



UNITED NATIONS
BELARUS

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UN BELARUS RESULTS REPORT

2022

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2022

FOREWORD BY UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN BELARUS



In 2022, the UN system remained committed to the priorities enshrined in agency Country Programmes and the draft Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025, while promptly adjusting and responding to the challenges with joint and coordinated efforts. We supported national partners, including state institutions and civil society organisations, to safeguard the progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensure resilient and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide assistance to migrants and refugees.

If COVID-19 exposed interdependency across all sectors of human development, the war in Ukraine is a warning for all of us, demonstrating the fragility of peace. The UN in Belarus, together with our humanitarian partners, worked to provide aid to people who had to leave their homes behind in search of a safer life.

In such a challenging environment, delivering on the promise of SDGs is more vital than ever, as SDGs are a blueprint for transforming the world. Hence, we must protect the progress already made and further accelerate it. The UN system in Belarus is guided by four crosscutting strategic priorities: green transition

for inclusive and sustainable growth, future generations orientation, digital transformation and social innovation, and gender equitable society.

We *promote* more decisive steps aimed at climate action, especially, by being more ambitious in reducing CO₂ emissions, investing in green solutions and innovations, and advancing the circular economy. We firmly believe that we cannot lose the fight against climate change, and Belarus has immense potential to be among the climate action leaders.

We *create* enabling environment for future generations. To ensure long-term sustainable development, we need to empower young people by investing in their education and health while ensuring social protection and employment opportunities. The UN in Belarus continues to support inclusive education that meets the demands of the 21st century, promotion of healthy lifestyle, and psychological well-being.

We *stimulate* the development of digital solutions and social innovation. Digitalisation can catalyse innovation, enhanced productivity, improved services, but it can also threaten privacy and fuel inequality. Hence, digital transformation should be safe and inclusive. Belarus has a highly skilled labour force and well-developed infrastructure, placing the country in a good position to advance digitalisation and social innovation while ensuring infrastructure resilience. UN, in its turn, is willing to support national efforts to form efficient digital ecosystems.

We *advocate* for a gender equitable society where all people of all ages can better exercise their rights and enjoy a better quality of life. Equal opportunities for men and women require both policy improvements and a shift in social and cultural norms. The UN system assists in improving capacities in data disaggregation, results based budgeting, gender mainstreaming, and overcoming existing stereotypes. The older population is also in focus, especially in the context of population ageing being a pervasive global demographic trend.

The work of the UN in Belarus would have been impossible without our partners, as a multi-stakeholder partnership is crucial for sustainable development. In this regard, on behalf of the UN Country Team, I would like to express our gratitude to our partners, which include state institutions, civil society, the donor community, the private sector, and academia. I hope that we will be able to expand our interaction and find new areas of cooperation.

Our team became stronger and more united. I sincerely appreciate our staff's resolute commitment to the UN ideals and values, as well as high professionalism. It was a tumultuous year for all, but we productively continued our work amid frustration, while focusing on the needs of vulnerable groups.

Looking forward, the UN system should remain a trusted partner to accelerate progress and ensure that no one is left behind while preserving the values of the UN Charter, including promoting human rights, maintaining international peace and security, ensuring the rule of law, promoting social progress and better standards of life.

Joanna Kazana-Wisniowiecki
UN Resident Coordinator in Belarus



CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN BELARUS	10
CHAPTER 2. UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK	13
2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results	14
2.2. Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes, and Outputs	16
2.2.1. UN Response to COVID-19	43
2.2.2. UN Response to Mixed Migration	47
2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda	54
2.4. Results of the UN Working Better Together: UN Coherence, Effectiveness, and Efficiency	58
2.5. Evaluations and Lessons Learned	61
2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization	63
CHAPTER 3. UNCT FOCUS AREAS FOR 2023	67

UN COUNTRY TEAM IN BELARUS

UN ENTITIES CONTRIBUTING TO RESULTS IN 2022:

- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS AND DONORS:

- European Union
- Global Environment Facility
- Germany
- Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Japan
- Joint SDG Fund
- Poland
- Russia
- United States Agency for International Development
- World Bank

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS:

- Belarusian Innovation Fund
- Council for Sustainable Development
- Economy Research Institute
- Great Stone China-Belarus industrial park
- House of Representatives of the National Council
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade
- Ministry of Architecture and Construction
- Ministry of Communications and Informatisation
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry for Emergency Situations
- Ministry of Energy
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Forestry
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Housing and Utilities
- Ministry of Industry
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
- Ministry of Sports and Tourism
- Ministry of Transportation and Communication
- National SDG Coordinator
- National Statistical Committee
- Oblast executive committees, other local and regional government institutions
- State Border Committee
- State Committee for Science and Technology
- State Customs Committee

THINK TANKS, ACADEMIA AND UNIVERSITIES:

- "Smart Brest" Institution for Science and Innovations
- Academy of Postgraduate Education
- Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education
- Belarusian State Academy of Communication
- Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University
- Belarusian State Economic University
- Belarusian State Pedagogical University
- Belarusian State University
- Brest State Technical University
- Centre of Scientific-Technical Information
- Coordination Center of Education for Sustainable Development
- Grodno State Agrarian University
- Minsk State Institute on Development of Education
- National Academy of Science
- National Institute of Education
- Polessky State University
- Republican Centre of Ecology and Local Studies
- Republican Centre of Psychological Assistance
- Republican Institute for Vocational Education
- Republican Institute of Professional Education
- Republican Institute of Retraining and Professional Development
- Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Pulmonology and Tuberculosis
- Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Medical Technologies, Informatisation, Management and Economics of Public Health
- Research Institute of Labor of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus
- State Institution National Centre for Hygiene, Epidemiology and Public Health
- State Institution Republican Scientific Practical Centre "Mother and Child"

LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:

- Adaptation Charitable Counselling Public Association
- Amrita
- Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities
- Belarusian Association of People with Disabilities
- Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs
- Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers
- Belarusian Society of Red Cross and its regional branches
- Belarusian Young Women Christian Association (Homiel branch)
- Belarusian Association of Visually Impaired
- Businesswomen Club Brest
- Centre for Children and Adolescents "Evrika"
- Interreligious Mission "Christian Social Ministries"
- People Plus
- Positive movement
- Refugee Counselling Service
- Republican Association of Wheelchair Users
- Republican Public Association of Parents with premature babies "Rano"
- Republican Volunteers Centre
- Socio-Pedagogic Centres of Brest and Gomel
- UN Global Compact Local Network
- Vstrecha
- We Help Children
- World Without Borders
- Your Chance
- youth centres

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS:

- A1
- Arzhanitsa
- Belmedtechnika
- Belpharmacy
- CISC Brest Science and Technology Park
- Ecoidea LLC
- Giprosvjaz
- JSC Belagroprombank
- MTS
- Turovshchina
- Valeotrans

CHAPTER 1

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN BELARUS



2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the UN presence in Belarus and the 30th anniversary of the diplomatic relations establishment between Belarus and a number of UN Member States. Nevertheless, it was a year of turbulence and exploration of new opportunities amid sanctions. The country was significantly affected by the geopolitical context, particularly the war in Ukraine and sanctions, while the social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the development dynamics of last year.

The war in Ukraine, which started on 24 February 2022, directly impacted Belarus. The number of sanctions imposed on Belarus has increased by 47 per cent, resulting in immense pressure on the economic development of the country, especially on the petrochemical industry and potash fertilizers. For instance, the Lithuanian ban on the transit of Belarusian potash, over 90 per cent of which was previously exported through Lithuania, blocked regular transit routes through Baltic ports and led export revenue to decline. Moreover, the conflict caused the loss of the Ukrainian market, which was one of the major trade partners of Belarus (in 2021, Belarus' export of goods to Ukraine amounted to USD 5.4 billion)¹. In contrast to the complicated environment, Belarus' food export expanded by 25 per cent in total, while to the European Union countries – by 50 per cent.

Overall, the economy contracted by 4.7 per cent in 2022. The annual inflation rate

amounted to 12.8 per cent, followed by price increases for food (13.4 per cent), non-food items (13.7 per cent), and paid services (around 10 per cent)². Despite the higher cost of living for most Belarusian households, real incomes decreased by 3.6 per cent³, increasing the vulnerability of people, especially poor. Nevertheless, access to external finance was limited. Belarus' credit rating fell to "restricted default" due to the decision of the Government to repay US dollar Eurobond obligations in Belarusian rubles in contradiction to bond documentation that does not allow for settlement in alternative currencies⁴. Such a downturn came alongside decisions of international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to restrict Belarus' access to financing. As a result, Belarus has had limited opportunities to complement state budget resources with foreign capital. Notably, the state budget for 2023 was approved with a deficit of BYN 3.2 billion, which is BYN 0.4 billion above the level of 2022. Furthermore, for 2023, social policy expenditures increased by 12 per cent (BYN 2.6 billion), while national defence expenditures increased by 35 per cent (BYN 2.8 billion)⁵.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery continued to be a part of the national context with a focus on prevention and health sector preparedness. More than 70 per cent of the population was vaccinated⁶.

¹ National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/AggregatedDb>

² National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=173690>

³ National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=127415>

⁴ FitchRatings, <https://www.fitchratings.com/research/sovereigns/fitch-affirms-belarus-at-rd-28-10-2022>

⁵ Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Belarus, https://www.minfin.gov.by/upload/bp/act/zakon_301222_231z.pdf

⁶ BELTA, <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pinevich-my-sovershenno-spokojny-v-otnoshenii-tridemii-tak-kak-v-belarusi-vysokaja-dolja-538361-2022/>

The mixed migration and refugee crisis also persisted in Belarus, which continues to be a country of transit and host numerous refugees in 2023. Even though the number of refugees and migrants from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and other countries gradually decreased, reports of cross-border pushbacks of people attempting to seek asylum in the European Union, including those of the elderly and families with children, remained a source for concern throughout 2022. Moreover, since February 2022, an increasing number of refugees from Ukraine and third-country nationals entered Belarus. From February to December 2022 a total of 18,880 individuals, fleeing war in Ukraine, arrived in Belarus. In this context, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe González Morales, visited Belarus in July 2022.

Human rights related concerns continued to be raised by different stakeholders, including through the UN human rights instruments and mechanisms. As in 2021, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) continued to be dissolved, which affected the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Leaving No One Behind, as many of these organisations provided access and expertise needed to support the most vulnerable groups in the country. Belarus announced the withdrawal from several

international instruments, including the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which allows individuals of a State party to the ICCPR and the protocol to file complaints regarding claims that their rights under the ICCPR have been violated, after exhausting domestic remedies.

Approaching the halfway point to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Belarus has made progress in the achievement of SDGs, despite existing challenges. 22 per cent of its targets are already fully achieved, 30 per cent are on track to be achieved by 2030, and 25 per cent require acceleration, if the implementation of the respective measures follows the same pace as now. However, SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) require particular attention to meet and exceed the goals. In addition, 22 per cent of target indicators lack sufficient data and/or methodology to be assessed. In terms of national SDG finance, according to the UN assessment of 24 state programmes for 2021-2025, these programmes are 60 per cent aligned with SDGs.

CHAPTER 2

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



2.1. Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

The draft UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (Cooperation Framework) outlines strategic priorities of cooperation between the UN and the Government of the Republic of Belarus. The strategic priorities of the Cooperation Framework were defined in coordination with the national partners and aligned with SDGs, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2035 (NSDS 2035), and several sectoral state programmes.

Under the NSDS 2035 the country pursues five strategic priorities that make emphasis on quality development

of human potential and resilience of families; productive employment and decent income; digital transformation and spread of innovations; development of business environment and sustainable infrastructure; and environmental security and transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy). The Cooperation Framework, in its turn, establishes four accelerator platforms (green transition for inclusive and sustainable growth; future generations orientation: adolescence and youth; digital transformation and social innovation; and gender equitable society), that complement corresponding national endeavours.

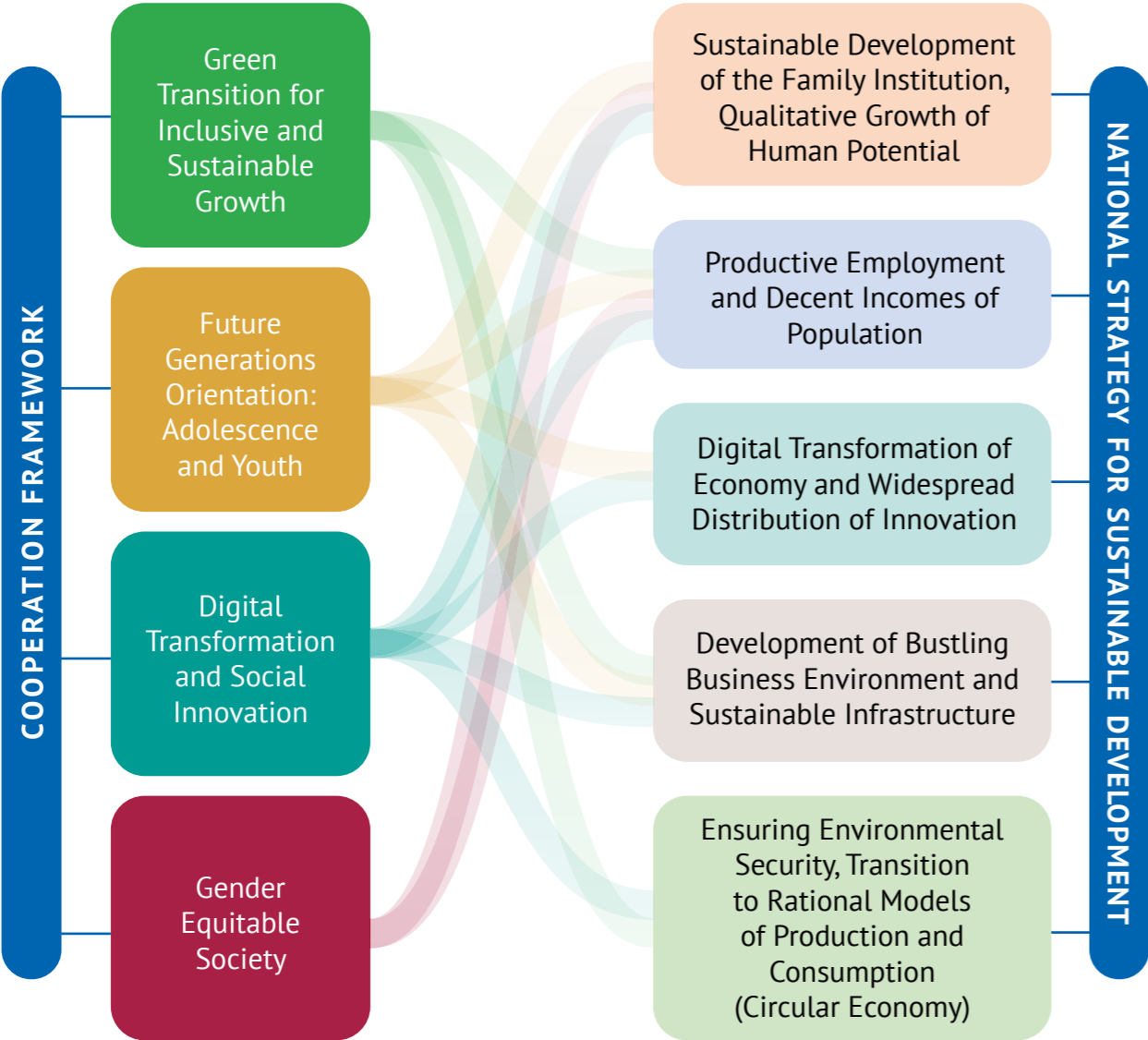
During the second year of the current programming cycle, the Cooperation Framework proved its relevance, considering that it is vital to safeguard the advancement of SDGs. Key areas continued to be a part of the national focus, including circular economy, expansion of employment opportunities, local development, climate action, agriculture and food security, strengthening the healthcare sector, improved targeted social assistance, performance-based budgeting, and women empowerment. At the same time, the UN system supported stakeholders through programmes and projects, capacity building activities, analytical work and policy recommendations. The UN agencies provided policy advice and conducted rigorous assessments to nurture discussions and develop recommendations in such areas as circular economy, quality and inclusive education, response to HIV and tuberculosis, labour migration, agriculture, renewable energy, drug policy, ageism, social services, etc.

The UN system actively contributed to strengthening the national SDG architecture and supported the functioning of the Council for Sustainable Development. The UN Country Team actively participated in the work of the Council, with concrete inputs to its workplan and substantive and technical support to the meetings. Moreover, the UN system assisted the Government of Belarus in preparing and presenting the Second Voluntary National Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The UN system has supported the process of national consultations in preparation for the UN Transforming Education Summit (TES) and the development of national commitments to transform education in Belarus. The UN agencies facilitated youth engagement during the national preparation for TES by organising the focus group discussions, thematic sessions, and a national roundtable with the participation of local experts, adolescents and young people. Based on the discussions, a list of recommendations for Belarus' TES report was prepared, which will help to draft Belarus Transforming Education Road Map 2030.

In 2022, in line with the UN Socio-Economic Response Plan to COVID-19 (SERP), the UN system continued addressing the consequences of the pandemic and the needs of the impacted vulnerable groups, including through the implementation of the World Bank loan within the Belarus Emergency COVID-19 Response Project.

The UN responded to the mixed migration and the Ukraine crisis. As a part of the interagency refugee response, the Belarus Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) was established for the development and implementation in the country of the regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Ukraine situation.





2.2. Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes, and Outputs



МЭТЫ ЎСТОЙЛІВАГА РАЗВІЦЦА Ў БЕЛАРУСІ

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: GREEN TRANSITION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The UN continued to support Belarus on its way to green economic transition and sustainable growth by promoting policies addressing climate-related challenges; strengthening the institutions and structures; and creating new knowledge for a holistic, inclusive, and green economic growth. The UN work focused on vulnerable groups, disproportionately impacted by climate change and deteriorating economic conditions.

With the help of the UN, Belarus has made notable progress in this area. A significant outcome of cooperation is the decision by the Government of the Republic of Belarus to increase the ambition of climate change mitigation, namely, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35 per cent by 2030 (instead of its previous commitment of 28 per cent). The new target was formulated in line with the second nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement.

To fulfil its climate commitments, Belarus launched the second National Action Plan for the Development of Green Economy in Belarus for 2021-2025 and has also developed a draft Strategy on Circular Economy till 2035, both of which were

supported by the UN in Belarus and have the UN playing a significant role in its implementation.

Furthermore, to identify other growth opportunities and establish an evidence-based foundation for the decision-making process, the UN system conducted studies in various areas, including labour migration, social protection, agriculture, food security, sustainable cities, greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, Industry 4.0., digital technologies, etc. As one example, UN agencies worked together with national partners to identify the specific impact of the cost-of-living crisis on vulnerable groups and contributed to the development of policy recommendations to address targeted responses.

Finally, recognising importance of the support for SMEs, notably self-employed and rural start-ups, the UN system, through local income-generating activities, provided much-needed assistance to over 3,500 individuals, 62 per cent of whom were women. It is estimated that the UN contributed to the creation of approximately 300 new jobs in rural areas.



OUTCOME 1

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

Contributing UN agencies in 2022:



Impacting the following SDGs:



2022 Expenditures:



OUTCOME 2

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

Contributing UN agencies in 2022:



Impacting the following SDGs:



2022 Expenditures:



Focus areas of UNCT work:

- Areas recovering from the Chernobyl disaster
- Assessment and inventory of land degradation
- Circular economy, green transition and smart sustainable cities
- Climate change advocacy for adolescents
- Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands
- Disaster risk reduction policy for the agricultural sector
- Support for ecotourism development
- Enhancement of national plant pest surveillance and phytosanitary certification system
- Greenhouse gas emissions trading, measurement, reporting and verification system
- Leveraging the impact of migration and labour mobility on sustainable development
- Local economic development, agricultural innovations, women entrepreneurship in rural areas
- National food security and domestic food aid measures
- Persistent organic pollutants legacy and sustainable chemicals management
- Promotion of volunteerism
- Reducing the advance of antimicrobial resistance in food and agriculture
- Renewable energy
- Socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, including more resilient value chains, stronger capacities in market information systems and policy monitoring, improved distance learning technologies
- Specific impact of the cost-of-living crisis on vulnerable groups
- Strengthening the resilience of pine forest to bark beetle outbreaks and associated dieback
- Support for the national institutional architecture for SDGs
- Technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents supported by the UN system:

- Draft Strategy on Circular Economy till 2035
- Roadmap on circular economy for educational institutions
- Updated technical regulations on the prevention of degradation and restoration of degraded reclaimed agricultural land
- Improved legal, policy and institutional frameworks and systems for risk reduction capacities on disaster risk reduction in the agricultural sector
- Guidelines on agricultural policy monitoring
- Recommendations on the inclusion of the gender equality dimension into the national emissions trading system and regular revision process of the Nationally Determined Contribution as well as recommendations on gender equality mainstreaming in climate change action in different sectors
- Recommendations for the Government on strengthening the labour migration system of Belarus to harness the potential of labour migration processes for its socio-economic development

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Rapid Integrated Assessment of 24 state programmes and their alignment with SDGs
- Holistic assessment of labour migration, including recommendations on leveraging migration for sustainable development
- Analytical reports on national social protection, food security schemes and agricultural trade policy, addressing the impact of the global cost-of-living crisis on vulnerable groups, including the development of policy recommendations
- Analysis of potential for implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies
- National baseline review of price and market information systems on agricultural markets and food supply chains that identifies the needs and gaps in data collection, analysis, dissemination, governance, and technical tools
- Analysis of functional models of agricultural advisory service provision and innovation support, predominantly from countries in Europe and Central Asia region
- Assessments on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for the following sectors: energy, passenger and freight transport, industrial processes and product use, waste management, agriculture, land use, land use change and forestry
- Comprehensive analysis of the disaster risk reduction system for the agricultural sector
- Renewable Energy Status Report for Belarus
- Review of the status of land use and land degradation
- Reports on eco-industrial parks feasibility for Free economic zone "Minsk" and Free economic zone "Mogilev"
- Analysis of the existing potential for the formation of smart industry in the real sector of the economy of the Brest region, assessing the replication possibility in the real sector of Viciebsk and Mahilyow regions

UN WORK IN FIGURES



Over USD 750,000 of annual savings achieved within **10** companies from the Brest region as a result of the Lean Manufacturing Programme implementation



More than **3,500** people (**62** per cent women, **42** per cent youth) benefited from local income-generating initiatives



In **12** districts of Belarus, entrepreneurs got access to microfinance



55 small and medium-sized enterprises received support in goods, works and/or services



296 new jobs created in the private sector: **179** for women, **117** for men, and **27** for persons with disabilities



250 people participated in **3** start-up events, resulting in more than **50** innovative solutions to support the recovery of the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident



4 Young Ecologist Clubs launched



570 tons of obsolete pesticides destroyed in an environmentally friendly way



95 hectares cleared of trees and shrubs to facilitate ecological rehabilitation of wetlands



4 pilot areas were supported in developing ecotourism strategies: Aziory (Hrodna region), Asviejski (Viciebsk region), Nalibotski (Minsk region) and Krasnyy Bor (Viciebsk region)



84 adolescents, including **62** girls and **22** boys, participated in an eco-marathon on climate change, eco-friendly behaviour and green economy



20 UPSHIFT mini-environmental projects on issues such as minimisation of air pollution, recycling, and rational consumption of resources, were developed during the eco-marathon, and **12** out of them received financing for implementation or research

Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- Expert and technical support to the National SDG Coordinator and Council for Sustainable Development and presentation of the Second Voluntary National Report at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)
- High-level advisory and expert support to Belarus' official delegation at 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27)
- Support to the Republican Volunteers' Centre with knowledge management within the volunteers' network for identification and learning from best practices
- Building skills of volunteers to support vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities and older people
- Training on gender equality and women empowerment in environmental protection for government staff and personnel of specially protected areas
- Laboratory training on the detection and identification of plant pathogens
- Capacity strengthening of national antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance systems and laboratory capacities for the establishment of a laboratory network on AMR and the harmonisation of laboratory methods for the detection of AMR in food and agriculture
- An educational application on issues related to persistent organic pollutants
- Hotline equipment procured and software solutions developed to support the operations of a hotline for labour migrants run by the Department on Citizenship and Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus to facilitate the effective delivery of gender-sensitive labour migration-related information services
- An interactive online course on labour migration developed to facilitate partner capacity building on labour migration governance and anti-trafficking
- 11 stakeholders from the Government of the Republic of Belarus and CSOs exchanged their knowledge, expanded their expertise on experience of Uzbekistan, as a country with a similar development context and similar migration challenges, in providing information services to labour migrants and countering labour exploitation

CASE STUDY

Labour Migration

In 2022, **IOM** contributed to strengthen evidence-based gender-sensitive labour migration data and research in the Republic of Belarus, having completed the country's first holistic assessment on labour migration, which includes specific recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Belarus to leverage migration for development. The recently released assessment report analyses the national economic development strategies of Belarus from a labour migration angle and evaluates the current situation with labour migration flows and remittances with an emphasis on gender.

It is the first attempt in the Republic of Belarus to examine the domestic labour migration ecosystem holistically from the perspective of the Government, employers, and migrant workers. The research, prepared in coordination with and endorsed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, is expected to inform legislative changes and national action plans on leveraging labour migration to advance Belarus' economic development.

To read the full report

SCAN or CLICK



CASE STUDY

Bringing Voices of Youth and Women to Respond to Climate Change

Youth are key actors in ensuring a more sustainable and healthier planet, as their future is at stake. Hence, empowering youth with knowledge and tools unleashes their creativity, leadership and active participation in the green transition.

With the support of **UNICEF**, more than 80 boys and girls have received UPSHIFT training exclusively on environmental issues. UPSHIFT is a programme operating in 22 countries around the world. The programme teaches people to identify, study and understand problems in local communities, and then create effective solutions, for instance, products or services. In 2022, the participants came up with 20 project ideas, out of which 12 received financing for implementation or further research.

To learn more about UPSHIFT and project ideas

SCAN or CLICK



SCAN or CLICK



SCAN or CLICK



To watch videos and hear the thoughts of the Belarusians on climate change

UNDP Belarus joined the UNDP's global Webby-award online campaign and the COP27 virtual exhibition *#DearWorldLeaders* to bring the voices of the Belarusians on climate action to the global stage. A series of four short videos featured the Belarusians from all walks of life and ages: youth, seniors, entrepreneurs and farmers, who shared their experiences on how climate change impacts their lives. In their addresses they offered ideas and solutions to decision-makers on how to strengthen climate response globally and locally.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: FUTURE GENERATIONS ORIENTATION: ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH

One of the strategies for accelerated human development is to focus on the needs of adolescents, youth, families with children, and vulnerable groups. This priority area is at the forefront of the UN work in Belarus, complementing the country's efforts under the National Programme on Education and Youth Policy for 2021-2025 and the National Programme on Peoples' Health and Demographic Security for 2021-2025.

With a continued focus on healthy lifestyles, the UN agencies provided extensive support to the healthcare sector from traditional areas, such as communicable diseases, to newer areas, such as mental health; meanwhile the response to COVID-19 gradually shifted from emergency assistance to recovery. The efforts of the UN system have led to improving several procedures, for instance, the amendment of protocols for treating tuberculosis, and the update of the national clinical guidelines on depression, suicidal behaviour and dementia for primary health care workers. For the first time in Belarus, the issue of migration and health has been put by the UN system onto the national agenda, as a response to the complex migration situation in the country to consolidate efforts of the UN, national governmental and non-governmental partners in ensuring equal access of migrants to healthcare and improving the health of the migrants and broader population.

The UN system's strategic interventions also included education, especially the promotion of inclusive and high-quality education that meets the demands of the modern world. In this regard, the UN system provided its expertise and best practices to contribute to the national long-term planning documents, among which

the draft National Strategy on Inclusive Education Development, the National Action Plan to Improve the Situation of Children and Protect Their Rights until 2026, the National Concept and Action Plan for Integration of 21st Century Skills in General Secondary, Vocational and Secondary Specialised Education Systems.

The UN system continued to focus on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and the improvement of the service offered to persons living with HIV/AIDS. Recommendations for a joint UN-Belarus drug policy assessment were published and discussed with sectoral experts.

Digital solutions were also at the heart of the UN work, allowing to reach a wider audience, create opportunities for e-learning, and distribute accurate and credible data.

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

Contributing UN agencies in 2022:



Impacting the following SDGs:



2022 Expenditures:



Focus areas of UNCT work:

- Child-focused public expenditure measurement
- COVID-19, including vaccination promotion
- Education, e.g., integration of the 21st-century skills, inclusive education
- Establishment and support to safe and enabling environments
- Healthcare, including access to HIV prevention, testing, counselling, social support programmes; infectious and tuberculosis services, as well as mental health and psychological well-being
- Online safety
- Positive parenting
- Countering human trafficking, including assistance to victims of human trafficking
- Assistance to migrants and refugees, including health support

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents supported by the UN system:

- National Concept and Action Plan for Integration of the 21st-century skills in general secondary, vocational and secondary specialised education systems
- National strategy for inclusive education, incorporating draft staffing model for preschools, schools, special education institutions, centres for correctional and developmental education and rehabilitation to implement inclusive education in practice
- National Action Plan on the improvement of the children's state and protection of their rights for 2022-2026, especially the inclusion of safe and enabling environments in schools
- Update of the National clinical guidelines on depression, suicidal behaviour and dementia for primary health care workers
- Update of the Clinical guidelines for the management of drug-resistant tuberculosis
- Draft sustainability plan for the national response to HIV and tuberculosis during the transition to public funding
- Draft clinical protocols in line with WHO recommendations on the treatment and diagnosis of tuberculosis
- Procedures for implementation of WHO recommendations in national clinical practice for tuberculosis
- Legal justifications for amending the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (Articles 157 and 158) related to the punishment for the transmission of HIV and venereal diseases prepared and submitted to the Government

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Sociological research and assessment of the legal environment in the context of tuberculosis
- Study of the impact of COVID-19 on the quality of HIV-related services
- Comprehensive study of drug policy and alternatives to detention/imprisonment
- Comprehensive model of rehabilitation of women at risk of HIV developed and piloted
- Methodological package on nutrition and feeding of vulnerable children (inclusive nutrition booklets), including children with disabilities, children living with HIV, and children under 3 years with special nutritional and feeding needs
- Assessment of the capacity of the Belarusian secondary education system to develop students' 21st-century competencies
- Guidelines for child-focused public expenditure measurement, supported by analysis at the country and local levels
- Commitment to Equity for Children Research Study, which included the multidimensional child poverty measurement and inputs for multidimensional child poverty national definition

- Country-wide survey on social services for families with children, assessing the current situation with services; needs of families with children, including children with disabilities; capacity of local authorities to provide the services; and gaps and bottlenecks
- Survey on Family-Friendly Policies availability in the Belarusian companies
- Analytical snapshot of the current situation with human trafficking in the Republic of Belarus, including the latest trends of trafficking in persons in the Republic of Belarus
- Comprehensive study on migration and health in the Republic of Belarus, consisting of an overview of national legal and regulatory frameworks on migrants' access to health services, and empirical study on health needs, vulnerabilities and resilience of migrants in terms of health

UN WORK IN FIGURES



Around **BYN 14,000** (equivalent to **USD 4,912**) raised through *Move4Good* sports social mobilisation and fundraising campaign for procurement of assistive equipment for inclusive schools



190 people who use drugs raised awareness on HIV prevention and other health services



137 free and confidential consultations on mental health were conducted through *Talk2OK.by*, an online platform



12,000 downloads of BEBBO, an online application for parents in the first months of its launch in June 2022



35 adolescents supported within a newly introduced case management system for adolescents living with HIV



40 schools piloted an elective course "*My psychological well-being and peer support in crisis situations*" for school students in 8-11 grades (14-17 years)



7.8 million people were reached through the TikTok campaign globally, and **210,000** people watched short educational videos within the *#InternetWithoutBullying* information campaign



About **60** families received remote counselling services in **3** pilot early childhood intervention centres in Mahilyow



18,000 posters and a social video reel within the "*Teach Children to See a Lie*" campaign were disseminated across schools in Belarus and the cinemas of Minsk city to prevent the sexual exploitation of children



More than **335,000** parents, teachers and kids were informed on risks and protection measures of online child sexual exploitation and abuse through the dedicated website



5,984 Belarusian nationals, migrants, and refugees minimised risks related to irregular migration and trafficking in persons through access to the comprehensive inclusive services of a nationwide safe migration hotline



1,500 people were assisted with asylum-related counselling and legal assistance, including almost **4,000** legal consultations



790 adolescents registered, and **57,430** visited U-Platform, the online platform enabling adolescents to participate in online trainings, join volunteer activities, learn about and engage in activities of the Resource Centres of Youth Initiatives and Youth Parliaments



69 returnees to Belarus received reintegration assistance, out of which **49** – basic needs provision, **20** – assistance with establishing and launching small businesses



More than **1 million** Belarusians and migrants increased their awareness on assisted voluntary return and reintegration



97 victims of trafficking, including **39** children, received rehabilitation and reintegration support, while the country only IOM-run Rehabilitation Centre accommodated another **72** trafficking survivors, including **25** children

Key capacity development provided by the UN system:

- 84 specialists participated in a roundtable training on opioid substitution therapy
- 250 healthcare professionals improved their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health
- Around 150 specialists received training on nutrition and feeding of vulnerable children
- 30 young people trained on healthy lifestyles, reproductive health, HIV prevention
- More than 2,500 health professionals participated in capacity development activities on effective communication with parents and adolescents, who, in their turn, consulted more than 10,000 families with children and adolescents on violence prevention, overcoming crisis conditions and vaccination promotion
- 60 pedagogues-psychologists working in territorial social-pedagogical centres trained on case management related to children in conflict or contact with the law
- 30 legal professionals working with different groups of vulnerable children improved their communication skills, supported by the development of a checklist on essential rules of communication, identification and referral
- 106 early childhood intervention (ECI) specialists strengthened their capacity to conduct e-ECI counselling
- 165 volunteers improved their capacities related to the provision of support to migrants
- 257 national local-level stakeholders and CSO representatives strengthened their capacities in fields such as fighting labour exploitation and online sexual exploitation of children, and provision of effective psychological assistance to trafficked individuals
- 1,197 young people, teachers and specialists were trained in countering human trafficking and exploitation through information activities led by civil society partners across Belarus
- 3 online courses for volunteering and programme management were developed and placed on the U-Platform



CASE STUDY

Mental Health Support

Mental health affects all areas of our life, including school or work performance, productivity, ability to focus, and relationships with friends, family, and strangers. However, due to existing stereotypes and stigma, people affected by stress are often reluctant to seek help.

In 2022, **UNDP** strengthened the capacity of volunteers and specialists to assist migrants and refugees in crisis situations, including psychosocial support. Psychosocial support is one of the key response priorities particularly for children and their caregivers, women, older persons, and persons with disabilities, who might have experienced stress and anxiety.

UNFPA also provided psychosocial counselling and services to Ukrainian refugees focusing on women, older people and people with disabilities. UNFPA experts continued to train response workers in providing gender-sensitive and survivor-centred gender-based violence services in humanitarian crises. Such training improves professional understanding of gender-based violence in emergencies and provides them with the necessary baseline knowledge and skills to apply in humanitarian response. In 2022, 47 response workers received training to provide such services. Moreover, to ensure psychological support for response workers, UNFPA mental health consultants provided counselling to the volunteers assisting Ukrainian refugees. During the counselling sessions volunteer peer support groups modelled support techniques and tools to manage their workloads, received practical guidance and learned techniques to avoid burnout and maintain professional boundaries.

IOM delivered Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPPS) to the vulnerable migrants and refugees from Ukraine. Such support was provided at two levels: initial psychosocial support (aid), and follow-up psychological consultations. In total, 313 vulnerable migrants and 206 refugees from Ukraine benefited from MHPSS.

WHO provided its extensive expertise to update the National clinical guidelines on depression, suicidal behaviour and dementia for primary health care workers, so that the Mental Health Gap Action Programme is introduced and actively used in public health activities.

UNICEF, with the expert support of the Republican Centre for Psychological Assistance under the Belarusian State Pedagogical University, has launched the *talk2ok.by* online platform, through which adolescents and young people can get qualified psychological assistance. The platform offers psychological support via online counselling: audio and video chats, and text messaging with peer counsellors. The online format is the closest and most accessible for teenagers: they communicate with each other this way, because it makes them feel safe. The person who will listen, support and say “it’s okay” could be a psychologist or a peer counsellor. They can be contacted online confidentially and for free.

To learn more and directly access the *talk2ok.by* online platform

SCAN or CLICK



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Under Outcome 4, the UN system is to deliver on the promise of forming foundations of an efficient digital ecosystem that is also in line with national priorities related to advancing smart cities, and digital development in 2021-2025. Notably, Belarus was ranked 55 out of 166 countries in the Frontier Technologies Readiness Index, highlighting its capability to equitably use, adopt and adapt “frontier technologies” (e.g., robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous vehicles, machine learning, blockchain, etc.). Digitalisation is a crosscutting issue; hence, digital solutions were present in each Outcome across four Strategic Priorities of the Cooperation Framework. IT and telecom industries can play a major role in overcoming the development challenges and promoting the acceleration of just transition, if cybersecurity risks are mitigated.

Three innovative initiatives in energy saving, digitalization of waste collection and urban landscaping management started in 2022. Responsible energy consumption among residents of apartment buildings scaled up by using an awareness-raising communication campaign in Navahrudak. As a result of the campaign, energy consumption in piloted apartment buildings was reduced by 5 per cent. A digital solution for urban green areas accounting tested in Navahrudak, Karma and Pinsk, which enabled the development of a mechanism to optimize public budget expenses. Innovative digital waste management system has been developed and implemented in Pinsk, Polatsk, and Navapolatsk.

In 2022, the UN agencies focused on empowering women in the information technology and telecommunication (ICT) sector by supporting training and internship for students. The UN agencies also expanded knowledge of the stakeholders on smart sustainable cities by finalising Hrodna smart sustainable cities profile, as well as bringing best practices and regional expertise. Moreover, to positively position and raise awareness on digital solutions supported by the UN in Belarus, 18 digital solutions of UNDP, ITU, and UNFPA were published on the *GoDigital* web-platform¹.

A digital platform for refugees and migrants from Ukraine *WeHELP.by* was developed in 2022, to ensure structured online access to available services and existing legislation.

To visit
GoDigital

SCAN or CLICK



To visit
WeHELP.by

SCAN or CLICK



¹ In 2023, the GoDigital web-platform was expanded, with 26 digital solutions for tourism, education, small businesses, society and smart cities published on the platform. Moreover, IOM, UNICEF, and UNHCR joined GoDigital.

OUTCOME 4

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

Contributing UN agencies in 2022:



Impacting the following SDGs:



2022 Expenditures:



Focus areas of UNCT work:

- Asylum and statelessness
- Digital solutions for vulnerable groups to facilitate access to services, including for older people and people with disabilities
- Safe use of Internet technologies
- Smart sustainable cities: national dialogue and exchange of practices with regional peers
- Software for toxic waste management
- Women and girls in STEM and ICT sector

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- Analytical reports on smart cities solutions implementation in Polatsk, Navapolatsk, Navahrudak, Karma and Pinsk
- Hrodna smart sustainable cities profile





18 best digital development solutions of UNDP, ITU and UNFPA were presented at the International Forum on Telecommunications, Information and Banking Technologies TIBO 22 in Minsk



19 digital solutions for social, inclusive, green, circular and community-based business



Over 100 children and adolescents are now active users of a quiz app on persistent organic pollutants



Over 400 people received training in workshops and peer-to-peer exchange of digital practices



7 girls successfully completed IT internships

Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- *WeHelp.by*, a digital platform for refugees, to ensure structured access to available services and legislation
- Regional peer-to-peer exchange of practices on the development of smart sustainable cities, including sectoral policies, city governance, quality of urban life and business environment, with 190 participants from 10 countries in attendance in Minsk
- Workshops on digital development at the local level in Pinsk and Maladzyechna, with 179 participants from government institutions and businesses
- Upgraded a unified database of persistent organic pollutants modernised, and national monitoring programme for chemicals monitoring
- Training course on information security for teachers
- Series of public information campaigns, including on girls in ICT, issues of persistent organic pollutants management and benefits of digital solutions for development

EXAMPLES OF CROSS-CUTTING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

SMALL BUSINESS

A map of business support infrastructure, where everyone can find information about business incubators and business support centres operating in Belarus, as well as apply for advice and support. To learn more, scan or click the QR CODE:



Business navigator of the Braslav region, that allows to explore existing businesses in the area, find real estate, get acquainted with suitable business ideas and franchises, find services and support for business. To learn more, scan or click the QR CODE:



TOURISM

Updated virtual tours. To explore, scan or click the QR CODE:

Republican Landscape Reserve "Aziory"



Republican Landscape Reserve "Nalibotski"



Republican Landscape Reserve "Asviejski"



EDUCATION

U-platform, an online platform for teenagers and young adults that allows them to learn online and actively participate in their city life. To visit the platform and learn something new, scan or click the QR CODE:

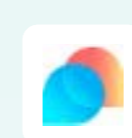


#meonline guide, a Digital Literacy Programme for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities. To explore and download the guide, scan or click the QR CODE:



SOCIETY

talk2ok.by, a platform providing free online consultations of psychologists for teenagers: To visit the platform, scan or click the QR CODE:



Online Childbirth Preparation Programme. To register for training, scan or click the QR CODE:



Parenting app **Bebbo**, that helps to answer questions about raising children, kids nutrition and much more. To download Bebbbo, scan or click the QR CODE:



CASE STUDY

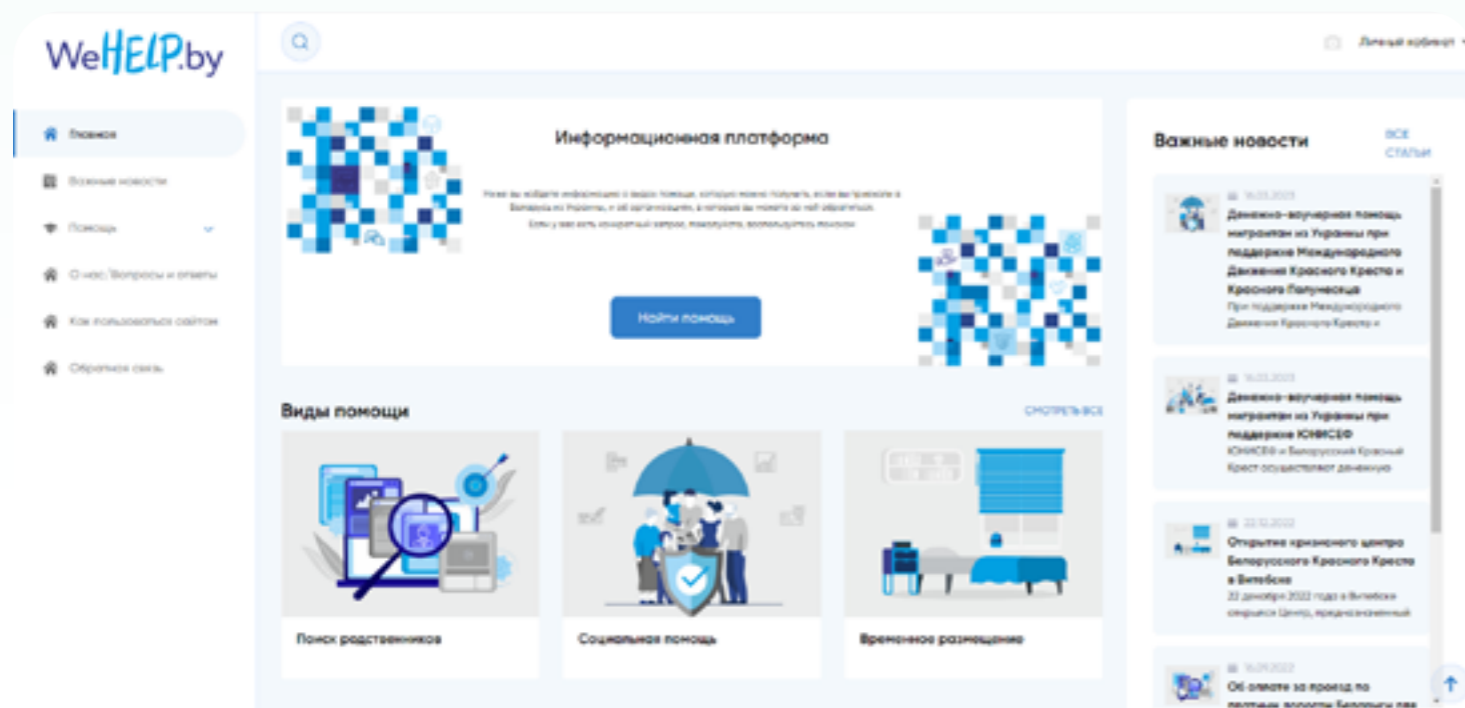
WeHelp.by

The Belarusian Red Cross in partnership with the Department of Citizenship and Migration and support from **UNDP, WHO, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF**, and **UNFPA** as well as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Health developed a single information portal for refugees and migrants from Ukraine – *WeHelp.by*. On this platform, one can conveniently and quickly get information on various issues, from obtaining legal status in the country and humanitarian assistance to finding employment and housing.

The needs and demands of people are at the centre of this work. For instance, in the section dedicated to helping families with children, parents can find detailed instructions on how to enrol their children in a school or kindergarten: from a complete list of required documents to the phone numbers of specialists in charge of education in each region. The same step-by-step instructions can be found for other questions.

To visit WeHelp and learn more about the platform

SCAN or CLICK



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: GENDER EQUITABLE SOCIETY

While much progress has been made in the area of gender equitable society, structural gender inequalities and stereotypes remain, despite existing national programmes to ensure gender equality in line with SDGs, including the State Programme of Socio-Economic Development for 2021-2025, the National Gender Equality Action Plan for 2021-2025, and several sectoral state programmes. Together with the national stakeholders, the UN agencies implement the activities of the National Gender Equality Action Plan for 2021-2025.

To strengthen the capacity of national partners to collect, analyse and disseminate demographic data, a curriculum on result-based budgeting was developed for the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education. About 85 per cent of training participants improved their knowledge on gender-responsive budgeting. Gender mainstreaming was also a part of the UN policy recommendations in various sectors, including labour, social protection, and healthcare.

Moreover, the issue of ageism was also the focus of the UN system. In close interactions with the national stakeholders, the Informational Strategy for Addressing the Issues of Ageism was developed, followed by a series of workshops and discussions with the government bodies, media, CSOs and service providers to facilitate the Strategy's implementation. In addition, a digital literacy module for older people and people with disabilities was developed and promoted throughout the country.

At the same time, to increase public awareness, the UN in Belarus continued its active information campaigns to advance gender equality, promote the benefits of involved fatherhood, reduce stigma against women who are in crisis due to alcohol and drug abuse, and at risk of being deprived of their parental rights, and those recently released from detention.



OUTCOME 5

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

Contributing UN agencies in 2022:



Impacting the following SDGs:



2022 Expenditures:



Focus areas of UNCT work:

- Addressing gender stereotypes and gender-based violence
- Advancing gender equality
- Enhancing the system of obtaining and using official data on population dynamics for policy development and implementation
- Gender mainstreaming, including raising the profile of women entrepreneurs
- SDG performance-based budgeting that prioritises vulnerable populations
- Strengthening the capacity of the national statistical system to collect, analyse and disseminate demographic data for sustainable development

RESULTS IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Sustainable development policy documents adopted with UN support:

- Informational Strategy for Addressing the Issues of Ageism
- Policy recommendations on organising humanitarian assistance, improving the regulatory framework, engaging volunteers to respond to emergencies, opportunities for new partnerships
- Regulations on the response of the Belarusian Red Cross to emergencies related to the mass arrival of migrants

Assessments conducted to inform future work:

- National platform for SDGs indicators upgraded
- Methodology to develop the Data for Children Management Plan and the Knowledge Management Strategy
- Study “National Accounts of the healthcare system of the Republic of Belarus as a tool for managing public resources and achieving SDGs”, followed by recommendations on the implementation of results-based budgeting in healthcare
- Mapping of refugees’ profiles (elderly, people with disabilities and chronic diseases, families with children, women-headed households and others)

UN WORK IN FIGURES



21 vulnerable women at risk or deprived of parental rights, including those released from detention, were supported to realise their right to employment and to enjoy their parental rights



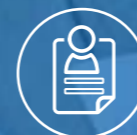
Over 5 million people reached by national digital campaigns on advancing gender equality and promoting involved fatherhood



3 digital solutions, including 2 data systems software “Demographic bank” and “Population of rural settlements”, 1 multifunctional electronic platform “Demographic Resource Centre”



450 healthcare managers and economists trained on normative budgeting within the healthcare system



19 representatives from sectoral ministries and research institutions improved their knowledge of gender-responsive budgeting

Key capacity development provided by the UN:

- Curriculum on result-based budgeting developed, approved and launched by the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education
- Digital literacy module for the elderly and people with disabilities [#meonline](#)
- Equipment and expertise for the establishment and maintenance of the demographic information training centre

Demographic Resource Center

UNFPA in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the National Statistical Committee established a Demographic Resource Centre at the Belarusian State University. The Centre is a thematic website that aims to integrate and store information and intellectual resources on demography in Belarus.

The Demographic Resource Centre aims to meet the needs of professional demographers and anyone interested in demography, including students, experts, and journalists. The Centre site works as a platform to accumulate authoritative sources in the field of demography, research publications, discussion articles, scientific reviews, translations of classical and modern foreign authors, archival and other materials that contribute to the development of demographic science, dissemination of demographic knowledge, as well as expanding and uniting the community of researchers.

The launch of the Centre strengthens the national system for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the national policy in the field of population and development; promotes the strengthening of demographic education and provides expert support to the analysis of the existing and development of new strategic documents, policies and programmes in the field of population and development with a specific on the implementation of the SDGs in the country.

To learn more about
the Demographic Resource Centre

SCAN or CLICK



LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

The principles of equality, non-discrimination, and Leaving No One Behind continue to be at the heart of the UN work in Belarus. In 2022, to voice the needs of vulnerable groups the UN Country Team held an open dialogue on vulnerabilities with local CSO leaders working in Belarus. Representatives of the most vulnerable groups of the society were represented and contributed to the discussion, including persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, women and youth with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, Paralympians, people living with HIV, victims of human trafficking, among others. The UN agencies and CSOs appreciated the opportunity to exchange views and define directions for

further interaction to ensure that those in need receive timely support.

The UN in Belarus has raised the visibility of disability inclusion through various public statements and speeches, as well as participating in key events of organisations of persons with disabilities, among which, the Republican Association of Persons with Disabilities, NGO "World Without Borders", and others. Furthermore, the UN system provides extensive support to inclusive education, increasing equal and inclusive access to quality education from early childhood through adolescence, while employment of persons with disabilities remains one of its main priorities.



Digital Literacy for Older People and People with Disabilities

Today many older people and people with disabilities do not know how to operate a smartphone and are unaware of the opportunities that mobile technologies can bring to their social and economic life. These factors become barriers to leading an active, fulfilling and quality life in the sense of their inclusion, socialization, and independence.

UNFPA, together with the telecom company A1 and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection developed, tested together with target groups, and distributed a set of guides to provide an accessible and understandable tool that helps people 65+ and people with disabilities to use mobile technologies as freely and widely as possible. For example, the guidebook for older people and 7 booklets *“Smartphone is Easy!”* explore different aspects of using digital devices for persons with disabilities. Moreover, social workers in

the institutions of the social protection system received guidelines for teaching digital literacy.

All learning tools were developed in close interaction with the stakeholders to ensure that they meet their needs. When preparing guidebooks for people with disabilities, we invited certified Clear Language specialists, our partners from “the Belarusian Association for Assistance to Disabled Children and Young People with Disabilities”. The guidebook for older people involved in the of people 65+ on criteria such as clarity of presentation, availability of services that older people need and much more.

To explore
and download
the guides

SCAN or CLICK



2.2.1. UN Response to COVID-19

2022 marked the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the world enhanced its position to respond to the pandemic, surveillance and genetic sequencing have declined globally, making it more difficult to detect and track COVID-19 cases, as well as new variants. The Belarusian response to COVID-19 gradually shifted from emergency support to ensuring access to vaccination. The Belarusians had an opportunity to receive free vaccination against COVID-19 with Sputnik V (Russia) and COVID-19 Vaccine Vero Cell (China). Moreover, the Government announced plans to produce its own vaccine. At the same time, enhancing preparedness of the health sector remained in the focus of the Government.

In line with the UN COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan for Belarus, the UN agencies contributed to the efforts of Belarus by promoting COVID-19 vaccination as well as by continued support to strengthening the health sector through the procurement of medical equipment. Within this work the UN system successfully overcame several challenges, for instance, import and logistical limitations imposed on Belarus, global disruption of supply chains, high demand for medical goods and related services, and global shortage of components.

COVID-19 vaccination

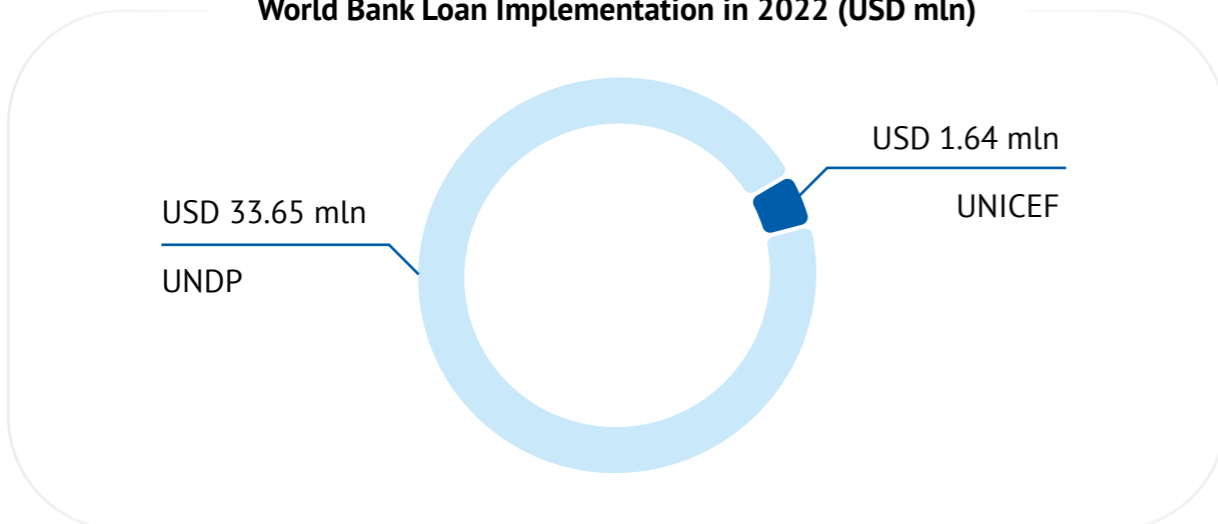
With UN support, Belarus strengthened the specific end-to-end cold chain supply infrastructure, required for COVID-19 vaccine distribution, and promoted vaccination against COVID-19.

In 2022, the UN agencies strengthened the capacity of relevant stakeholders, with a focus on healthcare professionals. For instance, UNICEF improved the capacity of more than 2,500 health professionals (paediatricians, psychologists) in effective communication with parents and adolescents on vaccination promotion.

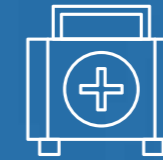
Emergency COVID-19 response: the World Bank loan

In 2022, the UN agencies completed the procurement of medical supplies and personal protective equipment within the World Bank loan of EUR 90 million (USD 100 million equivalent) for the Belarus Emergency Response to COVID-19. The assistance provided has strengthened the overall capacity of the national healthcare system to provide quality services to patients, especially vulnerable groups.

World Bank Loan Implementation in 2022 (USD mln)



THE PROCUREMENT UNDER THE WORLD BANK LOAN COMPLETED in 2022



1,678 units of medical equipment



5,000,000 pairs of gloves



2,000 oxygen concentrators



over 150 hospitals all over Belarus

(every fourth hospital received new advanced medical equipment, including hospitals in 6 regional centres and numerous districts, namely, 23 districts in Minsk and in Viciebsk regions, 12 districts in Mahiloyw region, 18 districts in Gomel region, 15 districts in Brest and Hrodna regions)

In 2022, **WHO** continued EU-WHO action to support the deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and vaccination in Eastern Partnership countries. A social media campaign was developed within the project aimed to discuss what motivates people of different ages and professions to get vaccinated for COVID-19. One of the campaign's heroes was Inna, an assistant director in a theatre in Minsk. She works a lot with people and to protect herself, her colleagues, as well as friends and family

members, she got vaccinated for COVID-19. Although, she later got sick with COVID-19, she had it in a mild form and by personal story tried to persuade those still in doubt to vaccinate.

UNICEF promoted vaccination by providing questions and answers related to the COVID vaccination for children and adolescents to dispel certain stereotypes and myths.

To learn more about
WHO media campaign



SCAN or CLICK

To learn more about COVID-19
vaccination for adolescents



SCAN or CLICK



2.2.2. UN Response
to Mixed Migration



Mixed Migration

The refugee and migrant crisis at the Belarus – EU border persisted until the end of the first quarter of 2022, when the majority of the persons returned to their countries of origin, while only a few applied for asylum in Belarus. After several attempts to cross the EU borders, some 1,000 migrants were accommodated at the nearby Bruzgi logistics centre, which remained functional until March 2022. Since June 2022, the situation has become more acute, when another wave of migrants attempted border crossings from Belarus into the EU countries of Poland and Lithuania. Changes in the migration patterns across the Belarus-EU border were reported with migrants from, among others, the Middle East, North Africa and South America, entering Belarus via the Russian Federation availing themselves of the open Belarus-Russia border. Based on the Displacement Tracking Matrix report covering September-November 2022, 59 per cent of stranded migrants entered Belarus from the Russian Federation. The migrants' irregular status in Belarus made them particularly vulnerable and in need of targeted assistance and support.

The UN system in Belarus via its Refugee and Migrant Task Force, co-chaired by IOM and UNHCR, continued to support the Government and the Belarusian Red Cross in addressing the basic needs of and ensuring decent conditions for the remaining people accommodated in the Bruzgi logistics centre, where stranded refugees and migrants were accommodated due to the closure of borders by the neighbouring EU Member States. Furthermore, to improve data collection, a needs assessment tool for the stranded refugees and migrants was rolled out in the logistics centre.

At the initial stage, in January-March 2022, an assessment of the needs of the migrants stranded at the Bruzgi logistics centre was conducted. Since June 2022, IOM analysed profiles, displacement patterns,

intentions and needs of the Ukrainian refugees, third-country nationals from Ukraine and stranded migrants present in Belarus. The data collected on immediate needs informed humanitarian actors' programming and provision of timely assistance to the stranded migrants. This included the delivery of food and hygiene assistance adapted to the needs of the migrants, including children and women, and their cultural peculiarities (fresh fruit for children, freshly baked pitta bread, powdered milk for babies, fruit juices and special milk for children, rice, pasta, etc.). As for non-food items, the UN system delivered clothes, shoes, special bottles for babies, protection cream (in cold weather), hygiene items. Deliveries took place on a regular basis (on average twice a week) till the closure of the logistics centre on 21 March 2022. After the closure of Bruzgi, IOM continued providing targeted humanitarian assistance to stranded migrants through its field offices present in all regions of the country.

In accordance with a plan submitted jointly by IOM and UNHCR to the Government in early December 2021, IOM supported assisted voluntary return (AVR) of individuals not in need of international protection to their home countries followed by their reintegration, while UNHCR, pursuant to its international protection mandate, provided legal counselling to those considering applying for asylum in Belarus. At the Bruzgi logistics facilities and after that through its field sites across Belarus, IOM provided the migrants with counselling on humanitarian return services. As a result, with IOM support, in 2022, a record number of **725 persons** (510 male and 225 female, 566 adults and 169 children) **voluntarily returned** to their respective countries of origin based on informed consent and assuming that return conditions in their countries of origin were safe and suitable. For instance, for the first time in Belarus, a charter flight from Minsk to Erbil (Iraq) carrying 98 migrants on board was organised by IOM. AVR support

also included relevant pre-departure counselling and vulnerability screening as well as pre-embarkation checks, facilitation of exit procedures in compliance with the legislation of Belarus, distribution of pre-departure cash allowance, and travel assistance. UNHCR screened all people who were accommodated in the logistics centre and identified **around 50 individuals** who indicated they would like to seek asylum in Belarus. Despite all efforts that, inter alia, included extensive liaison with state authorities to make sure receipt of applications for protection, **only 2 individuals effectively applied**.

While facilitating voluntary return for vulnerable migrants, special emphasis was made on protection-sensitive cases, especially, unaccompanied migrant children. As a result, for the first time in Belarus, a cross-agency IOM-UNHCR-UNICEF migrant child protection system with the Best Interest Determination Processes and Procedures at its heart was set up and activated in Belarus.

At the commencement of 2022, UNHCR delivered training to staff of UN, partners and authorities on Best Interests Procedure. As a result, a dedicated panel

of Best Interests Assessment (BIA) and Best Interests Determination (BID) were established with representatives of UNHCR, IOM, Belarusian Red Cross, the Refugee Counselling Service, and the Ministry of Education. In total, **3 unaccompanied minors** were identified within the framework of migration crisis at Belarus-EU borders: two Syrians and one Iraqi. UNHCR with the assistance of partners, including UN agencies, identified one unaccompanied minor (UAM) from Syria in December 2021 in the context of mixed migration movements at Belarus-EU borders. Following the boy's counselling and liaison with the Government of the Republic of Belarus, the UAM applied for asylum in Belarus in the beginning of January 2022 and was moved for accommodation from Grodno to Gomel. In parallel, the procedure of family reunification with the UAM's brother in Germany had started. As a results of efforts from both sides, the applicant was granted family reunification possibility and with UNHCR support successfully left Belarus to Germany in the beginning of January 2023.



around **1,500 migrants** were individually screened by IOM field staff to identify vulnerabilities, types of assistance required, or need for further referral to other humanitarian partners for requisite support



1,445 migrants in vulnerable situations received food and/or hygiene items



778 beneficiaries received support with shelter and accommodation



100 beneficiaries got medical assistance and **313 beneficiaries** were provided with mental health and psychosocial support

Ukraine situation

Refugee Response Plan

Belarus 2022

Achievements

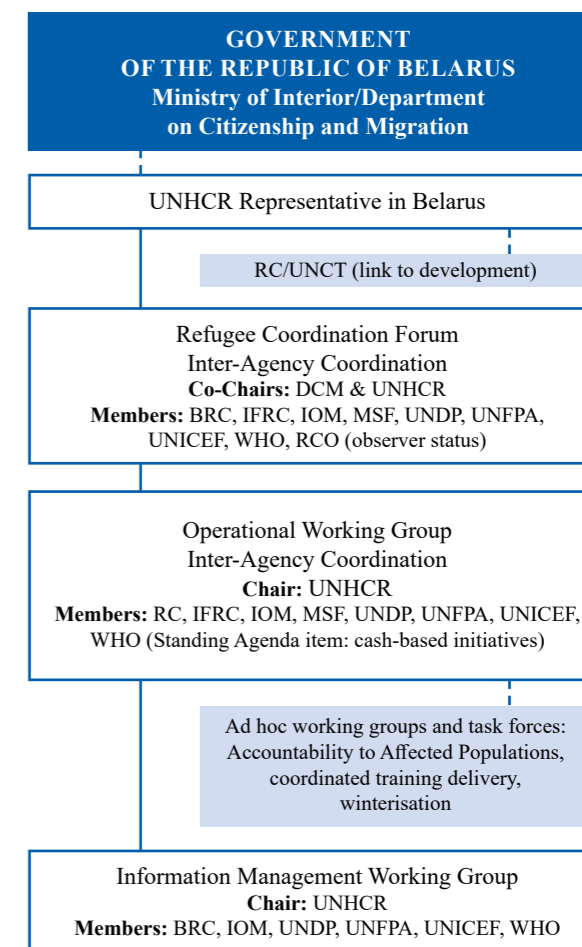
In line with the Mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and implementation of the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) for the Ukraine situation, the Belarus Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) was established in February 2022 as a result of the large number of refugees fleeing into neighbouring countries, followed by the development and implementation of the regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Ukraine situation.

Belarus is a party to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol and has national asylum legislation. During 2022, the Government of the Republic of Belarus maintained an open-border policy for refugees from Ukraine, with Belarus being a country of asylum and transit for refugees from Ukraine. The 2010 Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On visa-free travels of citizens” (2010 Agreement) entitles citizens of Ukraine to enter the territory of Belarus visa free and stay for up to 90-days. They must register with authorities within 30 days of arrival. However, all citizens of Ukraine are automatically considered to hold a temporary stay permit for up to 90-days (PTS)¹.

All twelve border crossing points between Belarus and Ukraine have been closed since mid-April 2022 following a decision of the Ukrainian authorities. Most refugees from Ukraine arrived through the European Union countries². Refugees also transited through the Russian Federation, although border crossings between the two countries were not recorded by Belarusian authorities due to the specific border regime between the two countries.

As of 31 December 2021, Belarus hosted an existing refugee population with 2,729 refugees and asylum seekers³. Out of those, 2,378 refugees⁴ and 15 asylum-seekers⁵ were Ukrainian nationals who had arrived in Belarus due to the armed conflict in the eastern Ukrainian regions in 2014. As of 31 December 2022, 18,880 individuals were recorded by the Government including (1) asylum-seekers, (2) people registered by the Ministry of Interior, (3) individuals who applied for permits for permanent residence and (4) people who applied for 1-year permits of temporary residence. Surveys have shown that 85 per cent of the refugee community were women and children under 18 years and 22 per cent were 60+. Most refugees from Ukraine reside in urban and peri-urban areas of Minsk City followed by Brest, Gomel, Minsk Region, Mogilev, and Grodno⁶. Many refugees from Ukraine in Belarus have family ties and social relations within the Ukrainian diaspora, share language and historical ties between the two countries.

A Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF)⁷ was co-chaired by the UNHCR Representative in Belarus and the Head of the Belarus Government’s Department of Citizenship and Migration with active participation from heads of the UN Agencies involved in the refugee response – IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO – and the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and Belarus Red Cross (BRC), as well as the Resident Coordinator’s Office in an observer capacity.



The RCF ensured strategic direction and oversight of the RRP implementation while standing forums, including an operational working group (OWG), information management working group (IMWG) and ad-hoc taskforces supported the RCF with technical and operational response capacity. The OWG, chaired by UNHCR, aimed to avoid duplication, and promote coordination for effective and efficient use of resources.

IMWG ensured evidence-based strategic decision making, planning and response. The IMWG established and reviewed interagency assessment tools and Protection

¹ Border crossing points do not span the entire border as there is unhindered flow between Belarus and Russian Federation for its citizens. 1999 Agreement on Establishment of the Union State of Belarus and Russia and the Government of Belarus does not record refugees crossing the border between Belarus and Russia. Source: <https://mfa.gov.by/en/bilateral/russia/>.

² The number of instances of border crossings State Border Committee of Belarus <https://t.me/gpkggovby/2389>.

³ UNHCR Annual Statistical Report for 2021.

⁴ The term “refugees” refers to people with refugee status and complementary protection in Belarus.

⁵ The term “asylum-seekers” refer to people who are awaiting decisions on their asylum application as of a specific date; in this case – as of 31 December 2021.

⁶ MOI’s Department on Citizenship and Migration at Refugee Coordination Forum meeting convened on 1 November 2022.

⁷ https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/38222/Refugee+Coordination+Model/19221f6e-d83c-409b-bc5e-13027df655ef#_ga=2.46922208.613797955.1678633746-1435667192.1668774781.

Monitoring and Profiling Fact Sheets, Inter-Agency Updates and new maps were produced.

In late 2022, the Government amended the existing 2014 legislation and extended it to all citizens of Ukraine (irrespective of region of habitation before arrival) and stateless people from Ukraine who arrived in Belarus and obtained permits for temporary or permanent residence⁸. The revision of the legislation provide for access to medical treatment, pre-school and secondary education, state allowances to families with children, allowances for temporary disability and access to pensions (with permanent residence permit), all on par with Belarusian citizens⁹, as well as exemptions from certain state duties (i.e. residence permits and special work permits). Therefore, RRP partners, supported the government-led response with a multisectoral approach based on the synergies and complementarities among UN sister agencies. The emphasis of the response was on initial support until new arrivals are included in national services or gained employment and on the targeted assistance to people whose needs or status did not fall under the State legislation support.

The BRC, which has a widespread presence in the country, was the main entity entrusted by the Government with the responsibility to receive funds from UN Agencies and provide humanitarian aid. UN Agencies also implemented activities directly and with a variety of other partners including the Refugee Counselling Services, We Help Children, the Socio-Pedagogic Centres of Brest and Gomel, the Belarusian association of UNESCO clubs.

In 2022, the protection response included strengthening data collection capacity within the IMWG to underpin an evidence-based response. Within the protection response strategy, partners regularly monitored access to territory and asylum procedures, as well as reception conditions of new arrivals. Individual counselling in person and through hotlines included legal counselling and referrals to services.

Child protection response activities focused on strengthening the child protection systems, including for unaccompanied and separated children, and establishing child-friendly spaces for children and families. Protection from gender-based violence efforts focused on strengthening the existing social structures and capacities including national gender-based violence protection networks of social and healthcare service providers and Civil Society Organisations that provide psycho-social counselling, case management and referral to other specialized services, including safe shelter. Information points, providing safe spaces for counselling and referral, with particular attention to the specific needs of women, girls, boys, older people, and people with disabilities, were established in the regions.

Psycho-social support was another key response priority was, particularly for children and their caregivers, women, older people, and people with disabilities, who might have suffered from or witnessed violence, including survivors of trafficking. A psycho-social mobile team was established to provide individual counselling and capacity building for frontline workers working with children. RRP Partners facilitated access to mental health services by providing specialized services where needed and strengthening the capacity of the local healthcare system.

RRP partners also supported payments for healthcare services and medications with special focus to the needs of people with terminal and chronic illnesses and disabilities. RRP partners strengthened the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, as well as antenatal, obstetrics and post-natal care in accordance with international standards. In cooperation with national authorities, RRP partners launched the response during the first weeks of the crisis by providing and prepositioning basic core relief items for immediate assistance, as well as for winter months and mid- to long-term needs to support refugees to settle in host communities.

One-time emergency cash assistance for vulnerable people supported payments for adequate accommodation and heating costs, while particularly vulnerable cases were supported with temporary accommodation. Several crisis centres were renovated or refurbished through joint efforts of the RRP partners. The outreach to (pre-)school-aged children was strengthened to assist access to the national education system and vouchers for school supplies and mandatory uniforms were provided to support the start into the new school year. Partners also implemented activities to support access to employment. Refugees and host communities benefitted from skills mapping, job intermediation and placement, and awareness raising on employment, self-employment, and other income-generating opportunities. Concerted efforts towards critical legal protection information and access to services and assistance included a range of digital solutions and digital literacy for older people. As majority of refugees from Ukraine were women and children and older people, the response paid specific attention to age and gender issues.

The Global Compact on Refugees provided an important overarching framework for collaboration between humanitarian and development Agencies. The refugee response in Belarus contributed to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda including SDG 1-SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 11 and SDG 16. While increasing community resilience contributed to fulfilling SDGs 1–16, SDG 17 bringing together humanitarian and development partners towards shared goals. Using cash instead of all in-kind assistance, which can include unwanted and wasted items, contributed to climate change mitigation (SDG 13).

⁸ Before that, the Edict legislation covered only citizens of Ukraine originating from Donesk and Luhansk regions.

⁹ Exemption from provision of documents utilizes the principle «if there is no objective reason to provide the needed documents».

MORE INFORMATION ON THE RESPONSE IN 2022 CAN BE FOUND AT:

Belarus RRP Summary 2022
Recalibrated (Belarus)



Ukraine Situation Regional
Response Plan



INFORMATION ON THE 2023 UKRAINE SITUATION REGIONAL RESPONSE CAN BE FOUND AT:



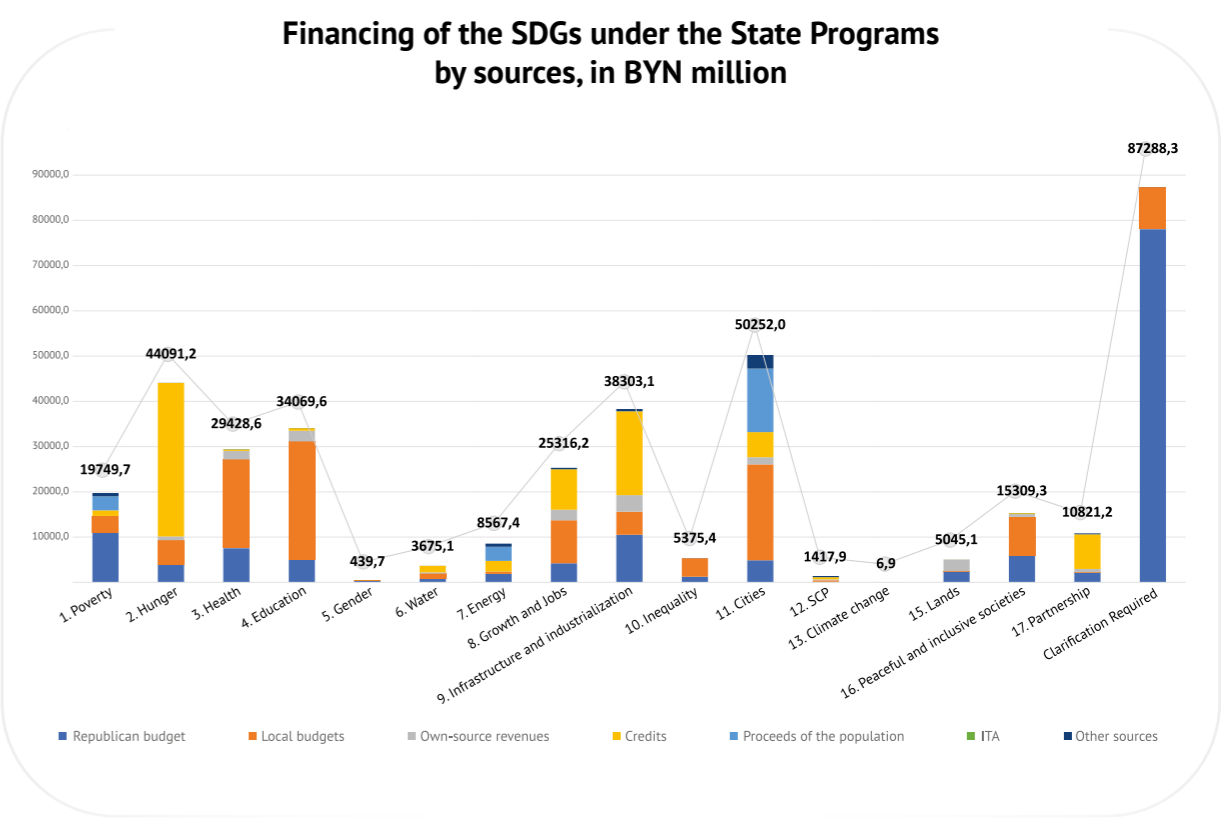


2.3. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

The state budget is the main source of SDG financing in Belarus. SDG spending through the public budgets amounts to 23-25 per cent of GDP annually.

The findings of the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) of 24 state programmes of Belarus for 2021-2025 identified that SDG 11 (Cities), SDG 2 (Hunger), SDG 9 (Infrastructure and industrialisation), SDG 4 (Education) and SDG 3 (Health) receive

a major share of financing through the state programmes. The main source of funding of state programmes is the national and local budgets (37 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively) and loans (21 per cent). The assessment also revealed that the least financed goals include SDG 13 (Climate change), SDG 12 (Sustainable consumption and production), SDG 6 (Water), SDG 10 (Inequality) and SDG 5 (Gender).

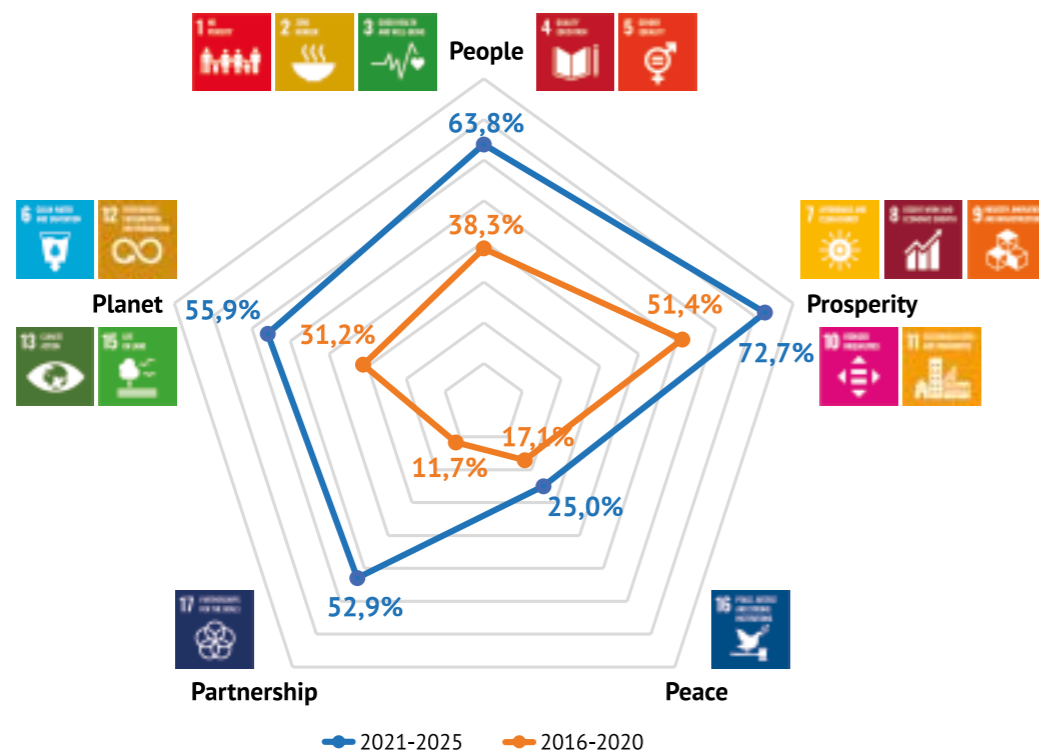


The RIA suggests that certain gaps in financing of some areas of sustainable development can be addressed by enhancing planning, monitoring and financing through greater synergies, coherence and complementarity of efforts at the national and local levels, as well as reducing trade-offs and advancing the 2030 Agenda as an indivisible whole.

The alignment of targets and activities of the state programmes with the SDGs is

60 per cent (the percentage of the number of unique SDG targets mapped at least once in all analysed state programmes). The results of RIA also suggest that the current alignment of the indicators of the state programmes with SDGs is 7.8 per cent, which is a significant increase compared to the previous programme cycle for 2016-2020. 15.4 per cent of the SDG indicators are reflected (fully or partially) in the state programmes of Belarus.

Increase in mainstreaming the SDGs in the State Programs for 2021-2025 versus State Programs for 2016-2020



Other sources of SDG financing in Belarus across domestic/international and public/private domains were scarce throughout 2022: sanctions adversely affected the donor environment, private actors de-prioritised the SDG implementation, foreign direct investments (FDIs) and official development assistance (ODA) grants and loans declined, while IFIs, such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), suspended operations in Belarus. In 2022, remittances from Belarusians abroad remained modest and have largely shifted from European and North American countries to being channelled through Russia.

ODA from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries may be expected to decline further in the short term. Meanwhile, Russia, the Eurasian Development Bank (EaDB) and China provide significant financial support to Belarus. There is also a high potential for private sector growth that would not only help advance SDGs but may also boost tax revenue and philanthropic financial flows. However, despite the country's potential, the financing landscape analysis underlines crucial gaps in some SDG-related strategic priorities. In this context, the UN system has made efforts to explore new approaches to available financing.

CASE STUDY

Mainstreaming Results-Based Budgeting in Belarus

In 2022, **UNDP**, **UNICEF**, **UNFPA** and **UN Women** continued to promote new tools of sustainable development budgeting that prioritises vulnerable populations in Belarus.

UNDP finalised the Rapid Integrated Assessment of state programmes and their finance for SDGs and presented key findings and recommendations on further actions to key stakeholders. In close cooperation with the national partners, UNDP developed the BioFin Roadmap outlining innovative finance mechanisms for ecosystem services payments and market development in Belarus. Also, a roadmap to ensure Belarus' green growth and the country's position in the specialised Global Green Economy Index (GGEI) was developed, following an assessment of the areas for accelerated low-carbon growth. A draft Development Finance Assessment report was prepared with recommendations for national counterparts on further steps towards the development of Integrated National Financing Frameworks in Belarus.

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

UNICEF conducted a research study on child-focused public expenditure measurement, social assistance services and capacity development for performance-based budgeting and developed new Guidelines on child-focused public expenditure measurement, including analysis at the country and local levels. UNICEF also finalised the country-wide survey on social services for families with children, including children with disabilities, and enhanced the capacity of local authorities to provide the services.

UN Women, for the first time in Belarus, conducted an online capacity building training programme on Gender-Responsive Budgeting based on the capacity assessment and the preliminary analysis of the budgetary process in Belarus from a gender perspective.

In 2022, over 500 national participants benefited from capacity building on SDG Financing: 463 got knowledge in the result-based budgeting, 39 healthcare managers and economists graduated from a 40-hour certified course, 19 representatives from sectoral ministries and research institutions in the sectors of labour, economy and healthcare were capacitated on Gender-Responsive Budgeting, and over 20 were trained in Rapid Integrated Assessment methodology.



2.4. Results of the UN Working Better Together: UN Coherence, Effectiveness, and Efficiency



Better integrated policy and technical support

In 2022, the UN agencies continued to provide integrated technical support and policy advice to the national partners. These efforts were evident in the support provided to the government partners concerning SDGs, namely the work within the Council for Sustainable Development, the National

Voluntary Review, the Transforming Education Summit, and assistance to migrants and refugees situation in the country. The UN system jointly supported the Government, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, in an integrated and comprehensive manner.



System-wide approach to support

The UN in Belarus continued to ensure that the expertise of the whole UN system was available for the country. Despite not being represented in the country, ITU, UN Women, UNODC, FAO, UNECE, and UNIDO have worked closely with the resident agencies in Belarus to ensure that both these agencies and national partners can benefit from expertise on different thematic issues, in accordance with the needs of the country. For instance, UNECE prepared the Smart Sustainable Cities Profile: Hrodna, which provides evidence-based recommendations to accelerate Hrodna's commitment to becoming smarter

and more sustainable in line with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), while ITU organised a regional forum "Smart Sustainable Cities: Social, Economic and Governance Aspects", that addressed the issues of sectoral policies and strategies, transparent management of the city, quality of life of the urban population and conducive business environment. Moreover, UNODC strengthened the capacity of the national counterparts in areas such as the treatment of health disorders related to the use of new psychoactive substances and stimulant drugs, alternative measures to incarceration for people who use drugs.



Joint programmes/joint resource mobilisation

With limited resources and opportunities, working together is critical to increasing impact. In 2022, the UNCT focused on implementing joint projects and programmes, coordinating common efforts and searching for new tools and mechanisms for resource mobilization. The UN in Belarus continued the implementation of the joint programmes and initiatives. It facilitated prompt

national approval of a new joint project on SDGs, namely "Support to the Efforts of the Republic of Belarus in Nationalisation and Localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals". Notably, a portfolio of joint programmes has significantly increased since 2021: from USD 258,000 (2021) to USD 855,000 (2022) and over USD 7 million in the pipeline for 2023 and beyond.



Joint Advocacy and Communication

The UN in Belarus strengthened its international procedures and mechanisms in support of communicating as one, through the UN Communications Group. In 2022, to mark the 30th Anniversary of cooperation with Belarus, the UN launched a year-long social media campaign highlighting the most important areas of joint work: from post-Chernobyl recovery to assistance to the most vulnerable populations, environmental protection, climate change and recovery in the aftermath of COVID-19.

The UN in Belarus contributed to the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence with an original social media campaign and a two-week presentation of writings that touch on the issue of

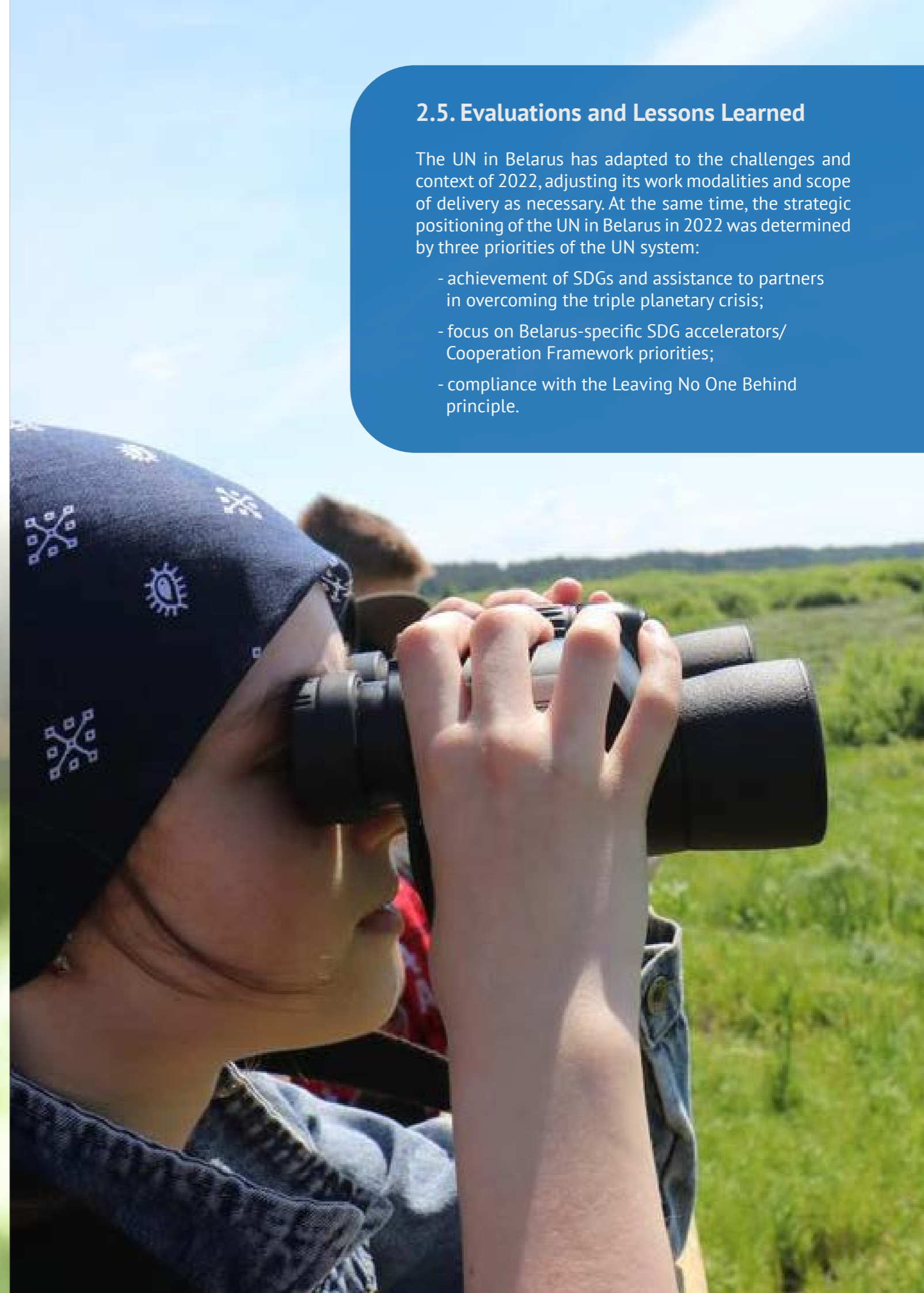
violence against women. The UNCT also participated in the “*I am a migrant*” campaign, which allowed the heads of UN agencies to share their stories as migrants and promote the positive contribution of migrants to sustainable development of the country.

The importance of using the UN as a platform for dialogue and cooperation to promote values and act on the responsibility to future generations was highlighted during a special anniversary event marking 30 years of the UN presence in the country with the UN’s national partners from the Government, Parliament, local NGOs, private sector, key international partners and other members of the diplomatic community.

2.5. Evaluations and Lessons Learned

The UN in Belarus has adapted to the challenges and context of 2022, adjusting its work modalities and scope of delivery as necessary. At the same time, the strategic positioning of the UN in Belarus in 2022 was determined by three priorities of the UN system:

- achievement of SDGs and assistance to partners in overcoming the triple planetary crisis;
- focus on Belarus-specific SDG accelerators/ Cooperation Framework priorities;
- compliance with the Leaving No One Behind principle.





SDGs and Leaving No One Behind remain central

The UN in Belarus is collaborating with the National Coordinator for SDGs and the National Council for Sustainable Development to strengthen management effectiveness and inter-ministerial coordination in implementing sustainable development policies, setting priorities, monitoring progress and discussing achievements in the implementation of the Cooperation Framework. The UN has contributed to the formation of several initiatives to promote the 2030 Agenda, and the Work Plan of the National Council for Sustainable Development for 2021-2022 reflects its results. The UN system should continue to support this functioning mechanism to achieve the SDGs and support the inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The UN must continue to identify the needs and voices of vulnerable groups, including through better data management and analysis and mainstreaming of human rights in all of the UN's activities.



Support the Government in the National Voluntary Review process

The UN supported Belarus in preparation for the Second Voluntary National Review, offering its comments on the text of this review and assisting the national partners in its presentation at the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum in New York. Looking forward, the UN will continue to support Belarus in its work on the Third Voluntary National Review and provide a platform for wider participation of all stakeholders. More emphasis is needed in the full use of the expertise of the country, including the UN and other partners such as civil society to make the National Review more inclusive.



Leverage UN expertise and experience

The UN development system can better leverage its expertise and experience not only through the entities within the UN Country Team but through agencies at the regional and global levels who are not resident in Belarus but continue to work in the country. The UN system is also well positioned to facilitate cooperation and sharing of best practices and innovation within and across regions.



Joint programming

The UN is the only entity that can deliver support to a comprehensive and integrated sustainable development agenda. By strengthening and expanding its joint programmes, the UN can ensure the issues are addressed in an integrated manner. With reduced resources and opportunities, working together is critical to increasing impact. In 2022, the UN system focused on designing and implementing joint projects and programmes, coordinating common efforts and search for new tools and mechanisms for resource mobilisation. This approach has informed the realignment of the resource base, including through co-financing, international and regional funding, joint programmes and optimization of business practices. The UN will continue to find ways to ensure that the right tools are in place to mobilise resources in the future.



Stay and deliver

The UN in Belarus must continue adapting its One UN Business Continuity Plan to ensure it remains operational in the country and available to continue delivering results, even in demanding contexts. The UN in Belarus will continue to improve and adjust its work to ensure it remains a relevant sustainable development partner to Belarus, our international partners and donors.



2.6. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilisation

Key challenges that have emerged in 2021 have slowed progress on sustainable development and forced the UN system, as well as national and international partners, to rethink their approaches and ways of working. The consequences of these circumstances were further aggravated in 2022 after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

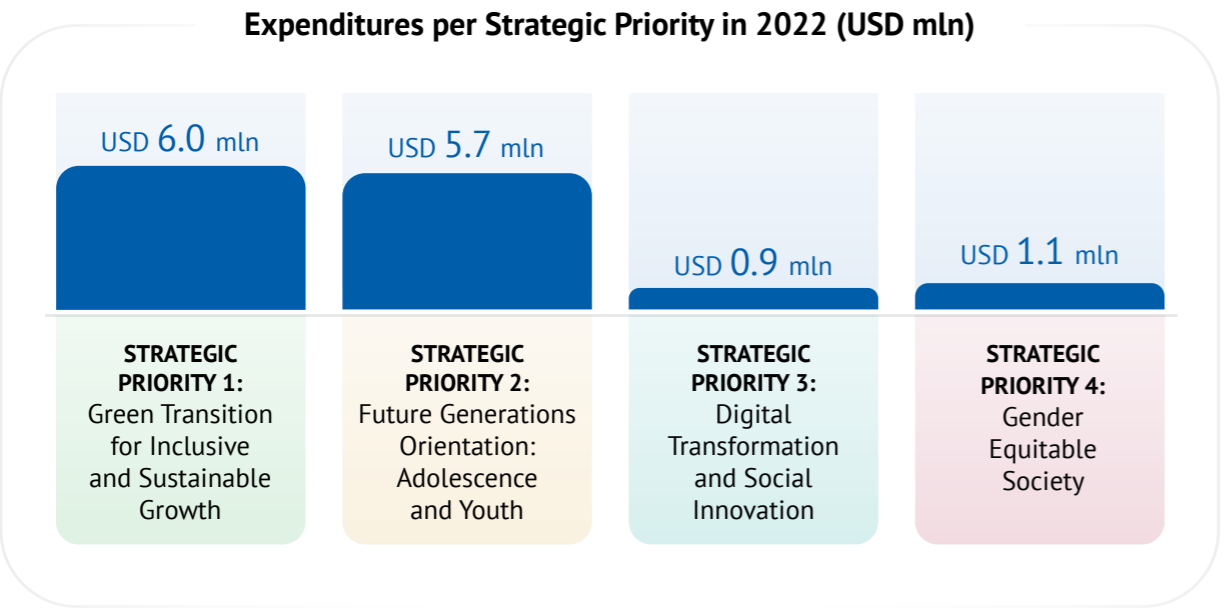
Several factors impacted the mobilisation of resources of the UN, including the reduction in core internal resources, the withdrawal of international donor support for the country, including IFIs, and low cost-sharing with national counterparts. A notable development in resource mobilisation in 2022 is the transition of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) from direct work with the national counterparts back to cooperation through the UN system.

Despite all the challenges, in 2022, the UN system contributed around USD 2 million of core resources and mobilised USD 11.7 million of donor funding. At the same time, there were certain imbalances in the financing

of the Cooperation Framework's Strategic Priorities, with more resources spent on support to green transition (USD 6.04 million) and future generations (USD 5.7 million) and much less on gender equitable society and digital transformation. Nevertheless, such disproportions are partly explained by the mutually reinforcing and cross-cutting nature of the UN focus areas as well as the necessity to refocus and reprogramme available resources to provide prompt assistance to people affected by the war in Ukraine.

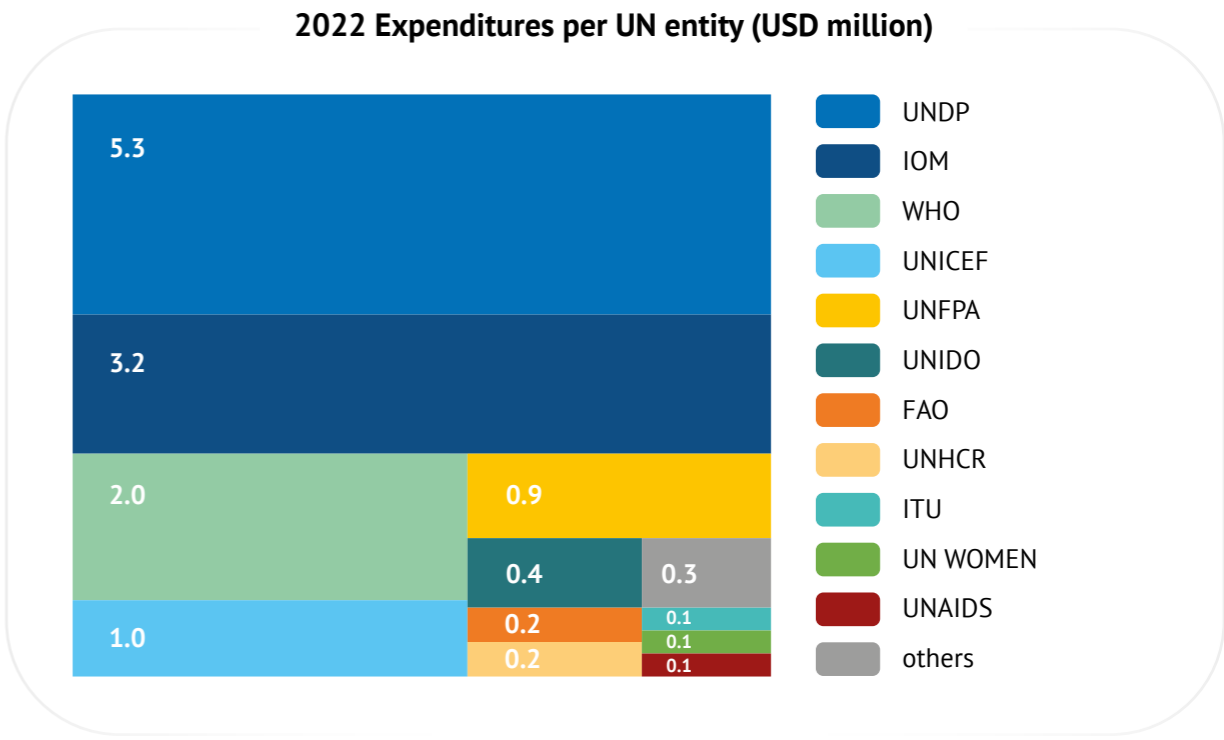
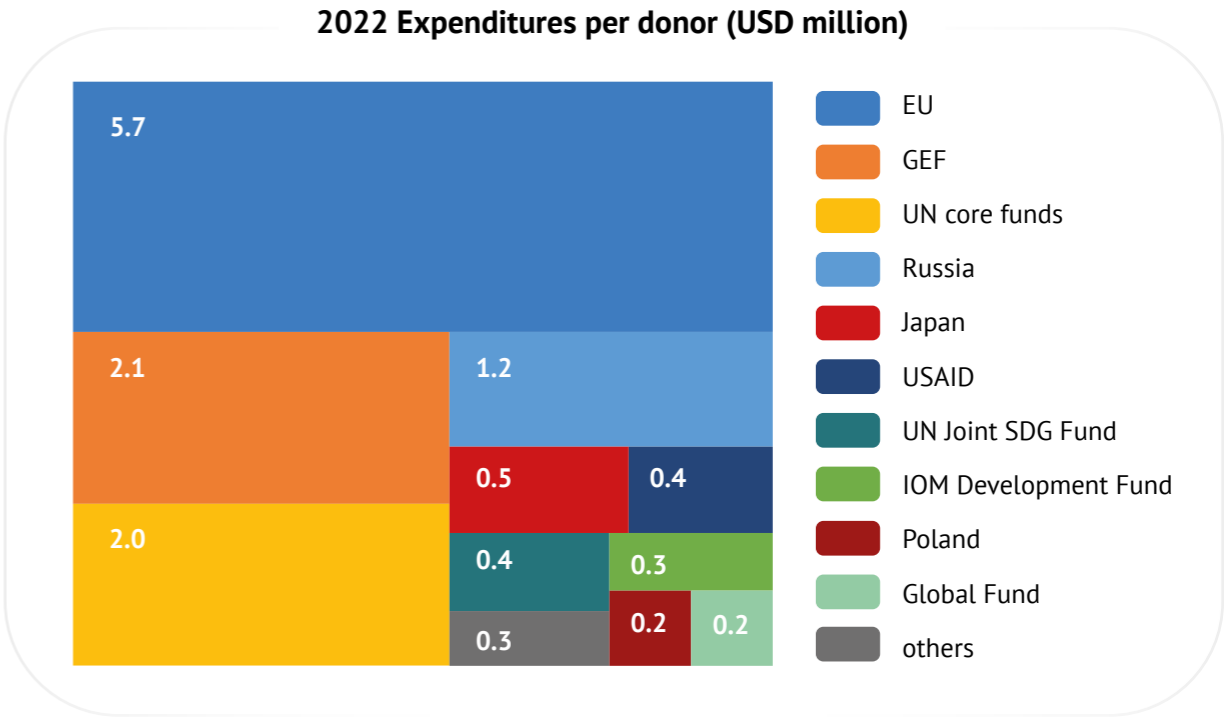
In addition, UNDP and UNICEF implemented the World Bank loan of USD 35.3 million in 2022.

UN agencies focused on leveraging their comparative advantages, developing co-financing proposals, partnering with new donors and mobilising resources through cost sharing with third parties, global trust funds, other funds and private sector enterprises. A key area the UN has focused on was supporting the architecture of the SDG achievement in the country.



The main donors that provided funding to support the Cooperation Framework implementation in 2022 included the multilateral donors: European Union, Global Environmental Facility (GEF),

UN Joint SDG Fund, IOM Development Fund, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); bilateral donors: Russia, Japan, USAID, Poland, and others.



The UN system's improved ability to articulate and formulate joint results helped to expand interaction both externally and internally, a notable result being the significant increase in joint

programmes from USD 258,000 (2021) to USD 855,000 (2022) and over USD 7 million in the pipeline for 2023 and beyond.



Key challenges

The challenges Belarus faced in 2022 will likely remain and continue to affect the work of the UN in the coming years. Key issues include:

Continued scarcity of donor funds, particularly of major traditional donors and IFIs;

Continued deterioration of the economy due to the negative impact of sanctions will increase pressure on the national budget, influence fiscal consolidation and austerity measures in socially significant areas. Fiscal constraints, combined with global inflationary pressures, debt vulnerabilities and currency devaluations, could reduce fiscal space for social spending to progressively realise economic and social rights and threaten the achievement of SDGs;

Liquidation of civil society organisations will continue to pose challenges in programme implementation and delivery, considering that CSOs provided much needed thematic expertise and access to vulnerable and marginalised groups.

CHAPTER 3

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2023



In the constantly changing global, regional and national context, the Cooperation Framework and its strategic priorities remain relevant as long-term objectives of the UN system.

The UN Country Team will focus on:

- Interacting with the Government, civil society, and relevant institutes of the national SDG architecture on SDG implementation.
- Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups under the Leaving No One Behind principle, including in joint programming and advocacy efforts.
- Serving as a platform for dialogue and engagement for all stakeholders supporting the 2030 Agenda, bringing voices of vulnerable groups and CSOs.
- Improving effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the UN work through relevant coordination mechanisms.
- Bringing international best practices and experience to advance sustainable development.
- Expanding joint programmes to enhance interagency cooperation and mobilise cross-sectoral expertise, including through innovative financing mechanisms.
- Adjusting the UN activities to the present context.
- Providing timely humanitarian assistance and durable solutions to people who had to leave their homes, including those affected by the conflict in Ukraine.

Looking forward, the UN in Belarus will remain open and ready to build constructive cooperation at the national, regional and international levels to advance SDGs in Belarus. Every crisis is a test of our principles, values, existing systems and operations. It allows us to critically reflect on shortcomings and gaps, make improvements and reinvigorate our commitments. However, solidarity, co-creation, and multilateralism shall be the cornerstone of cooperation.





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