



A Common Aspiration for the SDGs:

The United Nations in Turkmenistan 2016-2020



UNITED NATIONS
TURKMENISTAN





Content

	Strategic Area 1	Strategic Area 2	Strategic Area 3	Strategic Area 4	Strategic Area 5
Foreword					
5	Quality data and progress monitoring 16	Quality, inclusive social services 20	Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency 42	Economic diversification, employment and trade 52	Governance and rule of law 58
Introduction	OUTCOME 1	OUTCOME 2	OUTCOME 5	OUTCOME 7	OUTCOME 8
The United Nations in Turkmenistan 7	16	20	42	52	58
Turkmenistan-United Nations Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020 10		OUTCOME 3	OUTCOME 6		
United Nations reform in Turkmenistan 12		26	46		
The SDGs in Turkmenistan 7		OUTCOME 4			
Response to the global pandemic 14		32			
					Looking forward 64



Foreword

As the United Nations Resident Coordinator a.i. and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee, I am pleased to introduce this overview of the highlights of the cooperation between the Government of Turkmenistan and the United Nations development system under the United Nations Partnership Framework for Development (PFD) 2016-2020.

This publication presents some of the investments and efforts that Turkmenistan has made for its people, the planet and prosperity, to build a strong, safe and sustainable future for the Turkmen people. The images and stories reflect the experiences, achievements and aspirations of Turkmenistan's people, and our confidence that Turkmenistan and the United Nations family will continue working together for the country and for the generations to come.

The multi-sectoral UNPFD stimulated a wide range of successes in improving data availability, strengthening education, modernizing social services, improving health, increasing environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, adapting to climate change, diversifying the economy, employment and trade, and supporting the development of a culture of good governance and human rights.

In financial terms, US\$77 million have been spent on implementation of the UNPFD between 2016 and 2020. The Government's investment in joint work with the UN amounted to more than US\$ 23.6 million, representing almost a third of the total amount. In addition, the Government spent US\$43.5 million through the UN for procurement of vaccines and premix for flour fortification.

In 2020, the global pandemic added a new priority area to our partnership. The United Nations and the Government planned and implemented multiple activities to simultaneously strengthen the health response and cushion the knock-on effects on millions of people's lives, their livelihoods and the real economy, thereby aiming to preserve progress toward the SDGs.

Our fruitful cooperation will continue under the new Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025, which was signed in March 2020. This is the first such partnership agreement signed in Europe and Central Asia, and the increased number of UN agencies who are engaging to support implementation of this framework is a testament to the expanding partnership between Turkmenistan and the UN development system. It reaffirms and strengthens our strategic partnership on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In closing, I would like to express my profound appreciation to the UN personnel in Turkmenistan who have worked tirelessly to deliver on the UN's mandates and commitments, to the Development Partners for their engagement and support to our work, and to the Government of Turkmenistan for its commitment to achieving the goals of the Agenda 2030 for the wellbeing of the people of Turkmenistan.

Christine Weigand
UN Resident Coordinator a.i.

Introduction

This document looks back at the achievements of the Government and the United Nations in Turkmenistan in the framework of their 2016-2020 Partnership Framework for Development. It reflects the work of the United Nations agencies working together under their distinctive mandates.

The report begins with an overview of the United Nations in Turkmenistan, the Turkmenistan-United Nations Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020 and the United Nations reform process, which led to significant changes to UN support to Turkmenistan over this period. It continues with sections about the Sustainable Development Goals in Turkmenistan and the response to the global pandemic.

The next sections look in more detail at achievements against eight outcomes aligned with the priorities defined in the National Programme for Socio-Economic Development for the period 2011-2030 and in the 2030

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda. The outcomes are grouped into five strategic areas, as follows:

- Quality data and progress monitoring
- Quality, inclusive social services
- Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency
- Employment, economic diversification, and trade
- Governance and the rule of law.

Finally, the report concludes with a section that looks forward to how the relationship between Turkmenistan and the United Nations will develop under the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025.





The United Nations in Turkmenistan

The United Nations (UN) agencies, funds and programmes began their work in Turkmenistan shortly after the country's accession to the UN in March 1992. In 2007, the Government of Turkmenistan invited the United Nations to collaborate on the implementation of its social reform agenda, initiating a new chapter of cooperation.

The UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) is the highest-ranking representative of the UN development system at the country level. The Office of the UNRC aims to bring together the various UN agencies at country level to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities towards implementation of Agenda 2030

During the Partnership Framework for Development (PFD) 2016-2020, 14 resident and non-resident UN entities worked with country partners to achieve the national aspirations within Agenda 2030.

The table below lists the UN agencies that have been part of the UN in 2020:

Resident UN organizations



Established in 1951, the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.



On the ground in about 170 countries and territories, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** works to eradicate poverty while protecting the planet. We help countries develop strong policies, skills, partnerships and institutions so they can sustain their progress.



The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** works in over 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. And we never give up.



The **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime. UNODC operates in all regions of the world through an extensive network of field offices.



The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. Our mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.



The **World Health Organization (WHO)** is building a better, healthier future for people all over the world. Working with 194 Member States we strive to combat diseases – communicable diseases like influenza and HIV, and noncommunicable diseases like cancer and heart disease.

Non-resident UN agencies



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** leads international efforts to defeat hunger, improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, raise the standard of living in rural populations and contribute to global economic growth



International
Labour
Organization

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights.



The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** formulates and implements programmes and activities to promote and protect all human rights.



The **United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** supports developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively by providing analysis, facilitating consensus-building, and offering technical assistance.



United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, formerly UNISDR) is the United Nations focal point for disaster risk reduction. UNDRR oversees the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, supporting countries in its implementation, monitoring and sharing what works in reducing existing risk and preventing the creation of new risk.



As a multilateral platform, the **UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)** facilitates greater economic integration and cooperation among its member countries and promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity.



The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences and culture.



The **United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** is dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.



Turkmenistan-United Nations Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020

In 2016, the United Nations and the Government of Turkmenistan jointly finalized a new five-year strategic cooperation document, 'Turkmenistan-United Nations Partnership Framework for Development for 2016-2020' (UNPFD). The UNPFD signified a move away from a donor-recipient relationship and towards a partnership based on Turkmenistan's aspirations for continued growth and sustainable development. The UNPFD focused on five strategic areas: (1) quality data and progress monitoring; (2) quality inclusive social services; (3) environmental sustainability and energy efficiency; (4) employment, economic diversification and trade; and (5) governance and the rule of law.



1 Quality data and progress monitoring

PFD outcome 1:
Quality data, aligned with international standards, are available to policy makers, legislators, and the interested public to monitor the major goals of National Programmes, the post-2015 SDGs, and PFD, and to formulate new national strategies and programmes.

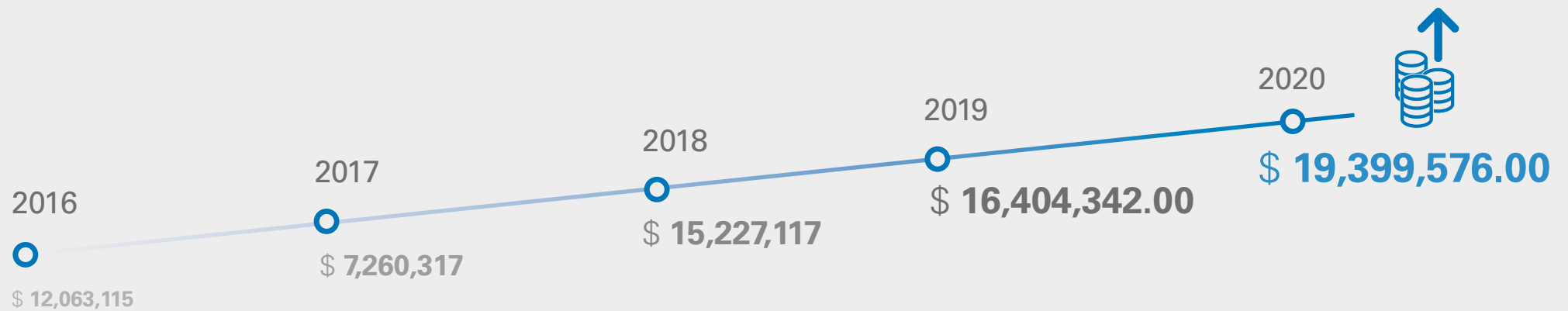


2 Quality, inclusive social services

PFD outcome 2:
Pre-school, primary and secondary education services are of higher quality, in line with international standards, and with priority given to inclusive education.

PFD outcome 3:
The social protection system is ready to provide inclusive quality community-based support services.

PFD outcome 4:
The people of Turkmenistan, especially vulnerable groups, enjoy better coverage of quality health care services focusing on women and child health, nutrition, NCDs, TB and Multiple Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDRTB), early detection and prevention.



3 Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency

PFD outcome 5:

The national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are aligned to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to promote sustainable practices on energy efficiency, the use of renewables, urban development, and waste management

PFD outcome 6:

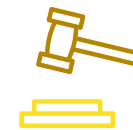
The national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are responsive to climate change issues by promoting climate resilience, adaptation, climate risk management and disaster risk reduction measures at sector and community level



4 Employment, economic diversification and trade

PFD outcome 7:

Strategies and simplified regulations are in place to promote inclusive employment through sustainable economic diversification



5 Governance and rule of law

PFD outcome 8:

State institutions implement and monitor laws, national programmes, and strategies in a participatory manner and in line with the country's human rights commitments

United Nations reform in Turkmenistan

Following global changes to the UN coordination system at the national level, endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2018, an empowered, strategic, effective and impartial leadership is in place in Turkmenistan through a new approach to the Resident Coordinator (RC) system. Since 2019, the new RC system brings the capacity, reach and impact of the UN development system together with the expertise of national partners to support sustainable development more coherently, effectively and efficiently. It is the cornerstone that enables a coherent and well-coordinated response by UN Country Teams that can deliver integrated support across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for the achievement of national development priorities and needs.

The UN Resident Coordinator and her Office has earned the recognition of the Government and of the UN entities as an impartial entity that has brought all UN entities, development partners and national stakeholders together to realize programme objectives and formulate a response to emerging challenges.

The UN Resident Coordinator has been instrumental in fostering closer collaboration within the UN Country Team and development actors to ensure coordinated engagement

with the Government. The Government has increasingly requested that the RC Office support the organization of Government-led dialogues on issues of priority to the country, whereas and that UN entities and development partners asked the Office to advocate or initiate discussions with national partners on issues of concern that impede delivery of efficient support in the country.

The SDGs in Turkmenistan

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) aims to ensure sustainable, progressive and inclusive growth, social integration and environmental protection, as well as to promote partnership for sustainable and resilient development. Turkmenistan was one of the first countries to take up Agenda 2030 and its pledge *to transform lives and protect the planet* with its 17 ambitious SDGs.

The Agenda serves as a central strategy In Turkmenistan, and government policies are focused on its implementation. In September 2016, Turkmenistan nationalized the 17 SDGs and 136 targets, which together balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Subsequently, the number of indicators was revised up to 175 indicators due to changes at the global level. The nationalized SDGs also

seek to realize human rights for all and to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, pledging that no one will be left behind.

As such, the National Programme for Social and Economic Development of Turkmenistan until 2030 and the Programme of the President of Turkmenistan for Social and Economic Development for the period 2019-2025 are aimed at achieving sustainable development and make consistent implementation of the SDGs a main priority. The country's 2030 vision *'to build [an] economically developed, socially protected, [and] ecologically clean society'*, as outlined in the National Programme for Socio-economic Development of Turkmenistan (NPSD, 2011-2030), is broadly consistent with Agenda 2030.

The coordinating body for the SDGs is the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan. The State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan (TurkmenStat) has been designated to monitor implementation, coordinate activities on compilation of administrative data and sector statistics, create and maintain the SDGs database, and prepare reporting.

The UN has been providing technical assistance and coordination to the Government and other stakeholders for implementation, monitoring

of, and reporting on, the SDGs. In an important milestone, Turkmenistan submitted its first Voluntary National Review of Progress towards the SDGs to the UN in 2019, building on baseline assessments and substantial support on system thinking provided by UN organizations. By then, the country had integrated 85 per cent of the 169 global SDG targets into national strategies. In 2020, the UN supported the production of a national progress report on SDG 3 on health and well-being and other health-related SDG targets in Turkmenistan. Concrete steps and activities have also been agreed with national partners on the development of a national SDG database, to be realized in 2021.

The UN has also conducted several high-profile events to raise knowledge and awareness about the SDGs and facilitate their implementation in Turkmenistan.

- In September 2017, the SDG Training and Methodology Centre was launched with the participation of government officials, the UN Country Team and the international community in the country. The Centre is seen by the Government as a knowledge hub for education and training, advocacy and awareness raising on the issues of sustainable development and support to SDG implementation in Turkmenistan. The Centre works in partnership with the Academy of Civil



Service, the National Institute of Education, higher educational institutions and NGOs.

- Also in 2017, Turkmenistan was one of the first five countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States to host a Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission, which provided practical solutions to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the country.
- In April 2019, to unleash the potential of Turkmen youth, the UN, the National SDG Centre, the Ministry of Finance and Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on young people to present ideas on how they could contribute to raising awareness of the SDGs at national level. The partners then selected 17 young people from all the regions of Turkmenistan to serve as Ambassadors for the SDGs. Also in October 2018, about 300 young people presented the 17 SDGs in a Dance Festival. Using contemporary choreography with the core principle of 'leaving no one behind', they conveyed the main message of the 2030 Agenda
- A pop-up children's festival on the SDGs was held in Mary in October 2019. Thirty children aged 8-9 years engaged in interactive

sessions that helped them understand the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some children took over the role of the teacher by citing a poem about the Convention rights.

Response to the global pandemic

The UN and Government's key area of cooperation in 2020 was the response to the global risks of the COVID-19 pandemic. A WHO technical consultancy mission in Turkmenistan was organized in July 2020, following which recommendations were developed. The UN and the Government shared joint development plans, including the Government's Preparedness and Response Plan for Acute Infectious Disease/ Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP), developed with UN support, approved on 22 May 2020, the updated CPRP was approved on 16 April 2021, and the Government's Immediate Socio-Economic Response Plan to acute infectious disease pandemic in Turkmenistan (SERP), also developed with the UN support and approved on 3 July 2020.

Most of the activities planned under the CPRP were implemented in 2020. In total the Government spent over US\$46 million for the COVID-19 response, with the UN and

development partners contributing US\$2.5 million for CPRP activities. **The achievements included:**

- Strengthened capacity of health workers and laboratory specialists at all levels of health care.
- A strengthened mechanism for data management on acute respiratory illnesses, included COVID-19.
- A mechanism established for submitting clinical samples for influenza surveillance and suspected COVID-19 cases.
- Ensuring infection prevention and control.
- Informing the population about the decisions taken by the Government on response measures.
- Alleviating the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 for the population
- Vaccination against COVID-19

In total, the Government, the UN and international financial institutions disbursed US\$28.8 million to support SERP implementation in 2020. At least 180

interventions of various sizes and types were made under the SERP in 2020. There were more than 170,000 beneficiaries. **The areas of work for the SERP were the following:**

- Improving quality of and access to essential health services.
- Providing social protection and basic social services.
- Protecting jobs, supporting small and medium-sized businesses and workers in the informal sector.
- Macroeconomic incentives and multilateral cooperation.
- Promoting social cohesion and promoting sustainability at the community level.





OUTCOME

1



Strategic Area 1
Quality data and progress monitoring

Quality data, aligned with international standards, is available to policy makers, legislators, and the interested public to monitor the major goals of national programmes, the post-2015 SDGs, UNPFD and to formulate new national strategies and programmes



Reliable and internationally comparable data are crucial for Turkmenistan's inclusive and sustainable growth, as well as for establishing baselines for monitoring SDG indicators, both at the national and disaggregated levels. Families who participated in the 2019 MICS were told that their responses will help the country to aggregate key data on children and women which will ultimately help to inform policy decisions.

The Government of Turkmenistan and the UN have been working to improve the reliability and completeness of national data.

Improvements include the introduction of modern methods for collecting, processing, storing, analysing and disseminating data, in line with international practice and in support of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Two Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) were conducted in 2015-2016 and 2019. The MICS provide much needed data against many SDG indicators, including on new areas important for Agenda 2030. The MICS 2019 provided data for 30 SDG indicators and insights into the potential impact of COVID-19 on those who might be left behind.

Turkmenistan has conducted several other important pieces of research with UN support over the period to improve the data and information environment. A survey on the main risk factors for noncommunicable diseases was conducted in 2018, along with the Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative. The same year a Government survey was conducted on the health and status of families. The survey results were finalized in 2020 and will serve as a baseline for a number of SDGs, as well as for improvement of public policy in the field of gender equality and the protection of women's rights, in accordance with Turkmenistan's national development priorities and international obligations.

In 2019, research was conducted with UN support on the food environment in Turkmenistan, as part of a broader project in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Research on the vulnerabilities of migrants and their families, as

well as their literacy and remittance-related behaviour, was conducted to support national banks and the private sector in the design of remittance and banking products.

Turkmenistan, with UN support, has been implementing recommendations from the adapted Global Assessment of the national Statistical System. By 2020, 41 per cent of the recommendations had been implemented, beating the target of 40 per cent. The SSC is working with the UN to introduce the System of National Accounts 2008 (SNA 2008), the most up-to-date international statistical standard for national macroeconomic accounts, adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) for policymaking, analysis, and research purposes. The SSC, with UN support, also conducted a survey on the informal economy to evaluate macroeconomic aggregates, comply with international accounting standards, and ensure accurate estimates of GDP.

The Academy of State Services and the UN have been working together actively on the use of demographic projections to guide national planning.



"We visited nearly 800 households in our region selected through random sampling. I witness significant changes in people's responses. They now seek for qualified advice, they want their children to be educated, and they openly share their concerns," says Gozel Omarova, MICS Team Supervisor and Chief of the Department at Dashoguz province division of the State Statistical Committee.

[Read the full story](#)

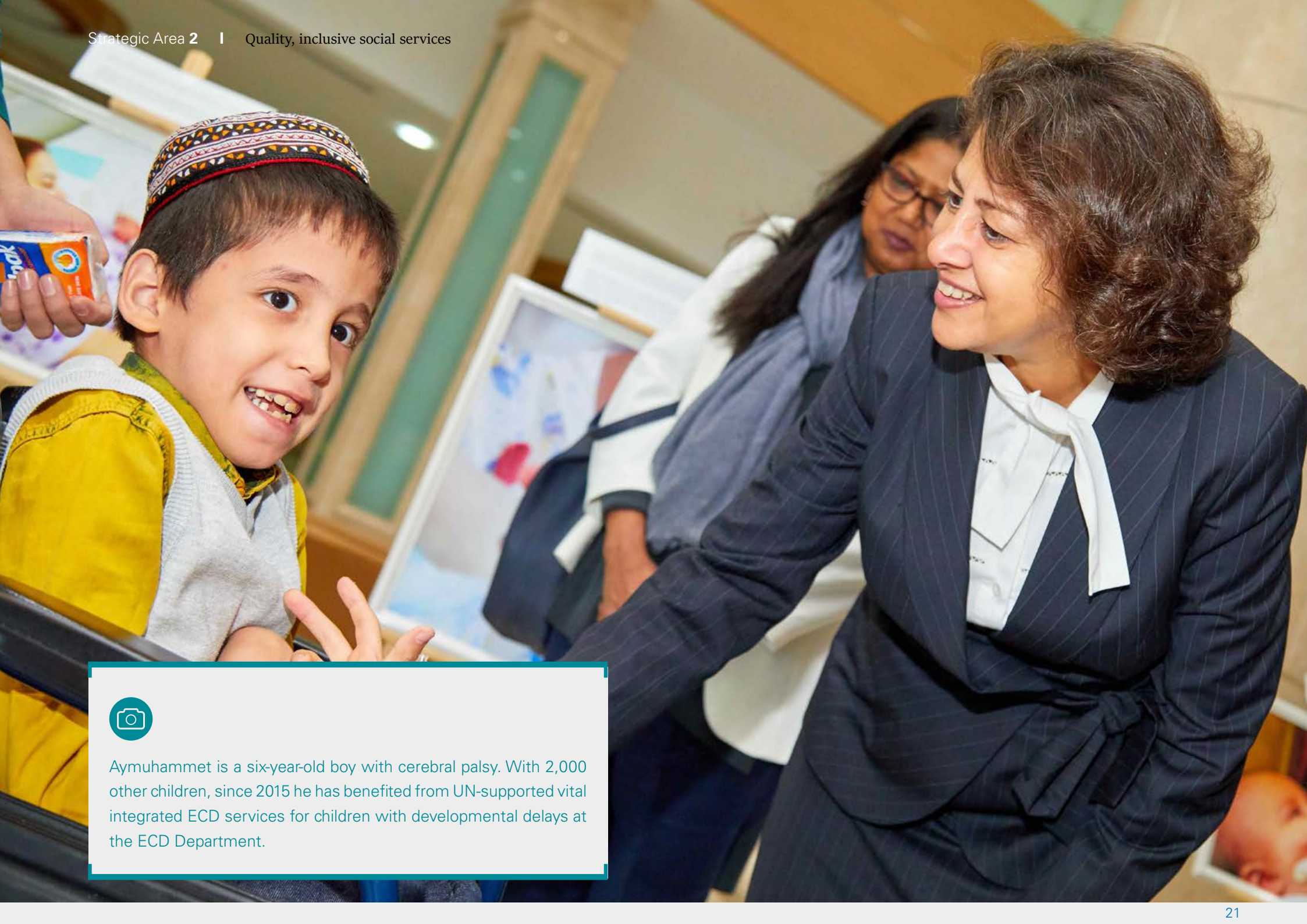


OUTCOME
2



Strategic Area 2
Quality, inclusive social services

Pre-school, primary and secondary education services are of higher quality, in line with international standards, and with priority given to inclusive education



Aymuhammet is a six-year-old boy with cerebral palsy. With 2,000 other children, since 2015 he has benefited from UN-supported vital integrated ECD services for children with developmental delays at the ECD Department.



Turkmenistan adopted an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategy in 2019 with UN support, and this was complemented in 2020 by an ECD Action Plan. Importantly, this is the country's first ECD Action Plan that is cross-sectoral, and several ministries – the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Medical Industry and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population – established a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism for ECD policy in the country. The new Strategy is aimed at ensuring that children and their parents can benefit from an equitable and affordable package of essential ECD services, including providing quality services to monitor childhood development, equipping parents with information and support, strengthening the access of all children to pre-primary education, and providing inclusive, high-quality, community-based support services.

The new ECD Strategy follows a previous UN-supported ECD Strategy that focussed on the education sector. During the UNPFD period, a wide range of documents were developed in the framework of the previous strategy, on topics such as: play-based, high-quality pre-primary curriculum resources; parental empowerment; and sports and play for development. All of these were developed in line with international standards.

Turkmenistan has been making progress on the ground in promoting access to, and the quality of, early learning for young children. This is reflected in the 2015-2016 MICS survey results, which showed that 46.2 per cent of five-year olds were enrolled in pre-primary education, up from the baseline figure of 33.5 per cent. Moving forward, with UN support the Government has adopted a 'Programme for improving the activities of pre-school institutions in the field of early development and pre-primary preparation of children in Turkmenistan for 2020-2025', which incorporates a UN-supported costed operational plan for introducing a one-year, high quality primary preparation programme for all five-year-olds in Turkmenistan.

The State Television Committee, jointly with the UN, has been bringing key communications messages to the population. In the field of

education, messaging on ECD issues began in 2017.

The Ministry of Education, with UN support, has reviewed the existing curricula and teaching methods in primary and secondary education. This has resulted in specific recommendations towards developing a competency-based education system, with follow-up actions.

The Government is now training teachers to deliver classes on the 'Basics of Life Skills', as part of comprehensive gender-sensitive and age-appropriate reproductive health education. While in 2016 just 42 per cent of subject teachers had received this training, by 2020 the figure was 95 per cent. With UN support, the topics of sexual and reproductive health were introduced into the education curriculum of schools in 2018. Board games and video materials on life skills and healthy choices for adolescents in school settings have been introduced to the secondary education system.

The Ministry of Education and Youth Organization, jointly with the UN, has promoted youth peer-to-peer approaches, and opened three youth centres. The youth centres use youth-friendly approaches and provide a platform for young people to connect, discuss reproductive health issues, and promote



"We started visiting the Early Childhood Development Department when my son was three years old. When we came, Aymuhammet could not do many things – he couldn't hold his head, communicate or hold a pen in hand. With support of ECD services, Aymuhammet started pronouncing the first distinct words. I have never thought he would be able to express himself, and moreover, study in a school," said Lachin, Aymuhammet's mother.

[Read the full story](#)

OUTCOME 2

reproductive rights. Up to 25,000 people have participated in their campaigns. With UN support, the Ministry of Education is expanding the youth education network and integrating peer-to-peer education on reproductive health into the work of the centres.

Guided by the approved child-friendly education policy, over the reporting period national stakeholders have developed their capacity for inclusive education with UN assistance. Support has focussed on building inclusive learning environments across selected pre-school and primary education institutions, and is designed to support children with special needs to transition to mainstream education. In addition, all six rehabilitation centres that cover children with disabilities aged 3-18 now deliver multidisciplinary support for children with disabilities and their families. Pilot interventions with two selected mainstream kindergartens have led to provision of individualized support for children with disabilities within their facilities, under the guidance of multidisciplinary professionals.

The Ministry of Education, with UN support, has established an electronic Education Management Information System (EMIS), which is expected to improve data collection and analysis, measurement of the quality of education, and monitoring of progress in the

sector. The UN has worked with the EMIS to make sex- and age-disaggregated data available to track access to education for girls and boys, including children with disabilities. Some of the data are now available on the UNICEF Research Centre's website.

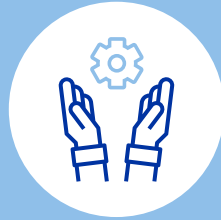
In 2016, young advocates for child rights – students at the International University for Humanities and Development in Turkmenistan – were in the spotlight during celebrations for the International Day for Protection of Children. Joining in various activities, around 500 university students and educators highlighted the critical importance of promoting and protecting children's rights and upholding the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The students shared their knowledge of child rights through stories, posters, videos, sketches, a quiz, and an exhibition. Students also shared their perspectives on how to better promote child rights in Turkmenistan through posters displayed at the exhibition, showing the artistic and academic works of the talented young students. The posters reflected their aspirations for promoting child rights, such as the right to education, to health care, and to protection from violence.

In 2017, on World Children's Day, with the theme #KidsTakeOver, young people gathered at the UN building to shine a light on the

most pressing issues that matter for their generation. The young people enjoyed taking over the role of the UNICEF Representative, taking turns to share their plans and how they would advance the child rights mandate and deliver on the SDGs.

With UN support, a Leadership Academy and Innovation Lab were held in Ashgabat and in the regions in 2018. Young people from diverse backgrounds presented socially innovative projects on health, the environment, inclusiveness, youth participation, and education. The young people generated 28 social innovation projects. The 220 young people who participated in the Academy came from very diverse backgrounds, including high school students, university and college students, young people living with disabilities, and orphans. The issues identified by the Academy's participants and the social innovation projects fed into the Action Plan of the State Programme on implementation of Youth Policy Law for 2021-2026.





Strategic Area **2**
Quality, inclusive social services

OUTCOME

3

The social protection system is ready to provide inclusive quality community-based support services



The Government of Turkmenistan has prioritized improvement of social services in its mid-term national development programme and human rights action plans, with the view of achieving the national priorities aligned with the SDGs. Expanding the range of social services, introducing the concept of social work and developing community-based services are declared to be important prerequisites for improving the system of social protection in Turkmenistan.

Responding to this challenge, several UN agencies and the Government of Turkmenistan signed a two-year Joint Programme in December 2019 **to introduce inclusive, quality, community-based social services** in compliance with the international conventions on children, people with disabilities, women's rights and SDGs. The foundational training of the 45 newly recruited social work specialists enabled the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of Turkmenistan to deploy them in all regions of Turkmenistan for initial assessment of vulnerable populations.

Under the Joint Programme, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population is introducing a new model of social services at community level, and building the capacity of the national social service workforce.

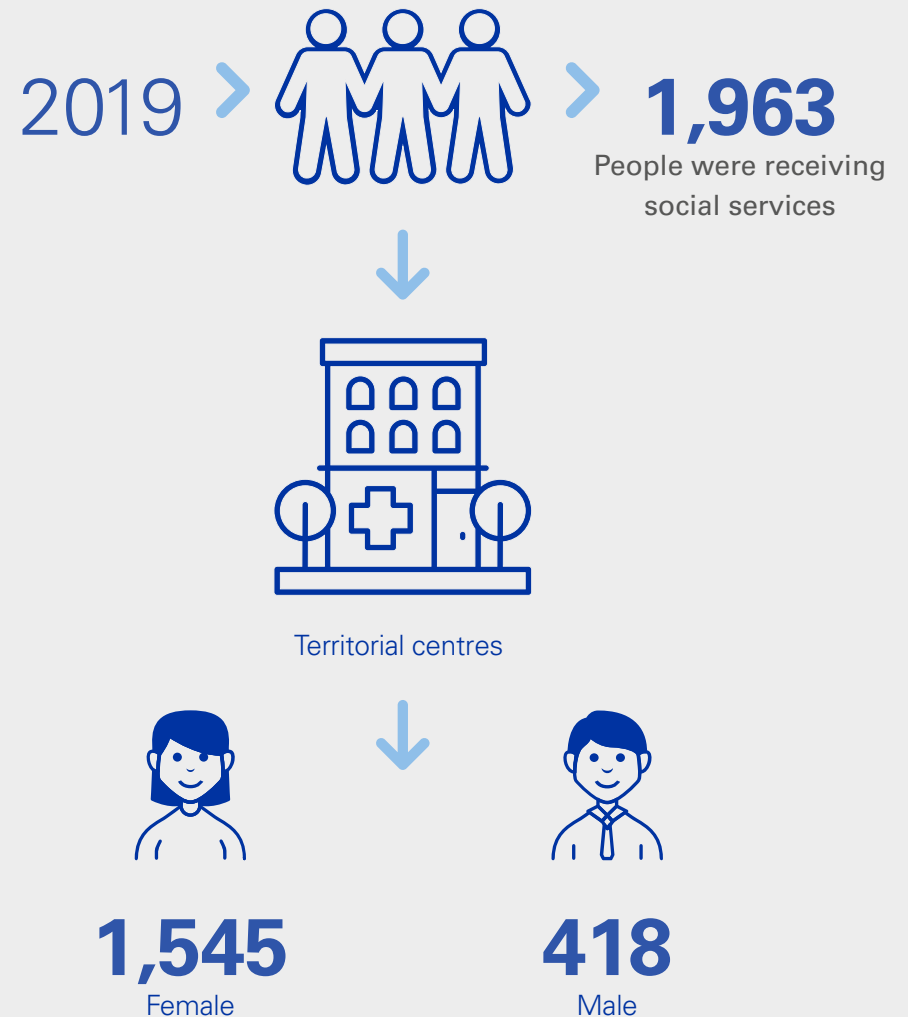
The community-based services will support children at risk of separation from parents, children without parental care, children with disabilities, youth at risk, women facing gender-based violence, people with disabilities, and older persons in need of support with basic everyday care. In 2018 and 2019, the Ministry of Education with UN support introduced a social work curriculum at the Pedagogical College and the National Medical University.

OUTCOME

3

As of 2019, 1,963 people were receiving social services in territorial centres, of whom 1,545 were female and 418 male.

The highest numbers of recipients were in Lebap (507) and Ashgabat (505).



In line with the Government's objective of strengthening the efficiency of social services, the UN has built the capacity of representatives of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and ministries for social service provision. In November 2018, the Government and UN organized a forum on the 'Role of NGOs in social service delivery for sustainable development in Turkmenistan'. This stimulated productive dialogue between the officials and NGOs to identify how to introduce social contracting in the country. A 2018 UN rapid assessment of social services in Turkmenistan identified possible short-term measures to introduce social contracting in practice, within the existing legislation.

Despite challenges imposed by the international pandemic in 2020, hands-on training continued in the field with UN support, and additional social workers were recruited. In 2021, 45 social workers are now providing services in five velayats across Turkmenistan.

Jointly with the UN, the Government is working to increase awareness of social services among the population. The 2019 MICS survey provides data disaggregated by residence, age, and disability status about the proportion of the population who have knowledge of where and how to access community-based social services.

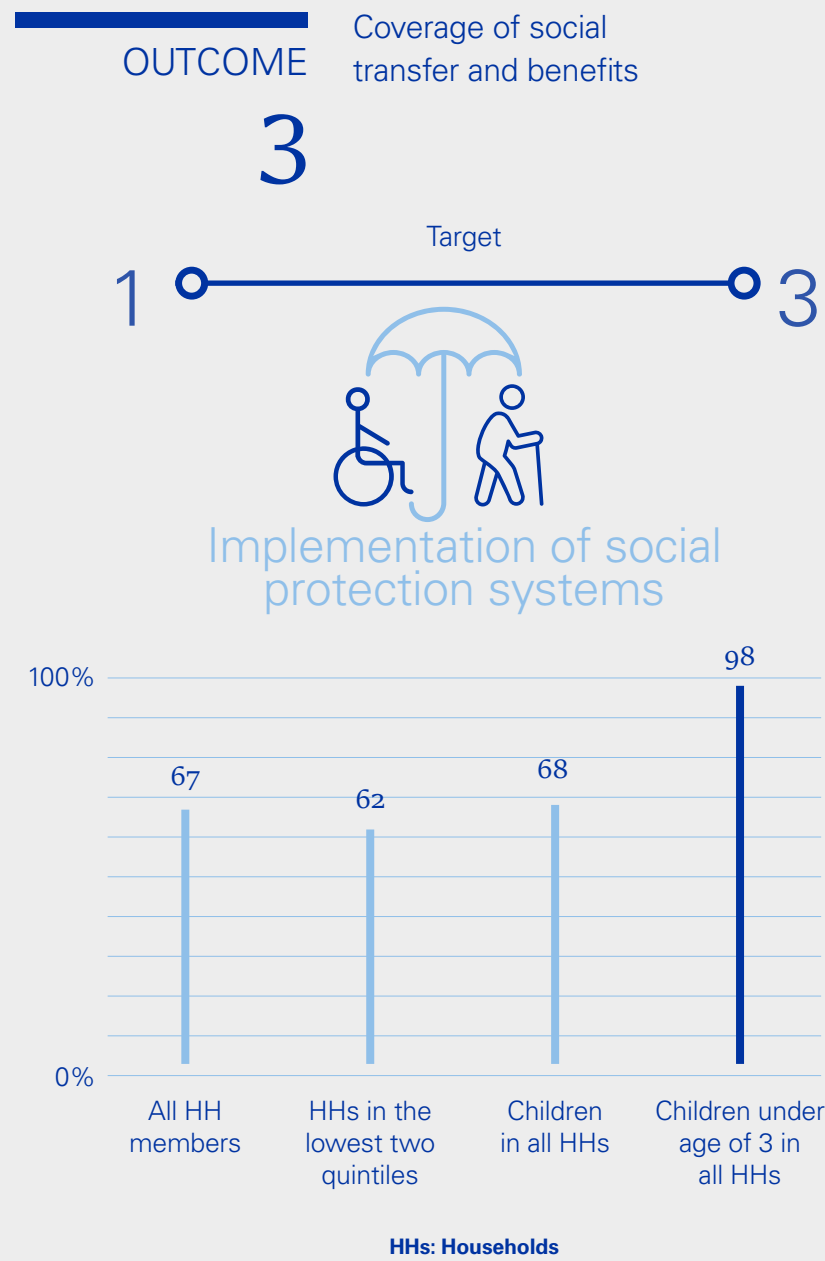


The foundational training of the 45 newly recruited social work specialists enabled the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of Turkmenistan to deploy them in all regions of Turkmenistan for initial assessment of vulnerable populations.

OUTCOME 3

Through its partners Keik Okara and the National Red Crescent Society, financial support has been provided to the refugees in the country. NGO Keik Okara, with UN support, continued to conduct case work to find alternative pathways leading to a durable solution for the remaining 21 refugees (10 female and 11 male) recognized under UNHCR's mandate, most of whom are from Afghanistan.

The National Action Plan to End Statelessness (2019-2024), developed with UN support, was formally endorsed in January 2019 by the President. The roadmap includes legal reform for the prevention of statelessness, and the generation of reliable data on the full extent of statelessness in the country through the 2022 national population census. In 2020 Turkmenistan further reduced the number of stateless persons by granting citizenship to 2,580 persons, though as no baseline statistical information is available, it is hard to measure overall progress towards complete eradication of statelessness in the country. Between 2016 and 2020, a total of 7,249 stateless persons were naturalized, while 770 persons of unconfirmed nationality were assisted by the National Red Crescent Society and Keik Okara to clarify their eligibility for third-country nationality through liaising with embassies in Ashgabat, and helped to obtain necessary identity documents (such as birth certificates).





“For me it is great happiness. Now I can vote and can enjoy all the rights as a citizen of Turkmenistan... I am especially glad that now I can travel freely. To a certain extent I could do so before too, but there are countries where you cannot go if you are stateless. For example, I always wanted to visit India, but it was not possible, as I did not have a passport. Now my dream can come true.

[Read the full story](#)



Mukaddas Yussupova, 45 years old, from Dashoguz velayat, is one of the former stateless persons who was granted citizenship and received a passport in 2019. In 1995 she moved from Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan to get married. She applied for Turkmen citizenship in 2015 and now is very proud to become a citizen.

Photo | UNTurkmenistan



Strategic Area 2
Quality, inclusive social services

OUTCOME

4

The people of Turkmenistan, especially vulnerable groups, enjoy better coverage of quality health care services focusing on women and child health, nutrition, NCDs, TB and Multiple Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR TB), early detection and prevention



Supporting the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, the UN supplies contraceptives for a period of three months. This is a good option for women who would like to postpone their pregnancy for just short while.

Since 2015 the Government has been funding reproductive health services and commodities for women and girls, including support for women and girls (from age 15) with chronic health conditions, disabilities, and on low incomes. Between 2015 and 2020, the Government contributed US\$1 million for joint programmes in reproductive health, gender equality, data and youth, and is now one of the UN’s biggest funders for work in this area. Screening for cervical cancer is now performed in 90 per cent of reproductive health clinics at primary health care level. In 2020, the Government approved the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health In Turkmenistan and Action Plan for 2020-2025, developed with UN support. This builds on the Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health In Turkmenistan National Strategy and Action Plan for 2015-2019.

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Health developed clinical protocols on emergency obstetric care with UN support. The proportion of maternity facilities providing comprehensive emergency obstetric and neonatal care in line with adopted clinical protocols increased from 42 per cent in 2016 to 83 per cent in 2020.

Increased focus on these areas has had impressive results. The proportion of pregnant women covered by antenatal care in the first trimester increased from 70 per cent in 2016 to 91 per cent in 2020. Turkmenistan’s maternal mortality rate is now one of the lowest in the region.



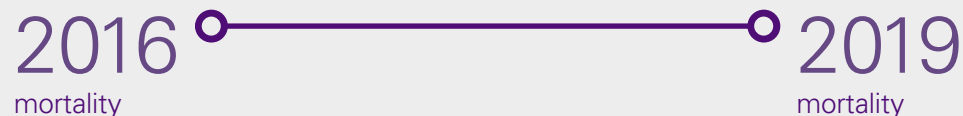
“My husband and I have waited for several years to have our third child,” said Jeren, who had just been seen by the reproductive health specialist in Mary region. “However my test showed that I have anaemia, and we were encouraged to get treatment before we can plan our family.”

[Read the full story](#)

OUTCOME

4

The under-five mortality rate fell from the 51 per 1,000 live births (UN estimate) in 2016 to 38 per 1,000, according to the 2019 MICS survey. However, this is still officially the highest rate in Central Asia. The neonatal mortality rate also fell, from 23 per 1,000 live births to 22 per 1,000 over the same period.



< 5 years
51 per 1,000
 live births



↓ **38** per 1,000
 live births

neonatal
23 per 1,000
 live births



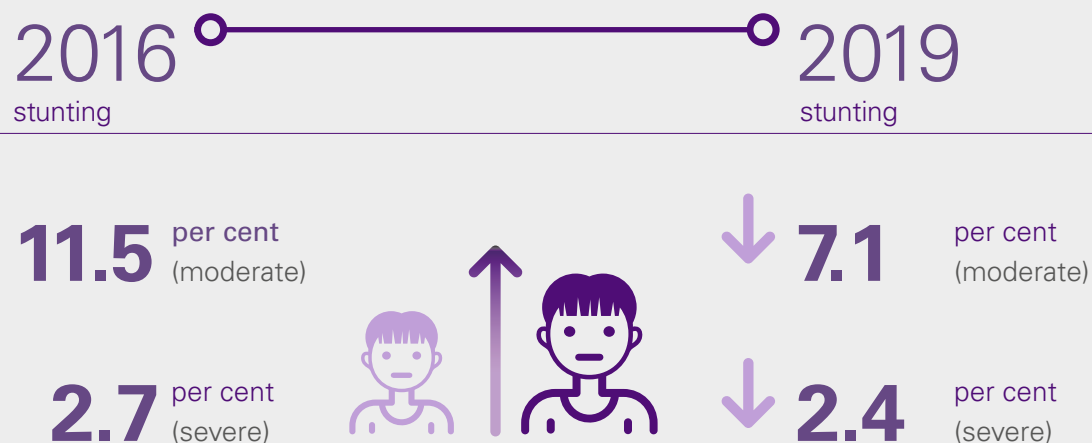
↓ **22** per 1,000
 live births

The Government is now considering how to further reduce child mortality. A National Concept and Action Plan have been developed with UN support to introduce Development Paediatrics and Early Intervention

Immunization continued to be important for the prevention and control of infectious-disease outbreaks and reduction of child mortality during this period. As part of the long-standing partnership between the Government and UN, national funding for the procurement of vaccines in Turkmenistan almost doubled from 2009 to 2020, and it now covers all immunization-related expenditure. As a result, immunization coverage rates for Expanded Programme on Immunization antigens remained high, with 98 per cent of children receiving the third dose of the vaccine for diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (DPT3) in 2016, and 99 per cent in 2019. There has been significant progress in the introduction of new vaccines, and during the 2016-2020 UNPFD the following vaccines were introduced: Human papillomavirus (HPV in 2016), Inactivated polio vaccine (IPV in 2016), pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), rotavirus and hepatitis A vaccines (in 2019). Turkmenistan now fully meets the WHO-recommended vaccine schedule.

Several national plans have been developed with UN support over the reporting period. With regard to communicable diseases these include the National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan, the Strategic Plan on Strengthening Control Measures for Viral Hepatitis in Turkmenistan for 2019-2030, The National Plan for Adaptation of the Health

Incidence of stunting has fallen in Turkmenistan, from 11.5 per cent (moderate) and 2.7 per cent (severe) in 2016 to 7.1 per cent (moderate) and 2.4 per cent (severe) in 2019. The UN has provided technical support for the development of the National Nutrition Programme (2019-2025), the National Programme on Healthy Nutrition of the Population for 2020-2025 and its Action Plan, that aims at strengthening health and preventing nutrition-related non-communicable diseases.



The Government is taking steps with UN support to reduce micronutrient deficiency, including through use of flour fortification with premix. In addition, there is a new Law on Breastfeeding (2016) and a bylaw on infant and young child feeding (2017). All health centres are now registered as baby friendly. Partly as a result of these measures, rates of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a baby’s life have increased from 11 per cent in 2006 to 59 per cent in 2019.

of the Population of Turkmenistan to Climate Change and its Adverse Impacts for 2020–2025, the National Strategy for Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance In Turkmenistan for 2017-2025, the National Policy, Strategic and Operational Plans for the Development of Laboratory Health Care Services in Turkmenistan (2018), and the Emergency Risk Communications National Plan (2018). In addition, guidance has been prepared on topics including outbreak investigation and response, clinical management and surveillance of acute respiratory infections, quality management in laboratories and the transfers of samples and biomaterials. These instruments are all intended to strengthen capacities and improve access to quality health care services for the population of Turkmenistan.

The Ministry of Health and the UN have also been working to promote young people’s health. A youth website (<https://yashlyk.info/>) on emotional and physical health was set up in 2014, and has grown in popularity since 2018. Currently it is being accessed 8,000 times a month.

Progress has been slower on reducing the mortality rate from cardio-vascular diseases, cancer, diabetes mellitus, and chronic respiratory diseases. The overall mortality rate from these conditions fell from 24.9 per cent in 2016 to 23.2 per cent in 2019. The proportion

Tobacco use among 18-69 year olds fell from 8.3 per cent in 2013 to 3.4 per cent in 2018. This improvement came in the first year of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in Turkmenistan for 2017-2021.



Tobacco use

8.3
per cent

↓ **3.4**
per cent

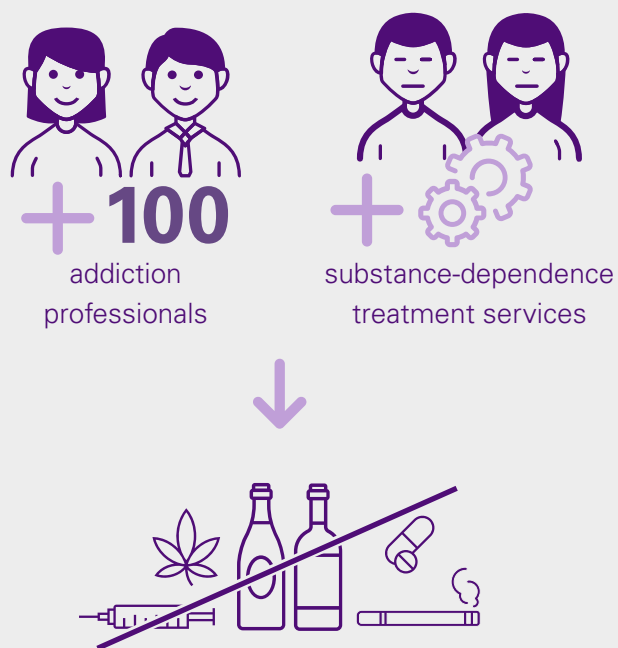
In the same year, the Tobacco-Free Car initiative was launched. Tobacco cessation guidelines were also approved in 2019.



In 2019, World Drug Day celebrations were held in Turkmenistan. More than 600 representatives of government organizations, law enforcement agencies, media, international and civil society organizations gathered to mark the day in Ashgabat on 21 June and in Mary on 26 June in the biggest shopping centre. Artists, singers, NGOs and young people raised public awareness of the risks and consequences of drug abuse and crime, and spoke about violence prevention. Representatives of law enforcement, the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, civil society organizations and the UN made presentations on drug abuse, crime and violence prevention and healthy lifestyles.

OUTCOME 4

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Health and other relevant government agencies worked with the UN to enhance their knowledge and skills to provide evidence-based, cost-effective substance-dependence treatment services.



Specifically, more than 100 addiction professionals enhanced their knowledge and skills to provide substance-dependence treatment and rehabilitation services.

of people who needed medical treatment and counselling (including glycaemic control) for prevention of heart attack and stroke and received it increased from 25 per cent in 2016 to 79.3 per cent in 2017-2018 (the next survey is planned for 2023). In 2020, the Government and the UN signed a landmark agreement to support implementation of the national non-communicable disease (NCD) control programme in 2021-2022. Activities will include reviewing the national clinical protocols, strengthening the national procurement and supply chain, and procurement of quality-assured, cost-efficient NCD medicines. This follows an assessment conducted with UN support on improving noncommunicable disease outcomes, which was completed in 2018.

Turkmenistan has been promoting healthy lifestyles. A National Strategy and Action Plan to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol was introduced for 2018-2024 with UN support, along with a National Strategy and Action Plan for improving Physical Activity for 2018-2025. A pilot project to encourage physical activity among women aged 35 and above living in rural areas was initiated in Lebap velayat in 2017.





There has been a reduction in tuberculosis and multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis, from the baseline figure of 42.6 cases per 100,000 population (in 2014) to 32.9 per 100,000 in 2019. During the reporting period, longstanding work to strengthen tuberculosis prevention and control in Turkmenistan has continued, as well as for diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis patients.



Tuberculosis



There has been a reduction in tuberculosis (TB) incidence rate from the baseline of 70 cases per 100,000 population in 2015 to 45 per 100,000 in 2019. During the reporting period, longstanding work to strengthen TB control in Turkmenistan, including prevention, detection and treatment of TB, has been continued.



upgrading of national

infrastructure and equipment



specific training to

medical specialists



tuberculosis

OUTCOME 4

To improve access to health care, legislative changes were introduced in 2020 with UN support. Under these changes, medical professionals working in villages, in remote and hard-to-reach areas, as well as in jobs with special working conditions, can receive social support in the form of additional payments above their official salary, reimbursement of utility costs, provision of land plots for individual housing construction, and other benefits.

The United Nations in Turkmenistan has hosted major conferences on health issues. In 2018, eight countries in Central Asia and Caucasus supported by UN organizations committed to strengthen capacity and governance to improve the nutrition and food security status of the most vulnerable in the region, at the official launch of the Regional Nutrition Capacity Development and Partnership Platform in Turkmenistan. In 2019, the WHO *European High-level Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases: Time to deliver on meeting NCD targets to achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Europe* was held in the country.

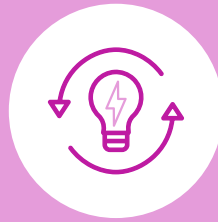


In October 2020, the UN visited eight schools in Ashgabat and Ahal province to raise awareness among children of the importance of handwashing and to remind them why, when and how to wash hands to protect their health.



“We need to wash our hands after we play with pets. We also need to wash hands before we eat a meal and after we play ball,” said Chynar Tangylyjova, student of school 89 in Ashgabat during the session on identifying when children needed to wash their hands.

[Read full story](#)



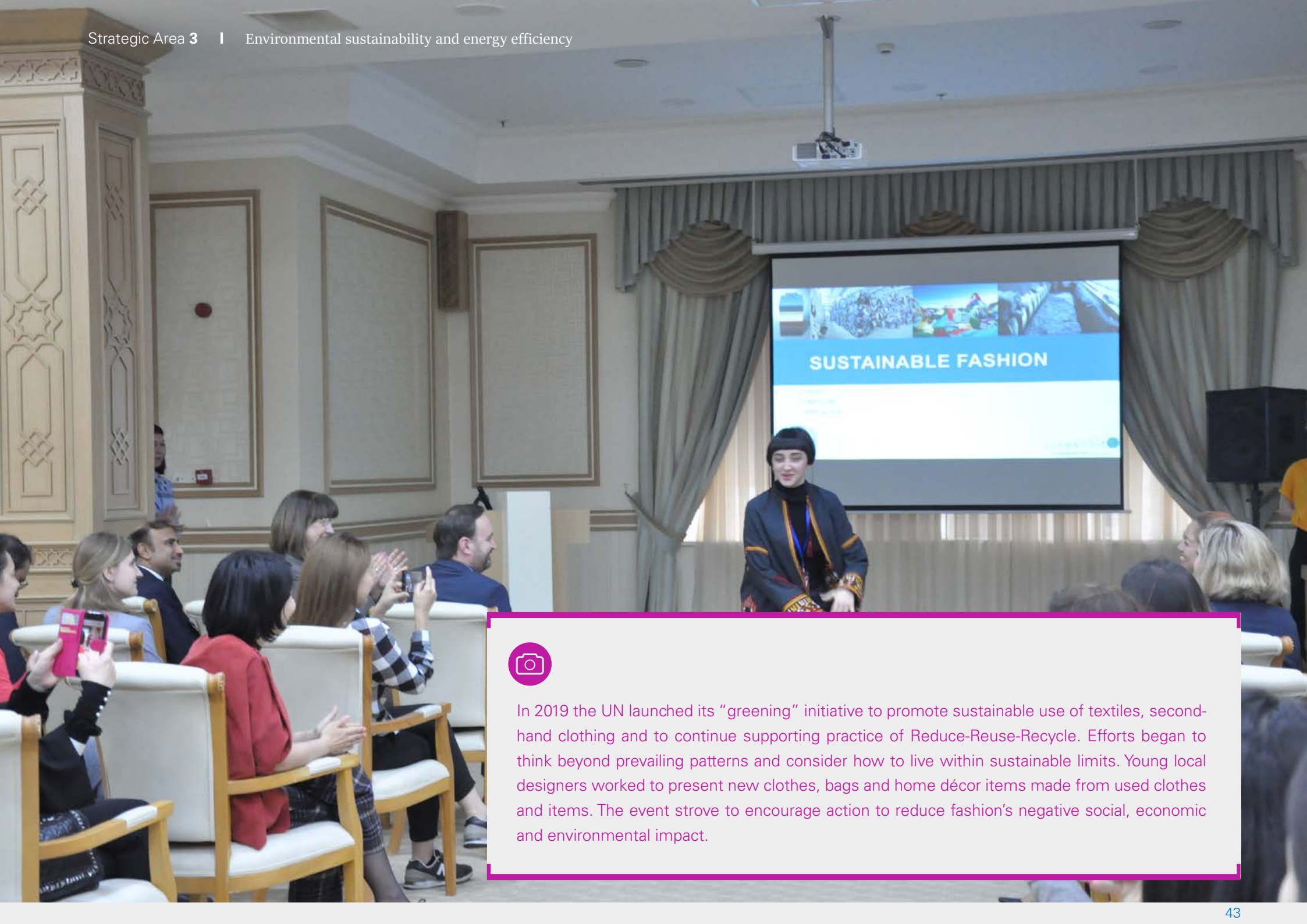
OUTCOME

5

Strategic Area **3**

Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency

The national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are aligned to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to promote sustainable practices on energy efficiency, the use of renewables, urban development, and waste management



In 2019 the UN launched its “greening” initiative to promote sustainable use of textiles, second-hand clothing and to continue supporting practice of Reduce-Reuse-Recycle. Efforts began to think beyond prevailing patterns and consider how to live within sustainable limits. Young local designers worked to present new clothes, bags and home décor items made from used clothes and items. The event strove to encourage action to reduce fashion’s negative social, economic and environmental impact.

The joint work of the Government and the UN in the area of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency has focused on promoting sustainable practices for efficient use of energy, use of renewables, urban development, and waste management. This has included research and piloting of energy-efficiency measures, use of renewables, and waste management in rural and urban areas. The UN was the Government's lead strategic partner in strengthening national legislative and institutional frameworks to promote energy efficiency and use of alternative energy sources, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to manage waste. In the reporting period, Turkmenistan developed or amended eight state laws, regulations and procedures that incorporate energy-efficiency standards and practices, the use of renewables, and sustainable waste management.

In 2019, Turkmenistan adopted a National Climate Change Strategy, developed with UN support, in preparation for the 4th National Communication Action Plan on implementation of the Paris Agreement. Preparation of the Action Plan continued in 2020. The Government is revising its national determined contribution (NDC) and developing more concrete targets for greenhouse gas reduction and adaptation. In addition, the National Strategy and Law of Turkmenistan on Renewable Energy were adopted in 2020.

Furthermore, a number of normative technical guides and regulatory legal acts have been developed with UN support for the Law of Turkmenistan 'On Waste'. A draft National Strategy on Waste Management was also developed as another step towards sustainability.

Substantial progress was made to gain energy efficiencies in the water sector. In April 2018, with UN support, a gravity-flow water pipeline to prevent ground water losses was launched for the town of Kahka. As a result, around 40 water pumps were shut down and associated greenhouse gases emissions reduced. Monitoring is in place for newly installed energy efficient water pumping stations in all five regions of the country; findings from this monitoring have been reflected in plans for pump replacement and upgrade, and have led to emission reductions in the water sector. In 2019, five old, inefficient pumps used to supply water for irrigation purposes were replaced. Newly installed, modern, energy efficient pumps are creating opportunities for efficiency improvements and will increase the reliability of the water supply in the targeted rural areas, bringing direct benefits to farmers. As Turkmenistan has a number of other settlements with similar problems in accessing a reliable water supply, the potential for replication is high.

In 2019, the Government approved demonstration measures for the street lighting of Ashgabat city with UN support, backed up by a comprehensive energy audit and energy efficient technology. The results will further influence the development of urban street lighting systems in the country.



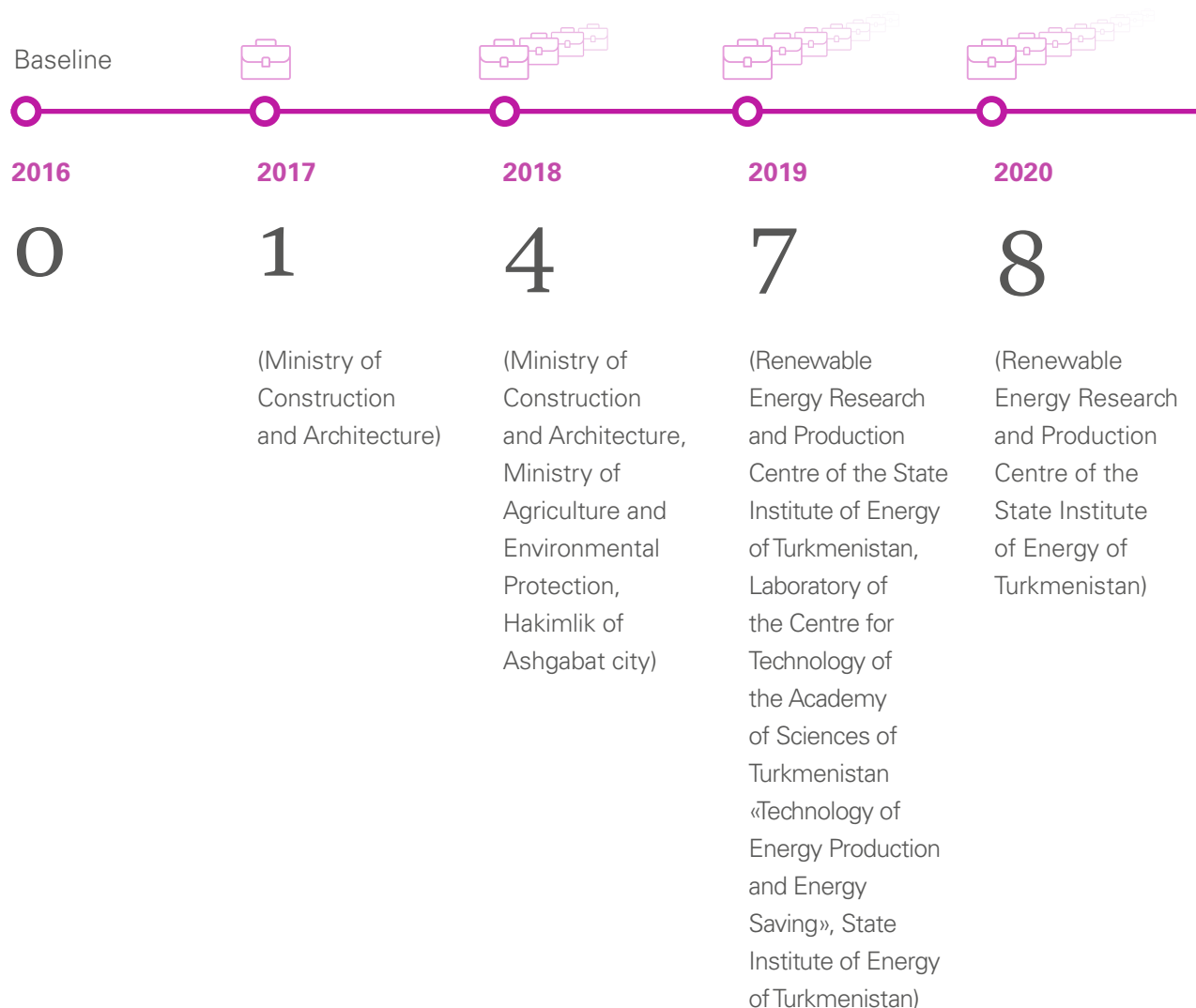
In 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection and the UN modernized equipment for air and soil quality assessment and control. Environmental monitoring specialists from the Environmental Control Service and its regional departments were trained to improve their capacities to monitor ecological conditions effectively.

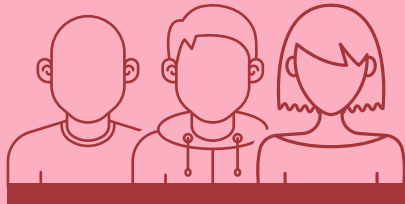
The environmental agenda was promoted through regular waste collections and campaigns to plant seedlings in Ashgabat and its surrounding areas.

The UN launched a feasibility study on conducting a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), including an objective to strengthen the capacities of environmental and planning sectoral authorities in regard to the benefits, principles and procedures of SEA, and to enhance co-operation within and across the Central Asian countries.

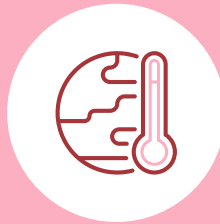
OUTCOME 5

Current and new institutions that research, pilot and replicate sustainable energy efficiency initiatives in rural and urban development, and the use of renewables, urban development and waste management practices





OUTCOME
6



Strategic Area 3
Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency

The national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are responsive to climate change issues by promoting climate resilience, adaptation, climate risk management and disaster risk reduction measures at sector and community level



Since 2018, a UN/GEF project offered training on new agricultural technologies and innovative farming in the context of climate change. The project initiated construction of greenhouses in each region to demonstrate the use of new technologies and their advantages. The greenhouses are located next to the administrative office of the farmers' unions.

In the area of climate change adaptation, there have been improvements in natural resource management and the promotion of climate change adaptation across all sectors of the economy. Disaster risk management (DRM) practices have been strengthened with UN support and awareness among government officials and the general population has increased. DRM activities have had a strong focus on vulnerable groups, supporting the aspiration to ‘leave no one behind’.



Between 2016 and 2020 the Government prepared and endorsed its first and second national strategies for climate change with UN support. The revised National Climate Change Strategy calls for nationwide, systemic measures to build the country’s climate resilience, and the scaling up of various adaptive solutions promoting sustainable land management and water saving behaviour.

The adaptation agenda includes several measures to showcase – to stakeholders at national and local level, as well as communities – effective ways of saving water and also producing good agricultural yields, and economic results that will boost local livelihoods for farmers and other land users. The Government and the UN recognize the importance of climate change adaptation in the country, as Turkmenistan is vulnerable to climate change.

Having been effectively demonstrated, these measures and technology are now being incorporated with UN support into the State Programme for Developing the Agro-Industrial Sector for 2019-2025, stipulating the use of water saving and any other resource-efficient technology for any investment in the land and water sector. Effective irrigation and water distribution systems have been successfully demonstrated that lead to water savings of 50 per cent on average, and 40-60 per cent increase in harvests, depending on the type of crop.

Throughout the reporting period, as part of the National Programme on implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Government jointly with the UN has been developing and implementing solutions at national and sub-national levels for climate change adaptation, and for sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems services. By 2019, a progressive adaptation programme in the country meant that more than 50,000 local community members were benefiting from adaptation solutions that had been effectively demonstrated, and more than 100,000 hectares of land were restored or under sustainable management. In 2017, water loss in reservoirs and sardobs was reduced through application of a geomembrane anti-filter film. Laser land levelling was also demonstrated, and production of biocompost initiated. In 2018, modern irrigation systems were installed in a research area of 145 hectares

in Geokdepe etrap, improved furrow irrigation and sprinkler irrigation systems were introduced, and agro-information centres were created and made operative in two veyalats. In 2019, energy efficient pumps were installed in five velayats. In 2020, technology was introduced for pumping and desalination of water using renewable energy in remote desert territories.

In the reporting period, the resilience of more than 2,500 farmers to climate change was strengthened in Dashoguz, Lebap and Ahal velayats through local adaptation measures. The UN supported residents of villages in Ahal and Dashoguz velayats to adapt to changing environmental conditions by establishing forest and sand nurseries, constructing reservoirs to collect and preserve rainwater, demonstrating production of liquorice to reduce soil salinity, and planting juniper and carcass trees for reforestation. The UN also provided training on integrated natural resource management and sustainable land management best practices, and disseminated information among beneficiaries on pasture management, drip irrigation, soil salinity management and other measures.

Four gender-sensitive local adaptation plans were prepared and adopted for pilot community areas with UN support, building on gender analysis to ensure the more active engagement of women in sustainable water and land management



“Each greenhouse will employ 2-3 local people, and provide jobs for the local community members. We are going to grow crops selected by the farmers themselves,” explains Murad Husayinov, local coordinator from the Lebap region. “It was decided to grow tomatoes and cucumbers in Dashoguz, and seedlings of various vegetables and plants for further dissemination among the residents in Lebap. We still need to wait some time to complete the construction and receive the first crop, but we are sure that we will be able to demonstrate that greenhouses in farming under the current climatic conditions ensure alternative source of income from the household plots, and offer financial and food self-sufficiency for local farmers”

[Read full story](#)

OUTCOME 6

practices. A series of training courses focused on gender issues in agriculture and climate change risk reduction, with dedicated attention to supporting independent female farmers and related farming businesses. As a result, as of 2019 more than 20 women are now engaged in production of bio-humus, the economic demand for which is steadily growing due to a sharp increase in private agricultural businesses. More than 20,000 women are expected to benefit from the ongoing implementation of a small grants programme promoting economically viable and climate-friendly agricultural practices and farming businesses in two velayats.

The reporting period also saw several cross-boundary water and climate change initiatives undertaken jointly with the UN to support regional efforts for building climate resilience and adaptation. In 2018, climate change-sensitive environmental education curricula in Turkmenistan were updated. In 2019, initiatives included the Regional Environment and Sustainable Development Programme, the Aral Sea Basin Assistance Programme, the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Programme in the Aral Sea Basin, the Climate Box Regional Initiative, strengthening disaster resilience, and accelerating implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Asia. Three further initiatives began in 2020: Central Asia Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM) II, Central Asian Desert





Initiative (CADI), and a project on ecosystem-based land use and the preservation of ecosystems along the lower sections of the Amu Darya River.

In the reporting period, Turkmenistan's disaster risk preparedness was improved by the Government's development of the State Policy in the Field of Civil Defence for 2019-2030 (2019), the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the UN for coordination of emergency preparedness and response (2019), and the Law on International Humanitarian Assistance in Case of Emergency Situation (2020). This paved the ground for the Joint Action Plan 2020 that envisages strengthening disaster-risk reduction implementation based on major hazards mapping, support to early warning systems, improving emergency preparedness and response (including as part of a humanitarian mass-influx), exchange of information, capacity building and coordination.

Turkmenistan is prone to earthquakes, and in 2020, the UN began a major project on seismic risk. The project is strengthening the country's capacity to assess seismic risks for early warning, as well as to prevent and respond to potential earthquakes and associated cascading emergencies. Specialized modern equipment was delivered to enable engineering surveys of buildings through the recording of seismic vibrations. Local specialists were trained to

assess and better prepare for seismic risks, through the surveying of buildings.

The Government's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programme – developed with UN support – was approved in 2019. Meanwhile, since 2019, a project to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework has been embedding an approach that shifts from managing disasters to managing risks. This regional project aims to enhance national disaster-loss accounting systems, as well as to strengthen regional cooperation for transboundary risks and disaster resilience strategies for Ashgabat city, and to support the national DRR Strategy and community-based engagement. The disaster management department in the Ministry of Defence is making communities in Turkmenistan inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and is strategically integrating volunteerism into the implementation and delivery of DRR activities in Turkmenistan.



Strategic Area **4**
Employment, economic diversification and trade

OUTCOME

7

Strategies and simplified regulations are in place to promote inclusive employment through sustainable economic diversification



In the area of economic diversification, employment, and trade, the focus has been on capacity development, knowledge generation and sharing, and technical assistance to different actors, including government institutions, research entities, and the private sector. Efforts have focused on the improvement of employment opportunities, diversification of the economy through the development of tourism, attraction of investment, and promotion of innovations. This area of work has had a substantive focus on vulnerable people.





A major achievement at policy level has been the development of the Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on Socio-Economic Development for 2019-2025. The Programme – developed with UN support – has a major focus on private sector development and economic diversification. As of 2020, the responsible government agencies were developing their work plans in accordance with the objectives of the Programme, constantly monitoring the performance of work and reporting on the implementation of activities at regular government meetings.

Turkmenistan has been enhancing and simplifying legislation to make import and border crossing procedures more efficient. For example, the Eurotrace programme for processing customs documentation and producing trade statistics has been updated. The new programme enables management of records on international trade, and analysis of export and import operations. In addition, the State Customs Service has implemented an Integrated Customs Information System following the latest UN standards. Laws were passed in 2019 to facilitate free economic zones and trade activities, while the Tax Code was amended in 2020, along with laws regulating currency, export rules, and use of electronic documentation. In 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN on implementation of the Single Window for Export-Import Operations in Turkmenistan, including in the banking, trade and

transportation sectors, in order to save importers and exporters time and reduce transaction costs.

Initiatives have also taken place with UN support to diversify the economy at national and sub-national levels. In 2018, the Programme for the development of small and medium businesses for 2019-2025 was approved, and a fund and state commission were created to support small and medium businesses. In 2019, the Law 'On the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan' was updated, and Presidential Decrees were issued on privatization of government facilities, on refrigeration and livestock facilities, as well as on joint stock companies and transportation.

Turkmenistan ratified the ILO Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention in September 2019. In 2018, with UN support, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population adopted Decree 87, which contains a comprehensive list of hazardous types of jobs and occupations from which children under the age of 18 are prohibited from working. Turkmenistan has also engaged with the United Nations to address the issue of forced labour in cotton harvesting.

Government officials have been sensitized with UN support on gender-equality issues in regard to domestic unpaid work, occupational segregation, and structural barriers to the labour market. An active labour market programme for inclusive employment was initiated in pilot



I used to buy vermicompost which was produced abroad. But it was very expensive for me. Then I took part in United Nations training and learned more about it. However, I still lacked some knowledge about production of vermicompost. Thanks to the project support, I filled in this knowledge gap and now I produce vermicompost myself. I am very satisfied with my results.”

Gulbahar, Lebap region

[Read the full story](#)

cities with the endorsement and support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population. Within this initiative, young men and women from vulnerable groups can receive job-skills training in their cities and support with future employment. In 2020, employment opportunities were created for 527 men and 707 women in six pilot cities in the professions of their interest. These opportunities included consultations on employment provided by employment departments, vocational education in schools, apprenticeships with private mentors, online job-skills training, support to self-employment, and provision of instruments and equipment to new small businesses.

Turkmenistan has been creating conditions and opportunities for the realization of the right to employment for people with disabilities. In 2018, the UN supported the first ever Careers Fair for people with disabilities, bringing together 80 representatives from the private sector, the Government, and the non-governmental sector. Persons with disabilities had opportunities to find suitable jobs, learn about new interesting vacancies and meet employers. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, the Turkmen Deaf and Blind Society, and the UN organized a forum to promote career opportunities for women with disabilities. The 2020 ‘People with Unlimited Abilities’ initiative contributed to the fight against social stigma around people with disabilities. Stories were

highlighted that illustrate the personal history of persons who overcome challenges associated with disability and demonstrate that the sky is the limit.

Meanwhile, in 2020 the Tax Code was amended with UN support to include a special category exempted from corporate income tax for ‘Enterprises of public associations of disabled people, the authorized capital of which is fully owned by public associations of people with disabilities, at least 70 per cent of whose employees are persons with disabilities, and which employ at least 20 persons with disabilities’.

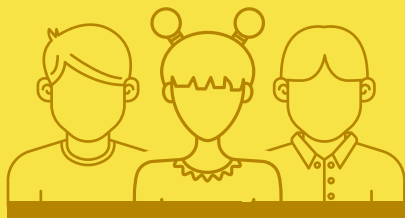
The State Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs (TFEB) has developed strategies for innovation in business, IT, retail banking, and project financing grounded in enhanced corporate governance, innovative and competitive financial services, improved banking infrastructure, improved financial literacy, and improvements to consumer protection. The UN has also assisted with workshops for TFEB, government institutions, union members and business leaders on project management, innovative financing, strategic negotiations, IT management and security, employment legislation, and labour safety.

Other areas of cooperation have been tourism and digitization of the economy. The World



Federation of Tourist Guides Associations, the State Committee of Tourism, and the UN have supported training in the areas of tourism, heritage management, and conservation. The Government has promoted introduction of a digital economy through the formulation of the 'Digital Turkmenistan' national concept.

Finally, the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry has developed a Human Resources for Health Strategy jointly with the UN, and also improved the quality of training and postgraduate education of health and health-related personnel.



Strategic Area **5**
Governance and rule of law

OUTCOME
8

State institutions implement and monitor laws, national programmes, and strategies in a participatory manner and in line with the country's human rights commitments



The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign which takes place each year and runs from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day), also encompassing other important key dates.

The #ErkeklerHem campaign encourages men and boys to promote positive social norms at home and at work, embrace equal respectful, healthy relationships and support human rights for all.

The institute of the Ombudsperson has been established, with the first ever Ombudsperson appointed in 2017. The UN has provided information about good practices in Central Asia and beyond, presented guiding international standards and principles for the establishment of the Ombudsperson's Office, and facilitated the introduction of the Ombudsperson to international human rights networks, particularly the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Dialogue has also been facilitated between the new Ombudsperson and civil society.

Turkmenistan met its international obligations as a signatory to major international agreements. The Government reported to the Universal Periodic Review, as well as to the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), and the UN Committee Against Torture (UNCAT). In 2020, the regular national report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child was prepared and submitted. More than 150 children from all over Turkmenistan took part in the report-development process, presenting ideas about what interests them and what they would like to improve in the future.



The Government with UN support has developed a number of human rights action plans, based on the recommendations from the UN Human Rights mechanisms, including:



- ▶ National Human Rights Action Plan 2016-2020
- ▶ National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2015-2020
- ▶ National Action Plan on Child Rights 2018-2022
- ▶ National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking 2020-2022
- ▶ National Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Counter Terrorism 2020-2022
- ▶ Turkmenistan National Strategy for Early Childhood Development 2020-2025
- ▶ National Action Plan to End Statelessness 2019-2024
- ▶ National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025

During the reporting period, implementation of earlier National Action Plans (NAPs) continued with UN support. For example, the 2015-2020 NAP on Gender was 95 per cent implemented, the NAP on Human Rights was 95 per cent implemented, and the 2016-2018 NAP on Trafficking in Persons was fully implemented. By 2020, 40 per cent of the NAP on Child Rights had been implemented, while a quarter of the 2020-2022 NAP on Trafficking in Persons was implemented in the first year of the programme.

With UN support, the Government also developed policies to address emerging cross-border issues, including the flow of goods and people. By 2019, 127 such initiatives had been implemented. For example, a Working Group was established to develop statelessness determination procedures, by which identification and documentation of stateless individuals, and ultimately their naturalization, will be possible. The State Service for Combating Economic Crimes was also established and a national response was prepared on implementation of the Paris Pact on combating illegal financial flows.

The UN supported law enforcement and judicial bodies by providing capacity building and legal and expert assistance on: asset recovery; forensics; violent extremism and terrorism prevention; trafficking in illicit drugs and drug precursors; trafficking in persons; customs control techniques; strategic trade controls; non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; sanctions and embargoes; risk indicators; and fraud patterns. This reached over 400 law enforcement officers and justice workers all over the country.

To prevent cross-border movement of illicit goods, and improve Turkmenistan's supply chain security and risk management at border crossing points, whilst facilitating legal trade, the UN supported the establishment of two Port Control Units (PCUs) at the International Customs Terminal in Ashgabat and Turkmenbashi International Seaport, as well as the procurement of specialized equipment for the State Customs Service

OUTCOME
8

By 2019 19 civil society organizations were participating in the implementation of national and sectoral programmes.

2019
→ 19 civil society organizations



National Red Crescent Society, Union of Women, Youth Union, Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Trade Union, Society for the Deaf and Blind, Society for the Disabled, Center for the Support for the Disabled, Chess Centre for the Blind, Sports and Fitness Club for the Disabled, Society of Lilliputians, Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled, Bar Association, OO Yenme, Ynam, Keyik Okara, Mashgala, Tyaze Zaman, National Paralympic Committee.

to ensure pre-arrival information exchange with bordering states.

The UN facilitated capacity building for Turkmenistan's forensic services to ensure effective use of forensic science in the criminal justice system, bring the national forensic institutions into compliance with internationally recognized standards, and create a pool of qualified and well-trained forensic experts within the country.

E-governance services have been developed jointly with the UN to improve the efficiency and accountability of public governance service delivery. In 2019, the <https://e.gov.tm/> website was created to provide public services to the population, and in 2020, the Interdepartmental Commission for the Development of the Digital Economy was approved.

In 2019, awareness was raised with UN support among top-level government officials and local governance agencies in pilot communities on prevention of violent extremism (PVE). Training took place on violence prevention for local district police and CSOs in six pilot communities, to assist local police to address issues of preventing domestic violence, coping with stress, handling emotions, and changing behaviours towards constructive dialogue when working with young people. In cooperation with the Hedayah Centre, a roundtable for

government representatives was held for the first time to raise awareness of threats of violent extremism and radicalization issues. The participants included representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Social Protection, Internal Affairs, and National Security, as well as from the Migration Service, the Youth Organization, the Women's Union, and the municipalities of cities selected for the pilot project.

The Government, with United Nations support, developed the National Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Countering Terrorism for 2020-2024 (adopted in 2019), which takes into account international best practice in countering violent extremism and terrorism. The strategy reflects areas such as migration, border control, the internet, terrorist financing, socio-economic and political aspects, as well as human rights and the rule of law. The Action Plan on implementation of the Strategy defines concrete steps for implementation over the next four years, including the establishment of specific inter-agency commissions and working groups with concrete tasks. The Action Plan also defines a framework for partnership with the UN and other international and regional organizations.



Looking forward

Turkmenistan has strong potential to achieve the SDGs if it invests more in human capital and governance, diversifies its economic base, creates a more conducive business environment, takes urgent climate action, and uses its natural resources efficiently.

Towards this end the Government of Turkmenistan and the United Nations system will continue to work together in 2021-2025 under the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. This is closely aligned with Turkmenistan's national programmes for socio-economic development,¹ and continues to reflect the country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its international human rights obligations.

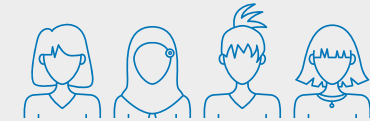
1. National Programme for Socio-economic Development of Turkmenistan (NPSD, 2011-2030); Programme of the President of Turkmenistan for Socio-economic Development of the Country for 2019-2025 (PPSD, 2019-2025).



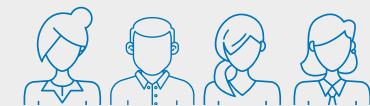


The Cooperation Framework reaffirms the shared vision and partnership between the Government of Turkmenistan and the UN system. It expresses our collective aspirations for a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient Turkmenistan. The Framework envisions that, by 2025, Turkmenistan will make significant progress towards achieving its national development goals aligned with the SDGs, within the following three strategic priorities:

- People-centred governance and rule of law.
- Inclusive, green, and sustainable economic growth.
- Quality, inclusive and affordable health, education, and social protection.



People-centered governance and rule of law



Inclusive, green, and sustainable **economic growth**



Quality, inclusive and affordable health, education, and social protection

Leveraging its principal roles – as a convenor of diverse stakeholders, an advisor on development, a promoter of international best practice, and an advocate for leaving no one behind – the UN system will work to address the major bottlenecks and risks, and partner with the Government of Turkmenistan to accelerate achievement of the SDGs. **There are five expected outcomes from cooperation:**

A distinctive feature of the new Cooperation Framework is its clear focus on the development of comprehensive partnerships to achieve the goals of the programme. Particular attention will be paid to building partnerships with civil society and the private sector, whose innovative potential will be useful to achieve the objectives of the Cooperation Framework. The UN's strategic partnership with financial institutions and development banks will help to create conditions for stimulating entrepreneurship and attracting foreign direct investment. The UN in Turkmenistan will continue to cooperate with national partners in the field of human rights, and specifically with the Interdepartmental Commission of Turkmenistan, in order to implement international human rights obligations.

OUTCOME

1

People have access to more effective, innovative, and transparent public administration based upon the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, labour rights, and quality data.



OUTCOME

2

Conditions for sustainable and inclusive economic diversification are strengthened with competitive private and financial sectors, enhanced trade and investment promotion, and the adoption of new and digital technologies.



OUTCOME

3

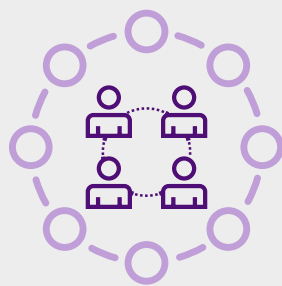
There is effective design and implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation and mitigation measures, enabling a more rational use of resources, increased resilience, and a 'green' economy transition.



OUTCOME

4

The population of Turkmenistan enjoys higher quality and inclusive health and social protection services;



OUTCOME

5

The education and skilling system offers all people the skills and knowledge for employment success in a diversifying economy and enhanced social integration and resilience.



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