support an interdisciplinary working group (WG) led by the Migration and Citizenship Service reviewed the legislation on international protection seekers and made recommendations to enhance existing protection mechanisms, including refugee status determination, interagency coordination, referral systems, and a protection needs assessment. Additionally, the UN initiated the #IBELONG campaign to end statelessness, showcasing success stories of individuals who overcame difficulties and desperation and gained nationality through the WG's efforts. As expressed by a former refugee featured in the campaign, *"After so many years of hardships, I now have a nationality and feel at home in my country Armenia where I belong to and live a dignified life"*.

In 2023, the UN also enhanced the legal system by supporting the creation of specialized curriculums in "International Labor Law" and "Domestic Labor Law" for judges and legal practitioners. *"It will empower our judges and legal practitioners with the tools and insights needed to render decisions that are both legally sound and deeply fair"*, states Stephen Marler, a representative from the US Department of Labor. This move aims to bolster the application of UN's Conventions and Standards in legal cases. Offered both online and offline for free, these resources promise to enrich the judiciary's understanding and handling of labor laws. Additionally, the UN developed Guidelines on Internal Procedures for Handling Individual Labor Grievances at Workplaces to facilitate efficient resolution of labor grievances, disputes, and complaints, tailored for the healthcare and mining sectors.

"Beware! Dangerous to life. Mines and unexploded ordnance deteriorate overtime and become more sensitive and explosive. What to do if you see a mine or find yourself in a mined area? The awareness raising campaign is part of the UN's efforts towards Strengthening National Mine Action Capacities in Armenia. The UN has played a key role in Armenia's mine action efforts, contributing to the development of a strategic Mine Action Strategy and Operational Plans aligned with international standards, along with clearance and land release operations on 135,200 square meters in Vayots Dzor region. With UN's technical support, national mine action authorities have significantly enhanced their capacities to operate safely. Additionally, a comprehensive needs assessment conducted in partnership with national and local authorities has identified critical deficiencies in emergency preparedness and protection, laying the groundwork for renovation and refurbishment of hideouts. Armenia's mine action sector is thus coordinated through a participatory, inclusive, and transparent mechanism, fostering collaboration and functionality across all pillars.

Read more
Strengthening labour rights @ILO

Read more
Enhancing migration governance @IOM

Read more
An Armenian homecoming @IOM

Disclaimer: up (arrow): progress, down (arrow): regress, =: no change
*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 6

Responsive and Effective Governance

UNSDCF Outcome 7:

People benefit from evidence-based, human-centric, and SDG-aligned policies supported by diversified sources of financing, innovation, and partnerships for sustainable development for all.

## Smart Data, Safe Roads: Armenia's New Tool to Save Lives

In Armenia, the battle against road fatalities takes a new leap with the introduction of the UN's innovative tool, the first road safety data analytical platform in Armenia for real-time road crash data monitoring and data-informed policymaking. "Our primary mission is to save lives by identifying high-risk spots and employing intelligent solutions," says Valerik, our road expert. Leveraging data and behavioral insights, this innovative solution targets "black spots" to prevent over 300 yearly fatalities that occur in the country each year.

The previously unavailable insights drawn from geospatial mapping, real-time updates, and analysis of road crashes, now empowers decision-makers to craft effective policies. This evidence-based analytics also guides the UN's behavioral experiments, reaching 21,000 drivers with nudges for safer practices in 2023 alone. These interventions conveyed messages emphasizing social responsibility, financial consequences and emotional appeals, cultivating a culture of road safety among drivers. The financial approach yielded a remarkable reduction of road violations by nearly 18%, making it the most effective nudge, followed by social responsibility, which resulted in a 13% decrease.

Simultaneously, the UN's comprehensive education program engages both children and parents, embedding road safety practices into everyday routines. These concerted efforts signify a paradigm shift toward evidence-driven policymaking, using innovation to accelerate the implementation of the National Road Safety Strategy. Together, we will help Armenia achieve a 50% reduction of road deaths by 2030.

Photo @UNDP

Key Contextual Challenges:
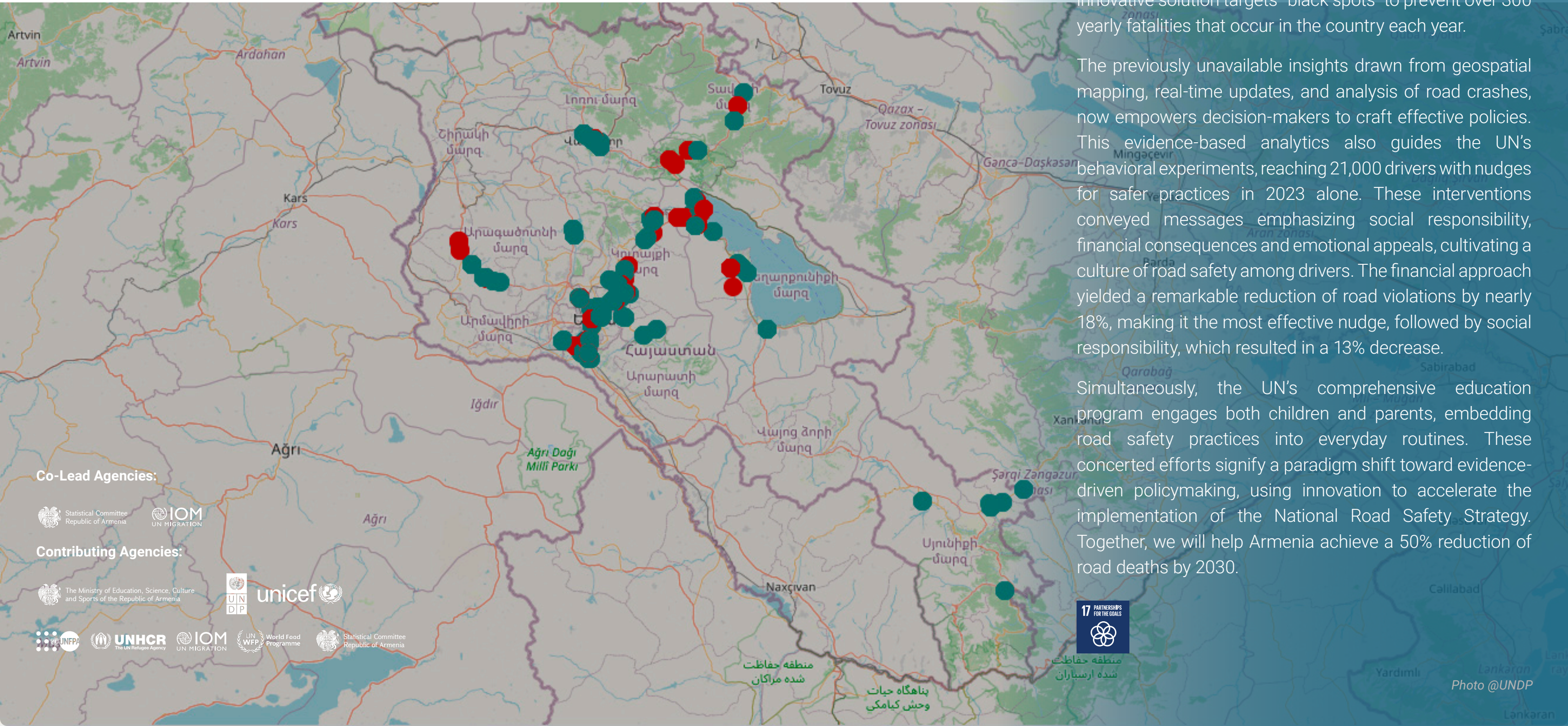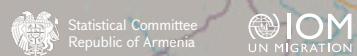
- Lack of comprehensive and quality data
- Underreporting on violence against children and women
- Inter-institutional cooperation needs

40+

innovative, impact-oriented, data-driven tools for policy-making developed

2023 Expenditure
$1,336,394

The UN Country Team in Armenia places great importance on fostering data capacity and evidence-based policymaking, as outlined in the 2021-2025 UNSDCF. Innovative and data-driven solutions continued to be on our radar in 2023. The enhancement of the Travelinsights tool represents one such milestone, enabling an unprecedented collaboration between the Armenian government and mobile operators. Travelinsights stands as the UN's pioneering AI-driven real-time data analytics tool in tourism, that enables the tracking of tourist trends through mobile operator data.

Reaffirming its commitment to effective migration governance, Armenia undertook the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) assessment last year. The MGI comprises a standard set of around 90 indicators developed by the UN and the Economist Intelligence Unit to assess the countries' migration policies. Additionally, the Migration Management Digital Maturity Assessment covered a wide range of topics relevant to digital governance, intended for both good migration management and overall e-governance of the Government of Armenia.

Armenia has a significant demand for knowledge and skills in innovative low carbon technologies. This is one of the findings of our analysis of labor market dynamics which we did in cooperation with Statistical Committee of Armenia (ArmStat). Drawing on real-time data insights into the most sought-after jobs, we developed both an online learning platform to boost employability and informed the state employment policy.

Amidst rapidly changing job markets, vulnerable women face increased difficulty in entering the workforce. Accelerator #5: National Platform for Economic

Empowerment of Women is the UN and Government's joint endeavor to boost women's employability. By using behavioral insights to understand entrepreneur decision-making, the programme is tailored to address barriers and leverage enablers for successful entrepreneurship practices by women.

Collaboration with ArmStat was instrumental in enhancing food security measurement in Armenia. This partnership facilitated the development of food security indicators from the Integrated Living Condition Survey (ILCS), introduced innovative approaches like the Nutrition-Based Poverty Line, supported the review of critical SDG indicators (2.1.1 and 2.1.2) and informed food needs assessment, ensuring targeted beneficiary selection for the UN's Food Cards assistance.

With strong data partnerships, in 2023 we also supported the development of the HIV Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) tool, providing a structured platform and rigorous training for peer monitors to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative data on HIV service delivery. This data complements local and national monitoring efforts, filling critical gaps in decision-making processes and informing evidence-based actions to enhance services. Additionally, we integrated the Rights-Evidence-ACTion (REAct) App into the CLM tool, enabling community-based organizations to monitor human rights issues and respond effectively.

To advance child rights efforts, the UN backed Armenia's Human Rights Defender Office in crafting the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) alternative report and supported ArmStat in updating Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity (TransMonEE) 2023 data. This collaboration triggered discussions on improving social and child protection data systems. Additionally, an Exploratory

Qualitative Study on Online Risks and Opportunities for Children and Young People in Armenia informed advocacy and fundraising and programming on technology-facilitated child exploitation. Importantly, the first "Comprehensive study of WASH facilities in the Republic of Armenia public school and preschool educational institutions" was launched to propose universal WASH facility model solutions for educational institutions.

Amidst ongoing discussions around education reform in Armenia, the UN spearheaded four in-depth studies to provide evidence-based recommendations drawing on global best practices. These studies delved into various aspects, ranging from pre-school education and teacher management to classroom assessment and teaching evaluation systems, bringing together leading technical experts, and civil society organizations to discuss the policy recommendations. *"This research will serve as a good basis for us to make future decisions and develop and implement effective policies. I am so pleased that the results of these studies are available at a time when we are reviewing the draft state program and action plan on education,"* noted Minister Mrs. Zhanna Andreasyan.

Under the UN's commitment to boost national evaluation capacities, Ministry of Finance (MoF) officials completed the Executive Course for Evaluation Leaders. The participation led to the creation of an Action Plan to develop Armenia's evaluation capacity, later introduced to MoF's senior staff. This effort is part of a broader capacity-building strategy that includes various M&E topics, extends to other national institutions, and thus signifies a comprehensive approach to fostering a culture of evaluation and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation function within programme-based budgeting processes.

Amidst the refugee influx, having reliable data and evidence was paramount to effectively address the needs of newly arrived refugees. The Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA), an inter-agency exercise, was swiftly deployed as part of the RRP to provide an overview of these urgent needs. Following this, a comprehensive multi-sector needs assessment was initiated jointly with the Government, designed in a gender-sensitive manner, considering the gendered impact of the crisis on women, adolescent girls and boys. Importantly, the questionnaire was collaboratively developed and digitized by the Nork Technology Center for sample surveys

and integration into existing social protection information systems, aiding USS social workers in their work.

To advance women's political participation in Armenia, the UN conducted assessments on the following areas: 1) Addressing the Challenges of Gender Equality and Women's Progress in Armenian Political Parties, 2) Advancing women representation in the Executive branch of Armenia, 3) Investigation into Women's Participation in Local Governance in Armenia. Additionally, we assisted in developing the municipality action plan on findings of the Gender Seal methodology application readiness review for Yerevan Municipality.

When reforms are realistically costed, they have a bigger chance for being prioritized for allocation of national budgets. Many UN-supported initiatives have led to budgetary commitments in Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) and annual budgets, highlighting the importance of evidence-based budgeting in driving policy decisions. Consider the vulnerability assessment system reform as a case in point. Through meticulous econometric simulations and financial estimations via a survey from the World Bank and the UN, this initiative resulted in increased allocations for the family benefit program in the 2024-2026 MTEF.

Capitalizing on prior support for SDG tagging of state budget programs, the UN transitioned to a sustainable approach in 2023. This involved enhancing the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Finance to independently conduct alignment activities. Additionally, the UN supported the Ministry of Finance in piloting the development of a financing strategy for the selected strategic document, the draft Employment Strategy. This initiative aimed to enhance the feasibility and viability of implementing strategic documents, contributing to long-term development goals.

The UN ensured evidence-based, sustainable solutions in other key reform processes such as social protection, education, climate change, and disaster risk reduction. The UN's expertise influenced policy recommendations in local level planning and budget allocations as seen in the following initiatives, such as: reform of social safety nets, better monitoring of education expenditure, disability-inclusive budget assessments, institutionalization and budgetary allocations for alternative preschool education services, and child-sensitive climate risk assessments.

Disclaimer: up (arrow): progress, down (arrow): regress, =: no change
*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 7

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

UNSDCF Outcome 8:

All persons benefit from gender equality and equal opportunities to realize their human rights, fulfil their economic, political, and social potential and contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

Co-Lead Agencies:

UNFPA | Republic of Armenia Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

Contributing Agencies:

Republic of Armenia Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs | Ministry of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia | The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia | UNFPA | Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia

UNDP | UNAIDS | unicef | UN WOMEN | IOM UN MIGRATION | UN WFP World Food Programme | ILO

Stars of Tomorrow: Inspiring Armenian Women in Astronomy and Science

In a world where the stars have long been named after men, we tell the stories of famous Armenian female astronomers and scientists to inspire young girls to dream big and aim high. Elma Parsamyan, the discoverer of the Karahunj astronomical observatory, Alenoush Terian, known as the "Mother of Modern Iranian Astronomy'", and Paris Pishmish, acknowledged as the founder of modern astronomy in Mexico, are among those Armenian luminaries.

Aligned with the 2023 Women's Rights Day theme, "Innovation and Technologies for Gender Equality" declared by the UN, we celebrated this year the resilience and ingenuity of women in STEM fields. Among those leading the change is Varditer Beglaryan who, at just 22, is a nuclear reactor physicist and Marie Curie scholarship recipient. "The Scholarship presents wide avenues to collaborate with renowned scientists and gain hands-on experience across various laboratories. Physics is a gateway to easier solutions and the future has greater promise for us. Consider the inefficiency of our time spent in the 21st-century just navigating roads. I envision a future where "the roads are shorter", says Varditer, encouraging girls to believe in their strength and take confident strides for their "flight to the stars."

5 GENDER EQUALITY | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
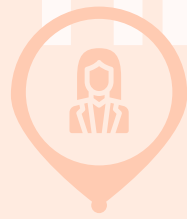
Photo @UNFPA

UNINFO Highlights

45+
CSOs and over 1200 social workers, labour inspectors trained in gender equality work

700+
women gained access to new economic opportunities

250+
women local councilors and parties politically empowered

Key Outcome-Level Indicators

Gender Gap Rank:
↑ **61 out of 146 countries**

SDG 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women:

in national parliament:	in local government:	in local government councils
↑ **36.45%**	↑ **25%**	↑ **30%**

as community heads:	as ministers:	as deputy ministers:
↑ **6%**	↑ **16.7%**	↓ **18.2%**

Key Contextual Challenges:
- De-prioritization of gender equality and women empowerment issues due to the security-related crisis
- Limited understanding and prioritization of gender equality programming among select partners

2023 Expenditure
$1,638,053

In 2023, Armenia marked a notable advancement towards gender parity, ranking 61st among 146 countries and marking a significant 28-point improvement since 2022. It also stood out as one of the top three highest-ranking countries in the Eurasia and Central Asia region. The UN, along with partners, made every effort to help this happen.

On the path from learning to earning, our focus remained on strengthening women's entrepreneurship and business skills, creating opportunities for income generation and economic independence. We have also supported entrepreneurs to take their businesses to the next level. Lilit, a young entrepreneur, exemplifies this mission. *Using an innovative recycling technique, she has been transforming five types of waste into high-quality recycled paper. Through participation in the UN's skill-building program for business growth, Lilit is now edging closer to her aspiration of establishing a large-scale paper and textile recycling facility and contributing to the promotion of eco-friendly living in the Shirak region of Armenia.* Promoting the empowerment of women and girls in the community, business, and the workplace, the UN's support has led to the inclusion of 5 more Armenian private companies as full members of the Global Compact Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) network, bringing the total number of participating companies to 27. This expansion further amplified our impact on women's empowerment in the business sector. Armenia concluded 2023 with a significant leap in women's economic participation and opportunities, ranking 52nd among 146 countries, up from 84th place in 2022.

In 2023, Armenia also witnessed a significant rise in gender parity in terms of political empowerment, climbing to 71st place from 114th in 2020. This achievement was bolstered by the UN's multifaceted support, which encompassed various initiatives.

This included capacity-building for partners and women incumbents, mentorship schemes for women leaders at local and national levels and establishment of Women and Youth Advisory councils. Additionally, the UN conducted the Gender Impact Assessment of Armenia's 2019-2023 Gender Strategy, the country's primary framework for women's advancement, and informed Armenia's new Gender Strategy of 2024-2028. The UN, in collaboration with local partners, also revived the civil society - Parliament platform to discuss and bring forward the pressing gender equality issues to the normative agenda. A package of recommendations on gender mainstreaming of Regulatory Body functions and procedures and the Law on Mass Media was elaborated and posted on e-draft. The UN also provided a comprehensive review of Armenia's Draft State Employment Strategy from Gender Perspective.

With a focus on enhancing women and youth engagement in local development, the UN spearheaded the co-design and implementation of 10 innovative municipal sectoral services. *Take, for example, the Shoghakat settlement in Gegharkunik region, which is now equipped with smart irrigation system. This innovative system includes a geomembrane basin, hydrometeorological station, solar-powered pumping station, and water distribution node with automatic control.* Diverse in scope and meticulously planned, these new municipal services are co-financed by the GoA and promise to enhance the lives of over 40,000 community residents. Notably, the piloted municipal services are all well-researched, inclusive, and gender-responsive: women were actively engaged in the design and piloting phases to ensure their perspectives were integrated, considering cultural, social, and environmental factors.

In 2023, the UN assisted the GoA in developing Gender Equality Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion guides, facilitating gender-sensitive and participatory policy formulation within Public Administrative Reforms. To ensure equitable resource allocation, engendered Annual Work Plans were implemented in eight municipalities, totaling 30 communities benefiting from this approach. Additionally, we continuously empower communities by establishing Women and Youth Advisory Councils (WYACs) in collaboration with community leaders, with 22 WYACs currently operational in Armenian communities.

In 2023, we maintained our consistent focus on prevention of gender-based violence and harmful practices. This year marked important progress, including the first release of official domestic violence data by Armstat and the adoption of the relevant legal norm, which envisages the introduction of the online centralized registration system for the cases of domestic violence in 2024 supported by the UN and approved by the Armenian government. Additionally, we enhanced the capacities of service providers, social workers and psychologists in victim-centered Gender-Based Violence (GBV) service delivery and supported the adoption of guidelines for identification and referral of domestic violence cases for school personnel. To minimize children's repetitive direct contact with the justice system in cases of violence against them, the UN worked with the Government to establish safe corners in Yerevan and Kapan, based on the internationally recognized Barnahus model. *The model will empower a greater number of victims to come forward and share their experiences, placing their trust in the safety and security of the system.*

When disasters strike, their impact is often felt most acutely by women and girls: conflict and displacement heighten the risk of gender-based violence and maternal mortality. The 10-months long blockade of Lachin Corridor and subsequent military offensive of September 19-20, 2023 severely restricted access to sexual and reproductive health services, exacerbating the shortage of essential supplies such as medicine, contraception, and menstrual products. Women's sexual and reproductive health suffered greatly, with heightened levels of stress, malnutrition, and anemia rates among pregnant women. *"One night, a pregnant refugee woman arrived, bleeding and in distress. We swiftly intervened, but sadly, displacement-induced stress led to a miscarriage,"* tells doctor Metaksya. As part of the refugee response, the UN was quick to provide sexual and reproductive health supplies, trained local service providers on specialized care for survivors of gender-based violence and established safe spaces for women and girls.

The Rapid Gender Assessment of refugees run by the UN and partners revealed that refugee women, though often overqualified, actively pursue any available job opportunity, like cooking local specialties, to secure employment for family support. Long-term welfare of refugees is something that concerns the UN and its partners. *"It is crucial that immediately after the humanitarian support, we engage in the second phase of rehabilitation and development. Creating job opportunities for women and girls should be organized so that people have stability,"* says Ruzanna, the director of WINNET, an organization an UN partner, that runs safe spaces in Goris and Verishen. The UN has committed to addressing the long-term needs of women and girls affected by the forced displacement, ensuring their continued access to psychosocial support, healthcare services and livelihoods. Progress has been made in promoting positive gender norms through various initiatives. These included integrating gender-responsive history teaching content into project-based learning, organizing gender equality campaigns, events and performances, implementing family-friendly policies, and actively involving men in advancing gender equality efforts.

Disclaimer: up (arrow): progress, down (arrow): regress, =: no change
*against UNSDCF baselines

Outcome 8

2.3. Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

The refugee influx of 2023 heightened vulnerabilities and stretched resources. Navigating these complexities, the UNCT reinforced existing and forged new partnerships to advance the SDGs. Focus on resilience and recovery was the top priority for all partnership initiatives striving to advance development amid the crisis.

The launch of the JSC and the participation of GoA's leadership in all UNSDCF Outcomes undoubtedly marked a new era of collaboration, joint action and collective responsibility.

In 2023, UN Armenia's Communications Group (UNCG) teamed up with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Public Relations and Information Center, and the Prime Minister's Office to create a unified network of spokespersons and communications professionals, supporting Armenia's commitment to Participatory Governance and Strategic Communications Reform. This effort involved strategic discussions to improve Armenia's Communications Architecture and Strategy. Furthermore, the Government of Armenia officially sought support from the UNCG to develop the Country's Communications Strategy on Armenia's Refugee Response, addressing challenges such as hate speech, misinformation, and fake news.

2023 witnessed the strengthening of our partnerships with the private sector. One notable example, was our collaboration with the Body Shop. As part of a new memorandum of cooperation, The Body Shop Armenia dedicated 4% of its monthly profit to uplift women and girls in border communities. This commitment brought technology and education to the forefront, with the donation of computers to the Berd region and the launch of graphic design course for young girls. Through continued collaboration with our business partner Yeremyan Projects, we ensured that 350 schoolchildren enjoy free, quality milk daily, promoting healthier eating habits. Collaboration with the Global Compact was vital in terms of promoting responsible business practices. In 2023, UN Armenia celebrated Ararat Bank's first anniversary of joining the UN Global Compact, highlighting the bank's commitment to sustainable business and social responsibility. This partnership underscores the bank's adherence to global initiatives promoting human rights, labor standards, environmental sustainability, and anti-corruption efforts.

The UN's partnership with MoLSA and the prestigious International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) showcases a successful UN-academia-government partnership for policy innovation and sustainable development. Marked by a trilateral MOU signed in Luxemburg, Austria, this collaboration aims to equip the GoA with advanced demographic insights and strategies for the future. Leveraging IIASA's global research prowess and a network of over 400 experts from 52 countries, the partnership focuses on refining Armenia's demography strategy with expert evaluations and crafting effective policies using international best practices.

The vibrant Armenian community in Argentina has exemplified South-South cooperation by empowering the UN to expand its programs in Armenia's Syunik region. This partnership has already benefitted the children of Syunik and is set to launch a youth center and refurbish a support center in other regions, showcasing the power of global community collaboration.

The UN's collaboration ECPAT International, INTERPOL, and Innocenti Reasearch Office is another example of the concerted effort by global organizations to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse worldwide. By employing a multi-sectoral approach and leveraging various research methods, including surveys and data analysis, the UN in Armenia is collaborating with partners to create a safer online environment for children, both in Armenia and beyond.

2.4 UN Coherence, Effectiveness and Efficiency

In 2023, twelve joint programs were implemented, accounting for approximately 22% of the total budget for the year. This collaborative approach has demonstrated its effectiveness in streamlining delivery processes and optimizing the utilization of limited resources. Importantly, under the UNSDCF umbrella and RCO leadership, the eight Outcome Groups were expanded and reformed by bringing in representatives from line ministries and institutions of the government, thus significantly boosting coordination efforts. The Outcome Groups attracted active participation from key government counterparts, who now serve as both chairs and participants in the delivery and monitoring of outcomes. This inclusive approach will ensure alignment with national priorities and will strengthen the impact of our collective efforts for the benefit of the people of Armenia.

In November 2023, the UN Armenia team proudly accepted the Best UN Country Results Report award in New York, recognized by the Development Coordination Office (DCO) specifically for the use of UN INFO. This achievement was a testament to the RCO's leadership and, more importantly, collaboration among multiple teams consisting of UNCT and Government colleagues, including the UNSDCF Outcome Groups, and the UN Communications Group (UNCG). Special recognition is extended to the UN Armenia Inter-Agency M&E Group for their efforts in populating and utilizing UNINFO. In 2023, the M&E Team selected 19 global indicators from the UNSDG Output Indicator Framework. Moving forward, the team will track UNSDCF implementation by monitoring progress against these selected global indicators, alongside those sealed in the UNSDCF Results Framework in 2021.

Last year, the UN strategically expanded its outreach and engaged diverse global audiences through multifaceted initiatives and campaigns such as the following: UN Day, 16 Days Campaign, World AIDS Day, World Ozone Day, Refugee Day, Sevan Startup Summit 2023, Quality Day, "Childhood Games" Special Multimedia Project, Youth Day, Population Day, Global Compact, Education Week, Book Giving Day, World Bicycle Day, Immunization Week, exhibitions, school and university visits, and field visits.

In 2023, the UN embarked on a new journey in Karashen, a community in the Tegh consolidated community. This marked the commencement of an innovative initiative: "One UN, One Village." The concept envisions the collective collaboration of all UN agencies, bringing together various capacities and knowledge, to co-create solutions to challenges with the Karashen community and invest in its sustainable development. The approach is still in its experimental phase, and further evaluation will be necessary to assess its effectiveness and potential refinements.

Read more
UN Armenia Annual Results e-Report @UN Armenia

Read more
Seaside Startup Summit @UN Armenia

Read more
SDGs through Childhood Games @UN Armenia

Read more
World Population Day in Jil village @UN Armenia

2.5. Evaluations and Lessons Learned

The Final Independent Evaluation of the 2021-2025 UNSDCF for Armenia will be delivered in 2024. In the meantime, the UNCT, with the support of the UN Armenia Inter-Agency Group chaired by RCO, conducts regular monitoring of UNSDCF progress. As part of 2023 Annual Performance Review, UNSDCF Outcome Groups engaged in in-depth discussions to gather the views of both the UN and the GoA on UN delivery mechanisms across coordination, partnerships, and effectiveness dimensions. Key takeaways included:

What has worked well?

Close coordination and mutual support with Government counterparts: Robust support was provided by UN agencies underscoring the strength of partnership with the Government.

Sustained Focus on Development: Despite the humanitarian situation, our development goals remained on track by harnessing agility, collaboration, and mutual support.

Joint Programming and Action: Consolidated efforts yielded more effective and efficient outcomes, including approved reforms, strengthened advocacy, better utilization of resources and enhanced partnerships.

Impact: UN initiatives facilitated significant institutional transformations steered by human-rights centered, citizen-oriented, and quality-driven approaches.

What could be improved?

Emergency Response Lessons: The forcible displacement of communities underscored the importance of better emergency preparedness. It is imperative to take stock and map problems and strengthen systems for quicker responses in emergencies.

Resilience Building for Vulnerable Populations: Managing the increasing number of asylum seekers, refugees, displaced populations, and migrants presents significant challenges, especially in effectively accommodating vulnerable groups within state services. It is crucial to prioritize clear information dissemination, to facilitate their effective access to services and foster integration and resilience-building.

Multi-Sectoral Collaboration: Collaboration between representatives across sectors is crucial. Effective utilization of existing platforms, such as the UNSDCF Outcome Groups, and ensuring broader membership can enhance inter-sectoral coordination.

Development Partners' Coordination: Establishing or restructuring a platform for policy dialogues and coordination among all development players is essential, under the leadership of the Government.

Strategic Partnerships and Joint Resource Mobilization: There is a need for further nurturing partnerships, exploring pooled fund opportunities and establishing new alliances, particularly with the private sector, to facilitate joint fundraising and maximize resource leverage.

2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

The 2021-2025 UNSDCF for Armenia has a total financial requirement of $250 million over five years, spanning from 2021 to 2025. Presently, the UN has secured over 56% of these funds (over $140 million), with over 45% of the total funds (over $110 million), already allocated towards the development agenda.

In 2023, out of $49.7 million planned budget $42 million (~85%) was available to the UNCT. Our expenditure totaled nearly $40 million.
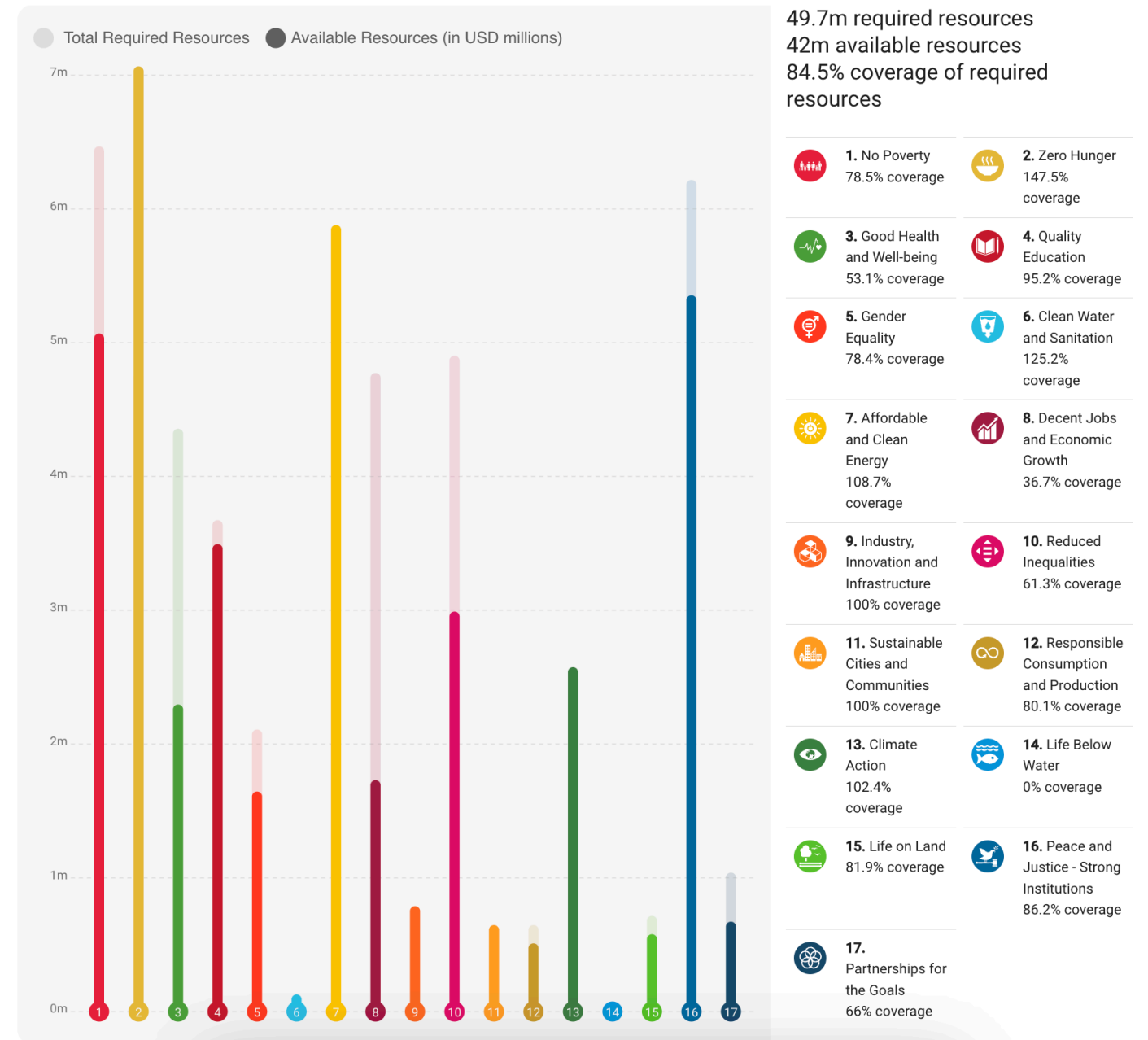

49.7m required resources
42m available resources
84.5% coverage of required resources

1. No Poverty 78.5% coverage
2. Zero Hunger 147.5% coverage
3. Good Health and Well-being 53.1% coverage
4. Quality Education 95.2% coverage
5. Gender Equality 78.4% coverage
6. Clean Water and Sanitation 125.2% coverage
7. Affordable and Clean Energy 108.7% coverage
8. Decent Jobs and Economic Growth 36.7% coverage
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 100% coverage
10. Reduced Inequalities 61.3% coverage
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities 100% coverage
12. Responsible Consumption and Production 80.1% coverage
13. Climate Action 102.4% coverage
14. Life Below Water 0% coverage
15. Life on Land 81.9% coverage
16. Peace and Justice - Strong Institutions 86.2% coverage
17. Partnerships for the Goals 66% coverage

Figure 6: UNINFO Visual 2:The UN funding gap by SDG in Armenia
This visual represents the funding gap by SDG of the UN's contribution in country, based on agreements with national partners in implementing the Cooperation Framework. (It does not represent the total funding gap for the achievement of each SDG in the country).

Disclaimer: The section presents UN's financial delivery per UN INFO data as of March 20, 2024.

As demonstrated in Table 8, the UNSDCF Environment-focused Outcome attracted the highest investment, exceeding $10 million in expenditure. Following closely behind is the Economic Development Outcome, which saw an expenditure of over $8.5 million, while the Social Protection Outcome recorded over $7 million in expenditure.

Figure 7: 2023 Expenditure per Outcome
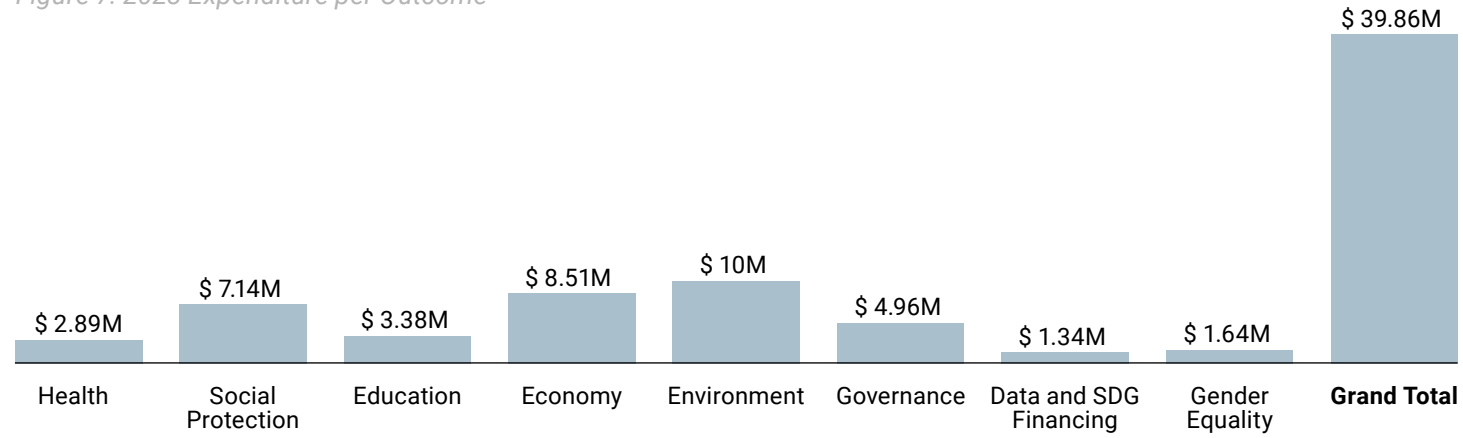
In terms of agency-specific expenditure, UNDP topped the list with over $18.5 million, followed by WFP with $6.7 million, and UNICEF with $4.6 million. See Figure below:

Figure 8: 2023 Expenditure per Agency
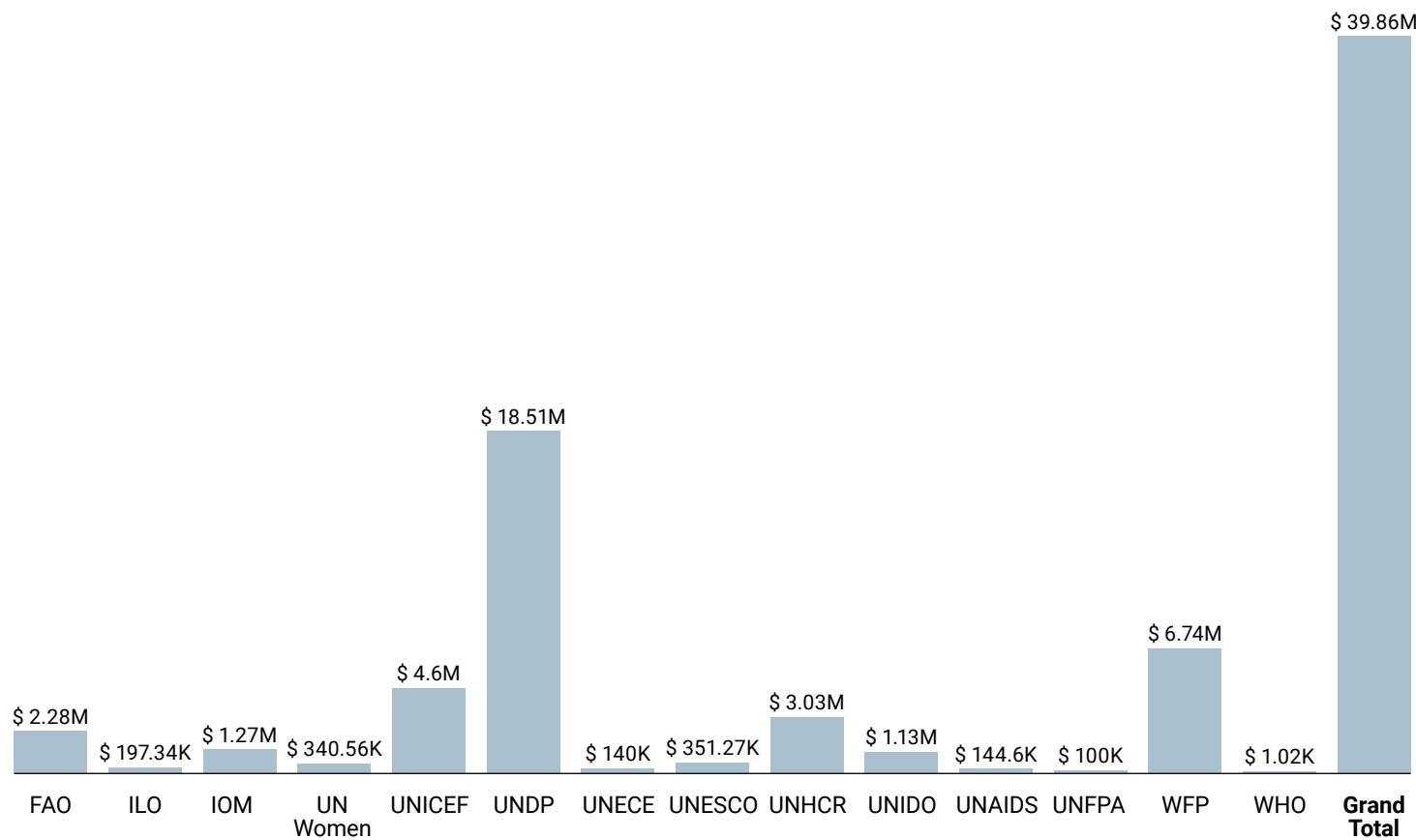
Our top 3 contributions went to: a) SDG 2: Zero Hunger, b) SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 16: Peace and Justice (16,9%, 14,1% and 12.8% of total budget respectively).

The below Figure illustrates resource allocations towards each SDG goal, based on the available resources in 2023.
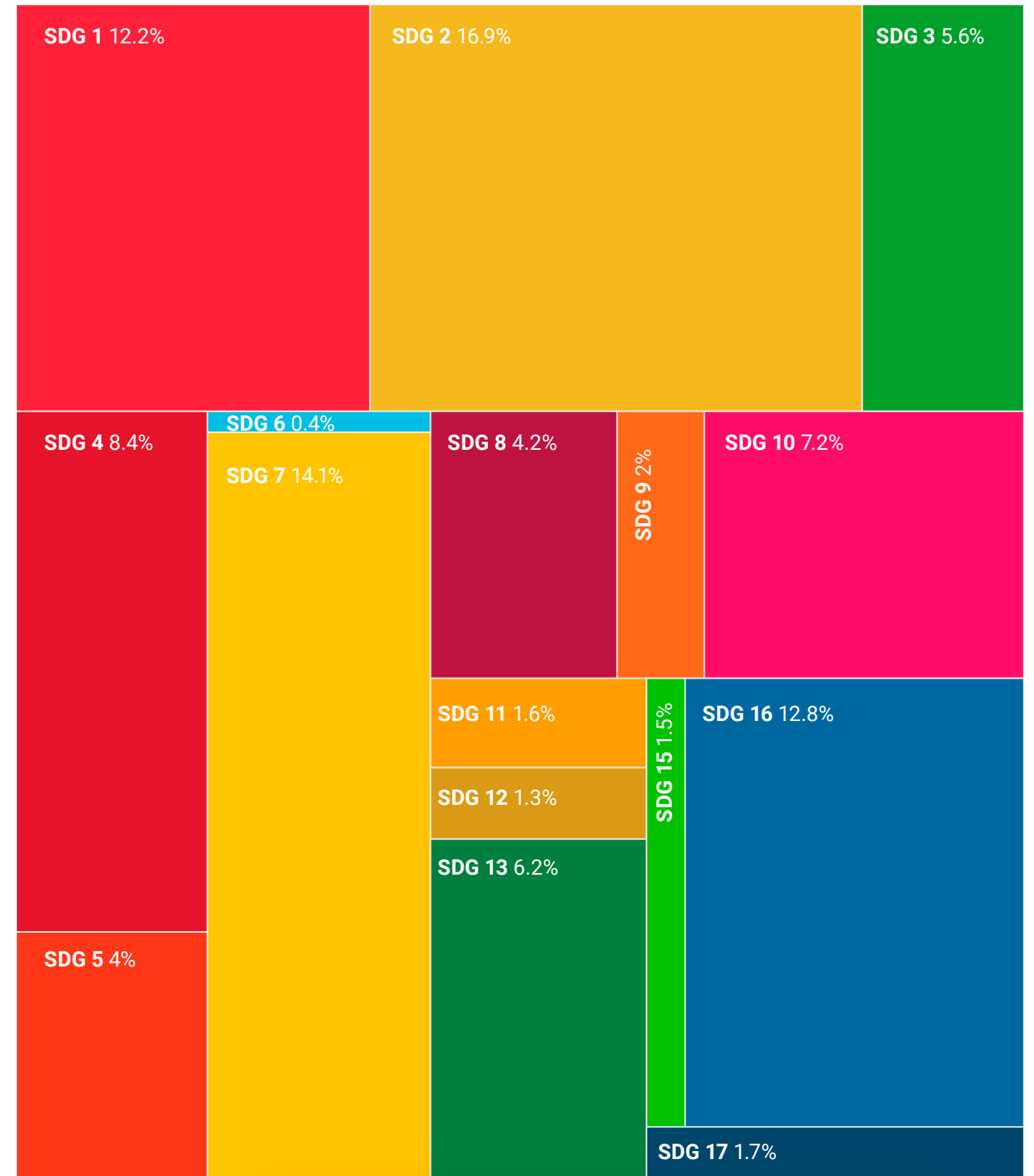

Figure 9: UN INFO Visual 3: Where is the Money Going? How the UN contributes to SDGs
The graphic illustrates resource allocations towards each SDG goal, based on 2023 available resources in UNSDCF

UNCT Key Focus for 2024

This section of the Report presents the key highlights of UNCT work in 2024, capturing the priorities identified within UNSDCF Outcome Groups by both UN and Government members.

UNSDCF Outcome 1 on Health:

- Strengthen health systems for Universal Health Coverage, including the adoption of Universal Health Insurance and establishment of the National Health Insurance Fund.
- Enhance national policies and systems on emergency preparedness and response, communicable and non-communicable disease, immunization, patient safety and and antimicrobial resistance (AMR), including digital interventions.
- Scale up MHPSS capacity and services in Primary Healthcare, including digital interventions in remote communities and psychosocial support to refugees and host communities in rural settings.
- Enhance information systems and capacity for rehabilitation and assistive technology.
- Support the enhancement of health services, especially for vulnerable groups, including remote communities, refugees, and children.
- Support emergency response and transition plan for health and nutrition needs of children.

UNSDCF Outcome 2 on Social Protection:

- Enact and implement the vulnerability assessment system reform for poverty-targeted benefits.
- Support MoLSA in finalization of legislative and policy changes, including the Integrated Social Services (ISS) strategy, Law on Social Assistance, Child Rights and Family Code, and their operationalization through secondary legislation.
- Address the extra costs associated with disability through the development of voucher-based assistance programs.
- Conduct barrier analysis for food insecure families and promote financial inclusion.
- Ensure labor rights and improve labor conditions in care services.

- Design USS new institutional model, Social Housing management model and digital tools based on the functional review.
- Pilot result-based financing for active labor market programs.
- Ensure inclusion of refugees in national protection systems.
- Upgrade the national classification of skills, competences, qualifications and occupations and develop a digital tool.

UNSDCF Outcome 3 on Education:

- Evaluate the School Feeding Programme, improve legislation, and prepare for its expansion in Yerevan.
- Promote widespread integration of Assistive Technologies at various educational levels.
- Enhance the quality of Armenia's TVET system, improving standards, upgrading institutions, and building faculty and youth capacity.
- Support the Ministry of Education in improving legal frameworks for Armenia's youth policy, aiming for the approval of the Law on Youth Policy.
- Expand early learning spaces for refugee and host community children with a focus on accessibility, inclusiveness, quality, and WASH.
- Conduct Joint Sector Reviews (JSR) and annual implementation reports for the State Education Development Programme through 2030.
- Reinforce the Education Management Information System (EMIS) by developing key modules for digital school governance mechanisms in educational institution monitoring and management.

UNSDCF Outcome 4 on Economy:

- Promote refugee integration, investing in human capital development and expanding economic opportunities.
- Implement community development interventions to reach the most vulnerable groups.
- Support SMEs, micro-businesses and local active groups to enhance their production capacities.
- Facilitate social behavior change, reskilling, and upscaling and use of innovative tools.
- Following the youth participation in Regional Rural Youth Forum for Europe and Central Asia, develop regional agricultural Olympiad with focus on youth.

UNSDCF Outcome 5 on Environment:

- Support the Ministry of Environment (MoE) in developing Armenia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and its implementation plan for 2025-2035.
- Finalize the package of the draft Climate Law, incorporating proposals for climate-related technology transfer to promote long-term low emission and climate-resilient development.
- Support the approval and operationalization of the Sevan National Park Management Plan and its Budgeted Strategy.

UNSDCF Outcome 6 on Governance:

- Strengthen the strategic vision of the National Assembly and develop a roadmap for reforms, communication, and collaboration to enhance modern public policy and inclusive practices.
- Enhance institutional capacities of the HRDO and the OSR to protect and promote human rights effectively, increasing access to their services.
- Enhance capacities of the MOIA in strategic planning, evidence-informed policy formulation, budgeting, and police reforms.
- Improve access to justice for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, including those affected by the refugee crisis.
- Clear affected communities from mines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs).

UNSDCF Outcome 7 on Data and SDG Financing:

- Implement Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.
- Launch a human-centric program in the public sector for the next 11 years, beginning with a pilot involving three state agencies under the Ministry of Internal Affairs: Police, Rescue Service, and Migration and Citizenship Service.
- Develop an administrative platform under the Law on Child Protection, focusing on children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.
- Digitalize actual address registration services for the entire population, initially targeting the forcibly displaced population, with regard to the digitalization of temporary protection certificates and later expanding to the general population.
- Enhance the Travelinsights tool, adding the functionality of event analysis in Armenia and their correlation with tourist paths

UNSDCF Outcome 8 on Gender Equality:

- Enhance the national gender machinery, including functional mapping of all relevant actors.
- Conduct Regulatory Impact Assessment of ILO C189 - Domestic Workers Convention.
- Conduct Legal analysis of the regulatory framework in Armenia against the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190).
- Implement a National full-scale Time Use Survey.
- Provide UN Women Beijing +30 support for report drafting and develop an Armenian Country Gender brief.
- Implement Gender Seal Official Methodology for Public Institutions, formally launched within HRDO.
- Develop a unified Gender Glossary.

Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labor Market program	MOJ	Ministry of Justice
AMD	Armenian Dram	MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
ARMSTAT	Statistical Committee of Armenia	MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
AT	Assistive Technology	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
CEPA	Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement	MTAI	Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure
CF	Cooperation Framework	MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks
CHI	Comprehensive Health Insurance	NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
CLM	Community-Led Monitoring	NGO	Non-governmental Organization
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
CSO	Civil Society Organization	OPD	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
CwD	Children with Disabilities	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
DCO	Development Coordination Office		
DFA	Development Finance Assessment	PA	Public Administration
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	PEF	Product Environmental Footprint
DV	Domestic Violence	PSS	Psychosocial Support
EaP	Eastern Partnership	PwD	Persons with Disabilities
EEAS	European External Action Service	RC	UN Resident Coordinator
EMIS	Educational Management Information System	RCO	UN Resident Coordinator Office
		RECP	Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production
ENV	Ministry of Environment	RG	Results Groups
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War	RRP	Refugee Response Plan
EU	European Union	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
GEF	Global Environment Facility	SSW	Social Service Workforce
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
GoA	Government of Armenia	TOC	Theory of Change
HA	Hectares	TransMonEE	Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus		
HRD	Human Rights Defender	UHC	Universal Health Coverage
HRDO	Human Rights Defender's Office	UIS	United Information System
HTI	High-Tech Industry	UN AIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis	UN HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
ILCS	Integrated Living Condition Survey	UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
ILO	International Labour Organization		
IMF	International Monetary Fund	UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
IOM	International Organization for Migration		
IPP	Index of Parliament Perception	UNCG	UN Communications Group
ISO	International Organization for Standardization	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
ISS	Integrated Social Services	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
JSC	Joint Steering Committee		
JWP	Joint Work Plans (JWP)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
LAG	Local Action Group	UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
MGI	Migration Governance Indicators		
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
MoE	Ministry of Economy		
MoESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MoE	Ministry of Economy		
MoF	Ministry of Finance	UNIC	United Nations Information Centre

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USD	United States Dollar
USS	Unified Social Service
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEP	Women Empowerment Principles
WFP	World Food Programme
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WYAC	Women and Youth Advisory Council

List of Figures