



**Republic of Moldova–United
Nations
Partnership Framework for
Sustainable Development
2018–2022**

**United Nations Development Assistance
Framework for the Republic of Moldova**

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
ATU	Autonomous Territorial Unit (<i>of Gagauzia</i>)
BOS	Business Operations Strategy
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil society organization
CwD	Children with disabilities
DaO	Delivering as One
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DRM	Disaster risk management
DTP	Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis
EU	European Union
FACE	Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
GDP	Gross domestic product
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HDI	Human Development Index
HEI	Higher education institution
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
LPA	Local public authority
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MSM	Men having sex with men
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHDR	National Human Development Report

OMT	Operations Management Team
PFSD	Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PwD	Person with disabilities
PWID	People who inject drugs
RG	Results Group
SADI	Small Area Deprivation Index
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STEPS	WHO STEPwise approach to Surveillance
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
SW	Sex worker
TB	Tuberculosis
TransMonEE	Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNPF	United Nations Partnership Framework
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VAW	Violence against women
VET	Vocational education and training
WP	Workplan

UNCT Moldova – Resident Agencies:

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

WHO World Health Organization
WB World Bank

UNCT Moldova – Non-Resident Agencies:

IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency
ITC International Trade Centre
UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECE United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is composed of representatives of the United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies and other United Nations entities in a given country, including non-resident agencies and representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions.¹

¹ UNDG (2014), "Guidance Note on United Nations Country Team Conduct and Working Arrangements", <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Approved-Guidance-Note-on-UNCT-Conduct-and-Working-Arrangements.pdf>

Declaration of Commitment

The United Nations is committed to working together with the Government of the Republic of Moldova to make a lasting contribution to national human rights and development priorities and to improve the living conditions of all people in the country, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Building on the results achieved under the United Nations–Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework (UNPF) 2013–2017 and continuing the Delivering as One (DaO) approach, the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the United Nations system will pursue the achievement of national development priorities, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the country’s international human rights commitments and the reform agenda linked to the European Union (EU) association process.

The Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018–2022 (PFSD) is a medium-term strategic planning document that articulates the collective vision and response of the United Nations system to national development priorities and activities to be implemented in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Moldova and in close cooperation with international and national partners and civil society throughout the time period indicated.

The strategic direction and the vision of the PFSD are fully aligned with national development priorities and aspirations. Four thematic areas have been selected for further pursuit:

1. Governance, human rights and gender equality;
2. Sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth;
3. Environmental sustainability and resilience;
4. Inclusive and equitable social development.

These strategic priorities were validated through broad-based consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups.

The PFSD serves as a framework for mutual accountability between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the United Nations. The ultimate objective of the PFSD is to enlarge people’s choices and opportunities, and to promote prosperity, resilience and sustainable development in Moldova.

Government of the Republic of Moldova:

Mr. Pavel Filip
Prime Minister

United Nations Country Team:

Ms. Dafina Gercheva,
United Nations Resident Coordinator

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
16 May 2017

Signatures

In witness thereof the undersigned, being duly authorized, have signed this Government of Moldova–United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development for the period 2018–2022 on (date), in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, and underscore their joint commitment to its priorities, expected outcomes and strategies.

UNCT Moldova – Resident Agencies:

For FAO

Mr. Raimund Jehle
FAO Representative in
Moldova

For ILO

Mr. Antonio Graziosi
Director of the Decent Work
Technical Support Team
and Country Office for Central
and Eastern Europe

For IOM

Mr. Antonio Polosa
Chief of Mission

For OHCHR

Ms. Georgette Gagnon
Director of the Field Operations
and Technical Cooperation
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For UN Women

Ms. Ulziisuren Jamsran
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Ms. Svetlana Plamadeala
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For UNICEF

Ms. Nune Mangasaryan
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Ms. Zsuzsanna Jakab
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UNCT Moldova – Non-Resident Agencies:

For IAEA

Mr. Martin Krause
Director of the Division for Europe, Department of Technical Cooperation

For ITC

Ms. Elena Boutrimova
Chief, Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

For UNCTAD

Ms. Dafina Gercheva
United Nations Resident Coordinator on behalf of Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD

For UNECE

Ms. Catherine Haswell
Officer in Charge, Programme Management Unit

For UNEP

Mr. Jan Dusik
Regional Director, Europe Office

For UNIDO

Mr. Jacek Cukrowski
Chief, Regional Division – Europe and Central Asia

For UNODC

Mr. Alexandre Schmidt
Chief, Section for Europe, West and Central Asia

Executive Summary

The long-term vision for the development of the Republic of Moldova is reflected in the National Development Strategy 2020, which was adopted in 2012. In June 2014, the Government of Moldova signed an Association Agreement (AA) with the EU. In September 2015, the country adopted the SDGs alongside all other Member States of the United Nations, to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

These key events and strategic aspirations underpin the Republic of Moldova–United Nations PFSD with the Government of Moldova for the period 2018–2022, which is aimed at assisting Moldova achieve its SDG targets by supporting the pursuit of European integration with a rights-based and inclusive approach.

The PFSD builds on the successes of the United Nations–Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework 2013–2017 “Towards Unity in Action”, and continues the DaO approach.² It describes how the Government and the United Nations, drawing on the full range of expertise and resources of the United Nations system agencies, will work in partnership to achieve development results.

The PFSD has been developed based on a highly participatory process which resulted in the selection of four priority areas, each with a strategic outcome. These outcomes correspond to key national development and human rights priorities, and are closely aligned with the SDGs and targets. They are aimed at making the best use of the comparative advantage of the United Nations system agencies and at offering opportunities to build on synergies and complementarities between their respective mandates, operational capacities and competency areas.

Priority Area	Outcome
1. Governance, human rights and gender equality	The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from democratic, transparent and accountable governance, gender-sensitive, human rights- and evidence-based public policies, equitable services, and efficient, effective and responsive public institutions.
2. Sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth	The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, have access to enhanced livelihood opportunities, decent work and productive employment generated by sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth.
3. Environmental sustainability and resilience	The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, benefit from enhanced environmental governance, energy security, sustainable management of natural

² At the request of the Government (2011), Moldova is a Delivering as One country which seeks to capitalize on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of the United Nations family to increase the United Nations system’s impact through more coherent programmes, reduced transaction costs for governments, and lower business operations costs.

Priority Area	Outcome
	resources, and climate and disaster resilient development.
4. Inclusive and equitable social development	The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from gender-sensitive and human rights-based, inclusive, effective and equitable quality education, health and social policies and services.

Cross-sectoral linkages between the issues addressed under each priority area are ensured by systematic application of the fundamental United Nations programming principles – leave no-one behind; human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability – as cross-cutting issues, and generally by a strong focus on poverty alleviation, with particular attention to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

The four outcomes serve as a mutual accountability framework between the Government and United Nations system agencies.

The outcomes will be achieved through the ongoing application of the DaO approach and based on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). Key elements include:

- A Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee comprising senior Government and United Nations representatives, which provides overall strategic guidance and oversight to ensure alignment with national priorities;
- A single One Programme, which consolidates and strengthens the coherence of the programme of cooperation between the Government and United Nations system agencies; and
- Results Groups (RGs) (one for each outcome), comprising representatives of resident and non-resident United Nations agencies contributing to the relevant PFSD outcome. They are responsible for joint work planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting against planned results.

DaO will be also supported by the United Nations Communication Group through which the United Nations system agencies will collaborate on common public awareness-raising and advocacy activities. More effective and efficient business operations will be ensured through a joint Operations Management Team, while the resources of the programme will be managed through the Common Budgetary Framework with joint resource mobilization. A number of additional inter-agency working groups will support joint United Nations work in relevant thematic areas.

This PFSD reinforces the strong partnership between the Government and United Nations system agencies to achieve country priorities. The Government has the primary responsibility and accountability for achieving the planned PFSD outcomes. Based on their comparative advantage in Moldova, United Nations system agencies will contribute policy advice, in accordance with international norms, standards,

and best practices, and build capacity at national and local levels – both within and beyond Government institutions – to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of national strategies, policies and plans. Emphasis is placed on those strategies, policies and plans that align strongly with the SDGs and targets, and that provide the fundamental basis for cooperation with United Nations system agencies.

The Results Framework (Annex 1), together with the Common Budgetary Framework (Annex 2) and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Annex 3), is the cornerstone of the PFSD 2018–2022. The budget framework provides the Government, United Nations system agencies, and other development partners with an overview of the required and available resources to support implementation, and any funding gaps. It is a basis for joint mobilization of resources and contributes to better coordination and delivery of support from the Government and United Nations system agencies. Full implementation of the PFSD will require an estimated amount of US\$ 156,700,000. This includes US\$ 9,770,000 from regular or core resources and US\$ 33,754,000 from other or non-core resources. The total estimated funding gap is US\$ 113,176,000. The Government will support the efforts of the United Nations system agencies to raise the funds required for the implementation of this PFSD. It is expected that Moldova, as a middle-income country, will increasingly leverage investment of partners by allocating its own catalytic resources into the PFSD.

1. Introduction

1.1 Map of the Republic of Moldova and Basic Data



Republic of Moldova: Basic Socioeconomic Data³

Location	Eastern Europe
Area	33,846 km ²
Land boundaries	Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east and south
Capital	Chisinau, 532,513 inhabitants (2014 census, National Bureau of Statistics – NBS)
Administrative divisions	32 districts (<i>raioane</i>), three municipalities and two autonomous regions (Gagauzia and Transnistria)
Constitution	Adopted by the Parliament in 1994
Political system	Republic
Population	2,998,235, of whom 38.2 per cent urban and 61.8 per cent rural (2014 census, NBS)
Nationality	Moldovan
Ethnic groups	Moldovans 75.1 per cent, Romanians 7 per cent, Ukrainians 6.6 per cent, Gagauz 4.6 per cent, Russians 4.1 per cent, Bulgarians 1.9 per cent, Roma 0.3 per cent, others 0.5 per cent (2014 census, NBS)
Languages	Romanian (official), recognized regional languages: Russian, Ukrainian and Gagauz
Annual population growth	-0.1 per cent/-1,296 inhabitants (2015, NBS)
Age distribution	0–17: 20.88 per cent; 18–64: 68.24 per cent; 65+: 10.89 per cent (2014 census, NBS)
Life expectancy at birth	Female: 75.54 years; male: 67.52 years (2015, NBS)
Infant mortality rates	Neonatal mortality: 6.4/1,000; under-five mortality rate: 11.7/1,000 (Ministry of Health, 2015)
Doctors per 10,000 inhabitants	36.6 (2015, NBS)
GDP	US\$ 17,793 billion (PPP valuation of country gross domestic product (GDP) 2015, IMF)
GDP per capita	US\$ 5,006 (2015, IMF)
Income level	Low middle-income
Inflation rate	9.7 per cent (2015, World Bank)
Public debt (per cent GDP)	27.5 per cent (2015, Ministry of Finance)
Labour-force	601,400 (average number of employees in 2015, NBS)
Unemployment rate	Total: 3.8 per cent; age group 15–24: 12 per cent (2016, NBS)
HDI score and rank	0.699, rank 107 out of 188 countries (2015 Human Development Index value, UNDP)
EU status	Associated country, 2014

³ Sources: NBS, www.statistica.md; Ministry of Finance, <http://www.mf.gov.md>; Ministry of Health, www.ms.gov.md; World Bank databank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=MDA>; IMF World Economic Outlook Database (April 2016); UNDP (2017), "Human Development Report 2016", <http://report.hdr.undp.org/>

1.2 Country Context and Development Environment

The Republic of Moldova is a landlocked, low middle-income country in transition situated in Eastern Europe. It has a population of 3 million, of whom 51.8 per cent are women and 48.2 per cent men (2014 census).⁴ The population of the country is undergoing significant demographic changes, characterized by low fertility rates, rather low life expectancy and an ageing population, with economic and social implications such as in the area of social security. Migration from the Moldova has been progressively increasing, with an estimated one-third of the working-age population currently abroad.⁵

Despite political instability, the Government of the Republic of Moldova (the Government) managed to conclude a visa-liberalization agreement and an AA with the EU in 2014. The agreement reaffirms the mutual commitment to strengthening the rule of law, democracy, and human rights standards and principles in Moldova. To achieve steady progress and ensure accountability, the Government of Moldova adopted the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the AA in 2014, which transposed the provisions of the agreement into concrete actions. Moldova submits regular reports on the implementation of the EU–Moldova association agenda to the EU. In addition, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) stimulates trade integration between Moldova and the EU. Nevertheless, consensus on Moldova’s future path is yet to be achieved, given diverging views on Moldova’s integration into the EU. Social cohesion is weak and the society remains divided, primarily along geopolitical and ethno-linguistic fault lines. The breakaway region of Transnistria continues to pose a substantial challenge to the internal stability of Moldova and is seen as a source of regional instability. Human rights and the rule of law in the region remain a matter of serious concern for the international community.

The transition to a market economy has been slow due to challenges faced in the implementation of economic and social reforms, the collapse of the industrial sector, and political tensions in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Economic growth reached an all-time high of 12.9 per cent in the third quarter of 2013 but contracted in the following years, to -3.7 per cent in the third quarter of 2015, when the economy flipped into recession due to a negative weather shock in agriculture, weak external flows, the repercussions of a large-scale bank fraud, and tight monetary policy.⁶ Sustaining growth has been a challenge since GDP gains have been fuelled by remittances and export growth through increased access to external markets, which in turn were subject to the effects of the global financial crisis and the trade sanctions imposed by the Russian Federation. The economy remained subdued in 2015, with the GDP shrinking by 0.5 per cent,⁷ but picked up in 2016, registering a growth rate of 4.1 per cent.⁸ Agriculture is the main pillar of the Moldovan national economy and the main source of livelihoods in rural areas, engaging about a fourth of the active population of the country.⁹ Besides a low productivity sector, under-

⁴ NBS (2017), <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=en&idc=30&id=5582&parent=0>

⁵ NBS (2016), “Labour Force Survey Report 2016”

⁶ World Bank (2016), <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/moldova/overview>

⁷ World Bank (2016), “Moldova Economic Update October 2016”

⁸ NBS (2017), <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=en&idc=168&id=5562&parent=0>

⁹ Moroz V., Ignat A, Lucasenco E. (2014), “Small and large scale farms in Moldova”

developed rural infrastructure and poor access to markets, it is highly dependent on natural factors. Extreme weather events, particularly droughts, have had severe effects: the country has experienced five severe droughts since 2000 (2000, 2003, 2007, 2012 and 2015). The annual economic loss caused by natural disasters was 3.5–7.0 per cent of GDP and in some instances even higher.¹⁰

The employment rate in Moldova was 40.3 per cent in 2015, among the lowest in Europe. The level of the indicator was lower for women and in rural areas.¹¹ The overall unemployment rate is relatively low, standing at 3.8 per cent in 2016, but unemployment in the 15–24 age youth group is a more severe problem, standing at 12 per cent.¹² Labour migrants accounted for 25.7 per cent (men: 33.0 per cent; women: 18.3 per cent) of the country's economic active population in 2015.¹³

The country has made significant progress in meeting most Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets. The main areas where good performance indicators have been achieved include the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger, the reduction of child mortality and the creation of a global partnership for development. The areas that lag furthest behind are those related to the combat of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), tuberculosis (TB) and other diseases, the improvement of maternal health, and the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. Moldova's HDI value for 2015 was 0.699, positioning the country at 107 out of 188 countries and territories and placing it in the medium human development category. Moldova has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.232, ranking it 46 out of 159 countries in the 2015 index.¹⁴

Political instability and slow and inequitable economic development has contributed to high poverty rates, placing Moldova among the poorest countries in Europe, despite important progress in reducing poverty. The national poverty rate decreased from 26 per cent in 2007 to 11.4 per cent in 2014.¹⁵ There are no significant gender differences in poverty rates (11.1 per cent for women and 11.9 per cent for men).¹⁶ Reduced remittances and currency devaluation, the falling purchasing power of social benefits and wages,¹⁷ and contracting agriculture risk undoing recent progress on the national poverty rate.

The environmental situation in Moldova worsened during the past 10 years in terms of emissions of CO₂, quality of drinking water, volume of municipal waste and consumption of fuelwood, which led to the Parliament adopting an important body of legal and strategic measures in line with the EU–Moldova association agenda and approximation of the EU acquis in the area of environmental protection. Moldova is highly vulnerable to climate change, leading in this regard among European and Central Asia countries. The impact of climate change on agriculture is significant, given that the latter is the main source of

¹⁰ World Bank (2016), "Moldova: Paths to Sustained Prosperity, A Systematic Country Diagnostic"

¹¹ www.ieconomics.com

¹² NBS, StatBank, <http://www.statistica.md/newview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5554>

¹³ Calculations based on NBS StatBank, <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/RO/03%20MUN/MUN07/MUN07.asp>

¹⁴ UNDP (2017), "Human Development Report", <http://report.hdr.undp.org/>

¹⁵ World Bank (2016), "Moldova Poverty Assessment 2016". The poverty line was set at MDL 104.67 per equivalent adult per month in 2014.

¹⁶ Ministry of Economy (2015), "2014 Republic of Moldova Poverty Report",

http://www.mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_privind_saracia_in_republica_moldova_2014.pdf

¹⁷ World Bank (2016), "Moldova Poverty Assessment 2016"; Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova (2016), "European Union Joint Analysis: Programming in the Republic of Moldova to 2020"

income for a large share of the Moldovan population. The energy system in Moldova faces serious challenges, prompting a need to develop alternative sources of energy and secure an alternative energy import source, particularly given the unstable situation in Ukraine, through which gas is transited to Moldova.

Local governance is still fragmented, underfinanced and able to provide only few good quality services or none at all, thus negatively impacting vulnerable and poor population segments. The new legal provisions on local public finances aimed to increase the fiscal autonomy of local public authorities (LPAs) are being implemented throughout Moldova; however, the fiscal potential of small communities is very poor, thus depriving the population of access to basic services. There is a significant economic polarization, coupled with disparities between regions and a widening development gap between rural and urban areas. The South region is the poorest, followed by the Centre, North and Gagauzia regions.¹⁸ Economic activity and qualified workers are concentrated in the capital while the socioeconomic development of rural areas is weak.

Moldova is party to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties,¹⁹ and broadly strives to comply with guidance provided by international human rights review bodies. The human rights situation has improved since 2010 as far as civil and political rights are concerned, while the social and economic rights have been affected by the financial-banking crises and regional instability. The special rights of vulnerable groups are yet to progress. While the regulatory framework has been improved, the capacity of state institutions to promote and effectively protect human rights is rather weak. Sectoral policies and programmes have yet to incorporate human rights, gender equality and inclusiveness systematically in their design and implementation. At the same time, positive legal developments have occurred over the last years concerning non-discrimination and gender equality.

Moldova has an active, diverse and dynamic civil society, academia, and media at the national level. However, there is scope for further expansion of the democratic space and of participation at the local levels, and for the strengthening of civil society and media independence.

1.3 Main Achievements and Lessons Learned from Past Cooperation

The independent evaluation of the UNPF 2013–2017 acknowledged that the United Nations has successfully supported the country in advancing the human rights agenda and reforms in key priority development areas, on the basis of efficient partnerships with key development partners and civil society.²⁰ United Nations Moldova has made a substantive contribution to the development and improvement of the legal and policy advocacy agenda in all focus areas of support, thus providing an

¹⁸ Ministry of Economy (2014), Small Area Deprivation Index (SADI) database

¹⁹ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); ICESCR; CRC; CRPD.

²⁰ United Nations Moldova (2016), “Final Evaluation of the United Nations–Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework 2013–2017”, <http://md.one.un.org/content/unct/moldova/en/home/publications/strategic-documents.html>

enabling environment for preserving and enriching the UNPF results in the years to come. Mainstreaming gender equality and human rights as well as climate change and disaster risk management (DRM) into the national, sectoral and local policies and plans have contributed to the sustainability of results in terms of impacts on the most vulnerable.

With the support of United Nations, new institutions were set up and integrated into the Government structures at central and local level. New services were developed, scaled up nationwide and taken over by authorities. Capacities were strengthened in terms of increased numbers of competent and skilled people, modernized infrastructure, institutionalized training, new positions introduced in the organizational charts of public institutions, increased capacities for data generation, and a wide range of guidelines, quality standards, protocols and methodologies developed with the assistance of the United Nations.

The UNPF implementation has brought about significant institutional and behavioural changes which influenced positive trends in relevant national targets. It has also contributed to advancing the EU–Moldova association agenda.

The results of United Nations cooperation were achieved in a timely, cost-efficient and effective manner, with little waste and duplication. The implementation of the DaO approach contributed to better programming, coordination and synergizing of the United Nations work through increased cross-practice and cross-agency harmonization, reduction of transaction costs, resource mobilization to cover the funding gap, and improvement of the clarity, coherence and consistency of external United Nations messages.

The evaluation of the UNPF 2013–2017 also highlighted a number of lessons:

- Although functioning in a challenging context, progress towards planned targets could be achieved by creatively using the existing enabling factors to add value and opportunities to open up new operating space.
- The achievement of results is facilitated by an implementation approach which combines sound analytic frameworks, strong evidence and investment in knowledge products with effective leverage of relationships of United Nations agencies with the Government, civil society and other key stakeholders, and the systematic embedding of capacity-building in United Nations interventions.
- In fulfilling human rights and achieving gender equality, both mainstreamed and targeted interventions are needed within the framework of United Nations support.
- Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in United Nations assistance requires a thorough understanding of the relationship between environment and development and better intersectoral coordination on environmental matters.

- Capacity-building priorities need to be informed by the analysis of both capacity assets and the gaps of targeted beneficiaries. In case of rights-holders (vulnerable people, citizens, community groups, etc.), the focus needs to be on increasing their access to quality services, improving governance and sustainable development opportunities, and on encouraging participation in voting and local decision-making. However, equally important is increasing rights-holders' capacity to understand and claim their rights.
- United Nations support needs to be focused on priority areas where the United Nations has the comparative advantage to produce the biggest difference that is realistic and fully aligned with the political context of the country, available resources and time frame.
- An underlying theory of change is needed to ensure the solid connection of United Nations support to national development priorities and targets, international commitments (e.g. EU–Moldova association agenda) and SDGs, as well as to improve joint Government–United Nations accountability for results.
- Political instability might lead to uneven participation of the Government in the steering, coordination and monitoring of United Nations assistance as well as decreased mutual accountability for results. The UNCT will have to monitor developments closely and maintain a regular dialogue with the Government and international development partners to ensure alignment of United Nations work on national reform and the EU–Moldova association agenda. Government commitment to the sustainability of the achieved results has to be explicitly enshrined in the United Nations assistance framework. A mitigation strategy for the risks arising from the challenges of the operating context is also needed to allow the UNCT to intervene in a proactive way.

1.4 United Nations Comparative Advantage in the Republic of Moldova

The UNCT has designed this new PFSD to make strategic use of United Nations resources and expertise in line with its comparative advantages. The latter were analysed from the perspective of United Nations agencies' mandates to act, their capacity to do so and their positioning in the country to address the development challenges of Moldova in a better way than other development partners.

The independent evaluation of the UNPF 2013–2017, a survey in the UNCT and among external stakeholders on United Nations comparative advantage, as well as in-depth interviews with key informants during the preparation of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), highlighted the following comparative advantages of the United Nations in Moldova.

The United Nations is a “market leader” in setting human rights norms and standards and promoting a human rights-based approach to development. This is a strong advantage which the United Nations used

in the development of this PFSD in order to lead Moldova's efforts towards developing efficient responses to human rights challenges.

Equally important are two other comparative advantages of the United Nations: impartiality and neutrality. It operates equally under any political regime and does not impose conditionalities like other international development partners; however, it does not remain impartial when it comes to human rights. The United Nations is also considered to be neutral, which is a crucial comparative advantage that will be used to continue engagement in dialogue in the Transnistrian region and build on the experience to date.

Stakeholders perceive the United Nations as a credible and trustworthy partner of the Government. This is an advantage which will be used in the 2018–2022 programming period to advance policy dialogue on human rights, where realization is lagging behind, as well as to link the work at the local level with the policy level, given its status as an international, intergovernmental organization with a privileged relationship with the Government.

United Nations Moldova is also considered to have cross-sector expertise in-house and be able to quickly mobilize good quality expertise from Moldova, and external expertise from within its regional and international network.

The United Nations has an undisputable comparative advantage in several thematic areas: human rights and governance; combating poverty; efficient service provision; health and reproductive rights; inclusive education; gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; combating inequality and the promotion of social inclusion; and mitigation of climate change and natural disasters. The new PFSD retains largely the same sectoral focus grouped around results/sectoral substantive areas of comparative strength. At the same time, in some other areas where specialized agencies of the United Nations system have a comparative advantage (e.g. agriculture, employment and local development, urban development, energy efficiency, industry, etc.), which has not been yet fully utilized in Moldova and could be further enhanced by the pooled expertise of different international stakeholders, viable partnerships will be sought on the ground to cover very specific development gaps and make a concrete difference in addressing the structural causes and institutional challenges inhibiting progress in these areas.

1.5 SDG Implementation in the Republic of Moldova

The global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an opportunity to draw the attention of governments and other partners to national development priorities. In particular, this will create new opportunities for mobilizing resources to meet these challenges. The strong and trustful partnership with the Government, as well as the mandates and technical skills of the respective United Nations agencies, gives United Nations Moldova a unique comparative advantage and position to support national actors in the SDG nationalization and implementation process. The United Nations advised and supported the Government in the establishment of a national Sustainable Development Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, to oversee the nationalization process and guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The

United Nations has also supported the process to elaborate national targets and indicators, which were endorsed by the Sustainable Development Council in March 2017.²¹

Following a request from the Government, United Nations Moldova will also support the revision of the National Development Strategy Moldova 2020 to ensure alignment with national aspirations, the EU AA and the 2030 Agenda. The revision of the strategy will also provide an opportunity to address challenges arising from the SDG nationalization process, e.g. ensuring that the national policy planning framework is coherent and has commensurate financial resources, and strengthening the inclusion of vulnerable groups' rights and needs in national policies, in line with the principle *leave no-one behind*. Furthermore, the new National Development Strategy will require improvement of the national monitoring and evaluation framework. This will open new opportunities for United Nations support to elaborate a robust system to monitor SDG implementation and enable evidence-driven and risk-aware decision-making by the Government and other key stakeholders in this context.

1.6 Process to Develop the PFSD 2018–2022

The development of the PFSD was carried out as an inclusive and participatory process, bringing together all relevant stakeholders, i.e. Government representatives, UNCT (including non-resident agencies), development partners, civil society, social partners, academia, and private sector partners. Representatives of excluded groups and groups vulnerable to discrimination and human rights violations were consulted extensively to ensure that their perspectives and needs were duly included in the process and reflected in the PFSD.

Strategic guidance was provided by the Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee, with technical support from the UNCT and inter-agency working groups as well as the Regional undg Peer Support Group. The process involved the following steps:

- A road map for PFSD 2018–2022 development was prepared by the UNCT and endorsed by the Government in March 2016.
- An independent evaluation of the current UNPF 2013–2017 was conducted from March to June 2016. The evaluation provided lessons learned and a set of forward-looking recommendations for the development of the PFSD.
- This was followed by a CCA, undertaken from June to October 2016, which offered a thorough participatory analysis of country development challenges from the perspective of Moldova's international human rights commitments and readiness to meet the related SDGs targets, the comparative advantages of the United Nations in Moldova, and potential support areas for United Nations cooperation.

²¹ The objective of the SDG nationalization process is to ensure that the global SDG targets and indicators are adapted to the national policy context, and to the monitoring and evaluation framework.

- The evaluation, the CCA and an internal UNCT planning and prioritizing process set the stage for the organization of a strategic prioritization retreat in September 2016 with over 100 participants from the Government, United Nations agencies, civil society and development partners. Through a combination of presentations, group exercises and plenary discussions, the strategic prioritization retreat defined and validated the outcomes as the backbone of the results matrix of PFSD 2018–2022 and agreed on the implementation strategy.
- The outcomes developed in the consultations and agreed between the Government and United Nations in the core areas of cooperation enable the realization of the country’s human development potential in four selected priority areas: (1) *governance, human rights and gender equality*; (2) *sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth*; (3) *environmental sustainability and resilience*; and (4) *inclusive and equitable social development*.

2. Strategic Priorities

The PFSD 2018–2022 is a strategic programme framework that responds to country priorities. It contains four expected results – outcomes – which were identified jointly by the Government, the United Nations, civil society and development partners. The outcomes build on achievements and lessons learned from the previous programme and utilize the comparative advantage of the United Nations in Moldova.

This section presents Vision 2030 and describes the expected outcomes and overarching programme strategies, as illustrated by the graphic representation of the theory of change (Figure 1). The full results matrices, including indicators, baselines, targets, means of verification/data sources, United Nations partners and Common Budgetary Framework, are provided in Annexes 1 and 2.

2.1 Vision 2030

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development is a transformative and normative agenda providing a sense of direction and a new approach to development. It is universal, action-oriented and indivisible, placing people and human rights at the centre of the development process, reaffirming that gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth. The 17 SDGs introduce the critical issues of peace and security, democratic governance, and the rule of law and human rights for all. The SDGs cover the three key dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental. The Republic of Moldova is committed to implementing Agenda 2030 and ensuring all people have equal access to development benefits so that no-one is left behind. Agenda 2030 provides a backdrop for Vision 2030 and guides United Nations' long-term development efforts in Moldova.

In the regional context, the EU AA (2014), and the wider EU–Moldova association agenda, provides a road map for reforms and modernization that is largely in line with the national development strategies and addresses existing challenges. Given the piecemeal progress across a range of the development sectors in the country in recent years, the bulk of the long-term targets set out in the national development strategies and the EU AA remains valid for the purpose of devising Vision 2030.

In addition to the global and regional development agendas, the perspective of the Government, as formulated in national strategies, policies and programmes, as well as the voice of the people of Moldova, were considered in formulating Vision 2030 for Moldova.

The Government's long-term vision for the development of the country is expressed in the National Development Strategy 2020. The voice of the people was articulated in the extensive public consultations carried out by the United Nations in Moldova in preparation for the formulation of the SDGs. More than 7,000 people were consulted – including from vulnerable and marginalized groups – to solicit their

concerns and priorities for the future of Moldova. The consultation was entitled *The Future Moldova Wants*.²²

Drawing on the strategic documents and public consultations mentioned above, United Nations Moldova envisages that:

In 2030, the Republic of Moldova will be a country free of poverty and corruption with reduced inequalities and strengthened social inclusion and cohesion so that no-one is left behind, a country where human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, the rule of law, environmental sustainability and the well-being of the population are promoted and respected.

To achieve this vision by 2030, a number of dynamic risks challenging Moldova's development endeavours will have to be addressed in a cross-sectoral, holistic and systematic way: political instability; deficiencies in governance and human rights enforcement; gender inequalities; systemic and endemic corruption; the slow pace of justice sector reform; shifting policy priorities; outward migration and shrinking population; economic decline and the scarcity of formal jobs; inequalities in high-quality education, health and social services; the unresolved conflict in the Transnistrian region and the lack of societal cohesion; environmental degradation and the effects of extreme weather events and natural disasters.

The enforcement of a well-developed and adequate legal and policy framework in Moldova will necessitate political stability, clear long-term policy priorities, a strong commitment to agreed reforms, as well as strong and sustainable implementation capacity of public institutions. The outcome of these systemic transformations will greatly depend on adequate budgeting, including increased investment for gender equality and women's empowerment, strong inter-institutional coordination, a holistic and integrated approach to development challenges, and effective targeting of resources to support the most vulnerable groups. A vibrant civil society and independent media is crucial to ensure that people are well informed about the actions and performance of public institutions and officials, and that people have the means to freely influence public policies. Public participation and engagement is key to enhancing policy and service delivery outcomes.

Systems and safeguards will have to be in place for addressing challenges faced by vulnerable groups, in their capacity as rights-holders, in claiming their rights and looking for redress, also for addressing the existing issues of under-developed and uneducated demand for available public goods and services caused by poor information and a lack of understanding of statutory rights.

A normative agenda focused on the elimination of social exclusion, inequities and discrimination is all the more relevant given Moldova's growing wealth inequalities and additional vulnerabilities which might be brought about by the ongoing administrative and decentralization reforms.

²² <http://md.one.un.org/content/unct/moldova/en/home/publications/millennium-development-goals--mdgs--and-post-2015-national-consu.html>

These challenges will also be addressed through transforming prevalent social norms which sustain public intolerance and discriminatory attitudes and practices resulting from the following: stereotypes and traditions; insufficient awareness concerning the potential of vulnerable and excluded groups to contribute to economic growth and improved overall health and well-being; flaws in the education curricula (e.g. life skills, tolerance and combating stereotypes, etc.); and a lack of awareness about human rights in the general population.

These structural challenges and persistent obstacles inhibiting substantive progress on many fronts will have to be addressed in order for the country to fulfil its national aspirations and goals, i.e. a country in which the economic and democratic gains benefit everyone and human rights are respected for all. The emerging developments in the demographic, political, economic, social and environmental landscape requires the Government, civil society, the private sector and development partners, including the United Nations, to meet these challenges with relevant and adequate responses and actions.

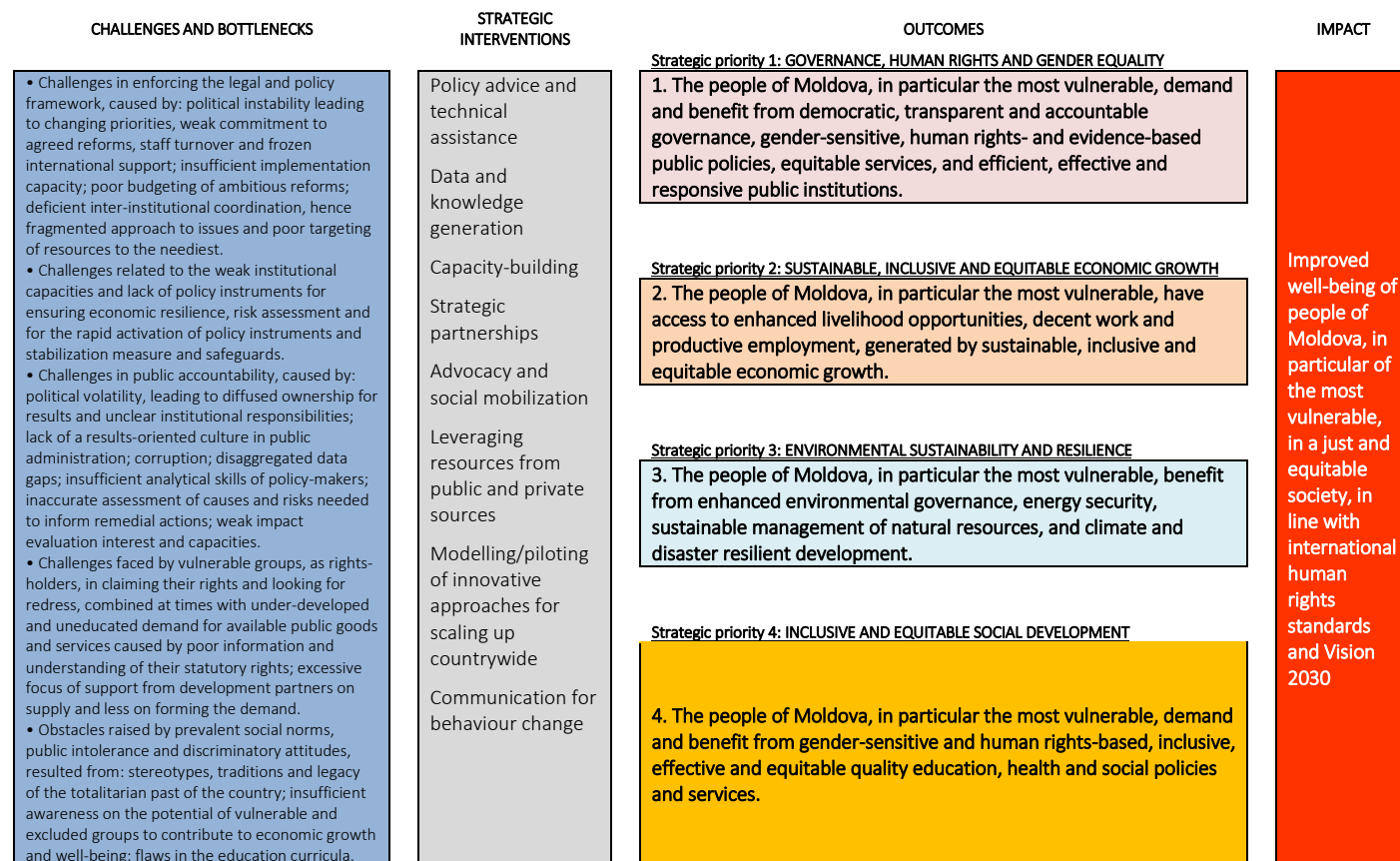
The PFSD 2018–2022 and subsequent strategic United Nations development frameworks for Moldova should be viewed as five-year action plans contributing to the achievement of Vision 2030, and thus implicitly to the realization of the SDGs in the country and the fulfilment of people’s aspirations. To maximize the achievement of results, the United Nations development efforts will be focused on the areas where the United Nations agencies possess a comparative advantage, as articulated in this PFSD. The Government carries the ultimate responsibility for the realization of the national development priorities that underpin Vision 2030, whereas the United Nations and other development partners will contribute in the relevant fields as per their respective mandates and comparative advantages. This PFSD establishes a broad mandate for the United Nations in Moldova, operating under the DaO modality, providing for an operational as well as a normative role. As the country evolves through different stages of development, it is foreseen that the United Nations’ operational role will be phased out and the focus will be exclusively on strategic advising, guided by the normative mandate. Ultimately, this trajectory will depend on Moldova’s development path, the Government’s priorities, and the resources made available for the United Nations’ work in the country.

2.2 Theory of Change

In order to design the PFSD 2018–2022 and identify the ways in which the United Nations can enable change to happen in line with Vision 2030 and formulate programming priorities, a theory of change was developed during the preparation of the PFSD,²³ taking the comparative advantages of the United Nations in Moldova and other partners into account. The graphic representation of the theory of change is presented in Figure 1.

²³ Theories of change have been prepared by the RGs for each priority area and outcome, which were used to construct the overall theory of change for the PFSD. They are available as separate working documents and do not form part of this PFSD document. The PFSD will be made operational through the development of biannual output-level joint workplans and/or agency-specific workplans and project documents.

Figure 1. Theory of Change of the PFSD 2018–2022



2.3 Strategic Priorities

Priority Area 1: Governance, Human Rights and Gender Equality

Outcome 1

The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable,²⁴ demand and benefit from democratic, transparent and accountable governance, gender-sensitive, human rights- and evidence-based public policies, equitable services, and efficient, effective and responsive public institutions.

Main Continuing Challenges in the Priority Area

Due to a series of political crises, frequent change in the Government and corruption that culminated with a large-scale banking fraud in 2014, as well as non-transparent and non-inclusive decision-making, the people's trust in the state institutions – Parliament, Government, justice system, etc. – dramatically decreased from 20–30 per cent in May 2012 to 6–9 per cent in 2016. In opinion polls, corruption has been persistently claimed as among the top three problems, the most affected areas being the judiciary, public finance, health and education.²⁵

Political instability has led to persisting inefficiencies, poor cross-institutional cooperation and excessive political influence over public institutions. Most concerns relate to the poor or partial implementation of policies and adopted laws and regulations. Management and coordination of reforms to reduce corruption, promote effective, accountable and transparent governance is rather weak, as is the institutional accountability of authorities. The draft law on ministerial and agency responsibility has been delayed in the Government since 2013. These challenges require more concerted efforts in supporting a strong, dynamic public administration that is able to withstand political shifts and sustain the institutional development gains that development partners have invested so much in. The enforcement of the recently adopted integrity package and the implementation of recommendations under the review mechanism of the United Nations Convention against Corruption is aimed at strengthening the prevention of corruption and restoring the public trust.

Corruption and poor public accountability contribute to a culture of indifference in society and the belief that very little can be done to change the governance system. This in turn affects the right to participate in public affairs, stand for election and participate in the election; it also affects Government decisions, access to public services, and the right to vote. Vulnerable persons' rights to partake in the decision-making process face many restrictions. The system for the engagement of civil society in the decision-making process established in 2009 in the form of the Participation Council has been donor-driven and fell apart after external funding ceased. There is no other system for engagement with people on the major policy debates, and decisions are taken in a non-transparent way. The public hearings institutionalized in the Parliament with support from United Nations do not cover all needs and are still sporadic, while there is no clear link between the recommendations received from civil society on the

²⁴ Based on a host of studies and reports, United Nations Moldova considers certain individuals belonging to the following groups as disproportionately likely to be left behind in the country-specific development process and exposed to discrimination and other human rights violations, particularly in rural areas: children left behind by migrant parents, older persons, the unemployed, persons in the lowest income quintile, persons with disabilities, survivors of violence, victims of human trafficking, persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, religious minorities, ethnic and linguistic minorities, stateless persons and refugees, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex persons. This definition of most vulnerable groups is applicable to all PFSD outcomes.

²⁵ Institute of Public Policies (2016), "Public Opinion Barometer, October 2016", http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/BOP_10.2016.pdf

policy and the actual decision adopted. Although Moldova has joined the Open Government initiative, information and data on policy implementation is not user-friendly, lacks engagement mechanisms and does not improve the Government's accountability to the citizens.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda, reliable and timely statistics are more important than ever and a strong consensus is now emerging on the need for mechanisms and capacities to measure and monitor SDG implementation once these are nationalized. The availability of data and the empowerment of citizens with voice and opportunities to get engaged in the decision-making processes and use this data play a decisive role in holding governments, businesses and international organizations accountable for their promises.

The Parliament's legislative and oversight functions needs to be strengthened, as well as its engagement with the electorate. A serious concern refers to the right of working migrants to vote: out of an estimated 1 million residing abroad only 138,720 voted in the 2016 presidential elections.²⁶ The access to vote for persons with disabilities (PwDs) has improved in the last series of elections, but less for those in state residential care. Further efforts are needed to achieve a more inclusive and transparent electoral system and a higher voter turnout, ensuring the credibility of the election results.

Justice Sector Reform Strategy (2012–2016) implementation is lagging behind, in particular regarding the enforcement of the approved legislation and institutional changes. Ninety per cent of the very ambitious policy document Strategy for the Reform of the Justice Sector 2013–2016 and its Action Plan has been implemented.²⁷ The results are yet to be perceived by the people, as the strategy mainly focused on the improvement of the legal framework, which is not yet consistently implemented.

The effective enjoyment of key public services related to fundamental human rights remains low among Moldova's most vulnerable groups. National and international studies, concluding observations and recommendations of the United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms point at the following specific issues: a sizeable number of undocumented Roma children and adults, a low level²⁸ of access to the justice system by PwD and the rural population, limited provisions of public interest information in minority languages, difficulties in issuing construction authorizations for religious buildings of religious minorities, torture and poor conditions of detention claims, various forms of discrimination against PwD, women, Roma and other ethno-linguistic minorities (as per rulings of the Equality Council) etc. General comment 14 of the Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which Moldova is a state party, describes health as a fundamental human right indispensable for the exercise of other human rights and that every human being is entitled to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health conducive to living a life in dignity. As party to a large number of international human rights instruments and mechanisms, Moldova regularly receives formal recommendations for the improvement of its human rights situation. The national human rights implementation, monitoring and reporting framework is, however, weak and fails to address all these recommendations. At the moment, the country has neither a comprehensive human rights strategy and action plan nor an effective national mechanism for coordinating implementation, monitoring and reporting on human rights-related reforms.

These and other similar challenges are the result of low levels of understanding of rights-based service

²⁶ "Report on the results of the Presidential Elections held on 30 October 2016 in the Republic of Moldova". Approved by Decision No. 572 of 18 November 2016 of Central Electoral Commission.

²⁷ Ministry of Justice, "2016 Annual report on the implementation of the justice sector reform strategy for the years 2011–2016" (draft)

²⁸ United Nations Moldova (2014), "Study on the situation of Romani women and girls in the Republic of Moldova", <http://md.one.un.org/content/unct/moldova/en/home/publications/joint-publications/study-on-the-situation-of-romani-women-and-girls-in-the-republic.html>; "Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues on her mission to the Republic of Moldova" (2017)

delivery among public service providers, of inadequacy of public policies and enforcement mechanisms for ensuring rights-based public service delivery, but also of the low level of empowerment among service recipients (rights-holders) to effectively demand and monitor public service delivery.

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has a strong impact on the socioeconomic development of a state and is essential to achieving progress across all the goals and targets of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Despite having a legislative and policy framework on gender equality in place, implementation lags behind and women still face discrimination and inequality in social, economic and political life. It is critical to address the structural causes of gender inequality, such as violence against women (VAW), unpaid care work, and unequal participation in decision-making with targeted efforts, as well as the integration of a gender perspective in all development interventions.

Women and girls constitute more than half of Moldova's population, yet they are under-represented in the bodies that make key decisions affecting their lives. Despite an increase in women's representation in the Parliament and at local level over recent years, the country did not reach its related MDG 2015 targets and the value of the Political Empowerment Subindex of the Gender Gap Index is still low (0.196 – placing Moldova in fifty-eighth place).²⁹ Even when they gain representation, the influence of elected women is sometimes limited, due to the centralization of party control in a male-dominated party leadership and gender norms and procedures in political institutions. Women in high positions in the legislative and the executive are involved mostly in the social spheres, with those related to economy, budget, law enforcement or security being dominated by men. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has expressed specific concerns that disadvantaged groups of women, including Roma women and women with disabilities, are in practice almost completely excluded from political and public life and has suggested introducing procedures to ensure their effective participation in elected offices and appointed bodies.³⁰

While Moldova recently adopted the Law 71/2016 stipulating a mandatory 40 per cent gender quota for party lists for local and parliamentary elections as well as other provisions related to gender equality, further efforts are needed to ensure real progress towards parity in representation at all levels, as well as the integration of a gender perspective in the entire policy and budget-making process. Towards this end, there is a need to strengthen the capacities, positioning and influence of the national gender equality structures and further enhance effective cooperation mechanisms between the gender equality bodies and the relevant Government institutions in order to enhance gender mainstreaming in all areas, as well as with civil society organizations (CSOs).

Stereotyped views on women's capacities and roles in decision-making are still strong, as evidenced in the way women are depicted in media. This requires dedicated efforts towards challenging gender norms and stereotypes. Also, women continue being predominantly responsible for domestic work and as primary caretakers even when they work outside the home, which reduces their mobility and ability to network – critical assets for any form of public engagement – and reinforces inequality at home.

Adolescents' participation in social life and their contribution to decision-making processes, both at home and in society, is low. Only 16 per cent of young people aged 15–24 are willing to participate in solving community problems, and 42 per cent state they cannot participate because of lack of time or because they do not know how to get involved. There is no tradition of adopting a participatory approach towards

²⁹ World Economic Forum (2016), <https://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=MDA>

³⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2013), "Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova 2013", <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/52f385744.pdf>

both adults and children in local public administration.³¹

Discrimination is widespread in Moldova, the least socially accepted groups being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, ex-detainees, persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, Roma and Muslims.³² Out of 400 discrimination complaints received by the Equality Council since its establishment in 2013, discrimination was found in over 100 cases. A 2016 study showed that the right to education, health, social protection, protection against violence, and a fair trial is ensured to a lesser extent for poor people, PwD, older persons and the rural population.³³ Stigma, social exclusion and discrimination is experienced also by sex workers (SW) and by people who inject drugs (PWID), and serve as barriers to effective access to health and social care services.

VAW is a widespread problem in Moldova and one deeply rooted in traditional norms and entrenched behaviours. According to a national study,³⁴ 63 per cent of women above 15 years old experience some form of violence³⁵ from a husband/partner during their lifetime. Rural women, elderly women, Romani women, women with disabilities and HIV-positive women reported the highest prevalence rate of multiple forms of violence. Gender-based VAW and violence against children is largely underreported due to shame, fear of social stigma, lack of knowledge about existing laws, judicial procedures and services, and overall because of a lack of confidence in the system. The courts, prosecutors and police do not properly implement law and regulations on domestic violence due to the lack of knowledge and skills, and prevailing traditional stereotypes.

The law does not regulate the status of psychologists in criminal proceedings (qualifications, competence, accountability). There is no clear concept of nor specific curricula for specialized training of professionals providing assistance to children and women in contact with the law. Psychosocial assistance services at district level are difficult to accessible for children and women coming from rural areas. There is neither a mechanism to enforce the provisions of the penal legislation on child-friendly and gender-sensitive interviewing, nor adequately adapted and equipped hearing rooms for child victims of crimes. Preparing children for participation in legal proceedings is done spontaneously by her/his parents or legal representatives, and not by justice system professionals, which in turn has negative repercussions on the child's ability to confront a non-sensitive justice system.

An understaffed justice sector is an obstacle to ensuring the access of children and women to a child-friendly and gender-sensitive justice system with insufficient numbers of judges and prosecutors, psychologists, specialized legal aid lawyers and mediators. A high workload and low remuneration have a negative impact on the performance of professionals working with children and women in contact with the law, including the guaranteed legal aid and probation services, which are free of charge. Lack of clear guidelines and protocols for the investigation/examination of cases involving children and women as victims, witnesses or alleged offenders has a negative impact on the quality of assistance provided to children and women in contact with the law.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

³¹ Council of Europe (2013), "Child and youth participation in the Republic of Moldova", http://eap.youth.eu/sites/default/files/documents/policyreviewmoldova_en.pdf

³² Equality Council (2015), "Equality Perceptions and Attitudes Study"

³³ People's Advocate (2016), "Human Rights Perceptions Study"

³⁴ NBS (2011), "Violence against Women in the Family"

³⁵ Types of violence: psychological, physical, sexual and economic.

Links to National Priorities

The outcome is expected to support the Government to increase the quality and efficiency of justice and fight corruption, which is one of the national priorities enshrined in the **National Development Strategy “Moldova 2020”**. This priority comprises the following areas:

- Strengthening the independence, accountability, impartiality, efficiency, and transparency of the court system;
- Increasing the efficiency of the pre-judicial investigation process to guarantee the observance of human rights, ensuring the security of each person, and reducing the level of crime;
- Improving the institutional framework and processes that ensure effective access to justice: effective legal counselling, examination of cases and execution of judicial decisions within a reasonable time frame, and modernization of the statutes of some legal professions related to the justice system;
- Promoting and implementing the principle of zero-tolerance for corruption in justice;
- Implementing certain measures by which the justice sector would contribute to creating a favourable environment for sustainable economic development;
- Ensuring the effective observance of human rights in legal practices and policies;
- Coordinating, establishing and delineating responsibilities and tasks of the main actors in the justice sector, as well as ensuring cross-sectoral dialogue.

Apart from “Moldova 2020”, the outcome is also aimed at supporting the implementation of related national strategies and action plans, most notably:

- **National Human Rights Action Plan 2017–2021 (under development):** Achievement of Moldova’s key human rights priorities set in the Plan, based on the country’s commitments under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), United Nations human rights treaties, and findings and recommendations of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies and special procedures.
- **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2017–2021 (submitted to the Government for approval):** Supporting an enabling legal and institutional environment and enhancing the capacities of women to engage in decision-making proactively; empowering women and achieving de facto equality between men and women in Moldova; fighting against stereotypes in society and promoting non-violent communication; gender-responsive budgeting.
- **Child Protection Strategy 2014–2020:** Ensuring proper childcare and education conditions in the family; preventing and combating violence, and the neglect and exploitation of children; promoting non-violent practices in raising children.
- **National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2017–2022 (draft):** Preventing VAW and domestic violence and investigating and prosecuting offenders.
- **Strategy on Public Administration Reform 2016–2020 and Action Plan for 2016–2018:** Developing public services reengineering, digitalization and streamlining based on the interoperability of services.

- **National Decentralization Strategy 2012–2018:** Capacity development of local public administration for the effective implementation of the decentralization process and the territorial-administrative reform.
- **National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017–2020:** Strengthening the capacities of the national institutions to implement the strategy and supporting the civil society to effectively monitor the implementation and consolidate the anti-corruption demand side.
- **Action Plan to Support the Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova for 2016–2020:** Reducing discrimination against Roma people in the delivery of public services, justice, education, health care, employment, and social assistance, as well as in representation.
- **National Strategy on Strengthening the Statistical System in the Republic of Moldova 2016–2020:** Strengthening capacities of the NBS, administrative and alternative sources to cope with the growing data demands for monitoring and evaluation of national policies and Agenda 2030; improving the level of disaggregation of nationalized SDGs indicators; increasing data users' statistical literacy for evidence-based policymaking; building national capacities for the next Population Census in 2020.
- **National Strategy on Migration and Asylum 2011–2020:** Strengthening ties with diaspora and promoting *social remittances* – democracy, economy, culture, gender relations, organization and community practices.
- **Diaspora Strategy 2025:** Ensuring the rights of the diaspora and confidence-building; engaging, development and acknowledging the diaspora's human potential.
- **National Youth Strategy 2014–2020:** The key priorities of the youth strategy are to: ensure youth participation in decision-making process and promote civic activism, youth mobility and youth awareness; improve access to services for youth, including health services; and improve economic opportunities for youth, including promotion of economic entrepreneurship and employment.

Related SDGs

The PFSD will also contribute to Government efforts to achieve the following SDGs and associated nationalized targets:³⁶

- **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
 - 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls
 - 5.2: Prevent and eliminate violence against girls and women, including trafficking
 - 5.3: Eliminate early and forced marriages with children
 - 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
 - 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning and to sexual and reproductive information and education
- **SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries**

³⁶ The nationalized targets are based on the global SDG targets and have been adapted for alignment with the national context and development priorities. Subject to available resources and capacities, the nationalized targets will inform and guide the United Nations' programmatic interventions during the implementation of the PFSD.

10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
 10.3: Ensure equal opportunities and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
 10.4: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

- **SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**
 - 16.1: Continuously and dynamically reduce all forms of violence, especially family violence and sexual violence
 - 16.2: End abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
 - 16.3: Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all women, men and children
 - 16.4.1: Significantly reduce illicit financial flows, improve recovery and return of illicit goods
 - 16.4.2: Combat all forms of organized crime and arms trafficking
 - 16.5: Significantly reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms
 - 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
 - 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
 - 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
 - 16.10: Ensure equal access to information for all citizens
- **SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**
 - 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
 - 17.18: By 2020, increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
 - 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity-building

Main Areas of Work

To respond to the governance and rule of law challenges and accelerate the implementation of Moldova's national strategies mentioned above, specific PFSD strategies will focus on:

- **Evidence-based policies:** Promotion of evidence-based policies, equipped with accurate disaggregated data, which enable development actors to address inequalities and to make sure that everyone has access to equal opportunities, and can apply their abilities to contribute to their country's development.
- **Institutional accountability:** Assistance to build accountable institutions which are responsive to the needs of people and representative of the population in its diversity; strengthening the capacities of national institutions to collect, disseminate, analyse and widely use disaggregated data for evidence, human rights-based and gender-responsive policy formulation and monitoring and evaluation of the social impact produced, which specifically target deep-rooted vulnerability patterns and disadvantaged groups and use innovative and sustainable approaches; improvement of the capacity of human rights policy-makers, monitoring bodies and implementers with regard to implementation of and effective monitoring over international human rights recommendations.
- **Institutional reforms:** Establishment of transparent, robust and evidence-based systems of binding regulations on policy development and policy monitoring, including a human rights-based approach to service delivery among public service providers; capacity-building of policy-makers and service providers (duty-bearers), including human rights and gender-sensitive policy

formulation and effective implementation, based on greater integrity in public sector and improved skills to detect and investigate cases of corruption and money-laundering; facilitating the transition from a rigid, centralized system of public decision-making towards a larger delegation of authority, inclusive and participatory decision-making, inter-agency cooperation, thus building capacity and commitments of elected officials and civil servants at all levels in legislative and policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and oversight, as well as bringing interoperable digitalized services closer to citizens and removing opportunities for corruption; further capacity enhancement to ensure an inclusive and transparent elections process.

- **Community engagement and empowerment of rights-holders:** Implementation of systems and safeguards for addressing challenges faced by vulnerable, minority and excluded groups in claiming their rights and looking for redress; addressing the existing issues of under-developed and uneducated demand for available public goods and services caused by poor information and misunderstanding of statutory rights; empowerment of rights-holders, including vulnerable, minority and excluded groups, to use the accountability frameworks and democratic instruments and mechanisms to effectively monitor and demand implementation of international human rights recommendations; support for rights-holders' self-organization and activism through civil society networks. Advancement of human rights will require individual and group empowerment, but also community mobilization and engagement.
- **Social norms:** Transforming prevalent social norms which sustain repression against prevention, public intolerance and discriminatory attitudes and practices resulting from: stereotypes, traditions and legacy of the totalitarian past of the country; insufficient awareness concerning the potential of vulnerable, minority and excluded groups to contribute to economic growth and well-being; flaws in the education curricula (e.g. life skills, tolerance and combating stereotypes, etc.).
- **Innovation and good practices:** Promotion of innovative approaches, good practices, successful models, as well as expansion of cooperation and partnerships and fostering dialogue, in order to involve a larger segment of stakeholders in the development process, including vulnerable, minority and excluded groups, CSOs, and international development partners.

Priority Area 2: Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Economic Growth

Outcome 2

The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, have access to enhanced livelihood opportunities, decent work and productive employment, generated by sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth.

Main Continuing Challenges in the Priority Area

After several years of progressive economic development, Moldova moved into recession in 2015 with GDP shrinking by 0.5 per cent.³⁷ This was mainly due to the unstable political situation, weaker external financial flows and the severe climatic conditions which hit the country. In 2016, the economy registered a growth rate of 4.1 per cent;³⁸ nevertheless, the reforms of the policy framework in key issues such as

³⁷ World Bank (2016), "Moldova Economic Update October 2016"

³⁸ NBS (2017), <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=en&idc=168&id=5562&parent=0>

debt management and investment promotion remain a continuing challenge and need to be better addressed to ensure the Government's financing needs are met and to support the development of Moldova's domestic markets. Remittances fell by another 9.1 per cent in the first half of 2016³⁹ and no policies are in place to stimulate investment of remittances in the national economy – they are exclusively used for consumption purposes. The economic shocks at the central level are multiplied several times when it comes to the local level due to excessive country fragmentation fed by current negative demographic trends and low institutional capacities of the LPAs to efficiently deliver basic services. Moldova faces the most daunting demographic challenges across the Europe and Central Asia region, with the lowest fertility, an ageing population and the highest net emigration rates, depleting social capital and leading to brain drain.⁴⁰

On the other hand, by signing the AA with the EU, since September 2014 Moldova has benefited from a DCFTA with the EU. This preferential trade system has allowed Moldova to benefit from reduced or eliminated tariffs for its goods, an increased services market and better investment conditions. Thus, around 63 per cent of Moldova exports are sent to the EU, followed by Russia (12 per cent) and Belarus (6.7 per cent). Moldova ranks sixty-eighth among the EU's trade partners, with a total turnover of €3.34 billion in 2016, an increase of 1.5 per cent since 2015.⁴¹

Moldova remains the country with the lowest rate of urbanization in Europe, with 38.2 per cent of the population in 2014 living in urban settlements, of whom over half (51.61 per cent) lives in Chisinau (2014 census).⁴² The urban-centred asymmetric growth has further deepened, with over 82 per cent of the country's poor residing in rural areas.⁴³ There is a widening gap in living conditions and income: in 2015 disposable incomes per capita in rural areas of Moldova were 29.5 per cent lower than in urban areas. The wages represent only 27.8 per cent of rural households' disposable income, and the dependence on remittances is twice as high as in urban households.⁴⁴ This development gap is further expressed in much worse access to such basic services as a safe water supply and sewerage systems, as well as education, having adverse impacts health outcomes and life prospects for people, including the most vulnerable, from rural areas. The access to basic services and resilient infrastructure is still limited in the rural areas especially, where less than 50 per cent of the population have access to piped water and only 1.4 per cent to the public sewage systems.⁴⁵ This process is fed by the fragmented, underfinanced local governments which can provide only limited services. The small size of localities,⁴⁶ combined with the low economic potential, negatively affects the capacity of local governments to fulfil their functions, most of them having a more representative role. This has particular significance for the most vulnerable and the poorest people, who do not benefit from strengthened livelihood opportunities.

This process is fed by internal migration, mainly to the capital city, with an internal migration rate of +6.2‰, or 59 per cent of internal migrants in 2013.⁴⁷ At the same time, urban inequalities are rising as well, contributing to food and fuel poverty.

³⁹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2016), "Transition Report 2016-17. Transition for all: equal opportunities in an unequal world", http://2016.tr-ebrd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TR2016_CA_Moldova.pdf

⁴⁰ The outward labour migrants accounted for 25.7% (men: 33.0%, women: 18.3%) of the country's economically active population in 2015. NBS (2015), <http://statbank.statistica.md>

⁴¹ European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/moldova/>

⁴² NBS (2017), <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=en&idc=30&id=5582&parent=0>

⁴³ Ministry of Economy, "Analysis of poverty indicators 2015", <http://www.mec.gov.md/ro/content/analiza-indicatorilor-saraciei>

⁴⁴ NBS (2016), "Population incomes and expenditures in 2015", <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5141>

⁴⁵ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (2016), "National Regional Development Strategy 2016-2020", <http://parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeacteleislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/3298/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

⁴⁶ Over 30% of Moldovan communities have fewer than the legally required 1,500 inhabitants.

⁴⁷ Nicolaas de Zwager, Ruslan Simtov. (2014), "Innovation in regional migration. Migration and development in Moldova"

The employment rate was 40.3 per cent in 2015, being among the lowest in Europe.⁴⁸ The level of the indicator differs by residence (38.9 per cent in rural areas against 42 per cent in urban areas) and gender (38.4 per cent for women against 42.3 per cent for men).⁴⁹ There is also a significant gender wage gap: in 2015, women earned on average 86.8 per cent of the salaries of men.⁵⁰ The low employment rate of Roma people is partly caused by the lack of targeted policies as regards the low literacy level and professional education of Roma, weak outreach by public employment services, the prevalence of stereotypes regarding the skills of Roma persons, as well as by gender-based discriminatory practices within Roma communities. As a result, the employment rate of Roma is two times lower compared to non-Roma (21 per cent versus 46 per cent). The employment rate of Roma women (16 per cent) is 2.7 times lower than for non-Roma women (43 per cent) and 1.5 times lower compared to Roma men (28 per cent).⁵¹ Poor outreach by labour-market programmes have resulted in rather modest employment rates for other vulnerable groups: 34 per cent for PwD, 26 per cent for returned migrants and 19 per cent for former convicts (2015).⁵² As far as young people are concerned, the rate is only 18.2 per cent for the age category 15–24 and 45 per cent for the age category 25–34. The level of the indicator is lower in the rural areas for both age categories. Skills mismatch, lack of early career guidance, discriminatory practices on the labour-market, limited access to labour-market information among young people as well as under-developed “soft” skills are underlying factors impeding the access of young people to good quality jobs. The general unemployment rate is rather low, standing at 3.8 per cent in 2016, although unemployment among youth aged 15–24 is a more pressing problem (12 per cent).⁵³ Unemployment is concentrated in the young population in rural areas, whereas in urban areas it is found across all age groups. Youth inactivity is of bigger concern than unemployment, affecting 59.6 per cent of young people.⁵⁴

Over one-quarter of young people in Moldova in 2015 were neither employed nor in education or training (NEET). These young people are either inactive or unemployed non-students.⁵⁵ Young women tend to stay away from the labour-force or education mostly due to family responsibilities, but also as a consequence of stereotypes, family responsibilities, a high reservation wage, the gender pay gap and a lack of decent, remunerative work. As they are not looking for a job, those women are more inactive than unemployed. The employment disparities between the urban and rural areas indicate reduced economic opportunities and employment-boosting policies and measures, which are important determinants of young labour migration. In 2015, people aged 15–34 represented around 57.3 per cent of the total number of job seekers abroad, the proportion of rural youth being 70.7 per cent of all young migrants.⁵⁶

Inequalities in the labour-market are persistent and the complexity of the problem makes policy formulation and implementation very problematic. In-depth labour-market analysis is rather undeveloped with regard to labour-market trends, economic development, an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, the particular needs of vulnerable groups, links between education and migration, but also

⁴⁸ www.ieconomics.com

⁴⁹ NBS, StatBank,

<http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MUN0102&ti=Ratele+de+activitate%2C+ocupare+si+somaj+pe+sexe%2C+medii+si+trimestre%2C++2000%2D2015&path=../Database/RO/03%20MUN/MUN01/&lang=1>

⁵⁰ NBS (2016), “Gender pay gap by economic activities, 2013-2015”,

http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/en/50%20Statistica%20gender/50%20Statistica%20gender__GEN01/GEN012400sal.px/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774

⁵¹ UNDP, United Nations Women, NBS (2016), “Situația femeilor și fetelor rome. Notă analitică”.

http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Cooperare_internationala/PNUD/10_tablouri_femei_RM/prof_6_rome.pdf

⁵² Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (2016), “Raport cu privire la situația pe piața muncii pentru anul 2015”

⁵³ NBS, StatBank

⁵⁴ ILO (2016), “Labour market transition of the young women and men in the Republic of Moldova”

⁵⁵ ILO (2016), “Labour market transition of the young women and men in the Republic of Moldova”

⁵⁶ NBS (2016), “Populația de 15 ani și peste, aflată la lucru sau în căutare de lucru în străinătate, pe grupe de vîrstă, sexe, medii și trimestre, 2000–2016”

human capital assessment through occupational skills analysis, development of occupational standards and better linkages between labour-market demand and supply. Existing legal provisions are in some cases a barrier to employment. As far as returned migrants are concerned, reintegration challenges include unattractive salaries, discouraging social infrastructure, a lack of jobs to match skills and competences acquired abroad, lack of recognition of non-formal and informal learning, hostile investment environment and insufficient resources and knowledge to launch a business. Most of these challenges are also valid for young people.

As for women, their employability is seriously affected by overprotective legal provisions, making employers bear the costs associated with maternity leave and forcing them to keep the position open for several years. In addition, about 66 per cent of women's total working time is made up of unpaid work, while men allocate half the time to this activity.⁵⁷ Another challenge is the lack of childcare services, which leads to women's unemployment and inactivity: nine out of 10 women with children under the age of three, and two out of three women with children between three and seven years old, are unemployed.⁵⁸ As for PwD, the lack of respect for the legal employment quota perpetuates the exclusion of these groups from the labour-market and prevents them from escaping poverty.

The size of the non-observed economy was estimated at 23.1 per cent of GDP in 2013, while 30.9 per cent of the employed population had an informal job.⁵⁹ Informal employment is high among the youngest population (15–24 years), particularly among those with lower levels of education and graduates of vocational education. It perpetuates precarious working conditions, non-standard forms of employment, lack of adequate protection and high vulnerability. The practice of undeclared work is widespread in Moldova, estimated at 13 per cent of GDP in 2011.⁶⁰ The share of informal employment in non-agricultural employment was 12.6 per cent, being 2.5 times higher among men (18.6 per cent) than among women (7.4 per cent). The large informal-sector economy deprives the state of the necessary tax resources for social sector spending and leaves large segments of the population unprotected against illness, old-age and occupational safety and health hazards. Labour inspection has limited capacities to enforce labour laws, address the transition from informality to formality and pursue respect for rights at work, whereas wage levels, and particularly the minimum wage, are often inadequate to ensure a decent standard of living for workers and their families. There are reported cases of violations of the rights of workers to remuneration and regular payments of their contribution to social and health insurance.

Agriculture remains one of the main economic sectors, employing 32 per cent of the labour-force in 2015,⁶¹ while about 50 per cent of exports were agrifood products.⁶² Besides a low productivity sector, it is also highly dependent on natural factors (floods, hail and droughts). The main obstacles in increasing the productivity levels in agriculture are a lack of knowledge and capacities of farmers, in particular of the small ones, in using modern technologies for the production and protection of crops, limited access to business support services and marketplaces, and challenges across value chains. In addition, the cooperation between the private sector and specialized research institutes is weak. Another important factor which worsens the situation in the agricultural sector is the high ageing rate of the rural population,

⁵⁷ NBS (2014), "Analytic note. The importance of unpaid work in Moldova". The analytic note was based on a time use survey.

⁵⁸ United Nations Women, UNICEF (2013), "Study on demand and supply of childcare services through the angle of women's employability"

⁵⁹ ILO (2015), "The informal economy in the Republic of Moldova. A comprehensive review"

⁶⁰ ILO (2015), "The informal economy in the Republic of Moldova. A comprehensive review"

⁶¹ NBS (2016), "Labour force in the Republic of Moldova: employment and unemployment in 2015", <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=en&idc=168&id=5147>

⁶² NBS (2016), "Export activities of the Republic of Moldova, January–October 2016", <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5441>

which reached 16.8 per cent in 2015.⁶³ According to the Agricultural Census (2011), about 46 per cent of agricultural farms are managed by people of pre-retirement (55–64 years) and retirement ages (65 years and over);⁶⁴ 36 per cent of agricultural farms are managed by women, most of them (57 per cent) being of pre-retirement or retirement age. Compared to men, the proportion of those who are managing a farm in pre-retirement or retirement age is 16.6 percentage points lower.⁶⁵

The industrial sector's contribution to GDP and job creation has been stagnant, reflecting weak technological capabilities, rendering it inherently incapable of capitalizing on the preferential market access conditions offered by the different trade agreements.⁶⁶ This is reflected in Moldova's continued reliance on a handful of trade partners as the main outlet for exports (Romania, the Russian Federation and Italy, which absorb the bulk of Moldova's exports) and the chronic trade deficit, which stood at US\$ 2 billion in 2015, fuelled also by the country's reliance on the import of energy resources.⁶⁷ Market and product diversification is therefore a matter of the utmost priority. Efforts should give priority treatment to the development of both the industrial and agricultural sectors. With 61.8 per cent of the population living in rural areas (2014 census),⁶⁸ the agricultural sector's importance for poverty alleviation cannot be over-emphasized.⁶⁹ However, development efforts are complicated by the unresolved conflict in the Transnistrian region, the under-developed transport infrastructure and the lack of enterprise support services. A recent United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) study on removing the regulatory and procedure barriers to trade shows that crisis has taken its toll on the manufacturing sector, which has been experiencing dwindling demand. The study also identified the key challenges for further development: transparency of regulatory and procedural requirements for exports and imports, at the border control and customs clearance, technical expertise and standardization, transit trade, transport and logistical services, and enterprise development programmes.⁷⁰

Moldovan small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have limited opportunities, skills and resources to innovate, either in terms of products, services or internal business processes. Although the overall research and development expenses accounted for approximately 0.37 per cent of GDP (2015), Moldova is positioned only 135th in the global ranking of 138 countries in terms of number of scientific publications.⁷¹ Enabling environment deficiencies led to poor access to entrepreneurship and business development services, limited access to higher value added chains and suboptimal workplace practices. Working towards building strong, competitive and innovative businesses is at the heart of the drive to enhance the economic and social development of the country.

⁶³ NBS (2017), "Ageing factor of population, 1980-2015",

http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/en/20%20Populatia%20si%20procesele%20demografice/20%20Populatia%20si%20procesele%20demografice__POP010/POP011600.px/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774

⁶⁴ NBS (2014), "Women and men in the agriculture of Republic of Moldova"

http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_agricol/Femei_barbati_agr/Femei_barbati_agric_eng.pdf

⁶⁵ United Nations (2016), "Femeile din mediul rural. Notă analitică". Drafted by M. Vremiş as part of the project "Strengthening of the National Statistics System".

⁶⁶ This is reflected in the country's narrow export mix, which continues to be dominated by agricultural and miscellaneous manufactured products. The miscellaneous manufactured products also comprise a narrow range, with clothes and furniture accounting for 54% and 23% of total exports, respectively.

⁶⁷ NBS (2016), "External trade activity of the Republic of Moldova in 2015", <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=en&idc=168&id=5079>

⁶⁸ NBS (2017), <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=en&idc=30&id=5582&parent=0>

⁶⁹ World Bank (2016), "Moldova Poverty Assessment 2016. Structural Transformation of Moldovan Smallholder Agriculture: Implications for Poverty and Shared Prosperity", <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/847331468184784843/pdf/105724-WP-P151472-PUBLIC-STUDIU-II-BM-en-COR-final.pdf>

⁷⁰ UNECE (forthcoming in 2017), <http://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/studies-on-regulatory-and-procedural-barriers-to-trade.html>

⁷¹ World Bank (2016), "Research and development expenditure (% of GDP)", <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/5.13>; WEF (2016), "The Global Competitiveness Report 2016–2017", http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2016-2017/05FullReport/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2016-2017_FINAL.pdf

The challenges facing the Government continue to be shaped by the imperative to stimulate a structural transformation of the economy towards increased concentration in high value added and labour-intensive production activities. The services sector, which constitutes the main engine of growth, is driven by public administration along with health, education and social work; the move away from agriculture has been underpinned by dwindling productivity.

The Transnistrian region remains isolated, leading to a steady decrease in living standards there. Heavily affected by migration, a worsening economic and currency crisis, political uncertainty and a degrading quality of basic services, the decline in the region has led to a gradual erosion of social cohesion and local capacities for reconciliation and development, thus negatively affecting prospects for a high-level political compromise between the sides in the conflict. The development gap is compounded by the fact that people in the Transnistrian region are not fully benefiting from the opportunities provided by the assistance offered to Moldova. Likewise, the development opportunities offered by the AA as well as the DCFTA arrangements are significantly out of reach for the region's economy.⁷²

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

Links to National Priorities

The outcome is expected to support the Government in the attainment of several national priorities included in the **National Development Strategy "Moldova 2020"**, notably by:

- Aligning the education system to labour-market needs in order to enhance labour productivity and increase employment in the economy;
- Increasing public investment in the national and local road infrastructure, in order to reduce transport costs and increase the speed of access;
- Reducing financing costs by increasing competition in the financial sector and developing risk management tools;
- Improving the business climate, promoting competition policies, streamlining the regulatory framework and applying information technologies in public services for businesses and citizens.

Apart from "Moldova 2020", the outcome is also aimed at supporting the implementation of related national strategies, as follows:

- **National Strategy for Investment Attraction and Export Promotion 2016–2020:** Attracting foreign direct investment in the strategic export-oriented sectors of Moldova; amending the regulatory framework, improving the skills of the workforce, upgrading the quality of industrial infrastructure, enhancing export capacity of local producers and institutional capacity to attract, maintain and develop exports.
- **National Employment Strategy 2017–2021:** Increasing formal employment based on economic competitiveness, skills and appropriate qualifications, in a sustainable and inclusive development environment.

⁷² Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova (2016), "European Union Joint Analysis: Programming in the Republic of Moldova to 2020"

- **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2017–2021 (submitted to Government for approval):** Mitigation of labour-market and the gender pay disparities; harmonization of national legislation with European standards on equal pay for work of equal value.
- **Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2014–2020:** Increasing the competitiveness of the agrifood sector through extensive restructuring and modernization, and improving the quality of life and work in rural areas by creating synergies between the food and the natural environment.
- **Strategy for Development of Rural Extension Services for the Years 2012–2022:** Rural economic development and improving agricultural productivity, contribution to enhancing the competitiveness of the agro-industrial sector through the provision of rural extension services.
- **National Regional Development Strategy 2016–2020 (draft):** Balanced and sustainable development in all regions of Moldova.
- **Development Strategy of the SMEs for 2012–2020:** Creating a favourable business environment, promoting entrepreneurship and supporting SMEs.
- **Domestic Trade Development Strategy 2014–2020:** Increasing the competitiveness of products/services placed on the market; improving trade infrastructure in the regions, especially in rural areas; upgrading forms of distribution and marketing of products/services; ensuring a skilled workforce and its continuous improvement.
- **National Strategy for Information Society Development “Digital Moldova 2020”:** Creating favourable conditions for the development and use of the potential of information and communications technology by public institutions, businesses and citizens to achieve their goals of economic, social and cultural benefit of all.
- **Diaspora Strategy 2025:** Direct and indirect involvement of the diaspora in the sustainable economic development of the country.
- **National Strategy on Migration and Asylum 2011–2020:** Maximizing the positive effects of circular migration through the transfer of knowledge and new skills of returning emigrants, more opportunities and facilitating conditions for the investment of remittances, stimulating the setting-up of joint enterprises with the participation of migrants and supporting employers in host countries.
- **Tourism Development Strategy “Tourism 2020”:** Boosting tourism activity in Moldova by developing domestic and inbound tourism.
- **Innovation Strategy 2013–2020 “Innovation for Competitiveness”:** Empowering people with innovative skills; steering the companies towards innovation; stimulating demand for innovative products and services.
- **Research and Development Strategy of Moldova until 2020:** Capacity-building of human, institutional and infrastructure resources; ongoing dialogue between science and society, knowledge dissemination and practical implementation of research results.

Related SDGs

The PFSD will also contribute to Government efforts to achieve the following SDGs and associated nationalized targets:

- **SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**
 - 1.2: By 2030, reduce by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in absolute and multidimensional poverty according to national definitions and international measure of people living on less than US\$ 4.3 a day
 - 1.3: Implement a nationally appropriate social protection system, including social protection floors, to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030
 - 1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance and other resources
 - 1.b: Create sound policy frameworks at the national levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support investment in poverty eradication actions
- **SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**
 - 2.3: Increase agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers through secure and equal access to productive resources, inputs, knowledge, financial services and markets
- **SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**
 - 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of young people and adults who have relevant skills for the labour-market
 - 4.5: By 2030, ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including PwDs and children in vulnerable situations
 - 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
 - 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
 - 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls
 - 5.2: Prevent and eliminate violence against girls and women, including trafficking
 - 5.3: Eliminate early and forced marriages with children
 - 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies
 - 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- **SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**
 - 8.1: Sustain per capita economic growth and, in particular, a GDP growth of at least 3 per cent per year
 - 8.2: Stimulate the growth of economic productivity at a higher rate compared to the real wage growth through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labour-intensive sectors, defined as top-priority sectors by the National Strategy for Investment Attraction and Export Promotion 2016–2020 ((1) agriculture and food industry; (2) automotive industry; (3) business services especially Business Process Outsourcing; (4) clothing and footwear industry; (5) electronics industry; (6) Information and Communication Technologies; and (7) production of machinery and its parts)
 - 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
 - 8.4: Improve progressively, by 2030, resource efficiency in consumption and production to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation
 - 8.5: By 2030, align the employment rate to the average value in Central and Eastern Europe, and stimulate productive employment, decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and ensure equal pay for work of equal value
 - 8.6: By 2030, align the proportion of youth NEET, to the average value in Central and Eastern Europe, in conditions of sustainable and inclusive development

8.7: Eradicate forced labour, child labour and end human trafficking
 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers
 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that encourages the implementation of public–private partnerships, develops the capacities of the local government in this field and, respectively, creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
 8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

- **SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

9.1: Develop high-quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient physical and business infrastructure in the regions in order to support economic growth, development and the well-being of the population, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
 9.2: Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization in order to increase, by 2030, the employment and industry's share in GDP close to the average level in Central and Eastern Europe
 9.3: Increase the access of SMEs to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
 9.4: By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, taking action in accordance with the respective capabilities
 9.5: Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors, as well as encourage innovation in order to boost economic competitiveness and the well-being of the population

- **SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries**

10.1: By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
 10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
 10.3: Ensure equal opportunities and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
 10.4: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
 10.7: Ensure a legal, equitable, well-informed hiring process for migrants

- **SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

11.1: By 2030, ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all, especially for the poorest layers of the population
 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport
 11.3: Support the sustainable development of the regions and ensure a polycentric urban system
 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to sufficient, safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces
 11.a: Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

- **SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

12.3: By 2030, significantly reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses

- **SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public–private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
 17.18: By 2020, increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national context
 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity-building

Main Areas of Work

To respond to the economic growth and labour-market challenges and accelerate the implementation of Moldova's national strategies mentioned above, specific PFSD strategies will focus on:

- **Policy advice:** Technical assistance and policy guidance in the area of national and local planning, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for inclusive and sustainable growth that fosters quality of life, social cohesion and improved livelihoods, and facilitates access to employment and entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on women.
- **Regional cohesion, regional and local economic development:** Addressing regional disparities and the rural/urban divide, sustainable regional and urban development, enhancement of services and upgraded resilient infrastructure, which will subsequently boost the local economic development and employment opportunities; cooperation tools, such as inter-municipal cooperation, public-private partnerships, which bring economies of scale, will be further used and expanded; LPAs engagement with community members and migrants for the socioeconomic development of rural and urban areas will be promoted.
- **Labour-market information:** Supporting the country's efforts in data-collection and analysis for forecasting the labour-market trends and development of targeted education; strengthening the capacity of the Government to translate data into budgetary decisions, taking into account the specific needs and rights of women and other target groups.
- **Capacity-building for business development policies:** Improvement of the capacities of national institutions (public and private) to develop, implement, monitor policies and measures that foster inclusive entrepreneurship, a positive business environment and sustainable (green) growth.
- **SMEs development:** Engagement with the private sector, innovative solutions for business development will be promoted; SME clusters development and export consortia; upgrading and developing value chains in perspective growth sectors; enhanced productivity, value addition, technology and skills upgrading; investment promotion.
- **Employability and job creation:** Support for groups with limited access to the labour-market, including, but not limited to young people, women from particular groups, such as PwDs, ethnic minorities, including Roma, returned migrants, to benefit from better access to finance, enhanced skills, improved access to second chance education (notably through ICT), childcare services (0–3-year-olds) and employment guarantee schemes to promote inclusive employment.
- **Promotion of social corporate responsibility** and women's empowerment principles in the private sector.
- **Innovation and competitiveness:** Trade facilitation, agricultural trade, innovation, increasing SMEs' competitiveness and internationalization, including of the agrifood products both in national and foreign markets; enhancing business support services for SMEs, promotion of innovative approaches to self-employment and entrepreneurship through research and development (including extension in agriculture) that involve various target groups, such as young people, women, returned migrants, academia, research institutions, etc.

- **Confidence-building measures:** Provision of support to people from both banks of the Nistru river and regions with special status in implementing comprehensive, area-based development interventions, job generation activities that address critical needs.

Priority Area 3: Environmental Sustainability and Resilience

Outcome 3

The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, benefit from enhanced environmental governance, energy security, sustainable management of natural resources, and climate and disaster resilient development.

Main Continuing Challenges in the Priority Area

Environmental degradation, pollution and the unsustainable use of natural resources are a significant concern for Moldova's development agenda. Short-term economic and social considerations still often prevail over long-term environmental benefits. The economy is resource-intensive and based on the over-exploitation of natural capital, while the role of environmental externalities in the macroeconomic set up is neglected. Despite approval by the Government of the Environmental Strategy and its Action Plan for the years 2014–2023, the environmental sector is not considered a priority and it is severely underfinanced, while the institutional set up continues to be weak with overlapping responsibilities and conflicting functions.

The EU accession process, the AA and 22 global, regional and subregional multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) comprise the country's framework for environmental policies. However, the EU integration and MEA implementation process is demanding in terms of human capacity at national and local levels and financial resources for investments in key sectors. Although significant improvements can be observed in the regulatory framework for environmental and nature protection as part of commitments under the AA and MEA, the country has yet to develop and adopt feasible instruments and tools for practical implementation.

Rural areas are mostly populated by subsistence farmers, one of the poorest groups in the country. Short-term survival strategies and conditions of high poverty prevent this population segment from investing in sustainable practices and cause increasing pressure on the natural resource base. This has detrimental effects on the ecosystem health, resulting in land and forest degradation, biodiversity loss, air pollution, water pollution and scarcity. Degradation of natural capital in turn has a negative effect on the income and living conditions of the population in rural areas. Over the last 30 years, the area of eroded land has increased by 6,400 hectares annually, and currently represents 25.93 per cent of the country's total territory and 40 per cent of agricultural land.⁷³ In the meantime, the impact of soil loss in terms of the agricultural production losses is estimated at US\$ 53 million annually.⁷⁴

Small-scale agricultural farms are poorly equipped and lack the experience necessary to penetrate foreign markets of the EU and other countries. Despite the recent increase in agricultural lending, the agrifood sector remains poorly financed. Over the last three years, a number of international programmes have targeted large agricultural enterprises with the transfer of equipment, post harvesting and storage

⁷³ Ministry of Environment (2014), "Environmental Strategy for the Years 2014–2023 of the Republic of Moldova"

⁷⁴ Project Implementation Unit, Moldsilva (2010), "Moldova Community Forestry Development Project Document"

equipment. However, the insufficient supply of medium-term loans, high interest rates and severe collateral policies combined with under-developed market instruments have impeded the development of a high-quality supply of food products.

Destruction of some 3,000 hectares of protected forests, as well as illegal logging to the volume of 400,000–600,000m³ annually is observed.⁷⁵ Only 5 per cent of pastures maintain high biological value, whereas about 70 per cent have lost the ability of recuperation. Some 1,558 locations are contaminated with persistent organic pollutants, while the state of the ambient air does not meet the required regulatory standards. Restricted Government budgets limit funding for protected area management and many of these are chronically underfunded and not able to proceed with proper management planning.⁷⁶ The degradation of natural capital has a significant negative effect on the development of community nature-based and eco-tourism, identified by the Tourism Development Strategy “Tourism 2020” as important drivers for the country’s economic development.

In addition to anthropogenic impact, Moldova is highly vulnerable to both climate change and disasters with average annual economic loss of 2.13 per cent of GDP. Due to catastrophic events that have an annual probability occurrence of 0.5 per cent, the country could lose up to 10 per cent of GDP per year.⁷⁷ For instance, the late frost in May 2016 and the heavy rains and hails in July 2016 affected almost 4,800 hectares of agricultural land, resulting in a damage estimated at US\$ 500,000.⁷⁸ These risks primarily affect the rural poor, women and vulnerable groups. Tackling disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation is becoming more important as the Government of Moldova has signed the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Strengthening of disaster risk governance is prioritized in the National Implementation Plan of the AA. However, the plan is not yet supported by an operational national policy framework and thus cannot be fully mainstreamed into cross-sectoral national and local development plans. Moreover, funding has not been secured for implementation of the plan. The United Nations has supported the Government in addressing these systemic challenges. A gender-sensitive National DRM Strategy and an Action Plan have been developed, but they are still awaiting approval from the Government.

Although the country has shown a commitment to strengthening disaster risk governance, prioritizing the prevention and preparedness activities in the National Implementation Plan of the AA, the national DRM Strategy has not yet been approved. The absence of a strategic framework makes it difficult to promote disaster risk priorities, thus resilience to disaster risks is not embedded into national and local development plans. The country has approved a National Adaptation Strategy, which identifies the projected impacts of climate change by sector and expects to have developed concrete action plans for adaptation and mainstreaming climate risk into sectoral policies by the relevant public entities. However, the country lacks a clear and effective multi-sectoral coordinating mechanism to address climate-related challenges and ensure effective mainstreaming. Besides coordination at national level, effective adaptation planning requires the engagement of local communities, with a focus on women, CSOs and young people.

Moldova is characterized by one of the most carbon- and energy-intensive economies in the region, with energy consumption twice as high as the EU average. The energy sector is the largest contributor of GHG,

⁷⁵ Ministry of Environment (2014), “Environmental Strategy for the Years 2014–2023 of the Republic of Moldova”

⁷⁶ Ministry of Environment (2015), “National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan”

⁷⁷ World Bank, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (2010), “Disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in Europe and Central Asia”, https://www.gfdrr.org/sites/gfdrr/files/publication/GFDRR_DRM_and_CCA_ECA.pdf

⁷⁸ UNDP (2016), “Post Disaster Needs Assessment System in Moldova: A Scoping Study”

accounting for 65 per cent of the total national emissions.⁷⁹ Having energy security among its key national priorities, the Government has made significant efforts to modernize and reform the energy sector. The 2030 Energy Strategy, National Energy Efficiency Programme 2011–2020, the law on the use of renewable energy and the law on energy efficiency (2010) have been approved. The industrial sector as well as SMEs have become more aware of the value of implementing zero or low cost approaches, such as energy management systems or resource-efficient and cleaner production methods in order to save energy and natural resources. From 2011 to 2014, the energy intensity in Moldova almost halved, from 0.92 to 0.48 tons of oil equivalent (toe)/US\$ 1,000.⁸⁰ The observed reduction took place as a result of energy efficiency measures and a decrease in energy consumption by the industry.⁸¹ Partially this reduction could be attributed to the assistance of the United Nations in the industrial sector in Moldova.

The country has also made efforts towards substituting fossil energy imports and increase energy efficiency. Diversification of primary energy sources to at least 17 per cent share of energy from renewable sources in the gross final consumption of energy by 2020 and the achievement of at least a 10 per cent share of renewable energy in final energy consumption in the transport sector by 2020 are targeted. However, Moldova's dependence on energy imports is still 87 per cent.⁸² This dependence leads to high energy prices and large debts to foreign suppliers, making affordability of energy the primary concern. On average, energy represented 17 per cent of the total expenditure of Moldovan households in 2013, indicating a typical situation of energy poverty.⁸³ The poorest households in Moldova spent on average 21 per cent of their total expenditure on energy. Thus, the residential sector, which is the largest energy user with a 40 per cent share of the national energy consumption and around 70 per cent of energy consumption related to heating, presents big opportunities for investment in energy efficiency to deliver both cost savings and GHG reduction.⁸⁴

While the Republic of Moldova developed a legislative basis for transitioning to a market economy, including the Law on Housing (2015), the Law on Energy Performance of Buildings (2014), the Law on Insolvency (2012), the Law on Condominiums (2000), the Law on Real Estate Cadastre (1998), there is still a lack of expertise in strategic planning and implementation to effectively address the challenges in the housing sector. The extensive legal reform that has been carried out is committed to filling the gaps in legislation and required support from the international community, including the United Nations, on effective implementation. A comprehensive set of measures should be employed for the development of the necessary capacities following the United Nations recommendations on the development of the housing, urban development and land management.⁸⁵

Recently, households have started to appreciate the value of the energy-efficient strategies, yet progress is very slow. Energy efficiency measures and green development have the stigma of being luxury investments. If the basic needs are fulfilled, like a stable income, decent housing, good furniture and domestic appliances, new car, etc., the priorities might shift towards environment friendly technologies and investments.

⁷⁹ Ministry of Environment (2013), "National Green House Gases Inventory Report"

⁸⁰ Energy Community (2016), "Energy Community Annual Implementation Report", https://www.energy-community.org/portal/page/portal/ENC_HOME/DOCS/4332394/3D790302C9FD5024E053C92FA8C0D492.pdf

⁸¹ Energy Community (2016), "Energy Community Annual Implementation Report", https://www.energy-community.org/portal/page/portal/ENC_HOME/DOCS/4332394/3D790302C9FD5024E053C92FA8C0D492.pdf

⁸² NBS, <http://www.statistica.md/category.php?l=ro&idc=128>

⁸³ Bertholet, F. K. (2015), "Moldova – District heating and electricity tariff and affordability analysis"

⁸⁴ EU/South-East Europe Sustainable Energy Policy (2016), "Energy Poverty in South-East Europe: Surviving the Cold", http://seechangenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Energy-Poverty-in-South-East-Europe_Surviving-the-Cold.pdf

⁸⁵ UNECE (2015), "Country Profile on Housing and Land Management of the Republic of Moldova"

As far as private companies are concerned, they will have first to settle in the market to later reinvest money in more advanced technologies. There are other challenges as well; these are mainly related to resistance to changes from the middle- and lower-level management of the companies, and the lack of a stimulation mechanism for the employees to promote energy-efficient measures.⁸⁶ Addressing these barriers will allow the industrial sector in Moldova to further improve operational activity, decrease costs and improve overall energy performance. In addition, companies will need to benefit from additional support to strengthen their internal capacities in terms of internalizing energy management systems and cleaner production approaches to better manage the consumption of energy.

The country is divided into two major river basins: the Nistru and the Danube-Prut. None has an integrated river basin management plan and established management body, which leads to poor water quality, quantity and availability. The main driver impacting the water availability is climate change. The EU Water Directives have still not been fully transposed into the national legal framework and capacities for integrated water management, including in a transboundary context, remain weak. Although Moldova as a party to the UNECE-World Health Organization (WHO)/Europe Protocol on Water and Health has elaborated a National Programme for Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Moldova 2016–2025 to ensure water safety and equitable access to water and sanitation, the country lacks the necessary capacities and financial resources to fully implement the programme.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

Links to National Priorities

The outcome is expected to support the Government in the attainment of two national priorities included in the **National Development Strategy “Moldova 2020”**, as follows:

- Reduction of energy consumption by increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources;
- Agriculture and rural development: competitiveness of agrifood products and sustainable rural development.

Apart from “Moldova 2020”, the outcome is also aimed at supporting the implementation of related national strategies, action plans and programmes, as follows:

- **National Environment Strategy 2014–2023:** Reduction of GHG emissions by no less than 20 per cent as compared to the base-year (1990) by 2020; ensuring rational use, protection and conservation of natural resources; integration of climate change adaptation principles into all sectors of the national economy.
- **Climate Change Adaptation Strategy until 2020 and a corresponding Action Plan:** Reduction by at least 50 per cent of the climate change vulnerability and facilitation of climate change adaptation in six priority sectors (agriculture, water resources, forestry, human health, energy and transport) by 2020.
- **National Health Policy of the Republic of Moldova 2007–2021:** Preventive measures to cope with unfavourable climate events.

⁸⁶ Data retrieved from the case studies conducted among industrial enterprises of Moldova that were beneficiaries of the project “Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Improved Energy Efficiency in the Industrial Sector in Moldova” implemented by UNIDO between 2011 and 2015. As some data reported by companies is considered commercially sensitive, the case studies were not made public.

- **National Programme for Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Moldova 2016–2025:** Improved water management to ensure water safety, water quality standards, access to water and sanitation for the population, including access to safe drinking water for 99 per cent of the urban and 85 per cent of the rural population by 2025, and improved access to sanitation for 85 per cent of the urban population and 25 per cent of the rural population by 2025.
- **Energy Strategy of Moldova 2030:** Ensure a contribution of renewable energy sources of 20 per cent in the energy mix by 2020; reducing GHG emissions by 25 per cent (compared to the base-year 1990) until 2020.
- **Intended National Determined Contribution to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 25 September 2015:** A commitment to an unconditional target of 67 per cent reduction of its GHG emissions by 2030 compared to the 1990 level.
- **Action Programme of the Government of Moldova 2016–2018:** Reduction of the impact of natural risks and protection against disasters.
- **National Energy Efficiency Programme 2011–2020:** Reduction of energy intensity in the national economy, and to decrease the negative effect of the energy sector on the environment.
- **Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2014–2020:** Increasing the competitiveness of the agrifood sector through extensive restructuring and modernization, and improving the quality of life and work in rural areas by creating synergies between the food and the natural environment.
- **Strategy for Development of Rural Extension Services 2012–2022:** Rural economic development and improving agricultural productivity, contribution to enhancing the competitiveness of the agro-industrial sector through the provision of rural extension services.
- **National Regional Development Strategy 2016–2020 (draft):** Development of balanced and sustainable development in all regions of Moldova.
- **National Strategy for Radioactive Waste 2017–2026:** Building operational and institutional capacity in decommissioning, remediation and radioactive waste management processes.
- **Tourism Development Strategy “Tourism 2020”:** Boosting tourism activity in Moldova by developing domestic and inbound tourism.
- **Innovation strategy 2013–2020 “Innovation for Competitiveness”:** Empowering of people with innovative skills and steering the companies towards innovation, as well as stimulation of demand for innovative products and services.

Related SDGs

The PFSD will also contribute to Government efforts to achieve the following SDGs and associated nationalized targets:

- SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
2.3: Increase agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers through secure and equal access to productive resources, inputs, knowledge, financial services and markets

2.4: By 2030, implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity, help maintain ecosystems and strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather such as droughts, flooding and other disasters

- **SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**
 - 3.6: By 2020, reduce by 50 per cent the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
 - 3.9: By 2030, reduce mortality and morbidity from hazardous chemicals and air and water pollution
- **SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**
 - 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of young people and adults who have relevant skills for the labour-market
- **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
 - 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- **SDG 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all**
 - 6.1: By 2023, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for 80 per cent of the population and communities and, by 2030, for all
 - 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, reducing the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse
 - 6.4: By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and a supply of fresh water
 - 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels
- **SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**
 - 7.1: By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
 - 7.2: By 2020, increase up to 20 per cent the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
 - 7.3: By 2020, increase by 20 per cent the efficiency of the energy consumption
- **SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**
 - 9.1: Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient physical and business infrastructure in the regions in order to support economic growth, development and the well-being of the population, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
 - 9.4: By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, taking action in accordance with the respective capabilities
- **SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**
 - 11.1: By 2030, ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all socially vulnerable people and young families
 - 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport
 - 11.3: Support the sustainable development of the regions and ensure a polycentric urban system
 - 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the direct economic losses caused by disasters
 - 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
 - 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to sufficient, safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces

- **SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**
 - 12.1: Integrate and implement the principles of sustainable consumption and production into relevant national policy
 - 12.2: By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
 - 12.3: By 2030, significantly reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
 - 12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse, especially at the municipal level
 - 12.8: By 2030, ensure that people, both in rural and urban areas, have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
- **SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**
 - 13.1: By 2020, ensure the climate-resilience by reducing by 50 per cent climate-related risks and by facilitating the adaptation in six priority sectors – agriculture, water, health, forestry, energy and transport
 - 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
 - 13.3: Consolidate the institutional framework related to climate change and raise awareness of climate change risks and adaptation measures of all relevant stakeholders, including population
- **SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**
 - 15.1: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland fresh water ecosystems and their services, in particular forests and wetlands
 - 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation
 - 15.3: By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world
 - 15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species
 - 15.6: Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed
 - 15.9: By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts and territory improvement plans
- **SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**
 - 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
 - 17.18: By 2020, increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in the national context
 - 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity-building

Main Areas of Work

To respond to challenges in the area of environment, energy security and climate change, and to accelerate the implementation of Moldova's national strategies mentioned above, specific PFSD strategies will focus on:

- **Policy advice and implementation support** in the area of environmental protection, energy efficiency, climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- **Energy security:** Provision of support to the Government in undertaking innovative steps to create an enabling environment for optimizing and streamlining the energy sector to increase energy security; provision of support to the Government, LPAs and private sector actors for the

expansion of renewables and energy efficiency in public and residential buildings and the industrial sector to bring economic, social and environmental benefits and as a measure to enhance economic growth while reducing the energy demand and fuel poverty, especially among the most vulnerable groups; using a human-oriented approach in developing a renewable energy sources market, in replicating new financial models and instruments such as Energy Service Companies, Loan Guarantee funds, etc. for the promotion of energy efficiency and for affordable energy services to the population in its efforts to minimize energy poverty.

- **Capacity-building:** Improvement of the capacity of the Government for meeting Moldova's commitments under MEA, including the AA, which requires the transposition of relevant acquis and its subsequent enforcement and monitoring; strengthening of the national capacity to develop and implement policies for sustainable housing and urban development. Increase the capacities of rural communities and local authorities in implementing efficient and inclusive development measures that provide economic and social opportunities for people living in rural areas.
- **Nistru river basin:** Supporting transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management in the Nistru river basin.
- **Public infrastructure:** Provision of assistance for the modernization of infrastructure aimed at environment protection, climate risk mitigation and low emissions, including through public-private partnerships.
- **DRM:** Advocacy for a sound cooperation and definition of clear responsibilities in DRM and setting-up of a cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism for efficient planned adaptation; mainstreaming resilience to climate change and disasters in a gender-sensitive manner nationally and locally; incorporation of risk assessment and climate disaster risk reduction priorities and measures into development planning at national and local levels; use of participatory decision-making and oversight mechanisms to strengthen the influence of gender equality champions, civil society and women's organizations on public policy, investment decisions, and the monitoring of DRM implementation.
- **Quality control for the national GHG inventory process and support for planning and implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures:** Development of partnerships between United Nations and other stakeholders to ensure access to public and private climate financing mechanisms, to reduce GHG emissions through improved energy efficiency in residential buildings and industry, low emission mode of operation of transport and waste management, to help vulnerable sectors of the economy and communities adapt to climate change in ensuring food security, to tackle water scarcity and increase ecosystem resilience; activation of alternative funding instruments to help the private sector mobilize funds for either innovative products, services or internal business processes in alternative energy and agrotourism with interesting up-scaling potential.
- **Integrated approach to local development:** Assistance for the development of an enabling local environment that is conducive to better and more accessible services, social cohesion and livelihood opportunities; provision of support to central and local authorities in meaningfully engaging with all community groups, including the most vulnerable, and empowering them to become co-participants in and contributors to local development.

- **Biodiversity:** Support for biodiversity conservation and combating desertification; improvement of integrated planning and implementation of management plans for protected areas to ensure ecosystem integrity and protection, combined with the creation of sustainable opportunities for income-generation.
- **Waste and chemical management:** Embedding of human health considerations in United Nations' targeted interventions in waste and chemical management; use of piloted ecosystem-based approaches in integrated water basin management plans, focusing on both ecosystem restoration and regulatory improvements.
- **Radioactive waste management, decommissioning and remediation of contaminated sites:** Building operational and institutional capacity in decommissioning, remediation and radioactive waste management processes.
- **Environmental assessment and monitoring:** Supporting the Republic of Moldova to fulfil international monitoring and reporting commitments to MEA.

Priority Area 4: Inclusive and Equitable Social Development

Outcome 4

The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from gender-sensitive and human rights-based, inclusive, effective and equitable quality education, health and social policies and services.

Main Continuing Challenges in the Priority Area

The Republic of Moldova, like many countries, is going through important demographic changes. This is characterized by low birth rates, rather low life expectancy and an ageing population.⁸⁷ The share of persons aged under 15 decreased to 15.9 per cent in 2015; at the same time the share of people aged 60 years and over was constantly increasing and constituted 16.6 per cent out of the total population in 2015.⁸⁸ The population forecast produced by the National Demographic Research Centre shows that the demographic dividend for the population of the Republic of Moldova could last until 2035. The active involvement of young people in public life and in decision-making process, including in the areas of education, health and social protection, represents a key element in boosting the sustainable development of the society. However, despite the reforms implemented in the youth sector in line with the provisions of the National Youth Strategy 2014–2020, there is still a relatively low participation of young people in the decision-making process at all levels of society in Moldova, as reflected by the Youth Gap Index.⁸⁹ If investments in young people are prioritized, especially in their education, health, including sexual and reproductive health and decent jobs, the Republic of Moldova will have a window of opportunity to harness the demographic dividend and allow young people to reach their full potential. Investments in human capital development, in particular education and health, will increase the share of the population that is economically active, which can further advance economic growth and development.

⁸⁷ "Road Map on Ageing", approved by the Government of the Republic of Moldova in 2014

⁸⁸ NBS (2016), "Structure of the population of the Republic of Moldova on 1 January 2016" <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5210>

⁸⁹ UNFPA, "Youth Index 2015 Policy Paper", http://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Policy%20brief_Youth%20Index_%20En.pdf

The total net enrolment rate in preschool education (for children aged 3–6 years) has recorded a steady growth over the last five years, reaching 85.1 per cent in 2015 (84.8 per cent for boys; 85.4 per cent for girls).⁹⁰ However, 80 per cent of Roma children, 60 per cent of children with disabilities (CwD) and 30 per cent of children in rural areas are not in pre-schools. Moldova’s total primary net enrolment rate of 87 per cent (87.5 per cent for boys; 86.2 per cent for girls) puts the country at the very bottom compared to many Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States countries.⁹¹ A high rate of dropout and absenteeism is observed among the most vulnerable groups: CwD, Roma children and children from poor families. Less than three-quarters of Roma children attend school daily and only one-third of CwDs graduate from school. Meanwhile, 12 per cent of children in the 7–15 age group are out of school as of the 2015/2016 school year.⁹² About 1,000 CwDs remain in special schools.⁹³ Many face stigma and discrimination. Only half of teachers believe that CwDs should study in regular schools and only 5 per cent of parents consider that a child with special needs should attend the community kindergarten.⁹⁴ Children with mental disabilities are even more stigmatized than children with physical disabilities. The lack of support services and the low capacity of staff in regular education institutions to deal with CwDs slows down their inclusion. At all levels of schooling, Roma children’s enrolment rates are much lower than those of non-Roma children: one-fourth at the pre-primary level, half at primary and lower secondary levels, and one-fifth at upper secondary level.⁹⁵ Poverty also has a significant impact on enrolment.⁹⁶ In 2012, the difference in school attendance between the lowest and highest wealth quintiles was 38 percentage points for early childhood education (3–4 year-old children) and 67 percentage points (67 per cent for boys; 66.3 per cent for girls) for upper secondary education.⁹⁷ Discrepancies between enrolment in rural and urban areas remain large at all levels of education, with rural children being worse off.

Overall school performance is weak and the overall proportion of students graduating is declining. About half of children come out of school lacking the skills for healthy and successful life. Only 30 per cent of 3–4-year-old children (30 per cent for boys; 30.6 per cent for girls) are developmentally on track in terms of literacy and numeracy.⁹⁸ Overall, some progress in education was registered by Moldova from 2009 to 2015. Regardless of the positive trend, approximately half of 15-year-olds lack a basic level of proficiency in reading and mathematics.⁹⁹ The number of teachers in some subjects, especially in rural areas, is insufficient to cover needs. Inequalities in accessing and benefiting from high-quality education are deeply rooted in the social norms of both duty-bearers and rights-holders. The research data shows that vulnerable groups of children¹⁰⁰ face greater challenges in education, including low school attendance and high dropout, a drop in academic performance and an increase in school failure, an increase in child involvement in crime and a heightened risk of their becoming victims of various forms of abuse.¹⁰¹ Migration increases the shortage of teachers and affects the children’s integration in the education system. Prevailing social norms, household poverty and a lack of positive parental skills decrease the interest, motivation and ability of parents to send their children to school and support their learning. Ensuring the inclusion of all children in education is part of Moldova’s international obligations as per the

⁹⁰ NBS (2016), “The situation of children in Moldova in 2015”

⁹¹ UNICEF (2016), TransMonEE database 2015, <http://www.transmonee.org/>

⁹² Calculations based on NBS (2015/2016), “Education in the Republic of Moldova: Statistical Publication”

⁹³ NBS (2015/2016), “Education in the Republic of Moldova: Statistical Publication”

⁹⁴ UNICEF (2015), “Participatory assessment of barriers hampering the access of Roma children and their families to services”

⁹⁵ United Nations Moldova (2013), “Roma in the Republic of Moldova in areas of their compact population”

⁹⁶ The differences are much less profound for children under three years, and for children of primary and lower secondary school-age.

⁹⁷ United Nations Women, UNICEF (2013), “Study on demand and supply of childcare services through the angle of women’s employability”

⁹⁸ UNICEF (2012), “Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Republic of Moldova.”

⁹⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2016), “Programme for International Student Assessment 2015”

¹⁰⁰ Children with disabilities, Roma children, children from the poorest wealth quintile, children of migrating parents left behind, children graduating from institutions

¹⁰¹ UNICEF (2016), “Situation analysis of children in Moldova and status of realization of Child Rights” (draft)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), among others.

The Education Code and the Education Development Strategy for 2014–2020 provide a sound basis for new policies, including for vocational education and training (VET) and higher education. Principles expressed in the strategic vision are in line with the AA. However, implementation of the reforms envisaged in these documents remains a problem.¹⁰²

VET in Moldova is still theoretical, focused on school-based vocational training, while any practical lessons are done in insufficiently equipped workshops. For most occupations, there are still no curricula reflecting the labour-market needs, nor any modern learning materials. Internships often do not follow a structured approach and students sometimes are only used as a “cheap workforce”. The same risk exists for envisaged dual VET education. Work-based learning in school programmes suffers from a lack of training equipment and trained and experienced teachers. The Action Plan for Restructuring the Network of VET Providers (2015–2020) was approved and implementation is ongoing. The per capita funding mechanism foreseen as of 2016 has not been introduced. An estimated 30,000 students are enrolled in VET.¹⁰³ The dropout rate among VET students is high. There is a significant mismatch between the knowledge and skills of the students and the needs of employers. As a consequence, the education system does not provide the skills required by employers.

Higher education is provided in 19 public (state-owned) and 12 private universities/academies (higher education institution, HEI). For state HEIs, the main source of financing is the state budget. In 2015, the Ministry of Education approved “The Reference Framework of the University Curriculum”. It defines the conceptual and methodological basis of the curricular policies at national level, in line with the national strategic priorities and with Moldova’s commitments towards integration into the common European Higher Education Area and further implementation of the Bologna Process. Competency-based higher education qualifications for 20 fields of study have been aligned with the national qualifications framework. Since 2015, higher education institutions have signed mobility agreements with 27 universities from 12 EU Member States within the Erasmus+ framework. An estimated 81,670 students are enrolled in HEIs in 2015.¹⁰⁴ Due to the differences in school systems between the two banks of the Nistru river, the students from the left bank educational system must study one additional year to get their bachelor’s degrees as compared to those on studying at right bank HEIs. The diplomas issued by Transnistrian schools and universities are easily recognized by the Russian Federation, while recognition in the whole of the Republic of Moldova remains an issue.

The infant mortality rate has decreased by more than half since the mid-1990s, reaching 9.7 per 1,000 live births in 2015, but is still twice as high as the EU average of 3.7 per 1,000 live births.¹⁰⁵ One in five deaths among children occurs at home, the majority of cases from preventable causes of deaths.¹⁰⁶ The rate of disability among children is 18.7 per 1,000 children and the country has poorly developed early detection and early intervention services for CwDs.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova (2016), “European Union Joint Analysis: Programming in the Republic of Moldova to 2020”

¹⁰³ Ministry of Education (2016), “Raport de activitate al Ministerului Educației pentru anul 2015”, http://www.edu.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_me_2015_1.pdf

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of Education (2016), “Raport de activitate al Ministerului Educației pentru anul 2015”, http://www.edu.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_me_2015_1.pdf

¹⁰⁵ WHO (2016), “European health for all database (HFA-DB)”

¹⁰⁶ National Centre for Health Management (2016), “Statistical Yearbook of the Health System of Republic of Moldova for 2015”

¹⁰⁷ National Centre for Health Management (2016), “Statistical Yearbook of the Health System of Republic of Moldova for 2015”

The immunization rates are decreasing (third dose of DTP 96 per cent in 2006 to 86 per cent in 2015).¹⁰⁸ There are wide variations among urban and rural areas and across districts, especially in the Transnistrian region.¹⁰⁹ The latest national immunization programme 2016–2020 was formally endorsed in mid-2016 and the comprehensive multi-year plan was updated to ensure further support for the new vaccines. The country will graduate from Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization support in 2016, being thus forced to fully cover the cost of the pentavalent vaccine and consumables from 2017.

There is an overall inequality between men and women in terms of reduction of life expectancy through death before 65 years: 10.4 years for males versus 5.4 years for females in 2014.¹¹⁰ The social, economic and physical environments in developing countries afford their populations much lower levels of protection from the risks and consequences of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) than in developed countries.¹¹¹ NCD account for 87 per cent of all deaths, with cardiovascular diseases as the leading cause, followed by cancer, injuries, respiratory diseases and diabetes.¹¹² Mortality from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis in the Republic of Moldova is the highest in the WHO European Region, with more than 80 deaths per 100,000 (1,315 deaths among men and 1,292 deaths among women in 2013).¹¹³ Breast and cervical cancer affect women of reproductive age and have a negative social and economic impact. High rates of NCD are driven by prevalent key risk factors, notably smoking, harmful alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and poor diet, most of these behaviours being initiating during adolescence.¹¹⁴ There is a discrepancy between men and women in terms of some risk factors, for instance, 43.6 per cent of males versus 5.6 per cent of females are current tobacco smokers, and 17.8 per cent of men versus 28.5 per cent of women are obese.¹¹⁵ The prevalence of mental disorders also remains high in Moldova. There continues to be gaps in the current legal framework, in particular regarding alcohol (the definition of alcohol beverages versus alcohol products, beer not listed under the Alcohol Law no. 1100 of 2000) or the enforcement of the Tobacco Law.

Of communicable diseases, there is an extremely high burden of TB, and multidrug-resistant TB has become a major public health problem,¹¹⁶ along with a high incidence of HIV, especially in key populations (PWID, SW, men having sex with men (MSM)) and among young people, the most affected being the Transnistrian region.¹¹⁷ Available data suggest that HIV has transitioned from an early concentrated epidemic in which the highest rates of transmission were among PWID to an advanced concentrated one, in which onward transmission to sexual partners of PWID and other key populations has become a source of new infections.¹¹⁸ The prevalence for PWID stands at 8.5 per cent in Chisinau, 41.8 per cent in Balti, 23.9 per cent in Tiraspol and 43.7 per cent in Ribnita; the prevalence for SWs is 6.1 per cent in Chisinau and 23.4 per cent in Balti; and the prevalence for MSM is 5.4 per cent in Chisinau and 8.2 per cent in

¹⁰⁸ WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form 2015

¹⁰⁹ UNICEF (2012), "Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Republic of Moldova."

¹¹⁰ WHO European Health Information Gateway, <https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/>

¹¹¹ WHO (2015), "Guidance note on the integration of non-communicable diseases into UNDAF", <http://www.who.int/nmh/ncd-task-force/guidance-note.pdf>

¹¹² National Centre for Health Management (2016), "Statistical Yearbook of the Health System of Republic of Moldova for 2015"

¹¹³ WHO (2016), "Health for all database", <http://data.euro.who.int/hfad/>

¹¹⁴ Lesco, G. (2015), "Summary report of the health behaviours in school-aged children study in the Republic of Moldova",

<http://md.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/moldova/docs/pub/HBSC%20report%20Moldova%20en.pdf>

¹¹⁵ WHO (2014), "Prevalence of Noncommunicable Disease Risk Factors: STEPS 2013", <http://www.who.int/chp/steps/moldova/en/>

¹¹⁶ WHO (2013), "Review of the National Tuberculosis Programme in the Republic of Moldova",

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/republic-of-moldova/publications2/review-of-the-national-tuberculosis-programme-in-the-republic-of-moldova>

¹¹⁷ Laukamm-Josten, U. (2014), "Support to perform the HIV epidemiological situation analyses"

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Health, World Bank, UNAIDS, GFATM, UNDP, University of New South Wales (2015), "Optimizing Investments in Moldova's HIV Response"

Balti,¹¹⁹ while in the general population it remains under 1 per cent – 0.15. SWs in Moldova have the highest HIV prevalence of all SWs in Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The universal coverage of these key populations with prevention, treatment, care and support services are fundamental needs that have to be addressed, and which will actually produce a change in the epidemic situation if appropriately addressed. The major barriers faced by the people living with HIV are stigma and discrimination by medical staff and the society. As a consequence, people living with HIV and key populations have a relatively low-level of service update, presenting for HIV testing late, and treatment delays. The HIV and TB programmes are mainly covered by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); domestic funding for HIV in 2015 constituted only a 30 per cent share.¹²⁰ To ensure the sustainability of the programmes, in the context of the rolling out of GFATM, it is important to support the country to develop transition and sustainability plans, as well as to advocate for the Government's commitment, responsibility and ownership towards these. There is high prevalence of HIV in prisons. More than a quarter of the prison population suffers from drug dependency, and almost half of prisoners are registered as re-offenders. The Transnistrian region has one of the worst TB and HIV epidemiological profiles in prisons, registering also one of the highest incarceration rates in Europe (nearly 500 per 100,000 population).¹²¹ Unfortunately, the current legal framework limits the access of inmates to HIV prevention and drug treatment programmes. Drug dependency treatment, such as opioid substitution treatment, known as an evidence-based method to prevent HIV and ensure adherence of the patient to other types of HIV and TB treatments, is not available in the Transnistrian region.

The access of vulnerable groups to primary care services and pre-hospital emergency care has improved, yet around 15 per cent of the population has no insurance coverage.¹²² The level of out-of-pocket payments (formal and informal) is relatively high, paid mostly for medicines.¹²³ The health system is suffering from a steady out-flow of staff within regulatory and implementation agencies, which precludes the efficient and timely implementation of health reforms and follow-up on recommendations. At the same time, the health care system is severely depleted of qualified human resources as health professionals continued to emigrate abroad due to low salaries and rather poor working conditions. The low availability of qualified medical staff and elderly personnel are bottlenecks to providing high-quality services in remote and rural areas. The health system is over-centralized with unclear roles for central and local levels.¹²⁴

Family planning is still perceived in Moldova through traditional gender roles. Information about the involvement of men in family planning is limited and the available statistics about the knowledge and contraceptive use refers only to women. The contraceptive prevalence rate for modern methods among all women is only 36 per cent.¹²⁵ Only 50 per cent of sexually active young people aged 15–24 used a condom during the last sexual intercourse.¹²⁶ This can be explained by the still limited access of young people, particularly those from the rural areas, to youth-friendly health centres, a limited choice of modern contraceptive for young people provided by primary health care facilities (male condoms and hormonal pills only) and the stock-out of contraceptives, due to insufficient capacities to forecast

¹¹⁹ National Centre for Health Management (2014), "IBBS [Integrated Behavioural and Biological Surveillance] report on HIV key indicators, 2012–2013"

¹²⁰ Ministry of Health, UNAIDS (2016), "Global AIDS Response Progress Report, Republic of Moldova, January 2015–December 2015"

¹²¹ Hammarberg, T. (2013), "Report on Human Rights in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova"

¹²² National Health Insurance Company (2015), "Improving national health care services in Moldova"

¹²³ WHO (2014), "Framework for addressing out-of-pocket and informal payments for health services in the Republic of Moldova"

¹²⁴ WHO (2012), "Republic of Moldova: Health System Review (Health Systems in Transition)",

http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/178053/HiT-Moldova.pdf

¹²⁵ Demographic Research Centre estimations based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012

¹²⁶ Ministry of Health, National Centre for Health Management (2012), "Study on knowledge, attitudes and practices on HIV/AIDS among youth aged 15–24"; UNICEF (2012), "Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Republic of Moldova."

reproductive health commodities based on the real needs of vulnerable groups. Consequently, despite a declining trend, the adolescent birth rate continues to be twice as high in Moldova (27.9 per 1,000 women aged 15–19 in 2015) as it is in the EU,¹²⁷ with high disparities between rural and urban areas. The share of abortions in the age group of 15–19 years, during the last 10 years, constituted about 10 per cent of the total number of abortions among women of reproductive age.¹²⁸ Also high is the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STI),¹²⁹ including HIV among young people.¹³⁰ The indicator on comprehensive knowledge on HIV and AIDS among youth aged 15–24 recorded a decreasing trend from 38.2 per cent in 2010 to 35.7 per cent in 2012.¹³¹ It is therefore of the utmost importance to increase the access of the population, including the most vulnerable groups, to sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV and STI prevention services and modern methods of contraception, as well as antiretroviral therapy, if needed (treatment as prevention). Equally important is to ensure the better access of adolescents and youth to age-appropriate sexuality education in schools and out of schools.

Although Moldova has made strong efforts to reduce absolute poverty, the country is still one of the poorest in Europe. The most vulnerable are people with a low education level, the elderly, PwDs, Roma, women survivors of violence, households with many children, families living in rural areas and those relying on self-employment. Vulnerable families in rural areas have limited or no access to basic social protection services, or adequate water and sanitation. The overall targeting of social assistance is weak, while pensions do not provide an adequate income for the elderly. In 2013, the replacement rate of the average old-age pension was 28 per cent of the gross wage, the lowest in Europe.¹³²

Undeclared work is one of the most serious challenges to labour-market governance and a major obstacle in establishing a comprehensive and sustainable social security system. The adequacy of the social security benefits, the level of compliance, and the scope and coverage will further undermine the durability of the system if left unaddressed. The share of GDP dedicated to social protection expenditure is about 12.4 per cent. Of this, 60.4 per cent is budgeted for pensions and 8.2 per cent for other social security allowances (for insured individuals). Only 20.7 per cent is budgeted for non-contributory social benefits and 8.8 per cent for social services, both of which seek to address the needs of vulnerable members of the population.¹³³ The limited coverage of the most vulnerable population groups by the social protection system and the low benefit levels which are disconnected from the national subsistence minimum are fuelling a persisting poverty. Poverty rates remain very sensitive to remittances – which is worrying given that remittances represent a declining share of the Moldovan economy.

Most of the migrant workers abroad are not covered by the social insurance system, generating increasing pressure on the labour-market and undermining the financial sustainability of the social protection system. The lack of social security coverage is one of the main disadvantages facing Moldovan migrant workers. The national social security system has no mechanism to accurately monitor household income, the situation being even more complicated for households with migrant family members. The current legal framework has 60 different laws and Government decisions contribute to the high fragmentation level of the social protection system.

¹²⁷ http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=WDI&f=Indicator_Code%3ASP.ADO.TFRT

¹²⁸ Demographic Research Centre (2016), "Population Situation Analysis"

¹²⁹ NBS (2016), www.statistica.md

¹³⁰ UNICEF, TransMonEE database, <http://www.transmonee.org/>

¹³¹ Ministry of Health, National Centre for Health Management (2012, 2010, 2008), "Study on knowledge, attitudes and practices on HIV/AIDS among youth aged 15–24"

¹³² World Bank (2016), "Moldova: Paths to Sustained Prosperity, A Systematic Country Diagnostic"

¹³³ Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova (2016), "European Union Joint Analysis: Programming in the Republic of Moldova to 2020". 2014 figure; calculations based on 2015 annual budgetary laws. UNICEF Moldova (2016), "Socio-economic analysis of social protection schemes", internal document.

In 2015, among 6,866 adults receiving support in institutions, 1,873 adults placed in residential institutions were adults with disabilities.¹³⁴ For children, data from 2013 indicate that among 3,927 children in residential institutions, 3,256 were with disabilities, and deprived of a family environment or the right to independent living and social inclusion.¹³⁵ The Government has engaged in a deinstitutionalization process that proceeds in line with the international commitments of Moldova under the CRPD and CRC. Many children and women suffer from violence in their families, yet there are few state-funded services for the victims despite the country's obligations deriving from the CRC and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). An estimated 76 per cent of children aged 2 to 14 years have experienced violent disciplining at home, including both physical punishment and psychological aggression. Moreover, 48 per cent are subject to physical punishment.¹³⁶ An alarming 16 per cent of parents beat their children when they are under one year.¹³⁷ Rooted in deeply held beliefs and behaviours, VAW remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations. Rural women, elderly women and those separated or divorced reported the highest prevalence rate of multiple forms of violence.¹³⁸ VAW and girls lead to a wide range of social, health and economic problems, affecting families, communities and society as a whole. The high incidence of VAW also hampers the economic empowerment of women and their participation in decision-making; it impedes the achievement of social and economic safety and well-being and global development goals, thus perpetuating under-development and poverty. The CEDAW Concluding Observations from 2013 and UPR recommendations from 2016 call for a wide range of actions. Although the legislation provides for sufficient protection mechanisms, enforcement is a matter of concern.

The justice system is insufficiently sensitive to child rights. While child offences are low and constitute a decreasing proportion of all crimes, child offenders have become younger and offences more violent. A high number of child offenders continue to be not diverted but sent to court and convicted.

Migration of parents increases children's vulnerability to violence, neglect and exploitation. In the case of multigenerational households with migrants, 60.8 per cent of children continue to be left behind without any form of legal protection (guardianship, trusteeship), and grandparents, relatives or the people they are entrusted to cannot represent and defend their legal rights in the occurrence of situations of abuse.¹³⁹

Since the establishment in 2006 of the National Reference System, the number of victims and potential victims of trafficking identified and assisted has been increasing. In 2015, 132 people were identified as victims and 298 potential victims, an increase by 3.2 times and 15.7 times respectively compared to 2006. In total, 81 per cent of identified victims were adults (58.3 per cent women; 41.7 per cent men), and 19 per cent children (64 per cent girls; 36 per cent boys).¹⁴⁰ Child trafficking with the purpose of exploitation remains a serious concern. According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in 2015 there was a sharp rise in the number of child victims identified in comparison to the previous year (from 26 child victims identified in 2014 to 68 in 2015).¹⁴¹ Over 70 per cent of the cases were sexually exploited children, and more than 29 per cent were subject to child labour. The internal trafficking of children in 2015 represented 94 per cent of the total number of children victims of human trafficking, an increase by 4.3

¹³⁴ Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (2016), "Raport Social Anual 2015"

¹³⁵ UNICEF (2015), TransMonEE 2015 database, <http://www.transmonee.org/>

¹³⁶ UNICEF (2012), "Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Republic of Moldova."

¹³⁷ UNICEF (2010), "National Survey. Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices"

¹³⁸ NBS (2011), "Violence against Women in the Family in Republic of Moldova",

<http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&id=3626&idc=350>

¹³⁹ UNICEF (2016), "Situation analysis of children in Moldova and status of realization of Child Rights" (draft)

¹⁴⁰ Bureau of Migration/Ministry of Internal Affairs (2016), "Moldova Extended Migration Profile 2010–2015" (draft)

¹⁴¹ Information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family to the Bureau of Migration and Asylum for the Extended Migration Profile, letter no. 01-2085 from 10 June 2016.

times compared to 2014 (64 versus 15 child victims of internal trafficking).¹⁴² As for the gender dimension of trafficking, data collected in 2015 confirm the trend already registered in the previous years, with women and girls accounting for 63 per cent of all victims identified (242 women and girls out of 262 victims identified).

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

Links to National Priorities

The outcome is expected to support the Government in the attainment of several national priorities included in the following strategies, action plans and programmes:

¹⁴² National Committee for Human Trafficking Control (2016), “National Report on Human Trafficking Prevention and Control Policy”, http://antitrafic.gov.md/public/files/Raport_naional.pdf

Health:

- **National Health Policy 2007–2021:** Increasing life expectancy at birth and prolonging healthy life; ensuring life quality and diminishing the differences in terms of health for all social groups; strengthening the cross-sector partnership in order to improve the population's health; and increasing the individual's responsibility for their own health.
- **National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of NCD 2012–2020:** Preventing and reducing the impact on health of NCD risk factors and health determinants; reducing by 17 per cent the mortality owing to avoidable NCDs; strengthening health promotion and societal accountability for one's own health.
- **Strategy on Health, Development and Well-being of Children and Adolescents 2015–2020:** Ensuring a healthy start in life for all children; ensuring healthy growth and development of babies during infancy, early childhood and preschool age; and ensuring a healthy transition from childhood to adulthood for all adolescents.
- **National Programme on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 2017–2021:** Universal access to sexual and reproductive health services; ensuring high-quality sexual and reproductive health services, enhancing rights and meeting beneficiaries' needs; increasing population awareness and education on sexual and reproductive health and services available.
- **National Programme on Health Promotion 2016–2020:** Improving public awareness about health; capacity-building for health workers; supporting the enabling environment; cutting down physical inactivity.
- **National Immunization Programme 2016–2020:** Reduction of morbidity, disability and mortality by providing the population with mandatory immunizations against TB, viral hepatitis B, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, rotavirus, pneumococcal infection, and some optional vaccination on epidemiological grounds.
- **National Programme on HIV/STI Prevention and Control 2016–2020:** Ensuring comprehensive HIV prevention, control, treatment and care services to key affected populations and their partners, as well as synergistic activities with other national programmes (TB, hepatitis etc.).
- **National Cancer Control Programme 2016–2025:** Cutting down cancer incidence (by 10 per cent) and cancer mortality rate by 2025, early detection of cancer, and improving the quality of life of patients diagnosed with cancer.

Education:

- **Strategy for the Development of Education 2014–2020 "Education 2020":** Access, relevance and quality of education, and setting objectives for their improvement, looking at beneficiaries and education process and focusing on their education needs, evaluation, teachers' remuneration, capacity of managerial staff, infrastructure etc.
- **Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Development of Parenting Skills and Competencies for 2016–2022:** Developing and revising the legal and regulatory framework on parenting skills and competencies development, the alignment with international standards; and developing and strengthening parenting skills and competencies for parents/legal guardians/caregivers of children and young people.

- **Action Plan to Support the Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova for 2016–2020:** Promoting inclusive education (focus on enrolment of Roma girls in preschool, school and pre-university, compulsory schooling for Roma children 6–18, and reduction of absenteeism and early school leaving); improving the employability of the Roma population; non-discriminatory access to health services; housing; improving the participation of Roma in decision-making.
- **Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020:** Promotion of inclusive education to prevent exclusion or marginalization of children; development of normative and methodological framework; accessible, friendly educational environment and inclusive culture and society.

Social protection and cross-cutting issues:

- **Child Protection Strategy 2014–2020:** Raising and education of children in family environment; preventing and combating violence, the neglect and exploitation of children, and promoting non-violent practices in the raising and education of children.
- **National Human Rights Action Plan (draft):** Implementation of the international human rights commitments of the country as reviewed by the international human rights monitoring bodies.
- **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2017–2021 (submitted to the Government for approval):** Improving the policy framework addressing the equal participation of both parents in the child’s care and education, and gender-based social assistance services.
- **National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2017–2022 (draft):** Strengthening protection and support to survivors of VAW and domestic violence; preventing, investigating and prosecuting VAW and domestic violence.
- **National Strategy for Migration and Asylum 2011–2020:** Ensuring protection measures for children left behind by migrant parents; strengthening the legal framework and adopting measures for reintegrating Moldovan citizens who returned voluntarily or were readmitted.
- **National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Moldova 2017–2022:** Combating trafficking and providing assistance and protection to victims; integration of the National Referral System into the Strategy.
- **Diaspora Strategy 2025:** Ensuring labour and social security rights of migrant workers in destination countries.
- **Action Programme of the Government of Moldova 2016–2018:** Increasing the level of social protection provided to families and foster social cohesion, improving access to social services, observing the rights of people with disabilities, combating domestic violence, eliminating gender discrimination, raising the quality of health and education services.
- **Road Map on Ageing:** Underlining the key interventions of the Government in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing for mainstreaming ageing across sectoral policies.

Related SDGs

The PFSD will also contribute to Government efforts to achieve the following SDGs and associated nationalized targets:

- **SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**
 - 1.3: Implement a nationally appropriate social protection system, including social protection floors, to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030
- **SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**
 - 3.1: By 2030, reduce the maternal mortality ratio to less than 13.3 per 100,000 live births
 - 3.3.1: By 2030, reduce transmission of HIV and STIs, especially in key populations and mortality associated with HIV
 - 3.3.2: By 2030, reduce the burden of TB and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other communicable diseases
 - 3.4.1: By 2030, reduce by 30 per cent premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment
 - 3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and the use of alcohol
 - 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning and to sexual and reproductive information and education
 - 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, high-quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- **SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**
 - 4.5: By 2030, ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including PwDs and children in vulnerable situations
 - 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
 - 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls
 - 5.2: Prevent and eliminate violence against girls and women, including trafficking
 - 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning and to sexual and reproductive information and education
- **SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries**
 - 10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- **SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**
 - 16.1: Continuously and dynamically reduce all forms of violence, especially family violence and sexual violence
 - 16.3: Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all women, men and children
 - 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
 - 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
 - 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
 - 16.10: Ensure equal access to information for all citizens
- **SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**
 - 17.18: By 2020, increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national context
 - 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity-building

Main Areas of Work

To respond to challenges in the area of education, health and social protection, and to accelerate the implementation of Moldova's national strategies mentioned above, PFSD strategies will focus on:

- **Evidence-based policies:** Generation of evidence on human rights violations (in partnership) to inform human-centred, rights-based policies and strategies.
- **Policy costing and budgeting:** Technical assistance to cost and budget equitable policies for the implementation of priority policies and strategies; advocacy for human rights/gender/child and adolescent rights-based budgeting, including investment cases and public expenditure reviews.
- **Intersectoral cooperation and mechanisms:** Development of efficient intersectoral coordination, including data sharing, case management, capacity development, monitoring and referring in order to better address the needs of the most vulnerable groups.
- **Information and empowerment of rights-holders:** Testing and implementation of innovative mechanisms for keeping the rights-holders informed of their rights; development of mechanisms allowing the rights-holders to claim their rights and to efficiently interact with duty-bearers; ensuring that adolescents and young people contribute, as agents of change, to decision-making, participate in social life, are able to claim their rights and support the realization of child rights.
- **Empowerment of adolescents and young people:** Support advocacy platforms and build capacities of adolescents and youth to contribute, as agents of change, to decision-making process and policy development and implementation in the areas of health, education and social protection; empowerment of children and young people to claim their rights for quality education and health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- **Capacity-building of duty-bearers:** Implementation of human resource strategies and review and rationalization of incentives; strengthening of LPAs' capacities to prioritize, manage, administer and finance health, education and social protection services within a robust implementation of decentralization reform; capacity-building of service providers, policy-makers, CSOs and caregivers/caretakers; improvement of methodologies and tools (e.g. targeting, per capita formulas, SOPs, quality standards, etc.) in a rights-based manner.
- **Information systems and quality monitoring:** Harmonization of data across systems; supporting the establishment or strengthening of existing management information systems, including linkages across sectors and with e-Governance databases; establishment of a robust monitoring system to track the quality of health (including sexual and reproductive health), education, protection and social services and compliance with international standards.
- **Monitoring and impact assessment:** Strengthening of performance-based monitoring for professionals and institutions to improve their accountability; monitoring of knowledge, attitudes and practices with focus on discrimination; improvement of alternative monitoring of implementation of policies and strategies (CSOs and population groups, e.g. women, Roma, young people); regular assessment of impact of policies and laws on the well-being of the most vulnerable people; capacity-building of the Parliament, Government, CSOs and rights-holders on monitoring.

- **Innovation and good practices:** Modelling, testing and replication of innovation and high-quality education, health and social services interventions in a human-centred, rights-based manner; identification and promotion of learning and successful behaviours and practices from lead users/positive deviants from among the rights-holders and duty-bearers in order to replicate them at various levels.
- **Communication for behaviour change:** Co-creating communication approaches to promote positive behaviours, including behaviours related to sexual and reproductive health, which are human rights-informed and appropriate to local settings. This is expected to lead to a supportive environment which will enable women, men, children and adolescents to initiate, sustain and maintain positive and desirable behaviour outcomes. Work with men and boys as transformative programming approaches to tackle discrimination and challenge pervasive stereotypes and norms.

3. Risks and Opportunities

There are a number of risks which have been considered when planning the PFSD 2018–2022 and mitigation approaches, as follows:

- **Political instability:** Apart from endangering earlier achievements in key reforms, political instability may lead to further loss of donor trust and could paralyse the previously well-established mechanisms of donor coordination, an essential ingredient of aid effectiveness. The reputational risk of the banking sector, following the fraud back in 2014, and ineffective anti-corruption mechanisms may deter investors and international finance institutions from providing budget support to Moldova, thus limiting the Government co-financing capacity of projects and programmes supported by the United Nations. The risk to programme implementation from political volatility is increased when a large portion of portfolio and pipeline interventions is policy-based.

Impact: High

Probability: Medium

Mitigation strategy: The United Nations will thoroughly monitor the political situation in cooperation with major international development partners, in particular the EU, IMF and the World Bank. It will also analyse the opportunity of committing support activities which depend on sensitive policy decisions or difficult inter-institutional collaboration.

- **Changing policy priorities:** Given likely reshuffles or the appointment of a new Government following handovers of political power as a result of elections (at least four rounds in the period 2018–2022), policy priorities might undergo significant changes and repositioning, as experienced over the last five years. The project portfolio and pipeline of international development partners, including the United Nations, should be flexible to adapt to changing priorities.

Impact: High

Probability: Medium

Mitigation strategy: The PFSD interventions will be designed so as to allow revision during their implementation period, depending upon emerging priorities, progress on reforms and the country demand. The revision will be done within the agreed broad outcomes of PFSD and in the spirit of full respect for human rights. Coordination among development partners providing assistance to the country will be done to help harmonize policy positions and ensure effective leverage over key governance issues.

- **Outward migration:** Due to migration, the country experiences a severe loss of skilled labour both in regulatory bodies and operational layers of Government at central and local levels. Migration of Moldova's economically active and better educated is expected to continue, thus undermining the country's capacity to promote the reforms needed and improve the local situation. Return migration represents another challenge that the leadership of the country will need support to

overcome. The main challenges faced by returned migrants include unattractive salaries, discouraging social infrastructure, lack of jobs to match skills and competences acquired abroad, lack of recognition of non-formal and informal learning, hostile investment environment and insufficient resources and knowledge to launch a business. The implementation of reforms towards meeting the AA commitments and SDGs, including interventions of United Nations in the next programming period, would require significant capacity-building measures and the retaining of qualified professionals in key economic and social sectors.

Impact: Medium

Probability: High

Mitigation strategy: The United Nations will actively engage with national counterparts to maintain an adequate implementation capacity of PFSD, including investment in the development of skills, efficient use of existing capacity assets and overall capacity-building.

- **Economic decline:** If continued, it will have a major impact on the social protection system and overall social rights, putting pressure on the Government to prioritize and respond to increasingly challenging and growing social problems. The situation might even be worse as a result of the induced effects of recession in the Russian Federation (the main destination for Moldovan labour migrants) consisting of lower remittances and reduced female-headed households' income. Public funding priority would then be given to most pressing needs at the expense of co-financing partnerships, including with the United Nations.

Impact: Medium

Probability: Medium

Mitigation strategy: The PFSD includes a section on the commitment of partners. It is expected that the Government will increasingly leverage investment of partners by allocating its own catalytic resources into the PFSD. The UNCT will also carry out intense advocacy to keep human rights high on the political agenda. Regular information about the progress of the PFSD and active engagement of high-ranking Government officials and key parliamentarians in its implementation will be particularly sought.

- **The unresolved conflict in the Transnistrian region:** The human rights situation in the Transnistrian region is unsatisfactory. According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, freedom of speech and diversity of opinion are continuously suppressed. The same applies to associations and political parties which oppose the ruling group. The rights of minorities are not always respected. Democratic values are barely upheld. The region is also frequently cited by the Council of Europe as the main hub of irregular migration, for which Moldova is frequently criticized. Until a lasting solution to the conflict is found, economic growth on both sides of Nistru river and progress towards supporting human rights will be very challenging.

Impact: Medium

Probability: High

Mitigation strategy: Given its valuable experience to date and widely-acknowledged comparative advantage, the United Nations will continue its engagement in the region and prioritize PFSD interventions in areas where it could make a tangible difference in people's lives.

- **Extreme weather events and natural disasters:** The experience of the last 10 years shows that droughts, floods, landslides and extreme weather events (like heat waves, torrential rains and flash floods) are no longer exceptional, but usual, taking a major toll in human lives and in the economic growth of Moldova. These hazards are likely to materialize again in the coming years, worsening impacts on climate-linked sectors like water, food security, health and forestry and potentially pushing many communities into poverty in the medium to long run.

Impact: Medium

Probability: Medium

Mitigation strategy: PFSD will help the country build resilience and reduce its vulnerability to natural hazards and adapt to climate change in key areas, including risk identification, risk reduction, preparedness, financial protection, and post-disaster recovery.

At the same time, there are a number of opportunities which could boost economic growth, social inclusion and democracy in the country and support the overall implementation of international assistance, including through the PFSD. The most important ones are the following:

- **AA with the EU, including the setting-up of DCFTA, which is a core part of the agreement:** The AA opens the gate towards the gradual integration of Moldova into the EU internal market via core reforms on economic recovery and growth, governance and sector cooperation. Adoption of EU approaches to policymaking will improve Moldova's governance, strengthen the rule of law, human rights and provide more economic opportunities by opening further the EU market to Moldovan goods and services. Fully implemented, the DCFTA is projected to bolster Moldova's GDP, reduce consumer prices, raise wages, increase disposable incomes and eventually reduce poverty.

Use of opportunity: The AA provides opportunities for the United Nations to engage in the period 2018–2022 together with the EU and other development partners in promoting democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the rule of law and sustainable development in key sector policy areas, including in the fields of public health, education, the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, employment, social policies and equal opportunities, public administration reform, agriculture and rural development, energy cooperation, environment and climate action, statistics, etc.

- **Return migration:** This could generate substantial externalities for the home country through investment, remittances, increased productivity, and skills transfers by returned migrants. However, the home country benefits from return migration only if migrants succeed in

accumulating savings and human capital and if the home country is able to make use of returnees' skills and investment. It means that the home country will have to support the returnees reintegrate into the domestic labour-market and develop an enabling environment encouraging them to invest and use their savings in business development.

Use of opportunity: In this respect, the United Nations could get engaged with the national employment service and other development partners in piloting innovative labour-market reintegration and investment advisory services for returned migrants, building on the experience gained so far in previous projects. In addition, the United Nations could contribute to a better understanding of the impact of return migration at macroeconomic level and its sustainability beyond the initial six to 12 months from return, and thus inform more effective policymaking for successfully engaging returned migrants in the future economic growth and development plans of Moldova.

4. Implementation Arrangements

Management and Accountability Arrangements

The PFSD will be nationally executed under the overall co-ordination of the State Chancellery (national coordinating authority for development assistance). Government ministries, NGOs, INGOs and UN system agencies will implement programme activities. The PFSD will be made operational through the development of biannual output level joint work plans and/or agency-specific work plans and project documents as necessary which describe the specific results to be achieved and will form an agreement between the UN system agencies and each implementing partner as necessary on the use of resources. To the extent possible the UN system agencies and partners will use the minimum documents necessary, namely the signed PFSD and signed joint or agency-specific work plans (WPs) and project documents to implement programmatic initiatives. However, as necessary and appropriate, project documents can be prepared using, inter alia, the relevant text from the PFSD and joint or agency-specific WPs and/or project documents.

Dispute Resolution

Any dispute between the Government and a United Nations system agency shall be resolved in accordance with the provisions of that organization's basic agreement with the Government, as referred to in chapter 8 of this PFSD. Any dispute among the United Nations system agencies shall be resolved exclusively among the United Nations system agencies through approaches identified in the UNDG-endorsed dispute resolution mechanism.

Financial Assurance and Audit

Regardless of the source of funds, each UN agency head is accountable to his/her Executive Head (or governing body) for resources received by the UN agency from its own resources, and in line with the pertinent financial regulations and rules of the concerned UN agency. Each UN agency is subject solely to the external and internal auditing procedures laid down in that organization's financial regulations and rules and procedures.

HACT¹⁴³

All cash transfers to an Implementing Partner are based on the work plans agreed between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies. Cash transfers for activities detailed in work plans can be made by the UN system agencies using the following modalities:

1. Cash transferred directly to the Implementing Partner:
 - a. Prior to the start of activities (direct cash transfer), or
 - b. After activities have been completed (reimbursement);

¹⁴³ Currently, HACT is used by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

2. Direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner;
3. Direct payments to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners.

Where cash transfers are made to the State Treasury, the State Treasury shall transfer such cash promptly to the Implementing Partner.

Direct cash transfers shall be requested and released for programme implementation periods not exceeding three months. Reimbursements of previously authorized expenditures shall be requested and released quarterly or after the completion of activities. The UN system agencies shall not be obligated to reimburse expenditure made by the Implementing Partner over and above the authorized amounts.

Following the completion of any activity, any balance of funds shall be refunded or programmed by mutual agreement between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies.

Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may depend on the findings of a review of the public financial management capacity in the case of a Government Implementing Partner, and of an assessment of the financial management capacity of the non-UN Implementing Partner. A qualified consultant, such as a public accounting firm, selected by the UN system agencies may conduct such an assessment, in which the Implementing Partner shall participate. The Implementing Partner may participate in the selection of the consultant.

Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may be revised in the course of programme implementation based on the findings of programme monitoring, expenditure monitoring and reporting, and audits.

Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee

United Nations Moldova operates under the DaO modality as requested by the Government in 2011. The overall strategic direction of the PFSD is exercised by the Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee, which was established by Government Decision No. 87 on 12 July 2016. The Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee is co-chaired by the Prime Minister and the United Nations Resident Coordinator. Other participants include the Secretary-General of the Government and representatives from Government ministries. United Nations agencies are represented on a rotational basis. The Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee provides strategic guidance and oversight during the implementation of the PFSD to ensure alignment with national priorities.

UNCT

The UNCT has overall responsibility for coordination and operational management of the programmes and activities of the United Nations in Moldova, including the PFSD. On the basis of the appropriate decentralization of authority from headquarters, the UNCT takes decisions on programmatic and financial matters relating to the programming activities, as agreed with national authorities. The UNCT is chaired by the Resident Coordinator and composed of the Heads of United Nations agencies operational in the country, working as a team under the principles of mutual accountability set out in the UNDG Management and Accountability Framework for the Resident Coordinator System. The UNCT directs and oversees subsidiary inter-agency working groups such as the RGs, Operations Management Team (OMT), and United Nations Communication Group.¹⁴⁴

Results Groups

Reporting directly to the UNCT, the RGs are the main mechanisms for coordinated and collaborative planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the PFSD. Each RG covers one PFSD outcome. They are chaired by international Heads of Agencies and include representation from resident and non-resident United Nations agencies contributing to the relevant PFSD outcome, as indicated in the PFSD results matrix. RG member agencies commit to contributing to the achievement of the relevant PFSD outcome. The RG Chair does not represent her or his specific agency, but provides leadership on behalf of the UNCT as a whole. The Chairs are empowered by the UNCT to take appropriate decisions and lead the RGs. They are supported by Co-Chairs in discharging their responsibilities.

OMT

The OMT provides leadership on the implementation of a coordinated, efficient and effective common operational support agenda at the country level. The OMT provides recommendations to the UNCT on common services and business-related issues and identifies opportunities for collaboration and innovation to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations programmatic work under the PFSD.

The OMT is guided by a joint Business Operations Strategy (BOS), which provides a strategic, medium-term focus on common United Nations operations in support of enhanced programme delivery. The BOS focuses primarily on efficiency gains and cost avoidance. It aims to enhance internal transaction cost avoidance and to improve the quality of services, including cost savings on externally sourced goods and services.

United Nations Moldova sees business effectiveness and efficiency in a broader context, where non-economic effects – such as human rights and social benefits – are part of the vision and business strategy. Therefore, diversity, social inclusion and equity are equally important dimensions of the joint BOS.

United Nations Communication Group

¹⁴⁴ The roles and responsibilities of the UNCT are set out in the Guidance Note on United Nations Country Team Conduct and Working Arrangements.

The United Nations Communication Group serves as a coordination mechanism that ensures that agency communication is complementary rather than competitive, and enhances agencies' individual communication efforts by pooling communication resources and expertise, thus also contributing to cost savings. It provides recommendations to the UNCT on communication issues and identifies opportunities for collaboration and innovation to increase the visibility and impact of United Nations programmatic work. The United Nations Communication Group is chaired by an international Head of Agency and sees participation from communication specialists or focal points from UNCT agencies.

The work of the United Nations Communication Group is guided by the joint United Nations Communication Strategy and annual communication plans. The United Nations Communication Strategy provides the framework, guidance and strategic vision for joint communication with a view to supporting the implementation of the PFSD. It ensures that the United Nations agencies speak with one voice and communicate effectively with all stakeholders to explain the role and work of the United Nations in Moldova, promote and strengthen the United Nations' public image, demonstrate results, support advocacy, outreach and resource mobilization, and raise awareness on key development challenges.

SDG/Monitoring and Evaluation Group

The SDG/Monitoring and Evaluation Group contributes to strengthening United Nations Moldova's capacity to manage for results and provides technical support to the UNCT and RGs in all monitoring and evaluation-related matters. Furthermore, the group provides technical expertise to the Government and other partners to enhance capacities for implementation and monitoring of the SDGs in the country.

Gender Theme Group

The objective of the Gender Theme Group is to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the United Nations' work in Moldova. The group supports the UNCT, RGs and other inter-agency groups to ensure that a twin-track approach (gender-specific and gender mainstreaming) is applied throughout the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PFSD.

5. Financing Strategy and Resource Mobilization

Resource Requirements

The United Nations agencies should primarily be seen as development partners providing policy advice and technical assistance to programme countries, rather than funders *per se*.

The implementation of the PFSD will require an estimated total of US\$ 156,700,000. This includes US\$ 9,770,000 from regular or core resources of the United Nations agencies and US\$ 33,754,000 from non-core or extrabudgetary resources from bilateral, multilateral and private sources. The total estimated funding gap is US\$ 113,176,000. This will need to be mobilized over the period of the PFSD. A detailed budget broken down by year is provided in the Common Budgetary Framework in Annex 2.

The Common Budgetary Framework aims to increase the transparency and predictability of United Nations work in Moldova by presenting a comprehensive and results-based projection of financial resource requirements and any identified funding gap for the entire programme period. The estimated resource requirements, while only indicative, are as accurate as possible at the time of the PFSD drafting. Resource commitments will continue to be made in agency programme and project documents, according to the procedures and approval mechanisms of each agency. The Common Budgetary Framework will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to reflect relevant changes.

Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization efforts for the implementation of the PFSD are guided by the United Nations Moldova Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy. To strengthen the United Nations' strategic focus in support of the national priorities and prevent funding-driven prioritizing, coordinated resource mobilization efforts, in particular for joint programmes, will be undertaken by the UNCT under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. Individual United Nations agencies will retain their capacity to fundraise for their respective mandates in full alignment with the PFSD and in coordination with each other. It is expected that the implementation of the SDGs in conjunction with the advancement of the EU–Moldova association agenda will enhance the country's capacity to absorb development assistance and create new opportunities for mobilizing and leveraging resources. As United Nations resources are only a small proportion of the overall resources required for achieving the SDGs, United Nations resource mobilization efforts will increasingly be focused on leveraging all existing international and domestic financial flows and instruments to finance the development results to which the United Nations contributes. United Nations resources will thus be an important tool to catalyse larger financial flows for sustainable development. United Nations Moldova will proactively explore new opportunities and seek to broaden and diversify the partnership base with the objective of bridging the funding gap. New partnerships will be sought with emerging donors and the private sector. Furthermore, there is potential for strengthening Moldova's engagement in South–South (East–East) and triangular cooperation, which could leverage additional resources for the implementation of the PFSD.

The UN system agencies will provide support to the development and implementation of activities within the UNDAF, which may include technical support, cash assistance, supplies, commodities and equipment, procurement services, transport, funds for advocacy, research and studies, consultancies, programme development, monitoring and evaluation, training activities and staff support. Part of the UN system agencies' support may be provided to NGOs/CSOs as agreed within the framework of the individual work plans and project documents.

Additional support may include access to UN organization-managed global information systems, the network of the UN system agencies' country offices and specialized information systems, including rosters of consultants and providers of development services, and access to the support provided by the network of UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

The UN system agencies shall appoint staff and consultants for programme development, programme support, technical assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

Subject to annual reviews and progress in the implementation of the programme, the UN system agencies' funds are distributed by calendar year and in accordance with the PFSD. These budgets will be reviewed and further detailed in the WPs and project documents. By mutual consent between the Government and the UN system agencies, funds not earmarked by donors to the UN system agencies for specific activities may be re-allocated to other programmatically equally worthwhile activities.

In case of direct cash transfer or reimbursement, the UN system agencies shall notify the Implementing Partner of the amount approved by the UN system agencies and shall disburse funds to the Implementing Partner in 10 days.

In case of direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner; or to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners, the UN system agencies shall proceed with the payment within 30 days.

The UN system agencies shall not have any direct liability under the contractual arrangements concluded between the Implementing Partner and a third party vendor.

Where the UN system agencies and other UN system agency provide cash to the same Implementing Partner, programme monitoring, financial monitoring and auditing will be undertaken jointly or coordinated with those UN system agencies.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is crucial for ensuring accountability between the United Nations and all stakeholders, in particular the Government, NGOs and other Implementing Partners, donors and the population at large. Moreover, a focus on data and evidence for policymaking and the delivery of development assistance is a key priority for United Nations Moldova. Monitoring and evaluation is a joint responsibility of the United Nations and the Government, and national systems will be used to the maximum extent possible. The PFSD results matrix serves as the main tool against which progress will be measured. An inter-agency SDG/Monitoring and Evaluation Group will provide technical support to the UNCT and RGs in all monitoring and evaluation-related matters. The calendar in Annex 3 provides an overview of planned monitoring and evaluation activities. It includes agency-specific and joint assessments, surveys, studies and other monitoring and evaluation activities.

A joint Country Results Report will be produced annually to highlight key development trends, track progress against the PFSD results matrix, update the Common Budgetary Framework, and report on United Nations activities and achievements in the field of communication and operations.

In the framework of the Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee, the Government and United Nations will undertake an annual review of progress against the PFSD results matrix in the first quarter of the year. The annual review is an opportunity to make refinements and adjustments of the PFSD and/or the joint WPs, taking into account changes in the country context and the progress of the United Nations programmes. A more comprehensive midterm review of the PFSD is optional and can be requested by the Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee.

An independent evaluation of the PFSD will be conducted in the penultimate year of implementation. The evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the United Nations support to the country. It will be carried out as an inclusive and participatory exercise involving all relevant stakeholders. The conclusions and lessons learned from the evaluation will feed into the development of the next PFSD.

United Nations Moldova is exploring new and innovative methods for monitoring and evaluation using participatory approaches such as microsurveys and self-assessments. Once piloted and tested, these methods will be used to ensure that the PFSD stays relevant in the complex and volatile development context in Moldova. Bringing in non-traditional layers of data will enable closer and more genuine engagement with the people of Moldova for the implementation of the PFSD. Data that is more reliable, accurate and disaggregated by variables such as income, gender, ethnicity, disability, age and geographical location will inform the design of well-targeted and impactful interventions, and help the United Nations reach out to poor, vulnerable and marginalized communities. Furthermore, modern research tools will be applied to generate verifiable data on social cohesion and reconciliation, which will be of particular importance for interventions related to confidence-building and reintegration.

Commitment of National Implementing Partners in Monitoring and Evaluation Activities and Audits

Implementing Partners agree to cooperate with the UN system agencies for monitoring all activities supported by cash transfers and will facilitate access to relevant financial records and personnel responsible for the administration of cash provided by the UN system agencies. To that effect, Implementing Partners agree to the following:

1. Periodic on-site reviews and spot checks of their financial records by the UN system agencies or their representatives, as appropriate, and as described in specific clauses of their engagement documents/ contracts with the UN system agencies.
2. Programmatic monitoring of activities following the UN system agencies' standards and guidance for site visits and field monitoring.
3. Special or scheduled audits. Each UN organization, in collaboration with other UN system agencies (where so desired and in consultation with the respective coordinating Ministry) will establish an annual audit plan, giving priority to audits of Implementing Partners with large amounts of cash assistance provided by the UN system agencies, and those whose financial management capacity needs strengthening.

The audits will be commissioned by the UN system agencies and undertaken by private audit services.

7. Commitments by Parties

Joint leadership and ownership of this PFSD by the Government and the UN system agencies is essential to ensure the quality of the process and the full achievement of planned results.

The commitments of UN system agencies with regard to partnerships, results and strategies, indicative resource requirements, and arrangements for management, communication of progress, monitoring and evaluation are specified in chapters 2 through 6 above.

The Government commits to co-lead through the Joint National/UN Steering Committee and support the planning, review and reporting process for the PFSD as well as to address or mitigate against major institutional, partnership or logistical constraints that may impede the achievement of its planned results. It will maintain and strengthen country development coordination structures, and promote the fullest possible links between these structures and those for PFSD management and implementation.

The Government will support the UN system agencies' efforts to raise funds required to meet the needs of this PFSD and will cooperate with the UN system agencies including: encouraging potential donor Governments to make available to the UN system agencies the funds needed to implement unfunded components of PFSD; endorsing the UN system agencies' efforts to raise funds for PFSD from other sources, including the private sector both internationally and in Moldova; and by permitting contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations in Moldova to support this PFSD which will be tax exempt for the Donor, to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

The Government will provide substantive contributions to the programmatic and operational activities of the PFSD. As a middle-income country, it is expected that the Government will increasingly leverage investment of partners by allocating its own catalytic resources into the PFSD.

Cash assistance for travel, stipends, honoraria and other costs shall be set at rates commensurate with those applied in the country, but not higher than those applicable to the United Nations system (as stated in the International Civil Service Commission circulars).

The Government will honour its commitments in accordance with the provisions of the cooperation and assistance agreements outlined in chapter 8.

The Government shall apply the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the UN agencies to the Agencies' property, funds, and assets and to its officials and consultants. In addition, the Government will accord to the Agencies and their officials and to other persons performing services on behalf of the Agencies, the privileges, immunities and facilities as set out in the cooperation and assistance agreements between the Agencies and the Government. The Government will be responsible for dealing with any claims, which may be brought by third parties against any of the Agencies and its officials, advisors and agents. None of the Agencies nor any of their respective officials, advisors or persons performing services on their behalf will be held responsible for any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is mutually agreed by

Government and a particular Agency that such claims and liabilities arise from gross negligence or misconduct of that Agency, or its officials, advisors or persons performing services.

With regard to Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT):

- A standard Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) report, reflecting the activity lines of the WP, will be used by Implementing Partners to request the release of funds, or to secure the agreement that UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF will reimburse or directly pay for planned expenditure. The Implementing Partners will use the FACE to report on the utilization of cash received. The Implementing Partner shall identify the designated official(s) authorized to provide the account details, request and certify the use of cash. The FACE will be certified by the designated official(s) of the Implementing Partner.
- Cash transferred to Implementing Partners should be spent for the purpose of activities and within the timeframe as agreed in the WPs only.
- Cash received by the Government and national NGO Implementing Partners shall be used in accordance with established national regulations, policies and procedures consistent with international standards, in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the WPs, and ensuring that reports on the utilization of all received cash are submitted to UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF within six months after receipt of the funds. Where any of the national regulations, policies and procedures are not consistent with international standards, the UN system agency financial and other related rules and system agency regulations, policies and procedures will apply.
- In the case of international NGO/CSO and IGO Implementing Partners, cash received shall be used in accordance with international standards in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the WPs, and ensuring that reports on the full utilization of all received cash are submitted to UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF within six months after receipt of the funds.
- To facilitate scheduled and special audits, each Implementing Partner receiving cash from UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF will provide UN system agency or its representative with timely access to:
 - All financial records which establish the transactional record of the cash transfers provided by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, together with relevant documentation;
 - All relevant documentation and personnel associated with the functioning of the Implementing Partner's internal control structure through which the cash transfers have passed.
- The findings of each audit will be reported to the Implementing Partner and UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. Each Implementing Partner will furthermore:
 - Receive and review the audit report issued by the auditors;

- Provide a timely statement of the acceptance or rejection of any audit recommendation to the UN system agency that provided cash so that the auditors include these statements in their final audit report before submitting it to UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF;
- Undertake timely actions to address the accepted audit recommendations;
- Report on the actions taken to implement accepted recommendations to the UN system agencies on a quarterly basis (or as locally agreed).

8. Other Provisions

171. Whereas the Government of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as “the Government”) has entered into the following:

- a) With the United Nations Development Programme (hereinafter referred to as UNDP) a basic agreement to govern UNDP’s assistance to the country (Standard Basic Assistance Agreement SBAA) signed by both parties on 2 October 1992. Based on Article I, paragraph 2 of the SBAA, UNDP’s assistance to the Government shall be made available to the Government and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of the competent UNDP organs, and subject to the availability of the necessary funds to the UNDP. In particular, decision 2005/1 of 28 January 2005 of UNDP’s Executive Board approved the new Financial Regulations and Rules and along with them the new definitions of ‘execution’ and ‘implementation’ enabling UNDP to fully implement the new Common Country Programming Procedures resulting from the UNGD simplification and harmonization initiative. In light of this decision, this PFSD together with a work plan (which shall form part of this PFSD) concluded hereunder constitute together a project document as referred to in the SBAA.
- b) With UNICEF a Basic Cooperation Agreement (BCA) concluded between the Government and UNICEF on 4 October 1996.
- c) With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) a Country Co-operation Agreement concluded between the Government and UNHCR in December 1998.
- d) With the UNAIDS office an exchange of letters dated 2004 to the effect that the SBAA signed by UNDP and the Government on 2 October 1992 be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UNAIDS.
- e) The Government of Moldova agrees to apply to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), mutatis mutandis, the provisions of the SBAA between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government, signed on 2 October 1992.
- f) With the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations the Agreement for the opening of the FAO Representation in the Republic of Moldova on 7 April 2014.
- g) With the office of the World Health Organization (WHO), a Basic Agreement concluded between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and WHO on 21 July 1994.
- h) With the International Organization for Migration a Cooperation Agreement concluded between the Government and the International Organization for Migration on 21 March 2002.
- i) The Government of Moldova agrees to apply to UNIDO, mutatis mutandis, the provisions of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government, signed on 2 October 1992.

- j) With IAEA a Revised Supplementary Agreement Concerning the Provision of Technical Assistance concluded between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and IAEA on 24 September 1998.
- k) With UNODC an exchange of letters dated 5 April 2011 to the effect that the SBAA signed by UNDP and the Government on 2 October 1992 be applied, mutatis mutandis, to UNODC.
- l) With the International Labour Organization (ILO) the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the constituent Social Partners on the Decent Work Country Programme for 2016-2020 signed on 19 February 2016.
- m) The Government of Moldova agrees to apply to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), mutatis mutandis, the provisions of the SBAA between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government, signed on 2 October 1992.
- n) For all agencies: Assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of the competent UN system agency's governing structures.

The PFSD will, in respect of each of the United Nations system agencies signing, be read, interpreted, and implemented in accordance with and in a manner that is consistent with the basic agreement between such United Nations system agency and the Host Government.

ANNEX 1. Results Matrix

<p>Outcome 1: The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable,¹⁴⁵ demand and benefit from democratic, transparent and accountable governance, gender-sensitive, human rights- and evidence-based public policies, equitable services, and efficient, effective and responsive public institutions.</p>							
<p>National development priorities or goals: Accountable, transparent and representative governance institutions able to elaborate and adopt evidence-based, people-centred, human rights-based and gender-sensitive policies in an inclusive and transparent manner; decentralized system of public decision-making; independent, accountable, impartial, efficient and transparent justice system; efficient pre-judicial investigation process guaranteeing the observance of human rights, ensuring the security of each person, and reducing the level of crime; effective access to justice; zero-tolerance for corruption; effective observance of human rights and gender equality in policies and practice; prevention and combating violence, neglect and exploitation of children; fight against anti-Roma discrimination; ensuring rights of the diaspora (see detailed references to strategic priorities in chapter 2, section 2.3)</p>							
<p>SDGs: SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</p>							
<p>United Nations partners: IOM, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO</p>							
<p>Other partners: Agency for Public Services, Border Police Department, Bureau for Migration and Asylum, Bureau of Interethnic Relations, Central Electoral Commission, Centre for Continuous Electoral Training, CSOs and community groups, Constitutional Court, development partners, Equality Council, LPAs, media, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, National Anticorruption Centre, National Bank of Moldova, NBS, National Institute of Justice, National Legal Aid Council, Office of the Prime Minister, Parliament, People's Advocate, private sector, Public Prosecution Service, State Chancellery, State Enterprise Centre for State Information Resources "Registru", Superior Council of Magistracy</p>							
Outcome indicators	Baselines	Targets	SDG indicators	Means of verification/ data source/periodicity	Medium-term Common Budgetary Framework (US\$)		
					Total cost	Projected to be available	To be mobilized (funding gap)
1.1 Percentage of people who trust governance institutions (Parliament, Government, justice) by sex and urban/rural status ¹⁴⁶	(April 2016) Parliament Total: 5.9 per cent Men: 6.9 per cent Women: 5.2 per cent Urban: 4.8 per cent Rural: 7.0 per cent Government Total: 9.2 per cent; Men: 10.3 per cent Women: 8.3 per cent Urban: 7.8 per cent Rural: 10.3 per cent	(2022) Parliament Total: 20 per cent Men: 20 per cent Women: 20 per cent Urban: 20 per cent Rural: 20 per cent Government Total: 25 per cent Men: 25 per cent Women: 25 per cent Urban: 25 per cent Rural: 25 per cent	Related to 16.6.2	Barometer of Public Opinion, Institute for Public Policy (semi-annually)	56.175 mln	13.110 mln	43.065 mln

¹⁴⁵ Children left behind by migrant parents, older persons, the unemployed, persons in the lowest income quintile, persons with disabilities, survivors of violence, victims of human trafficking persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, religious minorities, ethnic and linguistic minorities, stateless persons and refugees, and LGBTI persons. This definition of most vulnerable groups is applicable to all PFSD outcomes.

¹⁴⁶ Further disaggregation will be used (in PFSD annual reviews) once support is provided to the data holder for improved sampling (coverage by subpopulations) and data reliability.

	Justice Total: 7.8 per cent Men: 9.1 per cent Women: 6.7 per cent Urban: 7.5 per cent Rural: 8.0 per cent	Justice Total: 25 per cent Men: 25 per cent Women: 25 per cent Urban: 25 per cent Rural: 25 per cent						
1.2 Households and business facing corruption in the last 12 months, per cent of those interviewed	(2015) Households: 24 per cent Business: 24 per cent	(2022) Households: 12 per cent Business: 14 per cent	16.5.1 and 16.5.2	Survey on Corruption in Republic of Moldova: Perceptions versus Personal Experiences of Business People and Households, Transparency International (biannually)				
1.3 Implementation rate of recommendations of human rights treaty bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CRC (UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, WHO) ● CEDAW (UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNICEF) ● UPR (OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA) ● CRPD (OHCHR, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP) ● ICERD (OHCHR, UNHCR) ● ICCPR (OHCHR, UNDP) ● ICESCR (OHCHR, UNDP) ● CAT (OHCHR, UNDP, UNODC) 	N/A ¹⁴⁷	(2018) 15 per cent (2019) 30 per cent (2020) 45 per cent (2021) 60 per cent (2022) 80 per cent		National Human Rights Matrix (annually; supported by OHCHR); Reports of the People's Advocate (annually); Alternative reports of CSOs (periodicity depending on the revision cycle of the respective treaty bodies)				

¹⁴⁷ The baseline will be established in early 2017 through the National Human Rights Matrix instrument.

1.4 Proportion of women and men elected or appointed in the Parliament, LPAs and Government cabinet	(2016) Members of Parliament Women: 21.8 per cent Men: 77.2 per cent (2015) LPAs mayors Women: 20.6 per cent Men: 79.4 per cent (2015) LPAs local councillors Women: 30 per cent Men: 70 per cent (2015) LPA district councillors Women: 18.5 per cent Men: 81.5 per cent (2016) Government Cabinet Women: 21 per cent Men: 79 per cent	(2022) Members of Parliament Women: 40 per cent Men: 60 per cent (2022) LPAs mayors Women: 30 per cent Men: 70 per cent (2022) LPAs local councillors Women: 40 per cent Men: 60 per cent (2022) LPA district councillors Women: 40 per cent Men: 60 per cent (2022) Government Cabinet Women: 40 per cent Men: 60 per cent	5.5.1, 5.5.2 and 16.7.1	Parliament; Central Electoral Commission; State Chancellery; NBS (periodicity is based on the election cycle)		
1.5 Proportion of SDG indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation relevant to the national target	(2016) Disaggregated data are available for 35 per cent of SDG indicators, partially available for 17 per cent and are lacking for 50 per cent ¹⁴⁸	(2022) Disaggregated data are available for 50 per cent of SDG indicators and partially available for 30 per cent	17.18.1	NBS; State Chancellery (biannually)		
1.6 Social distance (non-acceptance) with regard to groups vulnerable to discrimination (value 0–6) ¹⁴⁹	(2015) People with physical disabilities: 2.2 Jews: 2.3 Religious minorities, other than Muslims: 2.3 Roma people: 3.1 People of African descent: 3.1 Muslims: 3.3 People with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities: 3.6 Ex-inmates: 3.6 Persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS: 4.3	(2022) People with physical disabilities: 1.9 Jews: 2.0 Religious minorities, other than Muslims: 2.0 Roma people: 2.8 People of African descent: 2.8 Muslims: 3.0 People with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities: 3.2 Ex-inmates: 3.2 Persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS: 3.8	16.b.1	Discrimination and Equality Perceptions Study, Equality Council (biannually)		

¹⁴⁸ Baseline data provided by the initial review (2016) of the availability and relevance of SDG indicators for Moldova. The figures will be updated in the PFSD annual reviews when the SDG nationalization has been completed (after March 2017).

¹⁴⁹ The indicator takes values from 0 to 6, where: 0 – lowest social distance (acceptable as a member of family); 1 – acceptable as a personal friend; 2 – acceptable as a neighbour; 3 – acceptable as workmate; 4 – acceptable as citizen of Moldova; 5 – acceptable as temporary visitors to Moldova; and 6 – highest social distance (to be expelled from the country).

	LGBT people: 5.2 ¹⁵⁰	LGBT people: 4.5				
1.7 The justice system comprises efficient child-friendly and gender-sensitive mechanisms ensuring that survivors of all forms of violence have de facto access to justice and perpetrators are held accountable (score 1-4) ¹⁵¹	(2016) Score 1	(2022) Score 4	5.2.1, 5.2.2, 16.2.2 and 16.2.3	UNICEF annual reporting		
Outcome 2: The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, have access to enhanced livelihood opportunities, decent work and productive employment, generated by sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth						
National development priorities or goals: Enhanced labour productivity and increased formal employment in the economy; improved business climate, innovation and economic competitiveness; promotion of exports and domestic trade; mitigation of labour-market and gender pay disparities; improved quality of life and work in rural areas; balanced and sustainable regional development; development of tourism; maximizing the effects of circular migration; information society (see detailed references to strategic priorities in chapter 2, section 2.3)						
SDGs: SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development						
United Nations partners: ILO, IOM, International Trade Centre (ITC), UN Women, UNDP, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNECE, UNIDO						
Other partners: Academia, Bureau for Reintegration, CSOs and community groups, Congress of Local Authorities, development partners, Labour Inspection, local and regional public authorities, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Informational Technologies and Communications, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, Ministry of Transport and Roads Infrastructure, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Moldova Investment and Export Promotion Organization, National Bank of Moldova, NBS, National Employment Agency, Organization for SME Development, private sector, State Chancellery						
Outcome indicators	Baselines	Targets	SDG indicators	Means of verification/data	Medium-term Common Budgetary Framework (US\$)	

¹⁵⁰ The baselines will be made more precise in early 2018 through the 2018 Discrimination and Equality Perceptions Study.

¹⁵¹ The indicator takes values from 1 to 4, where: **Score 1:** Not all legislation and no regulatory framework in place to implement legislation on child-friendly and gender-sensitive proceedings for victims and witnesses of crimes; pre- and in-service training for judiciary, legal enforcement psychologists and other professionals on child-friendly and gender-sensitive investigation and legal procedures are not in place; there are no fully standardized, equipped and functional child-friendly and gender-sensitive hearing rooms in place. **Score 2:** Draft legislation and regulatory framework on child-friendly and gender-sensitive proceedings for victims and witnesses of crimes are developed; pre- and in-service training for judiciary, legal enforcement psychologists and other professionals on child-friendly and gender-sensitive investigation and legal procedures are developed and tested; child-friendly and gender-sensitive hearing rooms are standardized. **Score 3:** Legislation and regulatory framework to implement legislation on child-friendly and gender-sensitive proceedings for victims and witnesses of crimes are in place; pre- and in-service training for judiciary, legal enforcement psychologists and other professionals on child-friendly and gender-sensitive investigation and legal procedures are institutionalized; standardized child-friendly and gender-sensitive hearing rooms are equipped. **Score 4:** Legislation and regulatory framework on child-friendly and gender-sensitive proceedings for victims and witnesses of crimes are enforced; pre- and in-service training for judiciary, legal enforcement psychologists and other professionals on child-friendly and gender-sensitive investigation and legal procedures are applied; fully standardized, equipped and functional child-friendly and gender-sensitive hearing rooms are in place.

				source/periodicity	Total cost	Projected to be available	To be mobilized (funding gap)
2.1 Small Area Deprivation Index (SADI) as average of SADI ranks for communities from the first quintile, by regions and SADI components (economic, environment, infrastructure)	(2014) SADI total North: 85 Centre: 82 South: 105 Autonomous Territorial Unit (ATU) Gagauzia: 140 Chisinau mun: n.a. Economic deprivation North: 105 Centre: 76 South: 103 ATU Gagauzia: 68 Chisinau mun: 101 Environment deprivation North: 102 Centre: 74 South: 81 ATU Gagauzia: 101 Chisinau mun: n.a. Infrastructure deprivation North: 77 Centre: 91 South: 99 ATU Gagauzia: n.a. Chisinau mun: n.a.	(2022) The average of ranks of the poorest communities (first quintile), by region, should have a value in close proximity to 85 (=average of SADI ranks for the first quintile) for all components: SADI total, economic deprivation, environment deprivation, infrastructure deprivation ¹⁵²	Related to 10.2.1, 11.1.1.1, 11.2.1.1 and 11.6.1.1	SADI database, Ministry of Economy (annually)	37.760 mln	11.660 mln	26.100 mln
2.2 Employment rate, by urban/rural, sex, age, disability	(2015) Total: 40.3 per cent Urban: 42 per cent Rural: 38.9 per cent Women: 38.4 per cent (urban 39.5 per cent; rural 37.5 per cent) Men: 42.3 per cent (urban 44.9 per cent; rural 40.4 per cent) Age: 15–24 years: 18.2 per cent; 25–34 years: 45 per cent; 35–44 years: 58.6 per cent; 45–54 years: 60.6 per cent; 55–64 years: 41.4 per cent (2017) Disability: - ¹⁵³	(2022) Total: 44.1 per cent Urban: 46.0 per cent Rural: 42.6 per cent Women: 42.6 per cent (urban 43.8 per cent; rural 41.6 per cent) Men: 45.6 per cent (urban 48.4 per cent; rural 43.6 per cent) Age: 15–24 years: 19.9 per cent; 25–34 years: 49.2 per cent; 35–44 years: 64.1 per cent; 45–54 years: 66.3 per cent; 55–64 years: 45.3 per cent	8.3.1 and related to 8.5.2	Labour Force Survey, NBS (annually)			

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¹⁵² The targets might be amended in the PFSD annual reviews in case of adjustments of the SADI methodology, i.e. the estimation of index values (additional to ranks) based on thresholds.

¹⁵³ The baseline data for employment rate by disability will be available in 2018.

2.3 Gender pay gap ¹⁵⁴	(2015) 13.2 per cent	(2022) 10 per cent	8.5.1	Labour Force Survey, NBS (annually)			
2.4 Proportion of young people, aged 15–29, NEETs by sex, urban/rural	(2015) Total: 29.3 per cent Men: 23.6 per cent Women: 35.2 per cent Urban: 26.6 per cent Rural: 31.4 per cent	(2022) Total: 26.8 per cent Men: 21.5 per cent Women: 32 per cent Urban: 24.5 per cent Rural: 29 per cent	8.6.1	NBS (annually)			
2.5 Rank of Moldova in the World Bank's Doing Business Report	(2016) 44	(2022) 40	8.3.1	World Bank (annually)			
2.6 Global competitiveness index	(2015) 4.0	(2022) 4.04	8.2.1	Ministry of Economy (annually)			
Outcome 3: The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, benefit from enhanced environmental governance, energy security, sustainable management of natural resources, and climate and disaster resilient development							
National development priorities or goals: Contribution of renewable energy sources of 20 per cent in the energy mix by 2020; reduced GHG emissions by 25 per cent until 2020 and by 67 per cent until 2030 compared to the 1990 level; energy efficiency and security; reduced energy poverty; rational use, protection and conservation of natural resources; modernized infrastructure for environment protection; climate risk mitigation and low emissions; reduced impact of natural risks and protection against disasters; ecosystem integrity and protection; increased quality of life in rural areas; balanced and sustainable regional development; innovation (see detailed references to strategic priorities in chapter 2, section 2.3)							
SDGs: SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all; SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development							
United Nations partners: FAO, IAEA, UNDP, UNECE, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNIDO							
Other partners: Academia, Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Service, CSOs and community groups, development partners, Energy Efficiency Agency, Energy Efficiency Fund, Hydro-Meteorological Agency, international financial institutions, Institute for Forest Research and Management, LPAs, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, Ministry of Transport and Roads Infrastructure, Moldova Forest Agency, Moldova Water Agency, National Agency for Food Safety, National Agency for Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities, NBS, National Centre for Public Health, private sector, State Chancellery, Tourism Agency							
Outcome indicators	Baselines	Targets	SDG indicators	Means of verification/data source	Medium-term Common Budgetary Framework (US\$)		
					Total cost	Projected to be available	To be mobilized (funding gap)

¹⁵⁴ The indicator represents the proportion of women's gross average wage of men's gross average wage, http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Metadate/ODM/en/Eng_ODM3_Pondereia_salariu_femei.pdf

3.1. Share of renewables in the gross final energy consumption	(2016) 14.2 per cent	(2022) 17 per cent	7.2.1	Energy Balance, NBS (annually)	40.700 mln	12.294 mln	28.406 mln
3.2. Percentage decrease in emission of GHG	(2013) 8.4 Mt/year CO ₂ equivalent	(2022) 20 p.p.	9.4.1	National Biannual Report, Ministry of Environment			
3.3. Number of centralized collection and processing centres for hazardous waste created as environment enabling public institutions to meet the international standards on hazardous waste disposal	(2016) There is no centralized collection and processing centre for hazardous waste	(2022) At least one collection and processing centre for hazardous waste created and operationalized	12.4.2 and related to 3.9.1	Annual Reports of the Ministry of Environment on the Implementation of the Stockholm Convention			
3.4. Number of people in rural areas benefiting from sustainable land, pasture and forest management practices, by sex	(2015) Total: 23,559 Men: 11,350 Women: 12,209	(2022) Total: 30,000 Men: 14,430 Women: 15,570	Related to 15.2.1 and 2.4.1	Report on the Implementation of the National Environment Strategy, Ministry of Environment (annually); District level annual reports, LPAs			
3.5. Proportion of districts applying climate resilient practices	(2016) 18 per cent (out of 33 districts)	(2022) 27 per cent	11.b.1 and related to 4.3.1 and 13.3.2	United Nations Moldova internal reports (annually)			

Outcome 4: The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from gender-sensitive and human rights-based, inclusive, effective and equitable equality education, health and social policies and services.

National development priorities or goals: Continuous strengthening of population's health; healthy growth and development of children; HIV and STI prevention and control; access, relevance and quality of education; development of parenting skills and competencies; promotion of inclusive education (for Roma children and CwDs in particular); alignment of the education system to labour-market needs in order to enhance labour productivity and increase employment in the economy; child protection; ensuring financial sustainability of the social security system; combating VAW and children; promotion of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment; protection of rights of migrant workers and of children left behind (see detailed references to strategic priorities in chapter 2, section 2.3)

SDGs: SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

United Nations partners: IAEA, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UN Women, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO

Other partners: Academia, CSOs and community groups, development partners, Equality Council, LPAs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Ministry of Youth and Sport, National Agency for Curriculum and Evaluation, National Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices, NBS, National Centre for Health Management, National Centre for Public Health, National Health Insurance Company, National School Inspectorate, Office of the Prime Minister, People's Advocate, private sector, Republican Centre for

Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance, State Chancellery							
Outcome indicators	Baselines	Targets	SDG Indicators	Means of verification/data source/periodicity	Medium-term Common Budgetary Framework		
					Total cost	Projected to be available	To be mobilized (funding gap)
4.1 Ratio between CwDs in regular schools and CwDs in special schools	(2015/2016) 1.8 (1,829/1,033)	(2022) 2.0		Education data, NBS (annually)	20.885 mln	6.360 mln	14.525 mln
4.2 Reduction in selected NCD risk factors							
a. Recorded adult (15+ years) per capita consumption of pure alcohol	(2014) 9.99 L per capita	(2022) 8.99 L per capita	a. 3.5.2	WHO Health for All database (annually); STEPS survey (quinquennially, next survey in 2018)			
b. Prevalence of current tobacco use among adults 18–69 years old, by sex	(2013) Total: 25.3 per cent Men: 43.6 per cent Women: 5.6 per cent	(2022) Total: 22 per cent Men: 40.6 per cent Women: 5.0 per cent	b. 3.a.1				
c. Prevalence of raised blood pressure (systolic blood pressure ≥ 140 and/or diastolic blood pressure ≥ 90 mmHg or currently taking medication for raised blood pressure) among adults 18–69 years old, by sex	(2013) Total: 39.8 per cent Men: 40.3 per cent Women: 39.3 per cent	(2022) Total: 37.8 per cent Men: 38.3 per cent Women: 36.9 per cent	c. 3.4.1				
4.3 Vaccination coverage rate for the third dose of DTP, for the worst performing district and as difference between the worst and best performing district	(2015) National: 89.7 per cent Worst performing district: 71 per cent Difference between the worst and best performing districts: 28.5 p.p.	(2022) National: 95 per cent Worst performing district: 85 per cent Difference between the worst and best performing districts: 10 p.p.	3.2.1 and 3.8.1	Ministry of Health; WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Forms (annually)			
4.4 Percentage of individuals belonging to key populations (PWID, SW, MSM), who are covered by HIV prevention services	(2015) PWID: 22.9 per cent SW: 55 per cent MSM: 27.7 per cent	(2022) PWID: 60 per cent SW: 60 per cent MSM: 60 per cent	3.3.1	Ministry of Health (annually); Global AIDS Monitoring (annually); Integrated Behavioural and Biological Surveillance (biannually)			

4.5 Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women in the age group 15–19 years old, urban/rural ¹⁵⁵	(2015) Total: 27.91 Urban: 13.64 Rural: 35.14	(2022) Total: 19.0 Urban: 11.0 Rural: 25.0	3.7.2	National Centre for Health Management (annually)			
4.6 Proportion of households receiving Social Aid benefits, by consumption quintile	(2015) Q1: 11.9 per cent Q2: 5.3 per cent	(2022) Q1: 30 per cent Q2: 12 per cent	1.3.1	NBS (annually)			
4.7 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence	(2010) Physical: 8.9 per cent Sexual: 4.1 per cent Psychological: 25.7 per cent	(2022) Physical: 6 per cent Sexual: 3 per cent Psychological: 18 per cent	5.2.1	NBS, Behaviour Study on Violence (quinquennially, next survey in 2018) ¹⁵⁶			
4.8 Monetary poverty rate, disaggregated by urban/rural and households with children	(2015) Discrepancy between urban and rural households: 11.4 p.p. (Urban: 3.1 per cent; rural: 14.5 per cent) Discrepancy between general poverty rate and poverty rate of households with three or more children: 13.6 p.p. (All households: 9.6 per cent; households with three or more children: 23.2 per cent) ¹⁵⁷	(2022) Discrepancy urban/rural (of p.p. difference) in poverty reduced by 30 per cent Discrepancy (of p.p. difference) between the general poverty rate and the poverty rate of households with three or more children reduced by 15 per cent ¹⁵⁸	1.2.1	Annual Informative Note on Poverty in the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Economy			

¹⁵⁵ Further disaggregation (e.g. age group 10–14 and Roma) will be added in PFSD annual reviews.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Moldova will support the Government to improve the collection of administrative data on VAW and domestic violence in the context of the implementation of the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2017–2022.

¹⁵⁷ This indicator might be replaced in PFSD annual reviews by the multidimensional poverty index when made available by the Government.

¹⁵⁸ Targets are formulated in terms of discrepancy reduction in line with the United Nations' equity-focused interventions and their comparative advantage. This type of target will be made more robust in the event that the poverty calculation methodology (currently discussed by the Government) is modified.

ANNEX 2. Common Budgetary Framework

Agency	Indicative budget 2018 in thousands US\$			Indicative budget 2019 in thousands US\$			Indicative budget 2020 in thousands US\$			Indicative budget 2021 in thousands US\$			Indicative budget 2022 in thousands US\$			Indicative budget 2018-2022 in thousands US\$			
	Core funds	Non-core funds	Funding gap	Core funds	Non-core funds	Funding gap	Core funds	Non-core funds	Funding gap	Core funds	Non-core funds	Funding gap	Core funds	Non-core funds	Funding gap	Core funds	Non-core funds	Funding gap	Total
Strategic priority/outcome 1: Governance, human rights and gender equality																			
IOM	0	0	4,329	0	0	4,329	0	0	4,329	0	0	4,329	0	0	4,329	0	0	21,645	21,645
OHCHR	100	250	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	500	250	500	1250
UN Women	150	300	700	150	300	700	150	300	500	150	0	300	150	0	300	750	900	2,500	4,150
UNDP	0	5,000	0	0	2,000	2,500	0	0	4,000	0	0	4,000	0	0	4,000	0	7,000	14,500	21,500
UNFPA	80	0	100	80	0	100	80	0	100	80	0	100	80	0	100	400	0	500	900
UNHCR	300	0	0	300	0	0	300	0	0	300	0	0	300	0	0	1,500	0	0	1,500
UNICEF	100	150	350	100	150	450	100	150	450	100	150	450	100	150	350	500	750	2,050	3,300
UNODC	30	180	350	20	160	300	0	160	200	0	0	260	0	0	260	50	500	1,370	1,920
WHO	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	10	0	0	10
Total outcome 1	762	5,880	5,929	752	2,610	8,479	732	610	9,679	732	150	9,539	732	150	9,439	3,710	9,400	43,065	56,175
Strategic priority/outcome 2: Sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth																			
ILO	50	0	50	50	0	50	50	0	50	50	0	50	50	0	50	250	0	250	500
IOM	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	5,000	5,000
ITC	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	1,000	0	1,000
UN Women	50	70	200	50	70	200	50	70	200	50	0	200	50	0	200	250	210	1,000	1,460
UNCTAD	0	80	300	0	80	300	0	80	300	0	80	300	0	80	300	0	400	1,500	1,900
UNDP	0	4,000	2,000	0	4,250	2,000	0	1,250	4,000	0	0	5,000	0	0	6,000	0	9,500	19,000	28,500
UNECE	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	50	50	0	150	150	300
UNIDO	0	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	56	0	0	280	280
Total outcome 2	100	4,350	3,606	100	4,650	3,656	100	1,600	5,606	100	330	6,656	100	330	7,656	500	11,260	27,180	38,940
Strategic priority/outcome 3: Environmental sustainability and resilience																			
FAO	0	600	1,000	0	600	1,000	0	600	1,000	0	600	1,000	0	600	1,000	0	3,000	5,000	8,000
IAEA	170	0	0	80	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	350	0	0	350
UNDP	0	3,572	2,748	0	4,772	1,548	0	0	6,320	0	0	6,320	0	0	6,320	0	8,344	23,256	31,600

UNECE	0	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	150	150	300
UNEP	50	0	0	50	0	0	50	0	0	50	0	0	50	0	0	250	0	0	250
UNIDO	0	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	0	200
Total outcome 3	220	4,372	3,748	130	5,422	2,598	50	600	7,320	150	700	7,420	50	600	7,320	600	11,694	28,406	40,700
Strategic priority/outcome 4: Inclusive and equitable social development																			
IAEA	66	0	0	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110	0	0	110
ILO	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	50	0	0	50
IOM	0	400	1,335	0	0	1,735	0	0	1,735	0	0	1,735	0	0	1,735	0	400	8,275	8,675
OHCHR	100	200	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	500	200	500	1,200
UN Women	50	50	100	50	50	100	50	50	100	50	0	100	50	0	100	250	150	500	900
UNAIDS	40	50	50	40	0	50	40	0	50	40	0	50	40	0	50	200	50	250	500
UNDP	0	300	0	0	200	250	0	0	250	0	0	250	0	0	250	0	500	1,000	1,500
UNFPA	320	0	100	320	0	100	320	0	100	320	0	100	320	0	100	1,600	0	500	2,100
UNICEF	250	0	500	250		500	250	0	500	250	0	500	250	0	500	1,250	0	2,500	3,750
UNODC	0	100	500	0	0	300	0	0	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	1,000	1,100
WHO	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000
Total outcome 4	1,036	1,100	2,685	1,014	250	3,135	970	50	3,035	970	0	2,835	970	0	2,835	4,960	1,400	14,525	20,885

ANNEX 3. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
I. UNCT M&E ACTIVITIES					
Surveys/studies <i>(Investigations of a problem or assessments of the conditions of a specified population group, aimed to support the identification of root causes, and development/refinement of implementation strategies and/or baseline indicators)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Human Development Report (NHDR) (UNDP) Impact of fiscal decentralization on social services (UNICEF) Behaviour study on violence (UN Women, UNICEF, UNAIDS, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) Reproductive Health Survey 2017/2018 (UNFPA) Decentralization impact on social services (UNICEF, UNDP, OHCHR, UN Women) Biannual Human Rights and Equality Perceptions Study (OHCHR, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP) Assessment of deinstitutionalization process and assessment of care-leavers' situation (UNICEF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Migration Profile 2013–2017 (IOM) KAP survey (smoking, alcohol) (WHO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHDR (UNDP) Biannual Human Rights and Equality Perception Study (OHCHR, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Migration Profile 2011–2020 – publication (IOM) Equity-focused Situation Analysis of Children's Rights (UNICEF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHDR (UNDP) Biannual Human Rights and Equality Perceptions Study (OHCHR, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP)
Monitoring systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG dashboard (UNCT) Logistic Management Information System of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG dashboard (UNCT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG dashboard (UNCT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG dashboard (UNCT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG dashboard (UNCT)

<p><i>(UNCT support to national information systems, with regular reporting of data related to PFSD results, in particular support for national reporting to human rights treaty bodies)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> health commodities (UNFPA) Assessment of Reproductive Health indicators in the national health information system (UNFPA) Disaggregated data-collection on gender-based violence in the health system along with social systems at local level (UNFPA) National Human Rights Matrix (OHCHR) CEDAW reporting (UN Women, UNFPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Human Rights Matrix (OHCHR) Midterm follow-up on UPR (OHCHR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Human Rights Matrix (OHCHR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Human Rights Matrix (OHCHR) CRC reporting (UNICEF) UPR process (OHCHR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Human Rights Matrix (OHCHR)
<p>Evaluations <i>(Evaluations of United Nations agencies' programmes and projects contributing to the PFSD and the PFSD evaluation)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of Country Programme FAO Moldova 2016–2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome 1 evaluation (UNDP) Outcome 2 evaluation (UNDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of ILO Decent Work Country Programme 2016–2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PFSD Evaluation (UNCT) Evaluation of UNFPA Country Programme 2018–2022 Evaluation of UNICEF Country Programme 2018–2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Strategic Note evaluation (UN Women)
<p>Reviews <i>(Drawing on United Nations agencies' and partners' monitoring systems as well as findings of surveys, studies and evaluations)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PFSD Annual Review/Country Results Report (UNCT) Midterm immunization program review (WHO) Midterm HIV Programme (UNAIDS/WHO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PFSD Annual Review/Country Results Report (UNCT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PFSD Annual Review/Country Results Report (UNCT) Midterm Strategic Note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PFSD Annual Review/Country Results Report (UNCT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PFSD Annual Review/Country Results Report (UNCT)

			evaluation (UN Women)		
II. PLANNING REFERENCES					
Capacity-building <i>(Major capacity development activities to strengthen partner M&E capabilities)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the NBS and line ministries in data management and use (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO) Result-based management, M&E training for United Nations and Government counterparts (UNCT) Support to National Centre for Health Management (improvement of M&E of health indicators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the NBS and line ministries in data management and use (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the NBS and line ministries in data management and use (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the NBS and line ministries in data management and use (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the NBS and line ministries in data management and use (UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO)
Use and users of M&E information <i>(Decision-making processes and events drawing on the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from the M&E activities above)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee National Committee on Sustainable Development (meetings and reporting) International Advisory Panel on Population and Development (TBD) (UNFPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee Committee on Sustainable Development (meetings and reporting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee National Committee on Sustainable Development (meetings and reporting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee National Committee on Sustainable Development (meetings and reporting) Preparation of the new UNDAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee National Committee on Sustainable Development (meetings and reporting)
Partner M&E activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring multidimensional poverty (NBS, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family with UNDP and UNICEF support) 				

(Major M&E activities of Government and other partners that use and/or contribute to the M&E activities above)

- World Wide Governance Index indicators (World Bank)
- Education management information system (Ministry of Education with UNICEF support)
- National Reference System Report (Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family)
- Mechanism for disaggregation of data concerning women/men participation in Parliament, national and local government per ethnicity (Roma/non-Roma) and disability status (with support from UNDP)
- National/Ministry reports on sector performance (Annual Social Report – Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family; Poverty Report – Ministry of Economy etc.)
- National Household Budget Survey, Labour Force Survey (NBS)
- Evaluation of state programmes by the public authorities
- Study on improving land management (Ministry of Agriculture with International Fund for Agricultural Development support)
- Monitoring of the intersectoral cooperation mechanism (Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family with UNICEF support)
- Biannual Update Report of GHG inventory to UNFCCC
- Annual Global AIDS Monitoring (HIV indicators, UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF)
- Sociological studies on the perception of the population concerning the respect for and fulfilment of human rights
- Results of the 2014 Population and Housing Census and of the next census to be conducted within the framework of the 2020 Census Global Round (NBS)