



# 2020 UN COUNTRY ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

Published, March 2021



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## MESSAGE FROM THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCF) is “the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).” It guides the entire programme cycle, driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective UN support to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The thrust of the Cooperation Framework (CF) is to contribute to a positive change in people’s welfare and less on bureaucratic processes!

Against this backdrop, this Annual Results’ Report has been prepared to reflect the collective effort of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Eritrea in contributing to the country’s quest to achieve SDGs through the lens and principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB). It has been prepared with special emphasis on higher-level results within the context of the 5Ps—**people, prosperity, planet, peace, and partnership** to ensure inclusivity in reporting on sustainable development. The report serves four main interrelated purposes to:

1. Track the country’s progress on SDGs while taking into account evolving regional dynamics;
2. Present the UN’s collective response to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis;
3. Assess UN’s comparative advantages in delivering for joint results in line with the reform agenda and
4. Draw lessons and experience to inform the preparation of the next Cooperation Framework for the 2022-2026 reporting cycle.


The report aims at creating a strong evidence base that can serve to guide policy interventions for optimal results as the country moves towards 2030. The report notes that the State of Eritrea has enjoyed sustained economic growth over the last 8 years. Increasing from 2.2 percent in 2010 to an estimated 4.2 percent in 2018, Eritrea was projected to remain on a strong growth trajectory to hit 6.2 percent in 2019. However, the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2019 has had debilitating social and economic effects resulting in weak economic performance with pass-through effects on the entire economy.

Although the real extent and scope of COVID-19 is yet to be captured, it suffices to state that the country is likely to experience rising unemployment and income poverty and a reversal in education gains (at the time of writing this report, learners have already lost one full academic year due to the lockdown measures that are currently in force). In addition, some health gains on reproductive, maternal and new-born, and HIV-AIDS might dissipate if the pandemic persists. Given the current state of Eritrea’s health systems, the pandemic and its resulting impacts are likely to overstretch the capacity and resilience of the health, sector should numbers continue to rise. The informal economy, one of Eritrea’s mainstay of low-skilled employment, has not been spared.

It is characterised by pervasive and vulnerable employment, with women being disproportionately and overly represented in the sector. Although poverty level has fallen from a high of 64percent in 2002 to almost half in 2015, a lot of people may slide back into transitory poverty due to the lingering effects of COVID-19. Therefore, addressing the myriad development challenges in Eritrea requires a broad set of policy instruments including focusing on labour-intensive sectors as well as providing social protection to vulnerable groups.

One of the best options for Eritrea is achieving economic transformation through inclusive, diversified and climate-resilient interventions. As the country inches towards the target date of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, Eritrea will need to accelerate its efforts in prioritizing and investing in SDGs while leveraging the support of the bilateral and multi-lateral development partners. On its part, the UNCT in Eritrea, working within the Cooperation Framework, will continue to draw on and leverage its convening power and collective offer in and out of Eritrea to support the Government of the State of Eritrea to deliver stronger results across different sectors and the SDGs in general. Building on this collaboration, the UNCT commits to continually avail itself to providing the necessary technical, advisory, and financial support to the people of Eritrea for accelerated progress towards SDGs.

Through this report, the UNCT hopes to stimulate heightened policy interactions with a view to catalysing more effort and support for SDGs in the country. Going forward, the UNCT will continue to marshal its support for sustained social, economic, and environmental gains at the national and Zoba levels, while leaving no one behind.

  
**Susan Ngongi-Namondo**  
 UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator  
 UNCT Eritrea

## UN COUNTRY TEAM IN ERITREA



### 8 - Resident Agencies



### 7 - Non Resident Agencies



Whereas the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is not a signatory to the current SPCF, it has been engaging the Government to resume programmes on migration and human settlement. Collectively, the UN offers a broad spectrum of expertise in the areas of governance, climate change and environmental sustainability, human rights, gender, political, peace and humanitarian advisory, health education, agriculture and fishery, human settlement and general areas of economic and social interests.

Throughout the current Cooperation Framework, the UN has remained positively engaged. Following the 9 July 2018 signing of the [Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship](#), between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the UN prioritised, from within the SPCF workplan through a Basic Services Response Priorities (BSRP), to respond to the changing reality on the ground. The UN has also been fully engaged in Eritrea’s COVID-19 response.



## Key Development Partners of the UN Development System in Eritrea

In the context of the SPCF 2017-2021, partnership is understood to be the framework for strategic investments between the GoSE, the UNCT and the larger development partners - resident and non-resident, in line with Eritrea's self-reliance and the 'Eritrean Resource First' principles. The UN Country Team collaborates with all development partners to advance results-oriented partnerships in order to promote complementarity and comparative advantages in working together. Significant efforts are therefore made to ensure strong partnerships with all stakeholders.

Eritrea has a few trusted friends with whom there is a solid bilateral and multilateral collaboration on the ground. The United Nations continues to leverage its convening powers in accessing and utilizing the largest share of partnership on offer in Eritrea. Over the course of the current cooperation framework, the United Nations has worked in collaboration with bilateral, multilateral, multinational corporations, and international non-governmental organisations development partners. The flag chart above shows those organisations and resident embassies in Eritrea with whom the UN has been working.

The UN worked with the European Union and its member states such as the Federal Republic of Germany, the French Republic, Republic of Ireland, the Italian Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. With Eritrean's growing influence and engagement in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea area, the country has reaffirmed its ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Ara-

bia, the Republic of Turkey and the United Arab Emirates who in turn support UN projects on food security and environmental sustainability in Eritrea. Eritrea's multilateral partners (governmental and non-governmental) are equally few – the African Development Bank, African Union, the European Union, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the notable international Philanthropist Organisation supporting projects in the area of Agriculture and food security. MasterCard remains the only multinational corporation actively funding projects in Eritrea. The national flag or logo of active diplomatic missions and partners in country are displayed below.

A key lesson from recent analysis of the partnership landscape in Eritrea is that there is no certainty on the expectation of any grand announcements about shifts in the development principle, at least in the present. But there are early pointers to changes in cooperation with partners albeit gradual and slow. Also, the UN and other development partners should be tuned in, read the messaging, and be ready to engage in responsive, accommodative and value-adding ways. In this regard, there is need to continue thinking about improving partnerships, collaboration and reflection on the UNCT configuration to ensure that its presence, both resident and non-resident, resonates with the messaging coming from the government.



## Overview: Cooperation Framework Priority Areas

Priority Areas	Agencies	Programatic Outcomes	Resource Requirement
4	15	8	328.7m

The Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) 2017–2021 between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the United Nations has four pillars and eight interlinked outcomes to support the effective implementation of SDGs in Eritrea. Guided by the National Indicative Development Plan (NIDP) 2014-2018 and by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SPCF espouses the principles of UN “Delivering as One” approach. It ensures a cohesive response to national development priorities reinforcing the principles of aid effectiveness and mutual accountability. The Government of the State of Eritrea (GoSE) and the UN System are thus committed to working together in the spirit of partnership to implement the SPCF as a contribution to the achievement of national development goals and aspirations.

The current cooperation framework covers four priority areas with a total of eight strategic outcomes and 14 participating UN agencies (both resident and non-resident).

- 1. Basic social services** – this pillar targeted youth, women, children, elderly people, rural dwellers, refugees, people living with disabilities and people living with HIV. The objective of the pillar is to increase access to and utilization of quality, integrated health and nutrition services for the achievement of universal health coverage, ensuring all people in the country benefit from available and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services and people have increased access to inclusive, equitable and quality early learning and basic education.
- 2. Environmental sustainability, resilience and disaster risk management** – this pillar focuses on negating the impact of ecosystem degradation and climate change and strengthening community resilience to disasters through the safe disposal of hazardous and obsolete pesticides. Sustainable environmental protection and natural resource management were the key achievements.
- 3. Public sector capacity strengthening** – this pillar focuses to improve evidenced-based planning and policy, accountability by public institutions and sys-

tems to ensure human rights and equitable public service delivery. The way to achieving that was through an enhanced institutional capacity resulting in improved access and quality public service delivery.

- 4. Inclusive growth, food security and sustainable livelihoods** – the priority area in this pillar was to contribute to improving access to and utilization of quality food and enhanced livelihood opportunities for smallholder households by strengthening agricultural productivity and market access leading to improved food and nutrition security. A key enabler for this outcome was undertaking value chain, climate-resilient sustainable agricultural practices, and new propagation techniques to increase production (apiculture, bananas, citrus). The priority area also had gender and youth empowerment, and social protection outcomes for children especially the vulnerable, adolescents, youth, women and people with social needs including refugee to be better protected in order to participate in economic, political, cultural and social development.

These interventions have cumulatively contributed to encouraging progress in health, education, water and sanitation, climate change and disaster risk management in Eritrea. They could also be attributed to improvements in food security and livelihood options for the targeted population. The protection measures continue to safeguard livelihood and protect the at-risk population from harmful practices and beliefs.

The implementation of the SPCF 2017-2021 has not gone without challenges. The long-drawn reprioritisation exercise following the peace agreement with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in 2018 and the pause of all UN programmes in 2019 slowed down programme implementation. A few months after the resumption of programme implementation in late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, further slowing down programmes and necessitating more rigorous change in priorities to address the outbreak. These shifts, though transient, were costly, and caused breaks and twists which affected funds absorption thus impacting the achievement of development results.





## Chapter 1: Key Developments in Eritrea and the Regional Context

Since 2010, Eritrea's economic performance has been on a positive trajectory moving from 2.2 percent to a projected 4.2 percent in 2018. It was further projected to continue with this strong performance due to increased demand for raw materials from its trading partners especially China. Notably, in 2018 the country's growth outpaced Africa's average of 3.2 percent but was below the East African sub-regional average of 6 percent (see Figure 1 below). Growth has largely been driven by services. In 2018, services measured as a proportion of gross value added (GVA) contributed 55 percent to GDP followed by industry at 25.5 percent and agriculture at 17.3 percent respectively. Year on year, the GDP growth for 2019 was estimated at 6.2 percent.

Overall, growth has not been inclusive to generate the quantum of jobs needed to absorb the large numbers of youths that are seeking employment. Currently, 57.4 percent of Eritreans are in vulnerable employment with little or no social protection. Therefore, the country needs to pursue job-rich and climate resilient growth that leverages the economic potential of both the formal and informal sectors especially the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Labour-intensive economic sectors such as housing and construction should be given priority in economic and national planning. Special emphasis should be placed on agricultural production and productivity, tradeable economic sectors that include manufacturing, IT, finance, and professional services.

These have higher growth potential and can leverage external demand for higher value added per job, pay higher average wages, and have large multiplier effects on non-tradable sectors like retail, education, health, food, services, and public utilities. Eritrea, like many African countries, is predominantly rural, with 65% residing in rural areas and subsisting on agriculture. Authorities need to create an enabling environment for commercial agriculture which is socially inclusive, addresses nutrition challenges, responds to the market and promotes 'farming as a business'. The sector should also be modernised so that excess labour released from the rural farms can move to urban-based sectors such as industry and services.

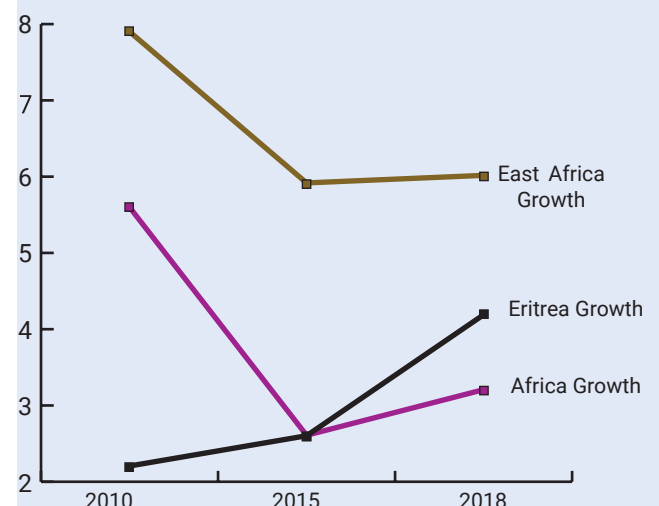
This excess labour will need to be retooled with essential modern skills to improve employability and functionality in urban areas. Since Eritrea is prone to weather elements and natural disasters, its future growth is contingent upon how the agriculture sector can absorb climate-related shocks and disasters. With an initial urbanization rate of 7.1 percent in 1950, Eritrea is projected to be 60.1 percent urban by 2050 (UNDESA, 2018)<sup>1</sup>—a phenomenal increase of 53 percent over a period of 100 years. This translates into an average growth rate of 5.3 percent every 10 years. Notably, Eritrea's urbanization rate is higher than East Africa's average and is expected to overtake Africa's rate by 2050. Such rapid urban transition calls for careful planning, designing, managing, and financing of urbanization in order to

1. UNDESA 2018. *World Urban Prospects: The 2018 Revision*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Population Division

unleash its potential as a strategic driver of industrialization, urban jobs and poverty reduction. Although Eritrea has managed to significantly cut its poverty levels from 64 percent in 2002 to around half in 2015<sup>2</sup>, these gains will be difficult to sustain in the face of the current COVID-19 pandemic and subdued domestic economic activities. In addition, the persistent structural challenges such as unreliable energy, poor infrastructural connectivity between urban and rural areas, low agricultural productivity coupled with low technological absorption have a potential to dilute economic performance.

Figure 1: Regional and national growth trends, 2010-2018

Source: UNDESA



The country's external sector has been resilient. Its total merchandise trade recorded an appreciable volume moving from US\$499 million in 2015 to US\$744 million in 2019, representing an increase of nearly 33 percent. However, its FDI inflows have experienced a significant decrease dipping from US\$ 91 million in 2010 to US\$67.1 million in 2019<sup>3</sup>, translating to a 26.2 percent decrease.

2. African Development Bank Interim Country Strategy Paper 2017-2019

3. <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/CountryProfile/GeneralProfile/en-GB/232/index.html>

## Global and Regional Dynamics and Trends

There are five major global and regional development trends that are shaping economies namely; **climate change, demographic shifts, particularly the youth bulge in Africa, urbanization (Africa is experiencing a rapid urban transition), emergence of digital technology or the fourth industrial revolution characterized by artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT), 3D printing, blockchain, use of the virtual space, big data, use of 5G, etc; and inequalities.**

How a country engages with these major trends will determine, to a large extent, its recovery and resilience post-COVID-19. Therefore, policy responses must be tailored to accommodate the impacts of these global and regional imperatives on national planning. The growth dynamics for East Africa indicate that the region is the fastest growing in Africa. It had a growth of 6.2 percent in 2018, a percentage point higher than the 2017 level. This was mostly driven by governments' spending on infrastructure and increase in domestic demand (ERA, 2019).

The region's growth should be seen in the context of regional integration. The operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021 offers East Africa and its member States immense opportunities for growth through boosting inter and intra-African trade (BIAT). Consistent with the ideals of regional integration, the AfCFTA will unleash many new trade opportunities in industrial products, services and enhanced movement of persons across borders.

ECA estimates that AfCFTA has the potential both to boost intra and inter-African trade by 52.3 percent by eliminating import duties, increasing regulatory transparency, promoting industrial diversification. It is estimated that AfCFTA can double economic growth if non-tariff barriers (NTBs) are reduced and or eliminated. Thus, as Africa moves towards deeper forms of regional integration through the AfCFTA, Eritrea needs to recalibrate and reposition itself to take advantage of the largest free trade area on the continent.

Therefore, assenting to and ratification of the AfCFTA will be the first step towards being part of the largest free trade area in the world. In addition, the country could give its agriculture a boost by domesticating the Comprehensive Africa's Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) for wealth and job creation through value chains, agri-business and agro-processing as well as promoting food and nutrition security.

Below. Eritrea, Northern Red Sea. WHO provides supportive supervision to Foro Maternity Waiting Home during. © UN Eritrea



## 2020 Key Development Trends and Emerging Issues

Data Source: The World Bank; accessed on March 22, 2021 click here for [link to data](#)





The GoSE's vision since independence is to build a modern equitable private sector led economy. Unfortunately, attaining this objective is constrained by various factors including inadequate enabling investment and business environment, and Eritrea's weak macroeconomic conditions. Notwithstanding, Eritrea's economic outlook was on a promising growth path until the COVID-19 outbreak significantly raised the downside risks to realizing the projected growth<sup>4</sup>. The real pre-COVID-19 GDP was projected to grow at 3.9 percent and 4.0 percent in 2020 and 2021, respectively. Per capita income was expected to grow from 1.8 percent in 2019 to 2.6 percent in 2021. According to the 2019 World Investment Report (WIR), the stock of FDI in Eritrea increased to US\$ 600 million in 2018 up from US\$ 55.5 million in 2017<sup>5</sup>.

Underpinning this positive outlook were the dividends from the July 2018 peace agreement with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the removal of UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions vide [UNSC Res S/RES/2444 \(2018\)](#), normalization of relations with the Federal Republic of Somalia, and expectations of a resolution of the dispute with the Republic of Djibouti. In addition, good performance was expected in the mining sector supported by increasing investments in minerals (i.e. copper, zinc, and potash) and the tourism sector. Increased investments in irrigation, microcredit, and alternative livelihoods were expected to further boost agriculture.

The COVID-19 crisis impacted Eritrea's economic outlook through commodity prices and trade, foreign direct investment, and travel and tourism. According to the African Development Bank's estimates, the share of agriculture sector contribution to GDP has remained at 24 percent, largely due to weak rural infrastructure, low use of yield enhancing inputs and technologies, insufficient irrigation systems, inadequate post-harvest storage facilities, lack of skills, and extension services for support to farmers and inefficient land management systems. These problems have combined to drive low agricultural productivity and continue to constrain the country's agricultural growth potential.

In addition to the difficult conditions posed by COVID-19, there are a number of other challenges that need to be addressed to unleash the country's economic potential. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), the combined problems of the locust invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic impeded economic performance in 2020, falling by 0.6 percent, compared to a growth of 3.8 percent in 2019<sup>6</sup>. However, in 2021, growth is expected to rebound to 5.7 percent<sup>7</sup>, thanks to a recovery in China, a major trading partner, and by extension its increased demand for raw materials including minerals and base metals. Although prospects for recovery look promising, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 slowed down growth because of weakening global demand for raw materials and reduced economic activities domestically.

4. African Development Bank, Eritrean Development Outlook 2020: Accessed on April 7, 2020

5. Real GDP growth had increased from 9.6 percent in 2017 to 12.2 percent in 2018

6. <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/eritrea>

7. <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/ERI#countrydata>

There are emerging opportunities in mining, tourism, agriculture and significant potential in the blue and green economies. Increased investment in copper, zinc, and Colluli potash is expected to drive growth in mining in the coming years. The Africa Finance Corporation and the Africa Exim Bank will jointly finance potash production. Investors from Italy and the Eritrean diaspora have expressed interest in developing the islands and coastlines, which would boost tourism. Agriculture is attracting development partner investments in irrigation, microcredit, and alternative livelihoods. The Horn of Africa initiative is focusing on infrastructure and human development as drivers of growth.

While Eritrea is forging ahead with improved ties with Ethiopia, events in the Tigray region in implications for Eritrea's path going forward. The July 2018 rapprochement signalled international re-engagement: the allegations of involvement in Tigray (including the pending investigation) signal possible tension with the international community with implications for partnership building for the SDGs. While not directly related to Tigray, the European Parliament's statement on human rights in Eritrea in October 2020 precipitated the current challenges with the uptake of development funding channelled by the EU to UN Agencies in Eritrea. This challenge can be expected to persist in 2021.

Peace with its neighbours such as the resolution of contentious issues with Djibouti and Somalia, the strengthening of the relationship with Ethiopia and resumption of Eritrea's membership within IGAD will go a long way in propelling forward the realization of enhanced regional trade and commerce in which the strategic position of Eritrea will confer upon the country a significant advantage as a possible hub for regional trade. It will also relieve a huge burden on the country's public finances and open the door to freeing up resources, both financial and human, for socio-economic development, the creation of economic opportunities to reduce unemployment and the flow of out-migration. Without peace and stability in the region, without regional integration and commerce, Eritrea's sustainable socio-economic progress will continue to be constrained.

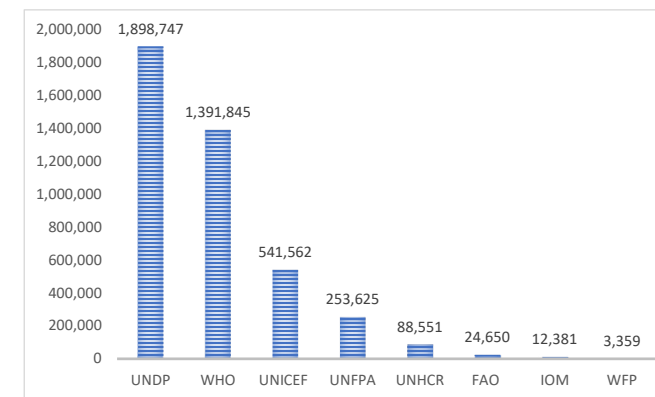


Immunization in Eritrea, UNICEF supported nationwide immunization programme © UN Eritrea

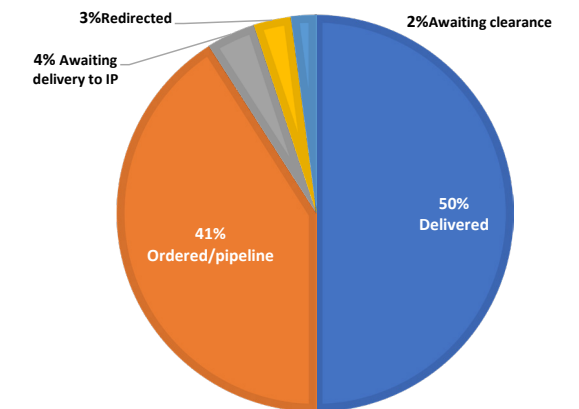
## Chapter 2: UN Socio-economic Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Key indicators that show the socio-economic impact

COVID-19 Response Contribution by Agency



COVID-19 Procurement Status as at December 31, 2020



Eritrea reported its first positive COVID-19 case on March 21, 2020, but it was until December 23, 2020, that the first COVID-19 related death was ascertained. By December 31, 2020 the total number of confirmed cases in the country was 1,320, which is among the least infection rates in Africa, with 676 recovered patients and three (3) reported deaths<sup>8</sup>. This is the result of proactive and robust pandemic containment measures. Eritrea started early restriction and quarantining of travellers who originated from or had transited through countries with reported COVID-19 cases and immediately established a High-level Task Force on COVID-19 which is the central coordinating mechanism for the response to the pandemic.

The country further closed eateries, bars, entertainments places, institutions of learning and worship centres; postponed court sessions for those not urgent, enforced and mandated physical distancing in commercial units and centres before reporting its first positive case. Two weeks after the first case was detected on March 21, the Government, on April 2, 2020, through the High-Level Task Force, announced stringent lockdown measures including the closure of all land and sea borders and air space to commercial flights and instituted a 21-day mandatory stay-at-home order.

The order was extended indefinitely following a rise in cases. In December 2020, it was reaffirmed there was a spike in cases. To alleviate the hardship caused by the lockdown, the Government tracked down on commercial enterprises and discouraged individuals from hoarding or hiking prices of essential commodities. The lockdown measures significantly impeded UN programmatic and operation activities. UNCT in Eritrea embarked on reprioritisation and programme realignment through a cursory programme criticality exercise aimed at a quick response to support the fight against COVID-19. The focus was aimed at preventing community

8. Government of Eritrea update through the Ministry of Information on December 31, 2020 accessed [here](#), accessed on March 18, 2021

spread and protecting at-risk population and communities from exposure and contagion through risk communication and community mobilisation. The UN, through WHO, conducted country readiness assessment for COVID-19 and advised on critical matters of focus. Depending on this, UN priorities were realigned to strengthening risk communication and community engagement, improving national testing capacity, strengthening capacity for the safe movement of people to and from Eritrea, strengthening national laboratory and research capacity for COVID-19 and supporting national health system for the effective delivery of all health-related services.

The UN, led by WHO, developed a response plan to complement Government efforts and established an internal task team to mobilize resources, track and channel requests and procure goods to the Government efficiently. In addition, WHO invested US\$ 400,000 towards the continuation of essential services which was one of the pillars of COVID-19 response in Eritrea. The UN, led by UNDP and the Resident Coordinator's Office, embarked on a rapid impact assessment in May 2020 and followed that with a more detailed assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in November of the same year. These exercises guided and informed the UN Socio-economic Recovery plan (UN SERP).

The UN SERP was developed under the technical leadership of UNDP and the RC Office. The UN Agencies in Eritrea committed to supporting the Government of Eritrea to safeguard progress on the achievement of the SDGs. The focus areas of the UN in Eritrea are strongly aligned to the UN global framework for socio-economic response. It leverages the UN Global Offer as well as flexible tools and resources to deliver the following:

1. **Health System strengthening:** Procuring vital health equipment, protective and medical supplies, improving national data and information systems

2. **Institutional capacity strengthening by improving Hospital Information System at the Ministry of Health.** This saw the transfer the paper-based medical records to digital, the creation Database (DBA), Medical Data Warehouse and Electronic Medical Records of the Ministry of Health to respond swiftly to COVID-19.
  3. **Deployment of Secured E-Zoom Infrastructure** to ensure and facilitate business continuity of Government Business of key ministries. e.g. the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance.
  4. **Supporting strategic communication through a COVID-19 Mobile Application** aiming to achieve: Public advocacy and sensitization on prevention and safety measures on COVID-19 and fostering youth innovation for sustainable development.
  5. **Providing social safety nets** in the form of food and cash transfers under which food items was mobilized to support vulnerable households impacted by COVID-19, in the Northern Red Sea and Anseba Regions and providing inputs and basic assets for the production of crops, livestock and fisheries
- The UN Socio-economic Recovery Plan for Eritrea was implemented for less than two months in 2020, hence there is no solid evidence to ascertain results beyond the activity and at most output levels. The bulk of UN's results were in the response phase. Specifically, the UN efforts saw a strengthened health system by procuring emergency health care equipment and supplies; continued livelihood through social safety nets for the most vulnerable population in the form of food and cash transfers worth around US \$500,407 in the Northern Red Sea and Anseba Regions. As part of the recovery capacity strengthening, the UN with support from UNDP, developed an offline COVID-19 mobile application for case mapping, contact tracing, targeted interventions as well as public advocacy and sensitization on prevention and safety measures.

## 2.1- People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership

### People

Eritrea Vision 2030 seeks to uplift the people out of poverty into a healthy sustainable economy that serves everyone in Eritrea equally. This is in line with its long-held principles of social justice (equitable distribution of resources), which has become the foundation of all public policies and strategies. Social protection programmes in Eritrea are guided by the Eritrean national laws, policies, principles, the Labour Law of 2003, and proclamations including the 1994 National Charter and the 2004 Macro Policy. Yet, poverty remains high in Eritrea with about half of the population falling below the poverty line<sup>9</sup>.

Women constitute about 50 percent of the country's estimated 1 million-person labour force. In addition to their primary responsibility of family care, food processing and preparation, and community activities, they contribute significantly to crop production and subsistence farming. Recognizing that gender equity and equality are intricately linked to the socio-economic development of the country, the UN supported the government of Eritrea to formulate a policy to improve the status of women. Over the past years, significant achievements have been recorded regarding, among other things, women's health, education, and participation in civil, cultural, economic, political, and social life.

However, many women related development programmes are hampered by economic constraints facing the country. Consequently, women still constitute most of the poor according to the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW, 2017) 2017 report. While gender equality and empowerment have received the Government's proactive support since independence, challenges persist. Parity between boys and girls in primary

education has been achieved and gender disparities in secondary education enrolment have been reduced. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, data as of September 2020, Eritrea's Gender Parity Index (GPI) was 0.86, 0.88, for elementary, and middle and secondary levels, respectively. However, girls are less likely, than boys, to progress to higher education, particularly in the science and technology programmes. This is attributed in part to underage marriage and other retrogressive religious and cultural beliefs and practices around girls' education. COVID-19 has made it even more critical to reach those furthest behind and to minimize the socio-economic effects of the pandemic on their wellbeing through mainstreaming the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) in the response to the impact of COVID-19.

It will be critical to respond to the needs of child-headed households, orphans, persons with disabilities, street families, refugees and migrants, persons with chronic illnesses, the aged, homeless and beggars as they are most at risk of being left behind. People living in rural areas, women, and children, are affected disproportionately as evidenced by rural poverty rates, labour market outcomes for women and the high incidence of malnutrition found in children.

As a lesson, with the observed urban-rural disparities in access to quality social services, some degree of emphasis on enhanced or expanded delivery capacity in the rural areas is of ultimate importance. This is particularly true in the areas of water and sanitation, access to electricity and energy, agricultural services, food production and nutrition security particularly for children under five years of age. In the area of education, emphasis must be put on improving the quality of teaching and learning and on more equitable access to pre-primary education.

### Prosperity

Inequality of both opportunities and outcomes remain the defining issues for addressing prosperity with the required level of resources to bridge the gender, spatial and international gaps. The focus on the prosperity agenda of Eritrea is to ensure that all people enjoy fulfilling lives where economic, social, and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

Eritrea's long term objective to improve living standards through development of the energy sector is to electrify all households in the long term and to reduce, by half, the proportion of households without access to adequate lighting and are reliant on sustainable cooking methods between 2014 and 2020. Quantitative targets include electrifying 50 villages per year and 100 percent access to electricity by 2030. According to 2016 data, access to electricity in urban areas stood at 46.7 percent on average.

The urban sector accounted for 77.1 percent in 2018. In rural areas, access to electricity is reported at 34.5 percent<sup>10</sup>. Renewable energy use accounts for 78 percent of all energy consumption due to a significant biomass, wood and cow dung for cooking and heating, whereas access to clean fuels and cooking technology remains very low (about 16.3 percent of the population).

The national unemployment rate is low at 5.1 percent according to ILO Statistics. Women have about the same unemployment rates as men. The MOLSW Labour Survey shows that close to one sixth (17 percent) of the Labour force population remains not gainfully employed. Among urban residents, 18.5 percent were not in gainful employment, and most of them women, accounting for 17 percent. The Labour underutilization rate of the youth (14-40) among urban residents was reported at 16.1 percent and 18.5 percent respectively for men and women and was higher than the national average of 15.6 percent.

Agriculture accounts for about 43 percent of all employment, manufacturing for less than a tenth, while the service sectors account for a little less than 50 percent. The service and agriculture sectors absorb at least two fifths of female employment. Women's average weekly hours of work and average monthly earnings are slightly lower than that of men in equivalent occupations. As many as 33.4 percent of all the employed have never been to school and only 36.6 percent have attended school up to primary level.

10. World Bank, [www.data.worldbank.org](http://www.data.worldbank.org)

### Planet

With the strong view that the development of our planet should be revisited, reinvented, and recalibrated, the UN and the Government of the State of Eritrea are taking key measures and actions to promote climate resilience and environmental sustainability. The driving forces and pressures on the country's environmental situation include the need to meet the food and energy requirements of the population, and the need for economic growth and job creation. Climatic hazards such as temperature increases, reduced precipitation, chronic droughts, flash flooding, heat stress, El Niño effects, and sea level rise have been noted to adversely affect food security, water supply, public health and wildlife.

Coastal resources and fragile ecosystems are also major concerns with regard to a changing climate. Those most likely to be affected are those least able to cope such as subsistence farmers, spate and irrigated well farmers, pastoralists, the rural poor, small-scale traders, urban and semi-urban poor, artisanal fishermen and island inhabitants. These groups are already finding it difficult to cope with increasing climatic variability. Women, children, informal settlement dwellers and elderly people are particularly vulnerable.

Eritrea is highly dependent on its natural resource base and biodiversity resources for socio-economic benefits of its people and economic growth. The presence of the natural resources and biological resources and their diversity provide raw materials and inputs for domestic and commercial production and consumption as well as providing a range of ecosystem services which support human populations and their economic activities. Biodiversity also allows for the possibility of future economic growth and holds intrinsic cultural, bequest and heritage values for the Eritrean state and people. The steady development of constructed areas not properly planned is a significant risk for environmental degradation, and loss of natural and cultural heritage.

Eritrea has made concrete steps for the protection of her cultural and natural heritage. Two cornerstones for the country were the "Cultural and Natural Heritage Proclamation", which, since 2015, lists immovable assets eligible for having national significance and the inclusion in 2017 of Asmara in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Land tenure is also a common issue. However, some progress on equal land rights have been made, starting with the explicit recognition of equal rights of men and women, and the explicit prohibition of gender-based discrimination laid down in the Constitution<sup>11</sup>.

Despite the fast-growing urban settlements, land consumption to population growth rates<sup>12</sup> indicate urbanization is increasing at a controlled pace, with limited sprawl and land consumption, concentrated along major routes. Urban Development Plans exist for main cities (Asmara, Massawa) or parts of them. The main cities also enjoy a network of public transport (buses) in main cities (Asmara, Massawa),

11. UN-Habitat 2005, *Innovations in Land Tenure, Reform and Administration in Africa* <https://rmportal.net/framelib/ltpr/052709/habitat-bankpaperedited.doc>

12. SGD 11.3.1



although statistics on population coverage, frequency and reliability are lacking. It is also worthy to note that, productive cities are engines of growth because of the agglomeration economies they offer in terms of skilled labour, information networks, physical and soft infrastructure, access to markets for goods and services as well as knowledge spill-overs<sup>13</sup>. The more Eritrea harnesses from its growing urbanization the better it will be for its fledging economy.

During the 30-year war of independence, Eritrea's environmental problems were escalated, and its environmental and natural resources have been overexploited. With the country's energy output still being inadequate, biomass remains the main source of energy, especially among rural households. Biomass is unsustainable as it is increasingly becoming scarce due to deforestation and environmental degradation. The completion of the Hirgigo electricity project, which has hitherto more than doubled the power generating capacity from 52 to 136 mega-

13. ECA 2017. *Urbanization and Industrialization for Africa's Transformation. Economic Report on Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

## Peace

Since the current cooperation framework was signed in 2017, Eritrea has traversed different phases in its country context. The July 2018 rapprochement with Ethiopia has been considered an important watershed for the possible future direction of development in Eritrea. It initially signalled a shift in development focus and ushered general improvement of relations with countries in the region. Nevertheless, expectations of sustained shifts in the country's development trajectory waned somewhat as various indicators suggested the need for continued patience/caution to further observe developments in the region and their implications for Eritrea. In particular, the dynamics in Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and countries along the Red Sea considered important external influence on Eritrea's economic and political relations.

While Eritrea remain peaceful as a country, there are trends in neighbouring countries that raise concerns. The fallout between Sudan and Ethiopia following Ethiopia's Amhara region's claim of disputed land between the two countries is a direct result of the Tigray conflict. The tension between the two countries appeared to change the dynamic around the unresolved controversy on the sharing of the Nile waters,

watts, will assist in addressing this problem. However, the country, with the support of development partners, needs to scale up investment in sustainable energy infrastructure to reverse the country's deforestation and environmental degradation.

Generally, there is a huge energy demand as the country's grid system is limited and some towns get power from isolated low capacity generators. Eritrea's current Public Finance Management (PFM) system is characterized by tight budgetary and treasury management controls, limited to scarce published information, centralized and consolidated oversight structures and procedures, and weak institutional and human capacities, particularly at the sub-national levels. These challenges prevent development partners from primarily or exclusively relying on country PFM procedures and systems to execute development assistance programmes.

and specifically the building and filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). While Eritrea had so far positioned itself in a mediative role between Ethiopia and the Sudan-Egypt axis, the appearance of closeness between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the border land claim by the Amhara region has shifted the dynamic which has led to Sudan and Egypt closing ranks with regard to the use of the Nile waters.

Still, the ongoing state of unrest in Ethiopia, read together with the planned elections in June 2021, suggest that the expected fruits of peace in the region and for Eritrea may be on hold for longer. Peace, stability, regional integration, and trade are fundamental to Eritrea's well-being and economic prosperity. Except for a few short years after independence, the country has been dogged by tension, conflict and isolation. The implementation of the Algiers Agreement and the July 2018 Peace and Friendship Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia and a stable and neighbourly relationship with Djibouti and Sudan would define Eritrea's next niche in national regional development.

## Partnership

The nature and severity of the transformational challenges facing Eritrea call for long lasting multilateral partnerships to help see Eritrea through various threats (natural and man-made). This should take the form of strong meaningful engagement with multilateral partners such as the United Nations, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the World Bank which may provide the type of confidence building that can bring about important shifts in partnerships between Eritrea and the international community. Currently, the partnership architecture in the country is shallow and narrow with fewer bilateral and multilateral partners. The leadership of Eritrea has however emphasized their drive to foster and enhance technical cooperation with various foreign institutions and experts.

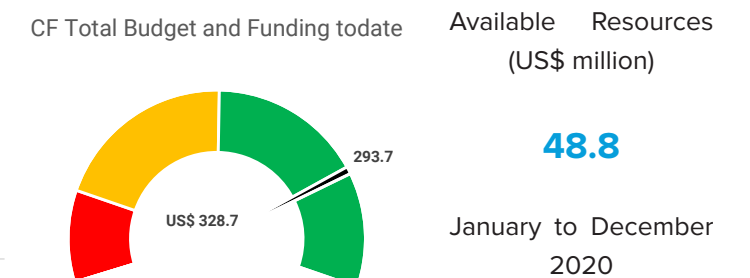
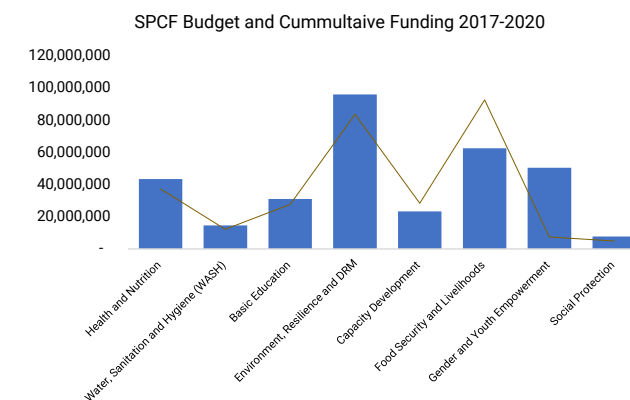
## Chapter 3: UN Development System Support to National Development Priorities through the Cooperation Framework

The UN development system support to national development is encapsulated in the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) of 2017-2021, the fourth strategic medium-term cooperation framework for Eritrea, that draws from and seeks to enhance Eritrea's development aspirations as articulated in the National Charter of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), which states inter alia, that the government shall seek to build a prosperous, peaceful and just country based on the principle of self-reliance. It outlines the collective vision and shared response of United Nations agencies in Eritrea to the National Indicative Development Plan (NIDP) 2014-2018.

It responds directly to the country's goals to advance Eritrea's sustainable development agenda and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Below are the requirements and funding of the SPCF 2017 - 2021, as of 30 September 2019. The full implementation of the CF was halted in

2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic threatened human existence globally. Major areas of interest identified at the start of 2020 were deprioritised as the pandemic penetrated the fabrics of the country. In response, sustaining delivery of the essential social services especially health, water, electricity, essential supplies for health workers as well as food, livelihood and social protection became a major priority alongside COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic in Eritrea reduced economic activities and forced business closures and job losses. It disrupted supply chains including food, health, and other essential social services, strained social protection systems, reduced fiscal space as tax revenues were eroded and further strained multilateral collaboration due to the clamp on cross-border movements. Eritrea prides itself on its vibrant social capital and youthful population (median age of 19.2 years) but the resilience of its communities and local economies systems was severely tested by COVID-19.



### 3.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

Total resources available for development interventions in Eritrea through the CF was US\$ 48.8 million. So far, the CF is about 90 percent funded in total with US\$293.7 million and one outcome (food Security and Livelihood) exceeding its planned budget for the entire programme cycle. On the UN system development contribution to results through the CF, results outlook are uneven quality and magnitude across the priority due to the unprecedented shifts needed to combat COVID-19 in 2020.

In close collaboration with Government, UN Agencies directly working on health- UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS – moved to consolidate recent gains in health indicators. With Primary Health Care seen as the pathway to achieving Universal Health Coverage, Eritrea has consistently focused on reducing maternal mortality, neonatal and child mortality. The reduction rate in child mortality is on average 4 percent over the last decade. This is largely due to the focus on expanding (in geographic scope) and increasing the coverage of basic public health services. Both the facility and community-based

health services contributed to the reduction of child morbidity and mortality. More mothers and new-borns are now receiving postnatal care within two days of childbirth (19.5 percent (HMIS 2020)). The country is on course to start providing holistic/comprehensive child health care based on an ongoing integrated management of neonatal and childhood illnesses (IMNCI) in communities and facilities around the country.

Eritrea has sustained the progress on the key Sexual Reproductive Maternal Neonatal Child and Adolescent health); (SRMNCAL such as observed in Antenatal Care (ANC), 39.7 percent of women received 4 ANC contacts, as compared to 40 percent in 2019; and deliveries attended by skilled personnel is at 57.8 percent in 2020 (HMIS report). However, family planning is still experiencing setbacks with only 6.5 percent of reproductive aged women utilizing family planning services, which is well below the target of 20 percent aimed for in 2021.



Medebar Metal Market, Asmara, Eritrea. Here, workers turn heaps of scrap metal into useful items. ©UN Eritrea



Eritrea's immunization programme continued to make significant achievements in the prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases, with immunisation coverage remaining high at over 95 percent for most antigens. Still, a high number of neonates die within the first week of life because 42 percent of Eritrean women are delivering at home. Only 24.7 percent of the women received postpartum care at 7 days, 6.5 percent of reproductive aged women utilized family planning services in 2020, well below the target of 20 percent aimed for the year; and 39.7 percent of women received 4 antenatal care (ANC), as compared to 40 percent in 2019. These were in part due to the protracted lockdown in Eritrea for the good part of the year.

The UN and GoSE's lifesaving interventions on malnutrition was scaled up to curb further deterioration in acute malnutrition especially given the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of children aged 6-59 months affected by Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM), admitted for treatment (total) in 2020 (Jan-Dec) was significantly more (28 percent), as compared with same period of 2019. The MoH with support from UNICEF treated more than 74,553 children under five for acute malnutrition during the reporting period compared to 50,000 in 2019. Of these, 19,037 were treated for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) while around 55,516 were treated for Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM).

This situation pointed to rising humanitarian situation that would have led to preventable excess mortality. Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) was reported at 95 percent and above the EPI coverage across the nation. On other essential social services, notable progress was made in areas such as ending open defecation (ODF). The number reduced from 90 percent in 2010 to 40 percent in 2019. Eritrea's HIV prevalence also declined since the early 2000s and it is sustained below 1 percent. About 8,957 or approximately 87 percent of people living with HIV accessed treatment at 53 ART Sites across the country. By the end of 2019, 97 percent of the eligible women attending ANC were tested for HIV and almost all known HIV infected women (98 percent) in ANC are receiving ART.

The Antenatal Care Sentinel Surveillance surveys indicated that HIV positivity among pregnant women and among people voluntarily coming for HIV counselling and testing (HCT) had declined from 2.5 percent to 0.21 percent and from 4.34 percent to 0.37 percent from 2003 to 2019 respectively.

ly. According to SPECTRUM 2020, overall HIV incidence declined from 0.63 to 0.11 [95 percent CI; 0.07-0.26] per 1000 while AIDS-related mortality declined from 1246 to 310 [95 percent CI; <500-870). New infection decreased from 1387 to 370 between 2000 and 2019. The numbers on education also present a mixed picture. The adjusted net enrolment rate (ANER) at primary level of education increased marginally from 83.5 percent (F: 81.2 percent) in 2019 to 83.7 percent (F: 81.5 percent) in 2020. This means a slight decline in the proportion of primary age out-of-school children from 16.5 percent in 2019 to 16.4 percent in 2020. However, in middle and secondary levels of education, the ANER indicated a steady decline from the base year and stands at 65 percent (61.0 percent females) and 46.7 percent (44.4 percent females) respectively. This signaled a slight increase in the proportion of out-of-school children in those levels of education.

Poverty issues continued to preoccupy the GoSE's development discourse in 2020. Several livelihood and cash transfer interventions were undertaken to ameliorate the impact of the nationwide lockdown. The UN, through UNDP, contributed to an improved livelihood for 3,500 (60 percent women) rural farmers through the implementation of a range of natural resource-based conservation and land restoration solutions, including cash-for-work based natural resources conservation to restore the fragile natural environment and maintain food security of the targeted households and communities. Even though the lockdown affected most wage earners in hairdressing, it was those in the informal hospitality sector, notably women tea sellers, taxi drivers and mechanics that were impacted the most through the general reduction of economic activities.

During the same period, access to clean energy was also increased. The UN, through UNDP and European Union joint project, 450 households or about 1,800 people residing in sub-towns of Maidima and Areza were able to access solar powered renewable energy from the installed two photo-voltaic mini-grids of a combined 2.4 MW. So far 2,450 households or about 9,800 people have access to energy generated by the facility. Access to clean and reliable electricity is helping women enhance their livelihood and social development in the society. Figure 3 below shows the total budget and funding received per outcome from 2017-2020.

The cooperation framework outcomes and outputs are being delivered in a fluid and flexible, albeit constantly evolving national context with emerging and disappearing priorities over time. The UN responded promptly through the BSRP, a subset of the CF to realign its work to better support Government. With the focus on health, education, livelihood, capacity strengthening for good governance and rule of law, climate change and environment and more recently COVID-19, this section will articulate more of the outputs level changes – related to capacities, products, services and systems, that contributed to the results articulated above.

## Basic Social Services

Eritrea achieved strong social outcomes in the face of limited resources and has registered consistent improvements in life expectancy. The 2020 indicator showed an increase of 0.53 percent from 66.09 in 2019 to 66.44 years in 2020. Generally, increasing access to essential social services has been critical to these gains and many others on social services. There was reasonable progress in health, water, sanitation and hygiene and energy despite the ravaging effects of the global pandemic. The UN Agencies working in those sectors in Eritrea (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNAIDS) reported reasonable progress for the period being reviewed.

The Ministry of Health (MoH), in collaboration with the WHO, developed a new National Health Policy (NHP) which aims to achieve the country's health sector vision, goals and aspirations, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, the community-based services policy 2020 and strategic plans for diseases such as Malaria, TB and HIV were all developed as tools to translate the NHP into actions, under the Health Sector Strategic Plan II (2017-2021). These documents are anticipated to guide the implementation of the medium-term health targets of the country.

The UN also supported MoH to regularly deliver integrated services in 41 hard-to-reach communities' country-wide out of the targeted 60 through the integrated mobile clinic services. This included primary health care interventions such as reproductive health (ANC, family planning), nutritional screening, immunization, vitamin-A supplementation and referral of the severely acute malnourished children, HIV screening and treatment, health promotion services and out-patients consultation. This integrated mobile clinic services provided an opportunity to reach 41 remote communities with essential services. In addition, WHO supported the development of the national guideline on infection prevention and control (IPC). This was updated to incorporate COVID-19 recommendations using the interim WHO guidelines and other tools for reference during trainings.

The Eritrea Maternal and Neonatal program was strengthened through the provision of international technical specialists of four Obstetric, Gynaecologists and anaesthetists each, in the health facilities of the country and the implementation of the high impact interventions in Maternal and Child health was accelerated leading to further reduction in maternal mortality. 32 health facilities were capacitated to perform standard basic emergency obstetric by providing refresher training in Life-Saving Skills to health workers. 20 adolescent-friendly health services were strengthened by building the capacity of 29 health-care workers on friendly adolescent health. With UN's support through WHO, six hospitals were enabled to perform caesarean

section and resuscitate new-borns by empowering 12 Junior medical doctors through a 12-weeks course on comprehensive emergency obstetric and neonatal care; essential drugs, supplies/commodities including the provision of Corn-Soy Blend plus (CSB+) for supplementary feeding at the health facilities with Maternity Waiting Homes for their full functionality.

Moreover, the Maternal Perinatal Death Surveillance and response guideline was finalized to improve the quality of primary health care of maternal and perinatal health and eventually reduce maternal and new-born mortality and morbidity. The Cervical Cancer Prevention, Control and Management guideline was finalized, printed, and disseminated in 2020 for better cervical cancer diagnosis and treatment. MoH trained and deployed 87 Barefoot Doctors as part of the pool of Community Health Workers (CHWs) implementing home-based care on the Community-Integrated. Management of Childhood Illness (c-IMNCI), community growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) and community infant and young child feeding (IYCF). In addition, 173 CHWs, drawn from Northern Red Sea, Gash Barka and Anseba Zones, were provided with a refresher training in Q1 of 2020.

In support of the service provision, adequate essential medicines were procured benefitting more than 110,000 children younger than five years of age. The MOH with support from the UN finalized the proposal to GAVI for the introduction of the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine for the prevention of cervical cancer among adolescent girls. It is important to note that the existing Health Sector Strategic Development Plan II (2017-2021) reported good progress in communicable diseases with significant reduction in malaria incidence over time, sustained progress in the reduction of the number of notified TB cases; new HIV infections, HIV prevalence, and AIDS related mortality in the general population.

Eritrea has taken significant steps to increase demand for family planning. The UN, through UNFPA, capacitated 55 Health facilities in the country on family planning with the training of 55 health workers and supply of modern commodities to all health facilities providing FP services to ensure no stockout. However, the country reported high ANC dropout and low institutional deliveries/skilled births, which was linked to sub-optimal service quality rather than low demand. Nonetheless, both communication for development (C4D) and quality improvements were applied to address the dropouts.

The efforts were directed at women and young people's access to high-quality comprehensive maternal and neonatal health services, including fistula treatment which resulted in treating 87 fistula survivors, provision of psychological and psychosocial support and conducting vocational trainings for fistula survivors to empower and equip them with life skills. In complementing the work of WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA in the health sector, UNAIDS advocated for the implementation of a multi-month dispensing (MMD) programme, ensuring that People Living with HIV did not face disruption in ARV supplies due to the COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions on movement. In 2020, the UN supported four integrated mobile vaccination sessions in each of the hard to reach areas of 16 districts in the 4 regions reaching an additional 38,004 children with vaccines. A combination of these outreach services and a comprehensive community mobilization, risk communication and community engagement helped to ensure that immunization services were maintained at high levels of 95 percent and above

## 3.2. Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs

The four priority areas of the current cooperation framework are as follows:

1. **Pillar 1: Basic social services**
2. **Pillar 2: Environmental sustainability, resilience and disaster risk management**
3. **Pillar 3: Public sector capacity development; and**
4. **Pillar 4: Inclusive growth, food security and sustainable livelihoods.**

These results areas respond to national challenges related to

1. **Improving and sustaining social progress and environmental sustainability**
2. **Capacity development**
3. **Accelerated inclusive growth, food security and livelihoods**
4. **Gender and youth empowerment and**
5. **Human welfare, social and child protection.**



since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic which threatened to erode the gains thus far achieved. The result of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) coverage survey, supported by UNICEF and WHO, showed a coverage of above 95 percent for Penta-3 antigens. The completeness of the routine immunisation report was 98 percent and timeliness was at 97 percent, with routine immunization coverage at 98.7 percent.

In addition, therapeutic and supplementary feeding interventions for children and women in all communities nationwide were also undertaken. Special focus was on improving the quality of services to beneficiaries, maintaining treatment outcomes well above international SPHERE standards; thus the cure rates were 91.3 percent (SPHERE >75 percent), defaulter rates 8.1 percent (SPHERE < 15 percent) and death rate 1.1 percent (SPHERE <5 percent). Water, sanitation, and hygiene became more critical as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread. In collaboration with UNICEF, 23,079 (10,386 male, 12,693 female and 1,154 people with disability) people had access to safe drinking water.

This was achieved as a result of the construction of 1 and rehabilitation of 10 community water supply systems in Zoba, Anseba, Debub, and Northern Red Sea, by the Ministry of Land, Water and Environment (MoLWE)'s Water Resources Department (WRD).. As part of the National Roadmap to end open defecation in Eritrea by 2022, with UNICEF's support, 465 communities were declared open defecation free in 2020, providing access to sanitation and hygiene services to 451,832 people (203,325 male and 248,507 female)<sup>14</sup>. The UN, through UNICEF and in collaboration with the Ministry

14. CLTS data 2020, MoH

## Public Sector Capacity Development

The objective of the UN system public sector capacity development interventions in Eritrea is to create the enabling environment for equitable public service delivery, human rights, and rule of law through evidence-based planning and policy formulation and accountable public institutions and systems. With UN support through UNDP, Eritrea now has 266 (35 percent Women) staff in various government offices trained in Compliance Audit, IT Auditing and Internal Auditing; Financial Audit, Compliance Audit; and 60 staff on Accounting and IT.

The UN, with technical support from UNDP, capacitated the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) with more qualified, motivated, and competent staff (from 40 in 2016 to 80 in 2020) to handle the demands of the office. As a result, the OAG's performance rating improved to an internationally accepted level. Consequently, a draft audit legislation was developed and submitted to the Government for approval. All these measures helped strengthen transparency, accountability and risk management. In addition, OAG developed;

1. [Integrated Reporting Template that can be used by Supreme Audit institutions \(SAI\)](#)
2. [Standard Planning Guideline](#)

of Education, constructed 124 primary classrooms, 24 staff rooms and 17 teacher residence quarters in underserved rural communities to increase access to basic education services in those communities. This enabled the enrolment of 4,960 (2,050 females) disadvantaged children in formal primary level of education. Similarly, 22 Complementary Elementary Education (CEE) centres were built, and 180 CEE facilitators from communities trained. This furthered efforts to expand the reach of non-formal accelerated learning program and thus catered for the learning needs of 5,700 (2,500 females) out-of-school children and youth from remote rural communities in Gash Barka. UNICEF's cost-effective access expansion strategy on early learning opportunities ensured 42 pre-primary classrooms were constructed and equipped within the premises of existing primary schools.

This increased capacity led to enrollment of 1,400 (750 females) pre-school age children. Furthermore, the construction of additional 141 primary level, 30 Early Childhood Education (ECE), 8 Special Needs Education (SNE) classrooms, 36 staff rooms and 3 teacher residence quarters in the four disadvantaged Zobas: Anseba, Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea were finalized during the reporting year and will provide access to learning opportunities for an additional number of children from targeted communities when schools re-open Zobas (Maekel, Debub, Anseba, Gash Barka), evaluated seed multiplication of 4 crops (wheat, Barley, Pearl Millet, Sorghum), and conducted training on food and feed safety and processing, and translation of Animal Health Proclamation into Tigrinya. As a result, three prototype vaccines were produced (Newcastle 12 wet vaccine, Fowl pox wet vaccine and dried Peste Des Petits Ruminants (PPR).

3. [System for Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategic and Operational Plans](#)
4. [Delegation Policy](#)
5. [New Organizational Structure and Job Descriptions developed](#)
6. [Code of Ethics which was revised to comply with the International Standard for Supreme Audit Institutions](#)
7. [Staff Training and Development Policy;](#)
8. [Stakeholder Engagement Strategy](#)
9. [Strategic Plan for Office of the Auditor General for 2019-2023 and](#)
10. [New Financial Audit Manual which was rolled out in 2020.](#)

Further, the digitization and centralization of the e-justice system supported by UN, increased efficiency in court procedures, client satisfaction and efficiency in justice delivery (E.g. Power of attorney can now be obtained in less than 20 minutes) and reduced wastages and transaction time. The fully automated case flow management system is

expected to result in improved operational efficiency, better reporting, and reduced backlog of cases. Human resource capacities were upgraded by improving knowledge, skills and attitude of the management and staff of MoJ and other Government offices through short and long-term training. At the Ministry of Labour, a new digital system was introduced that resulted in increased efficiency and productivity in developing TV and Radio Programmes, reducing costs as well as transaction time by 30-40 % for information flow to and from the regions. This enhanced information system has improved the general management capacity of the MoL.

The interventions did not only benefit Government ministries, departments, and agencies, it also deliberately targeted non-government and civil society organizations. The National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW), in partnership with UNDP, introduced simple and effective 250 handwashing stands which aims to provide and support

innovation in the re-opening of different categories of businesses, ensuring workplace safety and well-being with the provision of adequate hand sanitation. The National Union of Eritrea Workers (NCEW) was supported to provide various relevant training programs to 600 youth, including women in the area of Carpentry, Electricity, Welding, Electricity through the supply of IT Equipment, Electrical Equipment and Tools, Training Manuals, Welding machines, and furniture.

Through the intervention, the skills of 2 Eritrean technicians working under the Research and Documentation Center of the Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) were upgraded on audio recording and sound arrangement to enable them work as an audio-arrangers for different projects and programs. As a result, the two produced a short animation clip on COVID-19 that was successfully aired on the national Eri-TV, which boosted public awareness on COVID-19. On inclusive growth, food security and sustainable livelihood

## Inclusive growth, food security and sustainable livelihood

targeted vulnerable population especially children, adolescents, young people with special needs, including refugees, by improving their capacity, access to, and utilisation of quality food and livelihood opportunities, ensuring equitable opportunities to participate or be engaged in economic, political, cultural and social development. Food and nutrition have been of major national and public health interest in Eritrea way before the pandemic. That was why the agriculture sector received preferential treatment during COVID-19 lockdown with lesser restrictions. Apart from being the main source of livelihood for about 60 percent of the population, it contributes about 17 percent to the GDP and between 20-30 percent to commodity exports. Capacities of value chain actors (banana and citrus) and service providers strengthened food system and value chain philosophy and advocacy for integrated solutions.

Fruit sector strategy for value chain and markets development was drafted by MoA and FAO and the two conducted an assessment on value chain analysis and identification of suitable varieties production of good quality materials. With respect to livelihood support to smallholder farmers of Northern Red Sea to boost their productivity, around 500 quintals of improved seed (wheat, sorghum, pearl millet (cereals), and oil seeds (sesame and groundnut) were distributed to 6,900 beneficiary farmers. Further, more than 40 Kgs of bee forage seed were collected and provided to a selected Nursery to multiply and distribute to broader use. In addition, a ToT on Agronomic, Poultry and Bee Forage Management was provided to 50 MoA staff who in turn trained 1250 farmers. 8200 farm tools (shovels, mattock and pickaxe) were procured and distributed to 4300 households while 15 thousand one-month-old cross-bred chicks were provided to 600 women households in 9 sub-regions of the NRS zone.

In a joint programme between FAO and WFP, the capacity of Agricultural extension staff of the MoA and smallholder farmers was improved on grain post-harvest handling and storage. Storage materials (Silos, hermetic bags, tarpaulins) were distributed in four regions of Maekel, Debub, Anseba and Gash-barka. In addition, 40 agricultural extension experts, Training of Trainers (ToT) were trained on agronomy, and they in turn trained an additional 400 experts who trained 7,000 beneficiary farmers. 16,800 hermetic bags, 800 plastic silos and 3000 tarpaulins

were distributed to 5000 beneficiary farmers in four Regions. With regards to understanding the links between Nutrition and Agriculture, a nutrition Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) ToT was conducted targeting 25 government staff from MoA, Marine Resources, Eritrean Standards Institution, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Zoba. The participants were taken through the key principles and various methods used in dietary assessment. Enumerators were also trained in Zoba Maekel and Anseba on dietary patterns assessment methods. In addition, 700 Women Households in coastal regions of the Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea have improved skills on net making and traditional Small Fishing Activities.

This is to establish net making and repairing women groups (30 groups of 10); fish processing, food safety and hygiene women groups (20 groups of 10) and snail and Sea cucumber collecting women groups (20 groups of 10) each. In collaboration with the UN through IFAD, Eritrea now has an Environmental Social Management Plan and Framework for the Fisheries Resources Management Programme (FREMP). IFAD also developed the dam management plan for inland fisheries and conducted the Rapid assessment study on Agricultural sector and water quality analysis of water reservoirs used in inland fisheries interventions. On ecosystem management in coastal environment, 117 households participated in the planting of 88.5 ha worth of mangroves and halophytes along the coastal and islands sub-zobas through the programme.

Further, 7 additional water reservoirs were selected in 4 hinterland Zoba through selection process including water capacity and quality analysis, fish abundance and health status and availability of social services. To promote watershed management in inland reservoirs, 99 ha of land was managed and terraced with the participation of 1,135 household, 41 percent of women were female headed and 53 thousand seeds planted. For the UNHCR in Eritrea, the operational and protection environment changed since the first quarter of 2019 as the Government verbally cancelled the Partnership Agreement (PA) between UNHCR causing spontaneous departure of refugees from Eritrea. This would have reduced the total number of students who were attending school at different levels, since about 934 had been identified as refugees. Following the cancellation of the PA, the Office



of Refugees Affairs (ORA) took full responsibility to provide care and support for the camp-based refugees and hence the remaining students were able to continue with their education in the camp and in Massawa until the time schools got closed as part of the COVID-19 prevention measures.

On the prevention of harmful practices and sexual and gender-based violence, the Government adopted a five-year (2020-2024) costed national strategic plan to end female genital mutilations (FGM) and underage marriages (UAM) and commenced implementation. With UN's support, the Government strengthened coordinated action and implemented prevention and response interventions for FGM and UAM – involving community mobilization, dialogue, and service provision – which was continued until March 2020 and later paused due to the lockdown during COVID-19. In the first quarter of the reporting year, 200 community mobilization events were conducted to eliminate harmful practices and violence against children in all 67 sub-Zobas reaching 49,747 people (19,895 females), including 7,958 adolescent girls. There currently are 453 anti FGM-C and underage marriage

committees at regional, sub regional and administrative villages coordinated under the National Steering Committee (NSC). In 2020, amid the COVID-19 lockdown, 51 cases of under-age marriages were stopped, and 3 FGM/C cases brought to the court because of community mobilization and effective work of the committees. The family counselling service solved 222 cases related to UAMs, rape, illegal sexual relationships/betrayal and others forms of violence against girls and women in collaboration with the legal institutions/reinforcement officers. These committees provided prompt victim support to enable integrating into the community.

Furthermore, a national level RCCE and Family and Community Health Unit consultation/engagement supported development/ aired 45 radio and TV programmes on continuity of care and prevention of GBV at community level. Promotion of continuity of care at facility, community and household levels was reinforced. The MoH and UNICEF also moved to mitigate rumours and misinformation on COVID-19 through the 24/7 call center.

## National progress in reaching those left behind

8  
Resident  
UN Agencies  
7  
Non-Resident  
UN Agencies  
11  
Sectors  
410  
Agency Activities  
(including 29 activities at national level)

### UN Agency Activities by Zoba and Sector

Anseba	35	8	23	3	19	11			1				
Debub	23	9	23	4	18	11			1				
Gash Barka	22	7	23	3	18	11			1				
Maekel	24	7	23	4	19	11			1				
SKB(NRS)	36	8	24	4	21	22			2	2			
DKB (SRS)	23	6	23	3	19	11			1	2			

Source: OCHA, Asmara Eritrea

The protection of the most vulnerable population groups cuts across the work of the UN. In addition to mainstreaming it, affirmative actions were taken to reach persons left behind. UNICEF, WHO, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNAIDS, UNHCR and UNFPA are among the agencies that articulated concrete actions through their workplan to target people left behind. Their efforts included providing much needed support to vulnerable or disadvantaged or population at risk of being left behind. The main groups targeted based on the principles of leave no one behind are drought-affected pastoralist households; small-scale rural farmers; children under-5, especially malnourished children; nomadic communities and children on the move; out of school children; communities in border areas, people at risk of landmines/ERWs; people living with disabilities,

especially children; pregnant and lactating mothers; female-headed households; the elderly; adolescents at risk of irregular migration; people in hard to-reach areas; and refugees. In collaboration with the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers NCEW), the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) and the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), the UN strengthened the productive capacity of youth for sustainable employment opportunities. 544 youth were trained in Electricity, Tourism and Customer Services, Animal Farming (Goat rearing), Advanced Computer Networking, Driving and Bee and Poultry. In addition, 600 poor and vulnerable household farmers received beehives to support their livelihoods through generation of alternative income from bee keeping.

In 2020, 30 thousand people including children and adolescents were reached through community and school-based risk education (MRE) in Zoba Gash-Barka, Debub, and Northern Red Sea. In addition, UNICEF provided support to MoE towards design and printing of the Injury, Violence and Disability Prevention IEC flipchart and training manual for teachers and community-based Child Rights Committees/social mobilisers to be used extensively in communities and schools in mine risk areas of the country.

MoLSW in coordination with MoE procured educational supplies for 7,220 children in-need including street children to assist them get back to school once the schools reopen. Over-all, 9220 at-risk children were supported in the reporting year. A National Social Protection Policy and Strategic Plan focusing on mostly vulnerable, specifically female headed households is under development under the leadership of MoLSW with support from UNICEF and is expected to be finalized by end of 2021. To strengthen the social service workforce, UNICEF and MoLSW are working together to institutionalize the training system by revising and producing an integrated training manual for social workers.

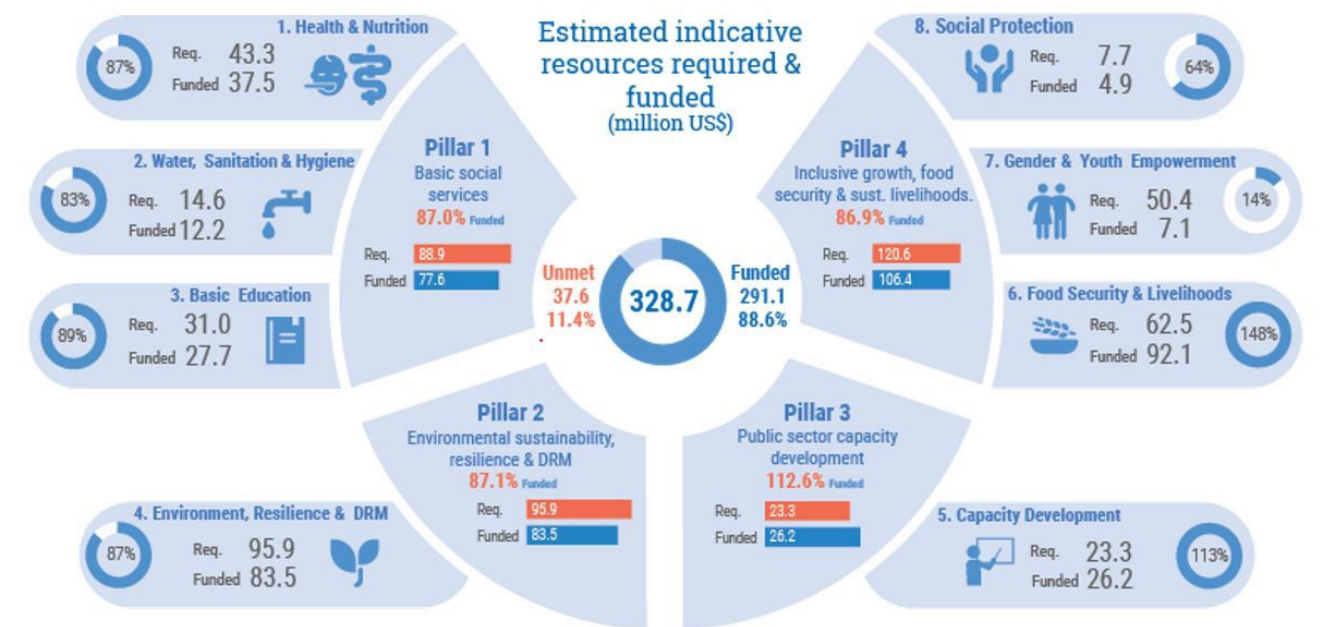
With UN support, Income Generating Activities (IGAs) in co-operation with the Private Sector (Eritrean Textile Industries, ETI) and civil society organizations (Network of People Living with HIV (BIDHO) and Eritrean Women's Association in Agribusiness (EWAA)) were executed in which 22 women living

with HIV were trained and skilled in activities contributing to their livelihoods. Similarly, 494 vulnerable families, specifically female-headed households, hosting orphans and children with disabilities were supported with a one-time cash grant support towards supplementary income to strengthen livelihoods and resilience. This benefitted over 2 thousand children.

Regarding refugees, the operational and protection environment changed since the GoSE canceled its programme with UNHCR in 2019. As a result, the total number of refugees was drastically reduced from 2,258 in first quarter of 2019 to 80 individuals in 2020. Similarly, the number of children before the start of the departure dropped from 1,219 to approximately 46 in 2020 (The 2020 figure is just an estimation as it was not possible to verify the age and gender of those remaining in the camp). Following the cancellation of the PA, UNHCR's access to refugees was denied with limited flexibility until June 2020. The above-mentioned reasons have hampered the operation from delivering its mandate and/or any of the planned activities. Hence, no reports on incidents of SGBV in the camp.

The UN also advocated the application of a whole of government approach in the national responses to the COVID-19 pandemic not to lose sight of the leave no one behind principle especially those in a vulnerable situation. The UN also continued to remind all development partners of their shared commitments through the SDGs and building back better and stronger.

## 3.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda



Source: OCHA, Asmara Eritrea

"Delivering as One for the SDGs"

DRM - Disaster Risk Management  
Req. - Requirement  
Creation date: 20 Jun 2022

Eritrea's bilateral partners are few; those on the cooperation framework are even fewer. The United Nations, the European Commission, and the African Development Bank remain key multilateral partners working directly with the Government, the UN and people of Eritrea. Noting the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) of 2015 on Financing for Development and the high premium it places on public policies and the mobi-

lization and the effective use of domestic resources, underscored by the principle of national ownership, as being central to achieving sustainable development goals, the UN in Eritrea worked closely with development partners worldwide to mobilise resources for the implementation of the CF. Despite the efforts, the overall scope of Eritrea's partnership over the period of the CF was declining until 2018 when an upsurge in



both its engagement and flow of development assistance was observed. Official Development Assistance (ODA) and private investment more than doubled in four years, climbing from US\$ 23 million in 2015 to US\$ 47.7 million in 2019. Total disbursement from all donors was up by US\$ 16.2 million in 2019, from US\$31.6 million in 2018<sup>15</sup>. Though 2020 was a difficult year with unprecedented COVID-19 impact on the operational space, the UNCT utilized the partnership platform to respond to the COVID-19 emergency through financing the subsequent recovery plan. A total of US\$4.5 million was mobilised to support COVID-19 response and efforts on resource mobilisation on the SERP have culminated to a reduced funding gap from US\$7 million in December 2020 to US\$3 million in March 2021.

Additional key achievements include developing a Basic Services Response Priorities and mobilizing funds to respond to the humanitarian needs within the SPCF and to continue to develop an analysis of the funding available and gaps to finance the SPCF. The UN also prepared inputs for Eritrea to be part of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan on COVID-19 but was turned down on the basis of relevance. The UNCT also brought together development partners and the COVAX facility through GAVI to discuss on the roll-out plan of COVID-19 vaccine. UNCT with the leadership of the RC has continued to advocate for the Government to make its decision on joining the COVAX Vaccine Facility or alternatively make other bilateral arrangements for the rollout of a COVID-19 vaccine.

15. Source OECD: <https://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>

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

The adoption of the UN reform measures at the country level has yielded positive dividends. The promise of strong leadership with adequate office support and a better global and regional offer in the areas of expertise and knowledge has bolstered the aggregate output of the UNCT and made it more responsive, efficient and effective in dealing with issues of duty of care and general staff wellbeing. The Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) has engendered stronger UNCT ownership and focus on shared values, results, and principles.

The UN system reinvigorated country team has heavily subscribed to the collective bargaining of the UN in advancing the 2030 Agenda and meeting the national development priorities. So far, the broader UN reforms and its adaptation to the changes at the country level has been productive. It has clarified and strengthened the working of the UNCT and the role of UNCT groups such as the Joint National Steering Committee, Programme Management and Results Groups, Operations Management Teams, and its subsidiaries such as HR, IT, Procurement and other related team have been more engaged in the realm of Operating as One to support the Government of the State of Eritrea to accelerate the Agenda 2030. The UNCT, under the leadership of the

Since the announcement of nationwide lockdown and stay-at home in April 2020, the Eritrean air space has been closed to commercial flights leaving everyone trapped in the country. The UNCT through the RC Office leveraged its partnership network to provide a single flight in every three weeks through the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights to Addis Ababa from Asmara since July 2020. With over 10 flights successfully conducted between July and December 2020, more than 500 persons mainly staff of embassies, UN organisations, international non-governmental organisations and their eligible dependents have benefited from the service.

Before the end of 2020, WFP reported reduction in air service due to dwindling funding opportunities and thus, the only service to Eritrea was to end. The RC Office reached out to all resident development partners and succeeded in facilitating funding from the EU to continue the fight to December 2021. The Eritrea UNCT through the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework 2017-2021 has actively engaged with partners to create opportunities for partnership and financing the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The EU and the African Development Bank are the major partners both providing direct funding to the government and through the UN. As one of the key mechanisms of partnership in the country, the UNCT's forum for development partners in Eritrea increased its meeting frequency in 2020 to discuss and keep abreast of development trends and the pandemic and flag partnership opportunities. The forum brings together all resident and non-resident bilateral and multilateral partners with interventions or interest in Eritrea.

RC, showed its flexibility and responsiveness to supporting the Government in the fight against COVID-19. The UNCT adjusted specific projects of UN agencies in the BSRP including those funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The UNCT also assigned all mobilized resources to augment Government capacity in infection control, testing capacity, community mobilization and contact tracking and supplementing the livelihood of the worst affected or most vulnerable persons. This coordinated approach came across as efficient as duplication was eradicated and collective offer of the UN was more coherent and impactful.

The UN, through OCHA, attempted to include Eritrea in the Global HRP for COVID-19 response but this was not approved by GoSE. To further its commitment toward an integrated UN system-wide approach, the UNCT commissioned an internal inter-agency team to conduct a rapid assessment of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 as a way of ensuring more needs-based approach to livelihood and other related support. This exercise was repeated in November 2020 with a broader and in depth look at the impacts of the pandemic. The report informed the UNCT Socio-economic Recovery Plan as there was no such document at the national

level to inform and align content. To coordinate the effective implementation of the SPCF, the UN Programme Management Team (PMT) is driving it with more focus on the SDGs. The group led a UN system-wide training on result-based management in December 2020 in anticipation of the commencement of the planning phase for the next CF. The UN inter-agency Communication Group continued to work on UN visibility on the ground with activities including branded materials and information sharing on programmes and projects.

The Taskforce on the Prevention of Social Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) was reactivated in 2019 to ensure the maximum prevention and protection of staff, partners and beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse. PSEA activities at the UNCT level were limited in 2020 but there was good rate of implementation of activities in the action plan at the agency level. The COVID-19 pandemic shook to the foundation every institution's progress on disease related safety and security for its people, the UNCT Eritrea was no exception. As part of the UNCT and RC's duty of care, several activities were undertaken. Earlier on, the UNCT put together a COVID-19 Contingency Plan informed by the Agency specific reflection on programme criticality.

The UNCT also assessed local health facilities in terms of their capacity to provide service to the public including staff. Based on the outcome, the UN updated the MEDEVAC plan to incorporate COVID-19 MEDEVAC. To provide clear guidance, instructions, and information on the pandemic, the UNCT increased the frequency of its meetings from quarterly to daily and later to twice a week. During these meetings, WHO would provide briefings on the general epidemiological situation globally and locally and guidance and decision would be made by the UNCT. The UNCT also established a coordination system through a subcommittee at technical level to coordinate specific aspects of the pandemic i.e. infection control, risk communication.

The country team also embarked on a cursory and unsupervised programme criticality exercise that led to the a Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) for the UNCT and each Agency to ensure consistent designation of critical and non-critical staff in its attempt to reduce footprints in the UN compound and offices. The UNCT developed a standard operating procedure (SOP) for possible suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case among staff and produced leaflets and shared Government guidelines as a way of keeping staff updated and further conducted a townhall in December to listen to emerging issues and concerns from staff after a long period of

lockdown. Staff, especially auxiliary staff, considered most at risk such as drivers, security guards, gardeners and cleaners were trained on infection prevention. The UNCT approved salary advances etc. early on to mostly national staff to cushion them from the economic impacts of the pandemic. In November, the UNCT also commissioned a psychosocial survey to assess the stress and mental health needs for staff and provide support them. As a result, the UNCT provided access to a dedicated local counsellor to complement the agency resources in place to support families, especially the younger members. This resource is cost shared among agencies.

Similarly, when the conflict in Ethiopia (Tigray Conflict) broke out and the rockets and missiles were thrown into Eritrea including the Asmara International Airport, the UNCT with support from UNDSS, successfully evacuated through the UNHAS flight all eligible dependents of UN staff in Eritrea upon advice of UNDSS. In a bid to ensure staff and their families feel safe working in Asmara as the conflict escalated, security measures within the UN compound and at the home of UN staff were improved. The UNDSS advised for creation of two safe havens for staff by the construction of T-walls and fitting of windows with anti-shatter films. The same was recommended for the home of all UN staff in Eritrea.

The UNCT approved these security measures and have taken actions to make sure there is improved safety and security of staff both at home and in the office. Eritrea is one of the first countries in Africa to adopt the second-generation Business Operations Strategy (BOS 2.0). The implementation of the BOS, as part of the DaO approach, has brought the UN agencies to plan and deliver operational results together with the aim of enhancing coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness. This will further reduce duplication and result in substantial cost avoidance.

The result of working together on operational issues have been evident in the quantified amount in terms of cost avoidance. By 2021, the UNCT would register an estimated cost avoidance of around US\$1.55 million. By furthering its 2021 agenda on common back office, the UNCT would address several operational shortfalls to give rise to more cost savings and avoidance in the years ahead. The Operations Management Team of Eritrea, chaired by UNDP, is driving the implementation of the BOS 2.0.



### 3.5. Evaluations and Lessons Learned

The final evaluation of the current CF is currently underway, but a mid-term review was completed in 2020 and some key points from the review was that a stronger government commitment and accountability for results makes it possible to deliver on collective commitments. However, all aspects of UN interventions are constrained by the absence of an overarching coordination mechanism between the UN and Government on the CF, which is made more challenging by the lack of recent data limiting the ability to measure progress on the SDGs and report with data and evidence on the CF. Operational independence is yet to improve, and the situation affects the ability to operate efficiently in the country.

Access and support to communities remain constrained. With internet penetration (user-per-head) still low coupled with the absence of diverse set of non-state actors (NGOs, CSO, CBO, private sector, think tanks, etc) hinder progress on the current CF. Based on the country's self-reliance model and inward-looking development approach, attracting external funding for development work in Eritrea has been all but easy. The reasons are multiple, but chief is the difficulty to negotiate and accept direct support from donors especially those outside the country.

As a lesson, the pandemic has so far shown that planning for and acting on something where unknowns far outweigh the knowns requires proactive and flexible actions. Flexibility and timely communication should be used continuously to generate and retain the level of trust to continue receiving the same level of effort from staff. In the early days of the pandemic in Eritrea, little was known on what to expect. However, learning from the disaster that unfolded in Europe

and the Americas, there were preparations for a worst-case scenario. Government efforts and interventions meant the situation was better handled thus leading to a phased easing of restrictions. Iterative learning and frequent adaptation of new knowledge and information has been crucial to COVID-19 related duty of care globally. In Eritrea, as soon as the UNCT learned new things about the virus, the old information was corrected and replaced immediately through messaging.

As the UNCT knew more, it focused more on helping members of staff update their knowledge of the evolving situation, highlighted the repercussions of no action, and advised on how to deal with emergent issues. On the CF related programmes, the lessons learnt included understanding that lean and flexible programme management would ensure continuity of projects even in the face of the worst human crisis. A programme management structure that allows quick decision in moving human and financial resources is needed in to keep UN ahead of the curve and making its interventions more relevant to the new context and its development partners on the ground.

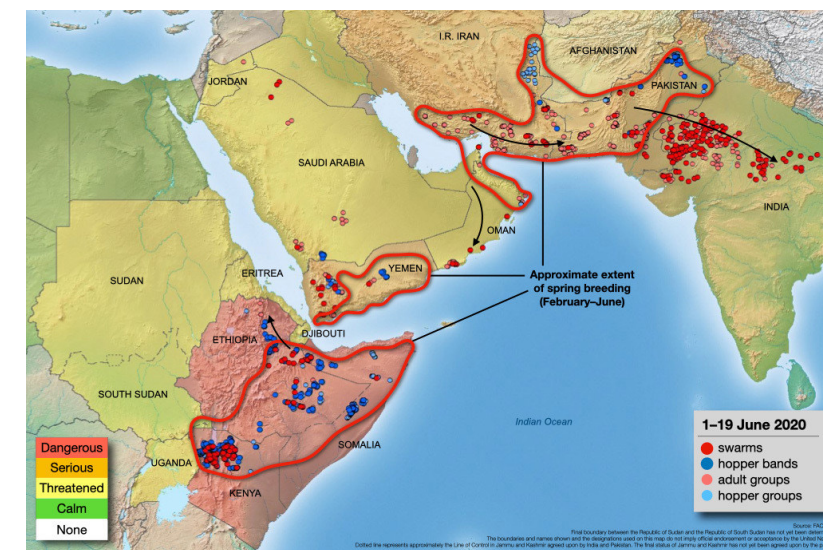
Eritrea's social capital is one of its biggest assets. With the ease of activating and utilizing community management structures, it made it easier for effective disease control and the continuation of lifesaving and critical programmes and projects. Similarly, the participation of stakeholders throughout the programme cycle is key to sustainability. Community participation created a strong sense of responsibility and ownership and enhanced the productivity of programmes and projects. The overall financial position of the cooperation as at the end of its penultimate year of implementation (2020) was

quite positive as the UNCT has been mobilised and funded 89.4% of its total budgetary requirement for the entire co-operation framework period. The total requirement for the final year of implementation as planned is US\$35 million, US\$13.8 less than the total funding for 2020 (US\$ 48.8 million). So far, the financing of all the CF pillars is above the 85% threshold leading to the final year (see Figure 4 above).

The best funded pillar is on Public Sector Capacity Development, where the available resources have exceeded the planned amount by 20.2 percent or US\$4.7 million. The outcome on Food security and Livelihood has received funding in excess of the total budget for the entire Cf period by US\$30 million or 48.2 percent. The Gender and Social Protection Outcomes are the least funded so far by 14.2 percent and 64.4 percent respectively. However, the increased focus on social protection and the emphasis to 'Leave No One Behind' going into the final year of the CF implementation would ensure

more funds are allocated to those outcomes as Eritrea seeks to address the medium to longer-term impacts on pandemic. The Figure above provides more details on outcome and agency level financial outlook as at December 31, 2020. Towards resource mobilisation, the UNCT through the Cooperation Framework 2017-2021 actively engaged with partners to create opportunities for financing the SDG 2030 Agenda. Specifically, UNCT utilized the partnership platform to respond to the COVID-19 emergency needs and financing the immediate response plan. A total of US\$4.5 million was mobilized as additional resources to support COVID-19 response and a further US\$4 million channelled to the socio-economic recovery plan (SERP).

This culminated into a reduced funding gap from US\$7 million in December 2020 to US\$3 million in March 2021. Specifically, for urgent basic services response in the 2020 BSRP, the UNCT mobilized more than US\$12 million in new funding for 2020, including US\$7.2 million for desert locust response.

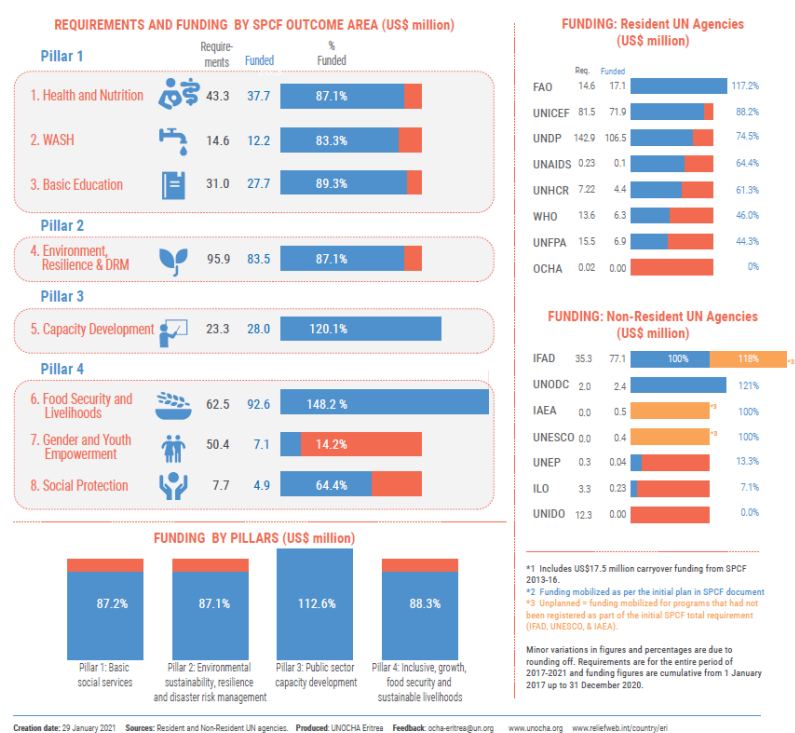


Desert Locust Global Forecast  
© FAO



Northern Red-Sea, Eritrea. Desert locust control activities by the FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture. © UN Eritrea

### 3.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization



89.4 percent

Amount mobilised and funded, as a percentage of the total budgetary requirement for the entire cooperation framework period.

Best funded outcome

Public Sector Capacity Development resources exceeded the planned amount by 20.2 percent

Least funded outcome

Gender and Social Protection Outcomes are the least funded so far by 14.2 percent and 64.4 percent respectively.

US\$4.5 million

Additional resources to support COVID-19 response



## Where we work

The UN Eritrea interventions will be grounded on the tenets of human rights, leave no one behind and gender. Through its Basic Service Response Priorities and the Socio-economic Response Plan, the UN will target drought-affected and locust-affected pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households; small-scale rural farmers; children under-5, especially malnourished children; communities affected by COVID-19; nomadic communities and children on the move; schoolchildren in vulnerable communities and out-of-school children; communities in border areas at risk of land-mines/ERWs; people living with disabilities, especially children; pregnant and lactating mothers; the elderly; adolescents at risk of ir-

**SUDAN**

**ANSEBA (6 UN Agencies)**

- FAO
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- UNFPA, UNICEF
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO

**GASH BARKA (6 UN Agencies)**

- FAO
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- UNFPA, UNICEF
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO

**DEBUB (6 UN Agencies)**

- FAO
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- UNFPA, UNICEF
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO

**MAEKEL (6 UN Agencies)**

- FAO
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- UNFPA, UNICEF
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO

**NORTHERN RED SEA (7 UN Agencies)**

- FAO
- UNICEF, UNHCR
- FAO, UNDP, UNHCR
- UNICEF, UNHCR
- FAO, UNDP, UNHCR
- UNICEF, UNHCR
- UNFPA, UNICEF
- FAO
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNHCR
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO, UNHCR

**SOUTHERN RED SEA (6 UN Agencies)**

- FAO
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- FAO, UNDP
- UNICEF
- UNFPA, UNICEF
- FAO
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO

The map shows the following regions and their corresponding agency counts:

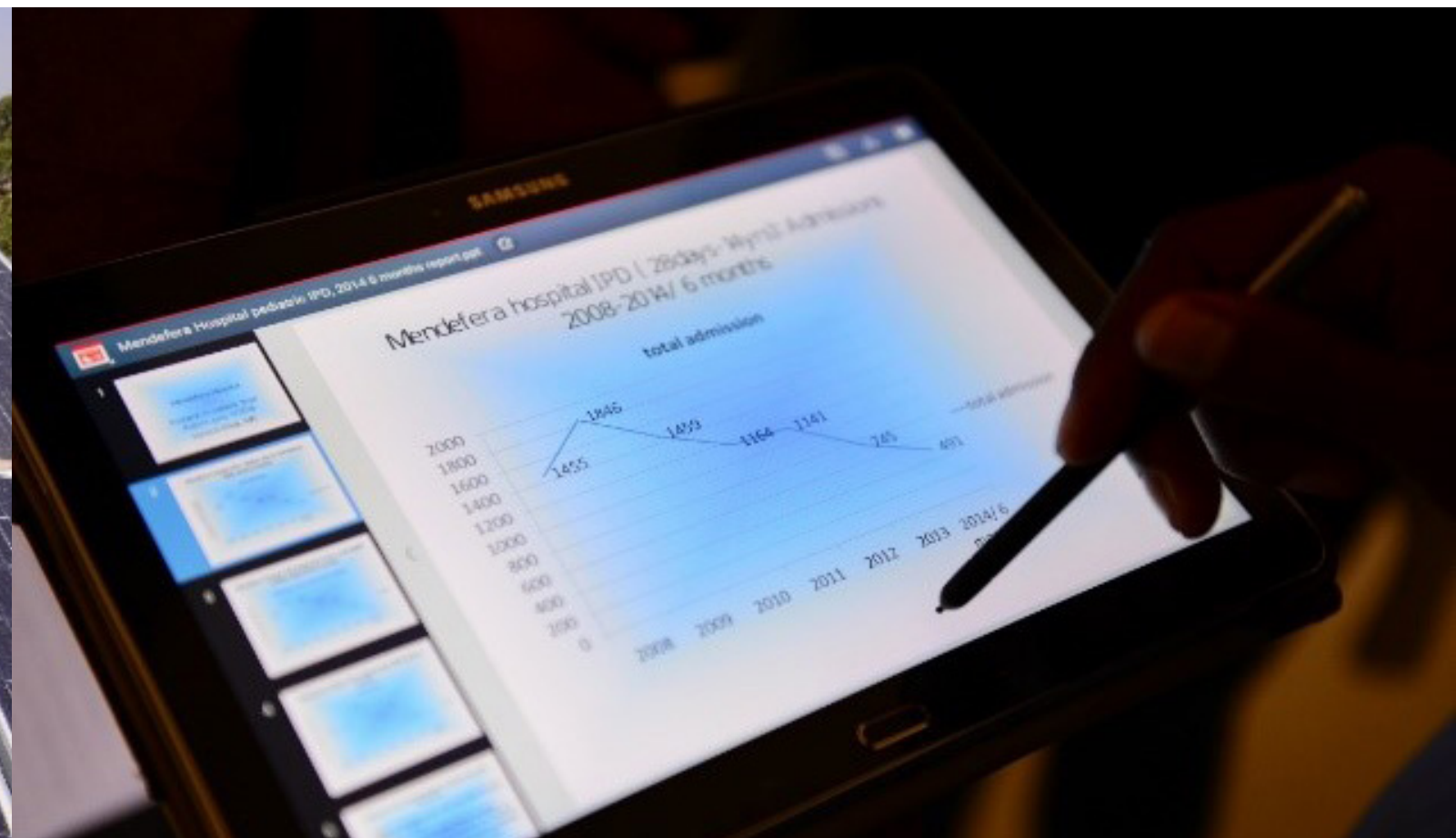
- ANSEBA: 64
- GASH BARKA: 58
- DEBUB: 62
- MAEKEL: 62
- NORTHERN RED SEA: 74
- SOUTHERN RED SEA: 61

**Legend:**

- FAO (Wheat icon)
- UNICEF (Child icon)
- FAO, UNDP (Wheat and Child icons)
- UNICEF (Child icon)
- FAO, UNDP (Wheat and Child icons)
- UNICEF (Child icon)
- UNFPA, UNICEF (Family and Child icons)
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS (Family, Child, and Heart icons)
- UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO (Family, Child, Heart, and Caduceus icons)
- UNDIP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO (Document, Family, Child, and Wheat icons)

**Geographical Labels:** SEMIENAWI KEYIH BAHRI, ANSEBA, GASH-BARKA, KAREN, MASSAWA, ASMARARA, MENDEFERA, DEBUB, DEBUBAWI KEYIH BAHRI, HABOT, NOGA, DAHLAK ARCHIPELAGO, MASSAWA CHANNEL, DAHLAK, KEVI, GHILALLO, E, BAB AL MANDAB, ASSEB.

**Footnote:** The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
 \* The Non-resident UN agencies engage at national level.  
**Abbreviations:** SKB: Semienawi Keih Bahri (Northern Red Sea), DKB: Dehubawi Keih Bahri (Southern Red Sea)  
**Creation date:** 29 January 2021 **Sources:** UN Agencies. **Feed back:** ocha-eritrea@un.org www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int/country/eri





## Acronyms

AfCFT	African Continent Free Trade Area	NRA	Non-Resident Agency
AAfDB	African Development Bank	NRS	Northern Red Sea
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	NSC	National Steering Committee
ANC	Anti Natal Care	NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
ANER	Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate	NSUDP	National Spatial Urban Development Plan
ARI	Acute Respiratory Infection	NUEW	National Union of Eritrean Women
AU	African Union	NUEYS	National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students
BIAT	Boosting inter-Africa Trade	OCHA	United Nations Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa's Agriculture Development Programme	ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation	OOOSC	Out of School Children
CCA	Common Country Assessment	ORA	Office of Refugees Affairs
CEE	Complementary Elementary Education	PFDJ	People's Front for Democracy and Justice
CF	Cooperation Framework (same as SPCF)	PFM	Public Finance Management
CHWs	Community Health Workers	SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
EDHS	Eritrea Demographic Health Survey	SNC	Second National Communication
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunisation	SPCF	Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework
ERN	Eritrean Nakfa	SRS	Southern Red Sea
ETI	Eritrean Textile Industries	TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
EU	European Union	UAM	Underage Marriage
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	UN	United Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	UNCT	United Nations Country Team (Eritrea)
FHH	Female-Headed Household	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
FReMP	Fishery Resources Management Programme	UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
GAM	General Acute Malnutrition	UNDP	United National Development Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam	UNESCO	United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
GoSE	Government of the State of Eritrea	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
GPE	Global Programme on Education	UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
GPI	Gender Parity Index	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
HDI	Human Development Index	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
HSSDP	Health Sector Strategic Development Plan	UNSC	United Nations Security Council
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	USD	United States Dollar
ICSP	Interim Country Strategy Paper	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	WFP	World Food Programme
IGA	Income Generating Activities	WHO	World Health Organization
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development		
ILO	International Labour Organization		
IMF	International Monetary Fund		
IOM	International Organization for Migration		
IWRM	Integrated Water resources Management		
IYCN	Infant and Young Child Nutrition		
LNOB	Leave No One Behind		
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition		
MIYCN	Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition		
MMR	Maternal Mortality rate		
MoH	Ministry of Health		
MoLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare		
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework		
NAPHL	National Plant and Animal Health Laboratory		
NER	Net Enrolment Rate		
NIDP	National Indicative Development Plan		







# 2020 UN Country Annual Results Report

## Eritrea

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