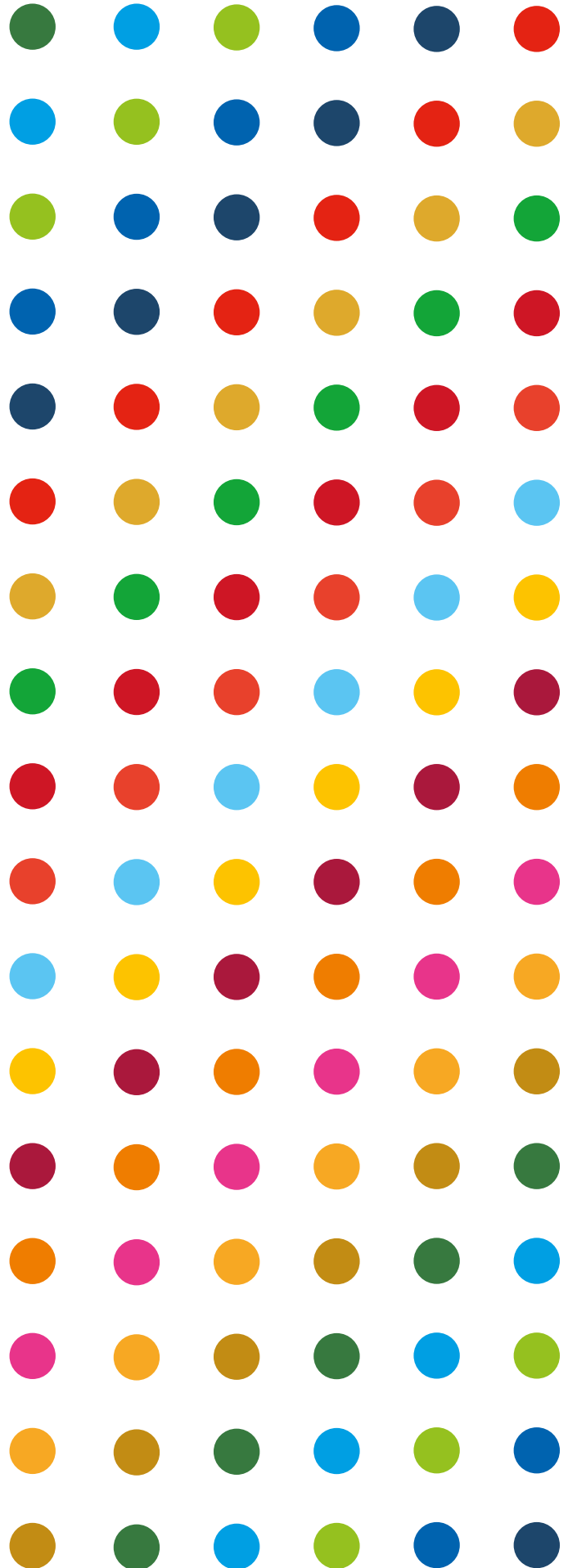




UNITED NATIONS  
UZBEKISTAN



# UNITED NATIONS COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS: UZBEKISTAN



UN COUNTRY TEAM  
UZBEKISTAN, TASHKENT

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# List of Acronyms

<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis
<b>CERR</b>	Center for Economic Research and Reform
<b>CAREC</b>	Central Asian Regional Environmental Centre
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>DFA</b>	Development Finance Assessment
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>IFIs</b>	International Financial Institutions
<b>INFF</b>	Integrated National Financing Framework
<b>L2CU</b>	Listening to the Citizens of Uzbekistan
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersexual
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind
<b>MAPS</b>	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
<b>NAP</b>	National Adaptation Plan
<b>NEET</b>	[youth] not in employment, education, or training
<b>NPS</b>	New psychoactive substances
<b>OPCAT</b>	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing power parity
<b>PRTR</b>	Pollutant Release and Transfer Registry
<b>SDG(s)</b>	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
<b>SCO</b>	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
<b>SOE</b>	State-owned enterprise
<b>SPECA</b>	Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
<b>TFA</b>	Trade Facilitation Agreement
<b>TIP</b>	Trafficking in persons
<b>TVET</b>	Technical vocational education and training
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

## Acknowledgements

This revised Common Country Analysis is the result of the collaborative efforts of the UN Country Team in Uzbekistan. I would like to thank the many UN staff members and other colleagues from partner organizations who were involved in the preparation of this report.

The report was coordinated by Simon Hacker and directed by Zarif Jumaev in the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), with consulting support from Tom Stephens, and valuable contributions from other members of the RCO team.

To complement the desk review and help ground truth emerging findings, two online surveys were conducted, one with members of the UN Country Team and a second with national and international partners and stakeholders. My sincere appreciation to the more than 60 respondents to the UN Country Team survey and to over 120 respondents to the partner survey. The feedback generated provided valuable insights that have been incorporated into this report.

This revised CCA provides the evidence base and analytical foundations for the UN Country Team's programming to implement the new Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025. It constitutes the UN system's independent, integrated, forward-looking and data-driven analysis of the context for sustainable development in Uzbekistan. I am confident it will serve to guide the UN family's ongoing support to the Government and people of Uzbekistan in the effort to build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic and to accelerate achievement of the country's national Sustainable Development Goals and international human rights obligations.



**Helena Fraser**

UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan



# Executive Summary

This update to the Uzbekistan Common Country Analysis (CCA) takes into account the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 and its continuing effects in 2021, touching not only public health and the economy, but also many other sectors and multiple socio-economic groups. The UN Country Team (UNCT) thus wished to reexamine the underlying analysis that had been agreed in 2019 and early 2020, and to improve the collective understanding of the development challenges and opportunities facing Uzbekistan in light of the systemic disruptions caused by COVID-19.

## Impressive progress prior to the COVID-19 outbreak

Prior to the pandemic, Uzbekistan was undergoing widespread and structural transformation that has touched all aspects of society. The Uzbekistan economy was growing at an annualized rate of 4.1 per cent. Legislative changes and policy interventions in governance were occurring at a fast pace. Uzbekistan had also stepped up its investments in the social sectors. Despite notable economic, social and political improvements, at the start of 2020, Uzbekistan still faced significant challenges in a number of areas, such as human rights, rule of law, corruption, judicial independence, as well as the environment and social protection. These problems continue notwithstanding the pandemic.

## COVID-19 response

The Government's response to the pandemic has been generally applauded by the international community. Some of the measures taken include:

- Creation of the USD 1 billion Anti-Crisis Fund
- Expanded funding for healthcare
- Increase in the number of families receiving social benefits
- Assistance to affected businesses and entire sectors through a wide array of tax holidays and other benefits and
- Continued efforts to maintain focus on the country's SDG priorities

## But challenges and new risks have emerged

By any measure, the pandemic has had serious economic and social consequences, including:

- Approximately 900,000 people, of whom 500,000 are children, have fallen into poverty due to the crisis
- About 475,000 small businesses were closed temporarily
- The pandemic exposed the acute need to develop an adequate mechanism of social security applicable to workers in the informal sector

- The greatest challenge in the health sector, beside maintaining a concerted
- COVID-19 response, is the continuation of essential health services, particularly for the most vulnerable. Other challenges include the ongoing limited administrative capacity, weak internal coordination, excessive restrictions on civil society, and limited cross-government approaches that are significant impediments to achieving the SDGs

### Programmatic Approach

The current UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework serves as the principal framework guiding the work of the UN system until 2025. The Framework is fully aligned with national priorities and adopts an integrated approach to address the core principles of: leaving no one behind, a human rights-based approach to development, gender equality and women's empowerment, resilience, sustainability and accountability.

Three conclusions drawn from the previous CCA are reconfirmed through this revised CCA:

1. Addressing exclusion and inequalities are key development challenges in achieving national development priorities
2. Achievement of the 2030 Agenda requires stronger integration of the national SDGs with ongoing national reforms
3. Ensuring policy coherence, filling data and statistical gaps, and supporting civil society capacities will be vital enabling factors

In short, the COVID-19 crisis has underlined the importance of 'leave no one behind' as an organising principle which should be applied more rigorously to all UN efforts.

# 1. Introduction

In early 2020, the United Nations Country Team and non-resident UN agencies completed a Common Country Analysis (CCA) that outlined the analytical framework by which the UN family of organizations could support the Government of Uzbekistan to achieve its development priorities, including attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since that time, however, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on Uzbekistan's society and economy. Despite some signs of economic recovery at the end of 2020 and early 2021, the impacts on Uzbek society have been significant and are ongoing, touching not only public health, but also business and trade, reducing economic growth, putting strain on the education system, and increasing numbers of poor and marginalised people, not to mention reallocation of government spending priorities in order to mitigate COVID-19's consequences.

Under these circumstances, the UN Country Team (UNCT) felt it necessary to reexamine the underlying analysis that had been agreed in 2019 and early 2020, and to improve the collective understanding of the development challenges facing Uzbekistan in light of the disruptions caused by COVID-19. This CCA thus reflects a desire to improve the analytical framework that supports the Government's immediate needs as well as the longer-term objective of helping to restore and improve the country's economic and social trajectory. In this regard, the updated CCA, in keeping with the UN family's comparative advantages, continues to give priority to supporting initiatives that help Uzbekistan achieve the SDGs, with particular focus on "leave no one behind" and on human rights - two integral principles of the Agenda 2030.

## Impressive progress prior to the COVID-19 outbreak

Prior to the coronavirus, Uzbekistan was undergoing widespread and structural transformation that touched all aspects of society. Under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, these changes have been felt across the economic, social, and political domains, representing a sea-change away from the 27 years of tightly centralised governance that characterised the immediate post-Soviet era.

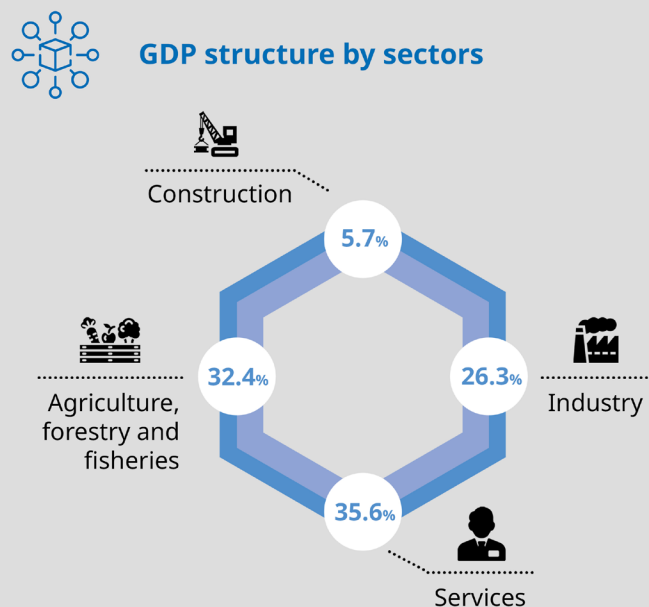
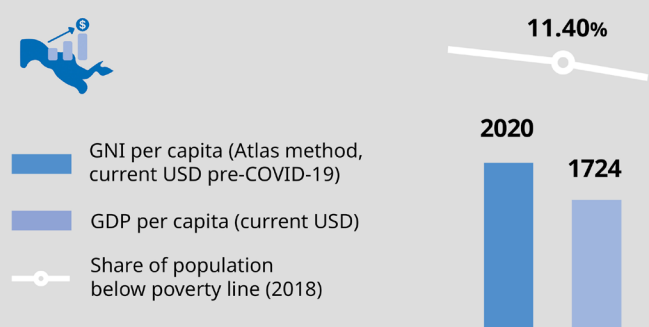
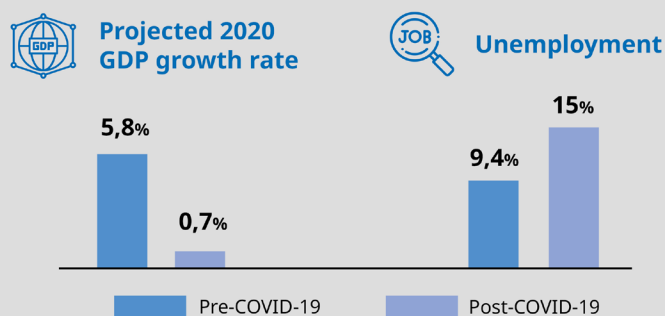
Prior to the pandemic, the Uzbekistan economy was growing at an annualised rate of 4.1 per cent, according to IMF data. Politically, legislative changes and policy interventions in governance have been taking place at a fast pace. Parliamentary elections in December 2019 were a step towards increasing democratic freedoms, and this greater openness and reduced fear of reprisal for criticising government actions has been welcomed by citizens.<sup>1</sup> Uzbekistan had also stepped up its investments into increasing access to, and the quality of, pre-school and higher education. It is expected to introduce reforms to improve the quality of other services such as the introduction of mandatory health insurance. The general public as well as the international community have welcomed the reforms, and The Economist rated Uzbekistan as the country that improved most in 2019.<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter, the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report placed Uzbekistan among the world's top 20 improved business climates.<sup>3</sup>

1 See: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/uzbekistan/442888?download=true>

2 See: <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/12/21/which-nation-improved-the-most-in-2019>

3 See: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/10/24/doing-business-2020-reforms-propel-uzbekistan-to-place-among-worlds-top-20-business-climate-improvers>

### Box 1. Uzbekistan: Key facts and figures



Similarly, diplomatic and economic relations between Uzbekistan and its neighbours have also improved. Until the COVID-19 lockdown, this included cooperation in making borders more open and safer for legal trade and transit of people and goods.<sup>4</sup> These improvements still have the potential to increase regional cooperation to both tackle common challenges and to create positive sum relationships with border countries.

Despite these economic, social and political improvements, Uzbekistan still faces significant challenges in a number of areas, such as the environment, manifested in the inefficient use of natural resources (i.e., water, land and fossil fuels), land degradation and desertification, waste management, loss of biodiversity, and climate change. Likewise, capacity support was needed even before COVID-19 to enhance services in such areas as social protection, disadvantaged youth, the disabled and elderly, and other marginalised people, to name but a few.

Before the pandemic, the positive changes had nonetheless begun spurring even greater demand from civil society and the private sector for further reforms. Moreover, while these reforms have been viewed favourably, there is a risk that inequitable distribution of the gains may increase vulnerabilities and trigger unintended social tensions. These risks have been compounded because of COVID-19 and the resultant new forms of vulnerability. Ensuring that no one is left behind will therefore be critical for Uzbekistan to overcome the crisis and move forward with its development priorities, including the SDGs.

4 For example, see: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/630344/EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)630344\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/630344/EPRS_BRI(2018)630344_EN.pdf) (p. 10-12)

Source: IMF and World Bank country data, official government statistics

In the face of Uzbekistan's progress and remaining challenges, it is worth briefly noting here some of the ways the Government has sought to confront the COVID outbreak since March 2020.<sup>5</sup> These efforts have been generally praised by the international community.

- Creation of the USD 1 billion Anti-Crisis Fund
- Temporary reduction in some national taxes, such as postponement of the payment of property and land taxes, the extension of a moratorium on tax audits, and delayed tax declarations for 2019 income taxes
- Increased lending under the Fund for Reconstruction and Development
- Expanded funding for healthcare, including for medicines, the costs of quarantines, and salary supplements for healthcare workers
- Increase in the number of families with children and low-income families receiving social benefits
- Assistance to affected businesses and entire sector via tax holidays and other benefits and
- Expanded public works programmes to support employment

The following sections of the report provide additional information on the impacts and implications of COVID-19 on Uzbek society.

### Report preparation and contents

With this perspective in mind, this CCA update builds on the extensive background research and consultations that were undertaken for the earlier CCA, where some 1,600 people civil society, youth, government, and parliament were consulted. The current CCA update reviews additional research that has been conducted to account for new data on the impacts of COVID-19 across different sectors. This updated CCA also benefitted from additional consultations. These were, for the most part, conducted virtually because of the restrictions on holding in-person meetings, but still allowed for an assessment of new requirements necessary to support the Government's efforts. Through this process the UN has gained additional insights into the

progress and new challenges for attaining the SDGs, as well as other key challenges and opportunities, such as multidimensional risks, human rights, issues confronting marginalised citizens considered as being "left behind," in addition to regional perspectives and major transboundary risks.

This report is organised into 10 sections and several annexes that examine different elements of the agreed framework by which the UN family will support Uzbekistan in the foreseeable future. Section 2 analyses the country's progress, means of implementation, and challenges and opportunities towards achieving the 2030 Agenda in light of the impacts from COVID-19. Section 3 briefly outlines the current human rights situation in the country, including both progress and challenges. Section 4 provides a deep analysis of those groups who may be left behind if deliberate and structural barriers prevent development for all. Section 5 presents a multidimensional analysis of risks, pinpointing concerns that could impede achievement of the SDGs in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

Section 6 briefly outlines the SDG financing landscape and proposes several key areas for generating additional revenues and savings, based on findings from the Development Finance Assessment (DFA). Section 7 summarises the key capacity challenges, notably with respect to policy coherence, civil service capacities, and civil society and civic engagement. Section 8 analyses the challenges and opportunities of cross-border and transboundary relations and perspectives. Section 9 outlines the consultations which allowed the UN to help refine its comparative advantage in Uzbekistan. Finally, Section 10 offers a series of conclusions and recommendations for the next steps to support the Government in achieving its development objectives and the SDGs, despite the COVID-19 disruption.

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5 Summarised from IMF. 2020. Policy Responses to COVID-19. <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#U>

## 2. The 2030 Agenda and COVID-19

### 2.1 Pre-COVID-19 initiatives and actions

As noted in the earlier CCA, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Uzbekistan initiated a number of steps to further align the country with the 2030 Agenda by integrating the SDGs into national strategies and programmes. This commitment was incorporated into a resolution that was passed in October 2018.<sup>6</sup> The Government adopted 16 national SDGs, 125 related targets, and 206 indicators to facilitate monitoring the implementation of the SDGs. It also established a Coordination Council, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, to oversee the implementation of the national SDGs across 21 government agencies, with the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction serving as the Secretariat. The resolution also laid down a roadmap of immediate activities aimed at implementing the national SDGs. These included:

1. Education, Environment, and Governance (which are to ensure cross-sectoral coordination and integration of SDGs)
2. Creation of an inter-agency group headed by the national statistical office to establish national SDG indicators
3. Commitment to present the national report on SDG implementation at ECOSOC's High-Level Political Forum (i.e., Voluntary National Report), as well as to the Uzbek parliament
4. An analysis on SDG financing from public funds began to be incorporated into state budget reporting and planning
5. A national SDG website with data and statistics on SDGs (<http://nsdg.stat.uz>) was established to ensure the transparency of SDG implementation
6. A public outreach and awareness raising campaign was launched to ensure support for the SDG approach

As further outlined in the 2020 CCA, while concerted efforts had been made towards Agenda2030, it was still evident that links between government strategies and programmes and the SDGs needed to be strengthened. In 2020, only a few key policies and programmes had an explicit link to the goals, while the majority had only an implicit link. Given the outbreak of the pandemic and the importance of these policies and programmes to the Government's development agenda, these weak linkages may still result in parallel or incoherent strategic national development objectives in contributing to the SDGs. The figure below highlights the extent to which different government strategies and policy documents are linked to the 16 SDGs.

To assist the Government in mainstreaming the SDGs and to identify accelerators and drivers of change, a joint UN-World Bank MAPS mission visited the country in April 2018. The MAPS Report on Uzbekistan (October 2018)<sup>7</sup> praised the ownership and comprehensive approach shown by the Government to align SDGs with national development policy, and made four main recommendations: (i) adapting the SDGs to the country's national development processes, (ii) identifying SDG acceleration opportunities, (ii) identifying the SDG financing options, and (iv) establishing a national SDG M&E framework. The mission also identified three areas for acceleration: (i) more efficient and accountable governance systems, (ii) social policy for inclusive development, and (ii) sustainable and resilient natural resource management.<sup>8</sup>

6 See Government Resolution # 841 "On measures for implementing National Sustainable Development Goals and Targets for the period up to 2030" dated 20 October 2018. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4013358>

7 [http://www.un.uz/files/UN%20in%20Uzbekistan/MAPS%20Report%202018/UZB-MAPS%20Report%20-%20Final\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.un.uz/files/UN%20in%20Uzbekistan/MAPS%20Report%202018/UZB-MAPS%20Report%20-%20Final_Eng.pdf)

8 World Bank-United Nations. 2018. *Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) for Achieving the SDGs in Uzbekistan*. October 2018.



**Table 1. Implicit and explicit linkages between government strategies and policies and the SDGs**

National strategy or policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Concept of integrated socio-economic development (2030)																	
Poverty Reduction Strategy (being drafted)																	
Social Protection Strategy (being drafted)																	
Employment Strategy (being drafted)																	
National strategy for the development of statistics (2020-25)																	
Development concept of the healthcare system (2019-25)																	
Development concept of the pre-school education system (2030)																	
Development concept of the public education system (2030)																	
Strategy of innovative development (2019-21)																	
Strategy to achieve gender equality (2020-30) (Drafted, pending the President's review and approval)																	
Concept of administrative reforms (2017-21)																	
Concept of improving normative work (2017-21)																	
Strategy for the development of agriculture (2020-30)																	
Development concept of nuclear power (2019-29)																	
Strategy for further development and reform of the electric power industry (2017-21)																	
National environmental concept until 2030																	
National strategy on transition to a green economy until 2030																	
Address of the President: Priorities for 2021 <sup>9</sup>																	

Implicit link to SDGs  
 Explicit link to SDGs

9 <https://strategy.uz/index.php?news=1230&lang=en>

The report further included extensive recommendations for strengthening statistical capacity in the country. The prototype SDG dashboard, prepared in 2018, identified serious data gaps, especially for goals 1, 2, 10, 12, 13, and 16, while also pointing to the goals and targets that require greater efforts and resources.

In 2020, the State Statistics Committee (SSC) that leads the Interagency Group on national SDG indicators made notable progress to harmonise the national SDG framework with the global framework, and increase data availability for the SDGs. As a result, the number of Tier I national SDG indicators (i.e., indicators having readily available data) increased from 65 at the end of 2019 to 115 indicators by the end of 2020. At the recommendation of the UN, several important missing SDG indicators (e.g., on domestic and gender-based violence, violence against media and journalists and environmental sustainability) were added to the list of national SDG indicators. In addition, a number of existing national SDG indicators were harmonised with their global counterparts, while redundant SDG indicators, which did not have a corresponding global one, were removed from the list.

In addition, an overview of the implementation of international statistical standards and good practices in Uzbekistan was completed in 2019 and resulted in the development and adoption of a consultative National Strategy on Data and Statistics.<sup>10</sup> The Population and Housing Census is now scheduled to be conducted in 2023 from which data can be used in more than 40 per cent of SDG indicators. The pilot census is scheduled to be conducted in November 2021.

## 2.2 COVID-19 impacts on achieving the SDGs

In July 2020, the Government presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the UN ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum on progress towards SDG implementation.<sup>11</sup> While most of the data used in the report pre-dated the pandemic, the Review did include a specific chapter entitled *Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on Sustainable Development Goals Progress and Socioeconomic Mitigation*. At the overall strategic level, the Review emphasised the importance of addressing challenges in maintaining socio-

economic stability and taking measures to protect the income and living standards of all Uzbek citizens until the crisis abates. The Review noted the hard choices involved in navigating between attempting to sustain economic growth and income and protecting people's health and lives.

At the macroeconomic level, the Review highlighted that about half of all economic activities were suspended in the early phase of the pandemic. Initial estimates showed that GDP would decline to 1.6 per cent in 2020 from 5.7 per cent which had been forecast in January. Exports were likely to fall by at least 10 per cent compared to 2019. The initial estimates for March 2020 showed that about 475,000 or 85 per cent of small businesses were closed temporarily. According to November 2020 World Bank and UNICEF estimates, approximately 900,000 people, of which 500,000 were children, could have fallen into poverty due to the crisis. By this measure, the poverty rate was expected to increase in 2020 to 8.7 per cent compared to the pre-crisis forecast of 7.4 per cent. Moreover, the impact of income disruption on poor and vulnerable population groups was made worse due to the rapid decline in remittances, which are mostly made to low-income households. In effect, families with children are more affected, especially considering that the poverty incidence among children is 1.5 times higher than among adults (UNICEF 2019).

By the same token, employment and income in households fell drastically. The share of households, where at least one member was working actively, fell by more than 40 percentage points (from 85 to 43 per cent) during the period from March to April. The greatest decline was among the self-employed. The share of people who said that they had any income from self-employment fell by 67 per cent compared to the previous month. In the first half of 2019, the

10 The joint overview was conducted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the European Union) and the Statistical Office of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/technical\\_coop/GA\\_Uzbekistan\\_Final\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/technical_coop/GA_Uzbekistan_Final_Report_EN.pdf)

11 See: <https://mineconomy.uz/en/news/view/3188>



share of employment in the informal economy was 58.2 per cent of the total workforce. This translates to 7.8 million people employed in the informal sector (mostly in construction, commerce, agriculture, tourism, and services). The largest portion in this group were young people aged 18 to 25. The group includes 2.5 million labour migrants who worked abroad in 2019.

Turning to the social impact of COVID-19, the Review noted, among other impacts, that the outbreak – not unexpectedly -- has had the greatest impact on the most vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and persons living in institutions, such as orphanages and mental health facilities, as well as children (discussed below).

The Review also included observations on the environmental impact of COVID-19 with respect to the SDGs. The report noted that the shutdown has had short-term beneficial impacts for Uzbekistan's environment, due to a decline in fuel consumption, especially for cars, trucks, and aircraft. As a result, the environment has benefited from lower air pollution, which improved air quality in large cities. At the same time, the Review states that the challenge will be to convert these short-term gains into longer-term commitments that foster the transition to a carbon neutral economy and employment growth in "green" jobs across multiple sectors. The COVID-19 crisis offers a window for Uzbekistan to cut subsidies on hydrocarbon fuels and redirect the savings to more sustainable initiatives in renewable energy as well as promote the mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

Apart from the VNR prepared by the Government, there have been several other studies that have sought to determine the impacts of COVID-19 on different aspects the Uzbek economy and society. For example, a survey conducted by UNDP and the Center for Economic Research and Reform (CERR) focused on the impacts of the disease and lockdowns on Uzbek small and medium enterprises (SMEs).<sup>12</sup> Among the findings of that survey were the following:

- The survey confirmed that in Uzbekistan the pandemic primarily affected companies operating in the tourism, hospitality and catering sectors. These were the sectors that experienced the sharpest drop in demand and revenue, massive suspension of operations, frequent involuntary leaves (especially unpaid) and layoffs of employees, and cuts of salaries and bonuses for the remaining employees.
- Agriculture, forestry and fisheries were the least affected sectors, where the continuation of operations, preservation, or even an increase in wages, was mainly observed.
- The measures taken by the Government to support business were effective to varying degrees. The respondents rated the following measures as the most helpful across all sectors: (i) subsidies (grants) to support business if companies had been hit hard (on the verge of bankruptcy); (ii) one-time payments of social assistance by the Government (approx. UZS 5 million) for employees of companies; and (iii) significant reduction (by 20-50 per cent) in interest rates on short-term and long-term loan. The provision of holidays for the repayment of bank loans was important primarily for industrial enterprises.
- The principal risk of the lockdown and pandemic on the labour market has been that the main decrease in economic activity is seen in the formal sector (4-7 per cent in the basic scenario) and concentrated in fields that provide 75 per cent of the country's formal total employment (education, processing industries and other services). Estimates also indicated that most of the new unemployed (approximately 60 per cent) were coming from small businesses. Therefore, supporting employment in the formal sector must be aimed above all at small businesses in an amount sufficient to ward off mass bankruptcies during the quarantine and in the early post-crisis months.

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12 CERR/UNDP. 2020. Study of the impact of Covid-19 on small and medium-sized businesses in the second quarter of 2020. Tashkent.

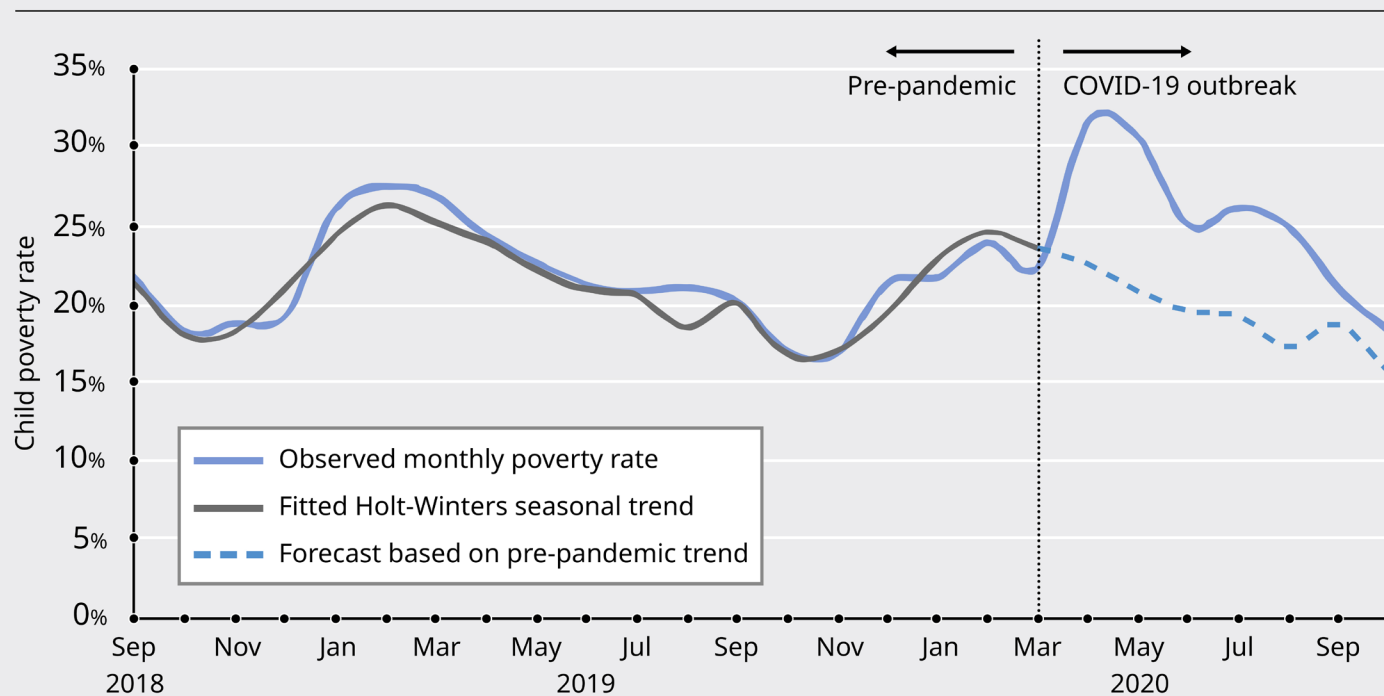
- Almost 60 per cent of the self-employed and 64.2 per cent of individual entrepreneurs had complete or substantial loss of income during the quarantine. Only 29 per cent of the self-employed who needed assistance the most (the self-employed who had no work prior to quarantine and who lost work after quarantine was introduced) have received some kind of benefits.
- Regarding social protection, all categories of workers in the informal sector reported that they were unable to access existing services, even though they were aware of the social security options available (retirement pensions, occupational pensions, disability pensions, unemployment benefits, paid maternity leave, benefits for temporary incapacity to work, etc.). The pandemic exposed the acute need to develop an adequate mechanism of social security applicable to workers in the informal sector.
- The greatest challenge in the health sector, beside maintaining the concerted

whole-of-government and whole-of-society COVID-19 containment and response effort, is the continuation of essential health services for the population, particularly for the most vulnerable, such as women, children, migrants, refugees and stateless persons, the elderly, and chronically ill.

With respect to children in poverty, according to the estimates from the monthly phone interviews of Listening to Citizens of Uzbekistan, the pandemic resulted in increasing child poverty by 20 per cent, which implied that more than 500,000 children fell into poverty.

The World Bank and UNICEF analysis shows that, had the pandemic not occurred, child poverty in Uzbekistan could have fallen from 24 per cent to 16 per cent within March-October 2020. However, the observed level of child poverty implies 20 per cent growth over this period. Although the poverty rate has a declining trajectory, progress remains fragile and subject to the situation with the pandemic.

Figure 1. Child poverty in Uzbekistan (September 2018 – October 2020)



Source: World Bank

Other findings indicate that during the pandemic:

- Average per capita income among children decreased by 12 per cent. The number of households concerned about a possible loss of income (e.g., due to job loss) increased from 47 per cent to 57 per cent during the first three quarters of 2020.
- In households where remittances from migrant-workers were named as a main income source, the average level of remittance fell by 38 per cent and an overall share of households reporting their receipt declined twofold, from 8 per cent to 4 per cent
- The percentage of children living in households that reported being unable to buy enough food for family members increased twofold, from 6 per cent to 12 per cent.

It should also be noted that the measures the Government introduced to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have had various negative implications on human rights, civil liberties and lack of transparency. This was reflected in the lack of laws or bylaws justifying the restrictions and lock downs. For example:

- Thousands of national civil servants were forced to take unpaid leave, with no opportunities for appeal or redress.
- Legal and judicial impediments were initiated which limited the ability of the judicial system to operate in an effective or transparent manner during the pandemic.
- The Special Commission for COVID-19 restrictions never formally published their decisions and made announcements exclusively in Uzbek.
- Concerns were noted about the lack of transparency in COVID-19 quarantine facilities, the poor quality of shelters and food, lack of effective complaint mechanism for people in quarantine, and reprisals against persons publishing critical comments in social media.

### 2.3 Adjustments to the means of implementation

Even in the wake of COVID-19, the National Action

Strategy 2017-2021, which generally aligns with Agenda 2030, remains a key instrument for guiding the implementation of Uzbekistan's ongoing development agenda.<sup>13</sup> Five key areas are prioritised in the Strategy:

1. Improving the system of state and public administration
2. Ensuring the rule of law and reforming the judicial system
3. Economic development and liberalisation
4. Social development and
5. Security, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance, and implementation of balanced, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy

The MAPS report, cited earlier, recognised the primacy of the domestic budget for financing the SDGs and further recommended strengthening institutional capacity and means of SDG implementation including national and subnational capacity for development planning, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation. It also calls for capacity for implementation of laws and enforcement of human rights commitments. The institutional arrangements proposed in the Government's resolution on implementation of national SDGs (#841 from 20 October 2018) are in line with the recommendations of the joint MAPS report recommendations on advancing the practical implementation of SDGs at national, sector, and local levels.

It is worth noting that the Deputy Prime Minister, Chair of the SDG Council, also co-chairs the Economic Council in charge of structural reforms in the country.<sup>14</sup> The inclusion of the General Prosecutor's Office into the SDG Council has further helped engage a critical national partner and to advance human rights and governance-related SDGs. The Ministry of Economic and Poverty Reduction, serves as the Secretariat of the SDG Council, and despite limited capacity and resources, has also shown commitment to advance the SDG agenda by facilitating necessary coordination among government agencies.

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<sup>13</sup> See: [strategy.gov.uz](https://strategy.gov.uz)

<sup>14</sup> Described at: <https://lex.uz/docs/4147303#414975>

Notwithstanding these concrete actions, it is important to acknowledge the competing demands that the Government now faces in implementing its National Action Strategy for 2017-2021 alongside demands brought about by COVID-19 and the preparation of the *Strategic Preparedness & Response Plan (SPRP)* to address the pandemic.<sup>15</sup> Most important are the competing demands with respect to fiscal constraints, budget prioritisation, and (re) allocation of revenues. The ongoing budgetary constraints are highlighted in the *Consolidated Multilateral COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Offer* jointly prepared by the international community in the spring of 2020 and updated in September.<sup>16</sup> These fiscal considerations are discussed further in Section 6 below on financing the SDG.

## 2.4 Follow-up and review

Since the previous CCA was finalised in early 2020, the UN Country Team has negotiated its UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) that was reached with the Government in September 2020. The Cooperation Framework was signed by the representatives of the Government and the UN family of agencies and organisations. The Framework serves as an agreed guide for the work of the UN system in Uzbekistan until 2025. The Framework takes into account the impacts of COVID-19 and identifies three strategic priorities and five outcomes which are fully aligned with national priorities, in order to support the Government in achieving the national SDGs. The Framework adopts an integrated and multidimensional programming approach in line with the five Ps of the 2030 Agenda (People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnerships) to address the core principles of: leaving no one behind, a human rights-based approach to development, gender equality and women's empowerment, resilience, sustainability and accountability. These principles remain valid and constant independent of COVID-19. This updated CCA is written to be in alignment with the new Cooperation Framework and help guide the elaboration of the Joint Work Plans by the UNSDCF Results Groups. As such, the CCA will be reviewed and updated as necessary to insure its congruency with the new Framework.

## 2.5 Agenda 2030: opportunities and challenges in the wake of COVID-19

### Opportunities

Despite the COVID-19 crisis, there are numerous opportunities to encourage implementation of the 2030 Agenda. One of the most significant opportunities is that civil society, including women and youth, is enjoying greater freedom of speech and a limited expansion in civic space.<sup>17</sup> This includes the Government having shown greater willingness to address systemic issues through legal and institutional reform, including the drafting and enacting of 259 new laws.<sup>18</sup> Recent reforms aimed at more open and consultative drafting of laws also provide a stronger basis for supporting efforts to ensure these laws are compliant with international norms and standards.

The UNCT continues to observe constructive engagement and improved cooperation between government, human rights bodies, and civil society, thereby creating enabling conditions for the 2030 Agenda (SDG 16.a).<sup>19</sup> There is also the ongoing possibility that market-linked reforms can trigger improvements in other areas of governance. For example, improved contract enforcement may bring about a change in overall access to justice and rule of law (SDG 16).

15 Found at: <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P173789>

16 World Bank, UNDP, et.al. 2020. *Consolidated Multilateral COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Offer*. Hereafter World Bank/UNDP. 2020. See: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/uzbekistan-consolidated-multilateral-covid-19-socio-economic-response-recovery-offer>

17 Refer to: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/uzbekistan#69f291>

18 At least 259 laws have been passed or amended since the new government took over in September 2016. Many of them aim at reforming the judicial system, criminal, civil and economic procedures, the health system, public procurement, dissemination of legal information, combating corruption, protection of women from harassment and violence, and law on guaranteeing rights and opportunities for women and men among others. Many are at a draft stage awaiting enactment, such as the law on public assembly, compulsory health insurance and the law on human trafficking, among others.

19 Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in 2017, and Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers in 2019.



One of the most significant outcomes of recent political developments has been improved relations with neighbouring countries.<sup>20</sup> Despite the slowdown caused by COVID-19 in trade and cross-border movement of people, improved cooperation is leading to making borders more open and safer for legal trade and transit, and creating opportunities for cooperation in areas such as water and energy sharing arrangements, environmental assessments, and disaster risk reduction (SDG 17.1, 17.3, and 17.6). Improved relations also provide an opportunity for reducing inter-ethnic tensions and creating enhanced social cohesion.

As noted in the earlier CCA, Uzbekistan is passing through a large ‘demographic window’ with a high proportion of potential young workers and a lower dependency ratio. This trend is predicted to last until 2044 and represents an important – but still unfulfilled -- opportunity to “make the country rich before it gets old.”<sup>21</sup> Before the pandemic, many young people, especially from rural areas, had been migrating out of the country in search of better economic opportunities,<sup>22</sup> making remittances an important component of the gross national income (GNI). As the pandemic abates, a return to out-migration can bring socio-economic problems and risks (SDG 10.7) that will require further attention.<sup>23</sup>

As domestic economic growth returns to normal pre-COVID levels and as ongoing reforms are fully implemented, Uzbekistan has the opportunity to create jobs in new and expanded industries and to move the economy away from its over-dependence on traditional export commodities, such as natural gas, gold, copper, uranium and raw cotton. Recovery from COVID-19 will provide an opportunity for the Government to continue developing plans to transition to a green economy and digital economy, as well as boosting sustainable tourism (SDG 7, 9, and 13).<sup>24</sup> Similar attention can be paid to strengthening the manufacturing and processing sectors, as well as spurring innovation, technology transfer, and economic transformation (SDG 9).<sup>25</sup>

Even before the Consolidated Multilateral COVID-19 Response & Recovery Offer, there was robust support from international financial institutions (IFIs) to the Government’s ongoing

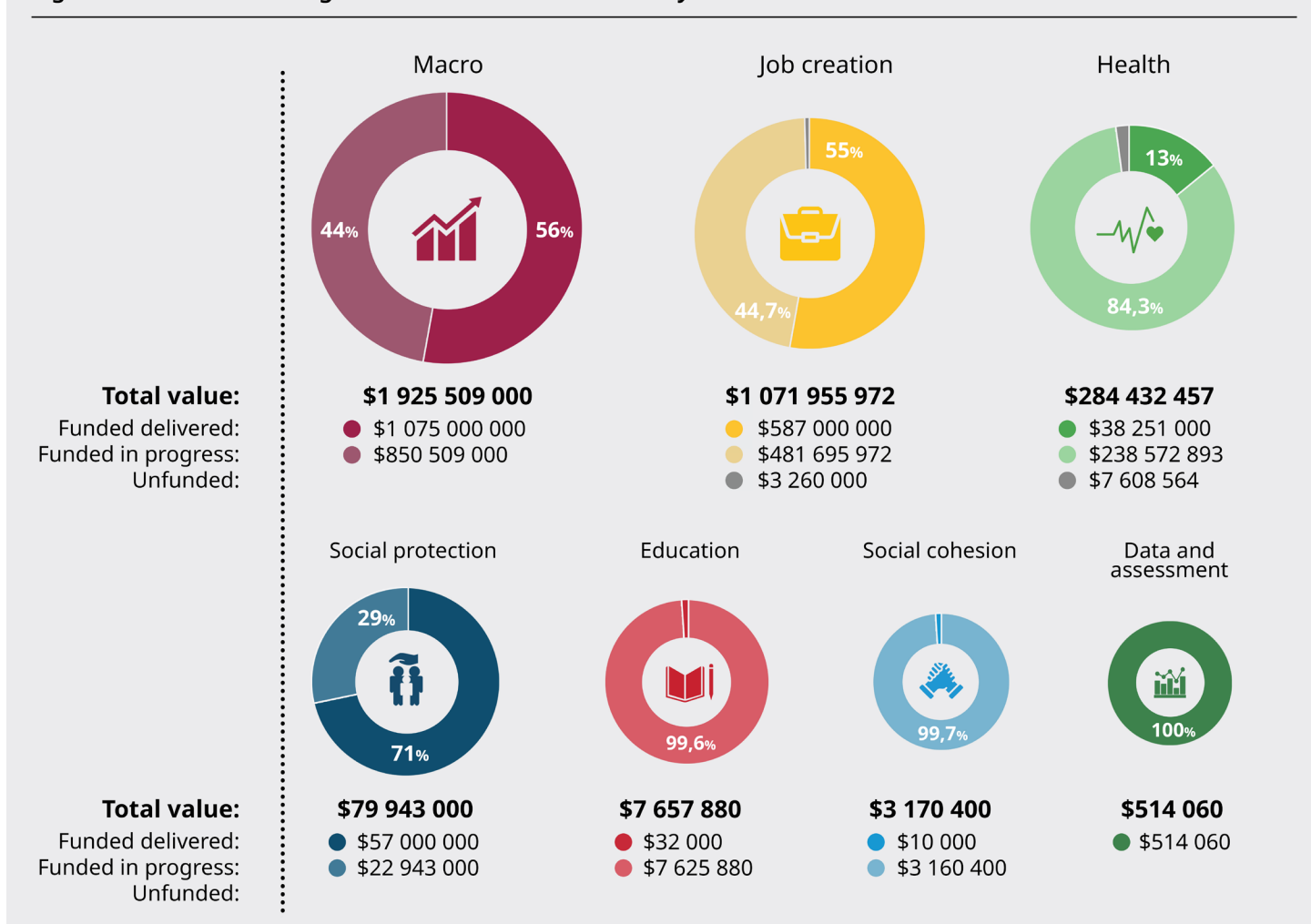
reforms, including increasing borrowing opportunities. For example, in 2019, the World Bank approved USD 500 million in financial assistance to Uzbekistan to support reforms, boost job creation, and promote reforms for the private sector.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the EBRD signed loan agreements worth USD 246 million for the energy, utilities and housing sectors, bringing their total lending to USD 1.3 billion.<sup>27</sup> The Consolidated Offer has resulted in further resources being made available to cover the most pressing needs resulting from the pandemic, for a committed amount of USD 3.373 billion. The figure below shows a breakdown of commitments by priority sector.

Finally, many reform measures, such as the unification of exchange rates, trade liberalisation, tax cuts, improving the Doing Business Index ranking (from 103rd place in 2014 to 69th in 2019), focused on supply-side policies.<sup>28</sup>



- 20 For example, see: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/630344/EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)630344\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/630344/EPRS_BRI(2018)630344_EN.pdf) (p. 10-12)
- 21 World Bank. 2018. *Growth and Job Creation in Uzbekistan: An In-depth Diagnostic (English)*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/130581560953053964/Growth-and-Job-Creation-in-Uzbekistan-A-In-depth-Diagnostic> (p. V)
- 22 Seitz, William Hutchins. 2019. *International Migration and Household Well-Being: Evidence from Uzbekistan (English)*. World Bank. Policy Research Working Paper; no. WPS 8910. Washington, D.C. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/615721561125387061/International-Migration-and-Household-Well-Being-Evidence-from-Uzbekistan> (p. 9-10)
- 23 ILO. 2019. *Towards an employment-friendly macroeconomic policy framework: the case of Uzbekistan Executive Summary*. Moscow.
- 24 Government Resolution on Adoption of the Strategy on Transitioning to Green Economy for 2019-2030. See <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4539506>
- 25 Government’s Strategy 2030 (draft, developed by the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, 2019)
- 26 See: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/06/14/uzbekistans-economic-transformation-gets-further-boost>
- 27 Refer to: <https://kun.uz/en/news/2019/11/21/ebrd-to-provide-nearly-250-million-loan-to-uzbekistan>
- 28 See: <https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/data/exploreconomies/uzbekistan>

**Figure 2. COVID-19 funding commitments to Uzbekistan by the UN and IFIs**



Source: United Nations, World Bank, UNDP, et.al. *Consolidated Multilateral Response & Recovery Offer*

Beginning in 2019, increased attention began to be paid to the demand-side of reform, which requires job creation and income support to ease the costs of transition for workers affected by restructuring of the economy and state-owned enterprises. While the pandemic has slowed down these reforms, there is good reason to believe that they will be rebooted once the COVID-19 crisis subsides.

### Challenges

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, it was recognised that there were several challenges and risks to meeting the country's SDG targets. Weak policy coherence and insufficient integration - of both the 2030 agenda and international human rights obligations<sup>29</sup> with national development

strategies and programmes remain significant barriers to achieving the SDGs (SDG 17.14). The complex and fast-paced reforms being initiated before the pandemic could be derailed if the reforms do not incorporate citizen engagement and popular support following the hardships from COVID-19. Not completing the reform process could have a ripple effect on the entire economy and risk further progress towards SDGs.

Other challenges include the ongoing limited administrative capacity, frequent reorganisations of ministries and departments, high staff turnover, weak internal coordination, and

29 See next section for a detailed overview of human rights progress and challenges.

limited cross-government approaches that are significant impediments to achieving the SDGs. The MAPS Report points to the need for much stronger inter- and intra-agency coordination to effectively anchor complex and interrelated development priorities (including SDG targets) in national policies and programmes at the design, implementation, and M&E stages.<sup>30</sup>

In the wake of COVID-19, reforms remain in a high-risk hiatus where internal resistance and bottlenecks may increase, including in the areas of land and labour markets, financial and capital markets, water and energy, health and education sectors, and privatisation of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Moreover, governance reforms which focus on creating a conducive business environment may be insufficient to overcome the deep structural impediments inhibiting job creation (SDG 8) and poverty reduction (SDG 1).<sup>31</sup> If the anticipated business-friendly reforms do not bring about wide-ranging employment and social dividends, they can lead to unfulfilled expectations, growing inequalities, and public dissatisfaction.

Failure to achieve the stated goal of reforms – prosperity and opportunity – will disproportionately impact marginalised groups and will increase the demand for social protection (SDG 1.3 and 1.a). To manage these risks, the Government is putting systems in place to monitor reforms on a regular basis and has become increasingly proactive in communicating with the people about the overall reform agenda as well as the COVID-19 response. The UN can assist the Government, by helping to communicate the reform vision and its linkages with SDGs. Moreover, the UN’s “leave no one behind” framework and strong experience in social protection can promote a more humane face to the ongoing reforms.

By the same token, there is still concern that reforms are taking place in a relatively opaque environment with insufficient – albeit incrementally improving – public accountability. As the earlier CCA noted, people’s rights have been violated to make space for big private investments.<sup>32</sup> The danger, of course, is that reforms may be perceived as actually worsening well-being for many, as the benefits accrue to

only a few. These issues are closely aligned with the ongoing and systemic problem of corruption in the public and private sector and rent-seeking behaviour, all of which discourage sustainable growth.

Additionally, the overall financial landscape for the country still appears weak, with low trust in the banking sector, stock market, and the national currency by businesses and the population in general (SDG 9.3).<sup>33</sup> If the available fiscal space is not used effectively as the country emerges from COVID-19, it may worsen the situation of those groups furthest behind, including those recovering from COVID’s economic impacts.

Turning to the environment, climate change, with its accompanying pressure on natural resources, impact on jobs, migration, health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture, is a crosscutting challenge affecting the entire 2030 Agenda. As mentioned above, the pandemic’s lockdown and travel restrictions have had one environmental benefit early in crisis, namely, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution due to reduced transportation. However, as the lockdown has been lifted, emissions are starting to go up.

Overall, Uzbekistan remains highly vulnerable to climate change and is facing a projected rise in temperatures, variable precipitation, and water shortages (SDG 13, 2, and 6).<sup>34</sup> The medium- and long-term impacts will be particularly severe on the rural poor because of their dependence on agriculture, low ability to adapt, and high share

30 See: [http://www.un.uz/files/UN%20in%20Uzbekistan/MAPS%20Report%202018/UZB-MAPS%20Report%20-%20Final\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.un.uz/files/UN%20in%20Uzbekistan/MAPS%20Report%202018/UZB-MAPS%20Report%20-%20Final_Eng.pdf)

31 Refer to: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORML EXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:R204](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORML EXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R204)

32 For example, houses continue to be demolished to accommodate new construction projects without warning or adequate compensation or without even affording aggrieved house-owners any legal recourse. See: [https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24767\\_MResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24767](https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24767_MResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24767)

33 IMF. 2019. *Article IV Consultations Report* (May 2019)

34 <https://mfa.uz/ru/press/news/2017/08/12255/> (in Russian)

of food in their consumption basket. Similarly, climate change is expected to increase the burden of waterborne diseases as well as health issues caused by dust storms and desertification (SDG 3).<sup>35</sup> Loss of life and economic damage caused by hydro-meteorological events like floods, heatwaves, mudflows, avalanches, and rising air temperatures are also likely to increase. For example, evidence suggests that the significant migration from the Aral Sea region in response to unemployment is caused by the inability of the agriculture sector to adapt to climate and water stress.<sup>36</sup> These climate change events are placing a significant adaptation burden on the country. Management aspects of environmental resources and climate change are identified as key drivers of exclusion and detailed in Section 4.4.

Finally, prevailing cultural norms, patriarchy, stereotypes and prejudices have a direct bearing on the achievement of SDGs. These norms negatively affect women and girls reaching their full potential and realising their rights. They also negatively impact the rights of other vulnerable groups, including ethnic, cultural, linguistic and sexual minorities. If not addressed these will significantly inhibit achieving inclusive and sustainable growth (SDG 5, 8, 10, and 16).

## Data Gaps

The challenges facing Uzbekistan continue to be amplified by a lack of robust data and evidence with which to identify and develop interlinkages between different sectors and to fully implement an integrated national development vision (SDG 17.18). The earlier CCA noted that inadequate statistical capacity will prevent tracking and reporting on the SDGs, and data are currently only available for 115 out of some 200 indicators. This impedes both an accurate and disaggregated analysis of the progress the country has made and limits evidence-based decision-making. The *Consolidated COVID-19 Response Offer* pinpointed some specific data and assessment shortfalls that limit monitoring of programmes and initiatives to address the pandemic. Many of these shortfalls overlap with the wider data challenge mentioned in the earlier CCA. As part of the *Consolidated COVID-19 Response Offer*, the UN and IFIs have

been able to address some of the urgent data needs in measuring the immediate impact of COVID-19 (ie, impact on poverty, jobs, incomes, employment, migration, remittances, access to distant education, hygiene and safety in schools, etc.) either through adjusting the ongoing studies (such as the Listening to the Citizens of Uzbekistan) as well as initiating dedicated rapid assessments. Nevertheless, the following data gaps are still observed:

- There is a strong need to capacitate service-providers and sensitize governmental bodies, religious leaders and CSOs on the need for reliable and accessible data and comprehensive analyses.
- There is a need to mainstream assessments and their findings into all development programmes.
- Support the Government with the digitalisation of data collection and distribution, monitoring (MIS), the introduction of open data and the provision of social services.
- Support resource mobilization activities for ensuring the safety of enumerators and those engaged in surveys and data collections activities during the COVID pandemic.
- Strengthen the openness and accessibility of government data, including working with the mass media and improve communication practices around sensitive topics.
- There is a growing need for a comprehensive Gender Assessment that would provide data on COVID-19's impact on women in all areas of social life.

It is worth noting that the UN and IFI's *Consolidated Multilateral COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Offer* has resulted in additional funding commitments of a USD 1 million for statistics and data-related support.

The COVID crisis has demonstrated major data gaps around gender-focused areas of concern. The assessment of gender data availability conducted by UNDP and UN Women in November-December 2020 demonstrated



that specific gender data were unavailable to report on key indicators. As it relates to primary COVID-19 indicators, only 33 per cent of indicators were available after the pandemic.

There was greater data availability for social protection and safety nets indicators (73 per cent), employment and economic well-being indicators (68 per cent), and education (64 per cent). Prior to the pandemic data were available for only 18 per cent of indicators on social protection and safety nets, but 73 per cent of indicators related to employment and economic well-being, and education. The relatively greater availability of employment and economic well-being indicators may be attributable to the UN and World Bank surveys that focused on assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic situation in Uzbekistan. However, while data were available for many of these indicators, in many cases the data were not disaggregated by sex. Data gaps were more evident as it relates to health indicators (13 per cent), compared to data available for only 31 per cent of health indicators prior to the pandemic. As it relates to violence against women, there were only three indicators and data were available for 67 per cent of the indicators before and after the pandemic.<sup>37</sup> National consultations on data,

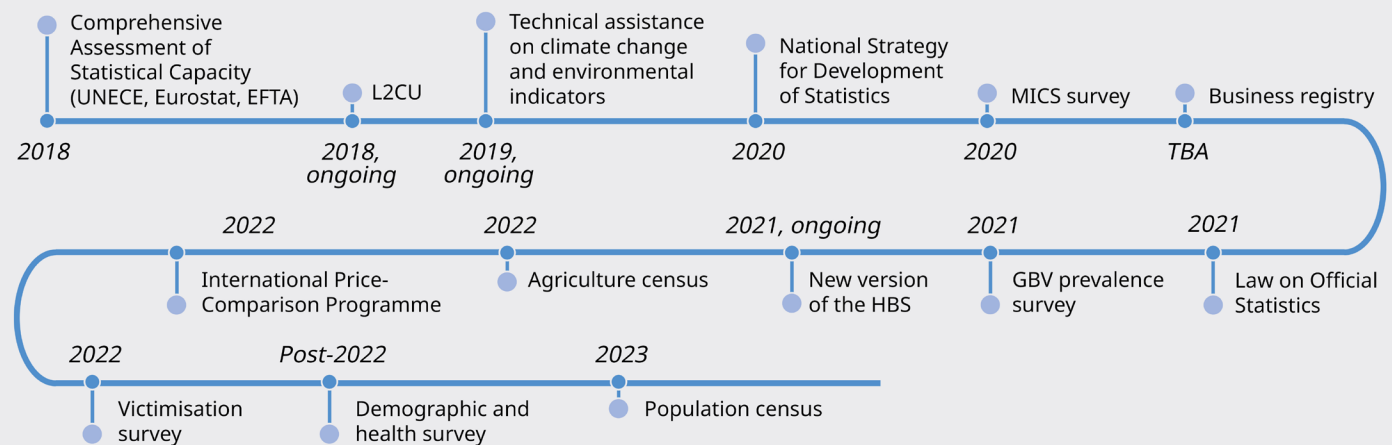
gender equality implications and COVID-19 are needed to stimulate efforts to fill data gaps and allocate resources to address gender data gaps, including data to measure the impact of the pandemic.

Capacities of state institutions to track the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations, including women, and assist these populations with mitigation and recovery measures depend largely on accurate reporting and monitoring systems, including sex disaggregation. Such information is required to effectively reach vulnerable populations with cash transfers and other social assistance programmes. Since these programmes represent major government instruments to mitigate the most severe effects of the pandemic, the government's basic capacity to respond to the pandemic with a gender lens is important.

Finally, Figure 3 below shows when different kinds of surveys and statistical assessments did or are expected to take place in coming years, which, when taken collectively, can fill many of the data gaps for monitoring SDG implementation.

37 UNDP/UN Women. 2020. *Assessment of data availability to analyze the gendered impact of COVID-19 in Uzbekistan.*

**Figure 3. Timeline of efforts to fill SDG data gaps**



### 3. Human Rights and SDGs

Despite the understandable attention being given to COVID-19, the importance of human rights<sup>38</sup> in Uzbekistan's efforts to become an upper middle-income economy should not be minimised. Approximately 90 per cent of the SDGs and targets correspond to human rights and labour rights obligations.<sup>39</sup> Progress on SDGs and human rights and labour rights implementation are therefore inextricably linked. Annex B provides an overview of each SDG and its link to corresponding rights so as to demonstrate their underlying importance to human development.<sup>40</sup>

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, some progress was being made in such areas as easing limits on freedom of expression and the media, although the legal framework is still not fully aligned with international human rights standards, and incidents of harassment of bloggers continue to be reported (SDG 16.10). In an important step, exit visas for Uzbek nationals were abolished, and *propiska* (i.e., residence registration) regulations have been substantially eased. Measures to criminalise forced labour have been enacted (SDG 8.7), although their application remains challenging. And laws on gender equality and gender-based violence (SDG 5) have been adopted. Moreover, the Government is increasing its focus on the accountability of state institutions and their transparency, by accelerating the fight against corruption (SDG 16.5), and by setting up public councils within state and municipal authorities (SDG 16.6).

As the earlier CCA noted, the budget and independence of the Parliamentary Ombudsman have been strengthened, and its offices have been trying to directly address issues of discrimination, exclusion, and inequalities – issues which have no doubt been exacerbated by the pandemic. Following amendments to the Ombudsman Act in 2017 and 2019, the institution can now receive complaints from persons deprived of liberty, and it has been mandated to serve as the national preventive mechanism.<sup>41</sup>

The Ombudsman is recognised as a vital bridge between civil society and the state, so that the country can have a strong and independent Ombudsman that complies with international standards, the Paris Principles, and national SDG target 16.a.1. If recommendations contained in the Capacity Assessment Report of 2019 can be fully implemented, the Ombudsman's office would become much more closely aligned with international standards.

Uzbekistan is also continuing to take steps to align laws on fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and religion or belief that follow international human rights standards. If well-drafted and adopted, such legislation will create a more enabling environment for the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms, and crucially for civic engagement and public participation. However, as at early 2021, most of these drafts were significantly delayed, and still undergoing review.

In 2020, Uzbekistan adopted different national strategies, policies and action plans aimed at addressing the recommendations of OHCHR's Human Rights Mechanisms, namely, the formulation of the National Human Rights Strategy (2020) and the National Action Plan on Universal Periodic Review (2020). A draft National Gender Equality Strategy has been developed

38 The use of the term, Human Rights, in this document refers to all international human rights norms and standards, i.e., not just those contained in UN Human Rights instruments but also those contained in other human rights instruments, such as ILO Conventions.

39 <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2019/human-rights-and-the-sdgs---two-sides-of-the-same-coin.html>

40 There is also an interactive site from the Danish Institute for Human Rights. <https://www.humanrights.dk/our-work/sustainable-development/human-rights-sdgs>

41 See: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en)

and submitted for review to the President's Administration. At this stage, it is too early to tell if Uzbekistan will succeed in making measurable progress in implementing these important plans and strategies.

As discussed in the 2020 CCA, Uzbekistan is a party to some 70 international and regional human rights treaties and agreements (see Annex A) and has ratified or acceded to 10 of the 18 core UN human rights treaties and optional protocols (while accepting individual complaints procedures in only one instance, under the ICCPR's First Optional Protocol),<sup>42</sup> as well as all eight Fundamental Human Rights Conventions of the ILO. Despite the pandemic, the Government has maintained regular dialogue with the UN Charter and treaty-based bodies, as well as the ILO Supervisory Bodies, including the Universal Periodic Review. Two special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council have undertaken country visits since 2017. Likewise, the Government has continued to file periodic progress reports on ratified UN core human rights treaties and agreements. In 2020, Uzbekistan drafted and publicly discussed its first-ever midterm Universal Periodic Review. Civil society was invited to review the draft and provide its recommendations.

The reasons for non-accession or non-ratification of remaining treaties differ depending upon the treaty concerned.<sup>43</sup> After initially signing several core treaties following independence, the Government followed a more cautious approach as the reporting burden is high and the capacity of the NHRC (National Human Rights Center), mandated with overseeing international human rights treaties, is limited.<sup>44</sup> Yet in recent years, Uzbekistan has ratified several ILO instruments, including ratification of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) and Tripartite Consultations (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976, (No. 144) -- which entered into force on 13 August 2020. Likewise, the Government has expressed its intention to ratify the Maternity Protection Convention, 1952 (No. 103).

In October 2020, the National Human Rights Center rolled out the National Recommendations Tracking Database, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the state bodies for implementation, reporting and follow-up to the recommendations

of the UN Human Rights Mechanisms.

Pointing to another concern, in December 2018, a new law on "On International Treaties of Uzbekistan" was adopted, requiring a prior financial impact assessment before the signing of any new treaty.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the National Human Rights Strategy includes ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as a priority for the Government, although delays in the ratification of OPCAT may be linked to the historical reluctance of the Government to open places of detention to international scrutiny.<sup>46</sup>

While progress has been significant, human rights challenges remain. Particular challenges that have been raised in recent recommendations by the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and comments by the ILO Supervisory Bodies include:<sup>47</sup>

42 Refer to: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=189&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=189&Lang=EN)

43 Differences in non-accession can be seen in the follow treaties: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance CED; and Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT).

44 Established by a presidential decree in December 2018, the National Human Rights Center of Uzbekistan (NHRC) is the state entity responsible for the preparation of national periodic reports and monitoring implementation of concluding observations and recommendations of the UN Treaty Bodies.

45 See: <https://lex.uz/docs/4193763>

46 The visit of the SR for Freedom of Religion or Belief to Jaslyk prison in 2017 and the subsequent closure of the prison were positive steps in this connection.

47 The list below highlights priority recommendations from the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en); from the Committee against Torture's Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en); and from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's Concluding Observations on the combined tenth to twelfth reports of Uzbekistan: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f10-12&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f10-12&Lang=en)

## The need to:

- Revise the legislation regulating the state of emergency in accordance with international human rights standards
- Further revise recently adopted anti-corruption legislation to ensure compliance with international standards
- Develop comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination, in all spheres, in both the public and private sectors
- Strengthen the legal framework for the protection of women against violence, including by explicitly criminalizing marital rape and domestic violence
- Address existing restrictions on the right to freedom of association, especially easing the registration of NGOs, regulation of their activities and receipt of foreign grants
- Ensure freedom of religion and belief, lifting broad restrictions on such freedoms
- Adopt legislation on the rights of persons belonging to ethnic minority groups, in consultation with all ethnic groups, including a comprehensive policy to address the structural discrimination faced by Luli/Roma
- Revise national counter-extremism legislation and bring it into full compliance with international human rights standards
- Adopt additional measures to ensure fundamental legal safeguards for all persons deprived of liberty
- Revise national legislation on prohibition of torture and ill-treatment and bring it into full compliance with international human rights standards
- Revise the current regulations on Mass Communication, Information Technologies and the use of the Internet which unduly restrict freedom of expression
- Address undue restrictions imposed by the national legislation on the right to stand for election
- Provide effective remedies (SDG 16.10) for persons convicted on politically motivated charges who have been released from prison
- Ensure the implementation of all pending Views adopted by the UN Treaty Bodies, through appropriate and effective mechanisms
- Encourage the relevant Uzbek authorities to review all reservations to human rights treaties which they have might lodged with a view to recalling them
- Support the relevant Uzbek authorities to welcome Special Rapporteurs who have not yet been invited to visit Uzbekistan and to start a constructive dialogue
- Continue efforts to ensure the complete elimination of the use of forced labour in cotton farming
- Continue efforts to ensure the elimination of compulsory labour and hazardous work of children below the age of 18 years in cotton production
- Amend legislation to ensure provisions concerning collective bargaining are in line with the requirements of ILO Convention No. 98
- Ensure the legislative framework fully incorporates the concept of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value and
- Include provisions in its legislative framework defining and prohibiting quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment

It is also worth noting the importance of:

- Strengthening the independence of the judiciary and the independence of the Chamber of Lawyers, as well as procedural guarantees of the independence of lawyers

- Establishing a fully-fledged national preventative mechanism
- Repealing article 120 of the Criminal Code, and taking measures to prevent violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
- Decriminalising defamation provisions and
- Creating a comprehensive national asylum system that conforms with international standards

Finally, while the country has accepted most of the recommendations of the UN Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures, and has made significant progress in the implementation of some of the comments of the ILO Supervisory Bodies, implementation remains weak due to a number of factors. These include institutional and capacity constraints, such as the absence of clear timelines, SMART<sup>48</sup> indicators, delineation of responsibilities, and adequate budgetary allocations in the associated national action plans. Nonetheless, even during the pandemic and post-crisis period, the UN will continue to support the Government in strengthening its capacity for implementation, reporting and follow-up capacity and to encourage accession or ratification of the remaining treaties and protocols through Uzbekistan's reform-orientated administration.

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48 SMART = Specific, Measurable, Attributable, Realistic, Targeted



## 4. Leave No One Behind

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the significance and importance of the UN's concern with leaving no one behind. Rising poverty levels and threats to human security and welfare that have been precipitated by the pandemic have been and will continue to place increased demands on government institutions, public budgets, and societal coping mechanisms. The approach to leaving no one behind is at the core of the sustainable development agenda by recognising the primacy of people in development efforts. Reducing or removing inequalities is important for its own sake at the personal and family level and for its contribution to sustainable development at the macro level.

For example, access to social protection programmes, both those with protective and preventive roles, has a significant impact on maintaining income security and coping with shocks, thereby enabling people to freely choose jobs and to maintain aggregate demand. Gender equality is yet another important aspect in Uzbek society that can significantly contribute to a reduction of inequalities. Similarly, higher representation of women in the parliament is desirable in itself but also for the contribution of women members in making development policies, programmes and outcomes more gender-sensitive and thereby more effective.

From a policy and programme perspective, identifying those left behind or at risk of being left behind continues to be a challenging task in Uzbekistan due to a lack of reliable and disaggregated data, and the fact that some groups live outside of national legal protection or are stigmatised and thus remain uncounted. In addition, there are those who are now being left behind because of the pandemic -- the new poor, the new marginalised – who must also be factored into any new framework for an effective response. This section therefore examines both what might be called “long-standing” marginalised groups and the “sudden onset” marginalised groups.

A good starting point for identifying groups that are left behind, or are at risk of being left behind,

is an analysis of major human rights issues raised by the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and ILO Supervisory Bodies and information provided by civil society actors. Based on extensive UN analysis and consultations with key stakeholders that were done for the CCA, as well as more recent surveys and polls conducted in the wake of the pandemic, this CCA update identifies four interlinked drivers of exclusion: (1) structure of economy, (2) governance institutions, (3) social infrastructure, and (4) climate change and natural resource management. These have not changed since the 2020 CCA.

### 4.1 The Structure of the Economy

Uzbekistan's economy presents a dichotomous picture, made worse in 2020 by the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. On the one hand, a dominant, state-controlled, highly regulated, capital-intensive formal industrial and agriculture sector is present, based on extractive industries, as well as state oversight of cotton and wheat. On the other hand, there coexists a large informal sector of small, low-paid, family-based enterprises absorbing surplus labour. Needless to say, it is the workers in the informal economy who are at the highest risk of being left behind as a result of, and after, the pandemic.

From a macro perspective, the COVID pandemic is having a significant impact on Uzbekistan's economic growth. Clearly, Uzbekistan has not been spared from the effects of the pandemic, which have taken the form of reduced economic growth and increased fiscal deficits from expenditures to support the economy.<sup>49</sup> The scale and magnitude of the macroeconomic impact of COVID 19 on Uzbekistan's prosperity can be gleaned from the following indicators:

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49 Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On immediate measures to limit the adverse effects of the coronavirus pandemic and the global crisis on sectors of the economy' No. 5969 dated 19 March 2020. The measures support financial and economic stability in industries and sectors of the economy. The Anti-crisis Fund (of 10 trillion som or about USD 1 billion) was created, and the Anti-crisis Commission under the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan was called upon to urgently develop additional anti-crisis measures.

(a) Worsening foreign trade balance: The crisis has negatively affected foreign economic activity, as restrictions on social and economic flows in other countries were applied earlier. This meant that in the first quarter of 2020 Uzbekistan's foreign trade balance went into deficit by almost USD 1.4 billion.<sup>50</sup>

(b) Reduced demand for exports from Uzbekistan due to poor growth prospects within its major trading partners: Three countries (China, Russian Federation and Kazakhstan) account for nearly 42 per cent of Uzbekistan's exports.<sup>51</sup> In 2020 prospects for growth in those countries were weak and, in some instances, negative. Russia's growth was expected to fall by 5.5 per cent and Kazakhstan's by 2.5 percent.<sup>52</sup>

(c) Reduction of imports into Uzbekistan: About 40 per cent of imports consist of equipment, machinery and accessories used in building new capacity, reconstruction and technical equipment for enterprises that are significant component of investment initiatives. Delays in import deliveries are likely causing economic harm by: (i) deferring projects; and (ii) restructuring repayment and interest payments on foreign loans.

(d) Reductions in foreign investment and loans: In 2019 investment in Uzbekistan came to UZS 220.7 trillion (or 43.1 per cent of GDP).<sup>53</sup> A third of the total level of investment (around 32 per cent) was made possible by foreign investment and loans. Because of financial constraints in the main sources of this investment (China, Russia and Germany), the levels of investment in Uzbekistan are likely to fall.

There is a common understanding that achievement of the SDGs requires robust economic growth, which can be propelled through greater efficiencies in resource allocation through market forces. While this will be a challenge under the current state-controlled economy, ongoing structural and market reforms are loosening the controls over the economy and paving the way for a greater role for privatisation and market-based responses. Importantly, this also includes the agricultural sector, which is on its way to greater liberalisation, clearer land ownership rights, and greater freedom for farmers to make decisions about production and trade.<sup>54</sup>

## Box 2. Snapshot of recent economic developments

- In the first half of 2020, GDP growth was nearly zero compared to growth of 5.8 per cent in the first half of 2019. The unemployment rate increased sharply from 9.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 to 15 per cent in the second quarter, before slightly decreasing to 11.1 per cent at the end of the third quarter.
- Higher gold production and agriculture growth helped offset a sharp fall in industry and services. A cumulative increase of 17 per cent in social payments and a 10 per cent increase in minimum wages since February helped preserve private consumption despite a 6-8 per cent decline in remittances, compared to 2019.
- Lower remittances and a wider trade deficit widened the current account deficit to 7.7 per cent of GDP in the first half of 2020. Exports fell by 22.6 per cent in the same period, due to supply chain disruptions and a fall in key commodity prices (natural gas, metals). Imports fell by 15 per cent due to a sharp fall in machinery and capital imports.
- The fiscal deficit increased to 5 per cent of GDP. About 2.5 per cent of GDP was directed to support health, low-income allowances, public works, and enterprises.
- Annual GDP growth was projected to be between 0.4 and 0.8 per cent in 2020. Assuming limited further lockdowns, GDP growth is projected to be between 4.8 and 5.0 per cent in 2021.

Source: World Bank: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uzbekistan/overview#economy>

50 Source: State Committee on Statistics.

51 Source: Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan. Available online at: <https://nuz.uz/ekonomika-i-finansy/46076-minvneshtorg-uzbekistana-obnarodoval-togi-vneshney-torgovli-za-2019-god.html>.

52 Source: IMF-World Bank. 2020. Economic Outlook. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020>.

53 Source: Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://invest.gov.uz/ru/mediacenter/news/results-of-investment-activity-of-the-republic-of-uzbekistan-for-2019/>.

54 See: <https://uzdaily.uz/en/post/51827>

Despite progress made, current reforms would benefit from increasing transparency, accountability and fairness. This includes more public information and transparency about the awarding of large construction contracts and the sale of large economic assets, such as buildings and manufacturing and utilities plants often awarded to private companies without a transparent competitive process,<sup>55</sup> as well as in public procurement. This has been reflected in the new editions of the Land Code and Town-Planning Code. As these legal acts are of higher order, inclusion in the strategy has become obsolete (at least the measures against land grabbing).

With respect to the impact of COVID-19 on trade in the economy, Uzbekistan is still undertaking an assessment of the country's readiness to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The Government recognises the importance of expanded trade as part of any long-term post-crisis growth in the economy. The TFA is now part of a package of commitments that Uzbekistan will have to negotiate for WTO accession. The objectives are to prepare a national road map to implement the TFA; better understand the level of implementation of each TFA measure; use this knowledge when negotiating the accession of Uzbekistan to the international rules-based trading system under the WTO; request a deferral of the implementation of some measures; and seek foreign assistance to apply measures that have not yet been implemented. The assessment indicates the readiness of the country to implement the TFA measure-by-measure and helps the Government formulate its negotiating position.

In the rural sector, international evidence demonstrates that land reforms and privatisation of non-agricultural land, while making private investment attractive, also increases the risk of land grabbing.<sup>56</sup> To mitigate against this, and to realise the goal of economically vibrant and sustainable cities while also preserving cultural heritage (SDG 11.4), decisions on land reform and major urban projects need to be participatory, transparent, and accountable. There is an opportunity for the UN to help mainstream these principles in the draft National Urbanisation Strategy 2030 and to link it to the 2030 Agenda.

The pandemic has not diminished rent-seeking behaviour and the demand for informal payments from state actors and extraction of resources from businesses and the general population -- concerns that are reportedly widespread.<sup>57</sup> In parallel, import restrictions, high tariffs, and extensive subsidies are often used to support certain industries (e.g., manufacturing, electronics, automobile industry, heavy industry etc.), directly hurting marginalised people the most through increased prices, constrained supply and low quality of products and services. The highest levels of Government have made important and public commitments to tackle these challenges.

Seen from another perspective, there are other structural factors that remain bottlenecks for the economy. From 1995-2016, government policies favoured capital-intensive industries, mostly deploying imported technologies and providing these industries with better access to subsidised credit, resources, and foreign exchange. The result was a policy regime that favoured capital over labour. Labour intensity across all labour-intensive subsectors has been declining over time.<sup>58</sup> As a result, the informal sector (as measured by the share of people employed informally) has grown rapidly and now accounts for over 50 per cent of the economy (60 per cent if migration is included).<sup>59</sup>

The significance of the pandemic on the people in the informal sector and other groups cannot be overstated. Before the pandemic in Central Asia, the highest level of self-employment was in Uzbekistan (32.5 per cent) and Tajikistan (37.8 per cent).<sup>60</sup> Baseline projections were that per

55 See: <https://centralasia.media/news:1469998>, <http://uza.uz/ru/society/kak-sdelat-protsess-privatizatsii-zemli-bolee-effektivnym-26-02-2019>

56 Source: <https://www.globalagriculture.org/report-topics/land-grabbing.html>

57 See: <https://www.oecd.org/corruption/acn/OECD-ACN-Uzbekistan-4th-Round-Monitoring-Report-2019-ENG.pdf>, including summary on page 36. Also: <https://www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/uzbekistan/>

58 World Bank. 2018. op.cit. para 2.

59 ILO. 2019. *Towards an employment-friendly macro-economic policy framework: the case of Uzbekistan*, ILO (Moscow), June 2019

60 ILO. 2019. ILOSTAT. Accessed 12 November 2019. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>.



capita income growth would be flat, and that 900,000 people could have fallen into poverty as a result of the crisis. Using the poverty line appropriate for lower middle-income countries (USD 3.2 per person per day in PPP terms), poverty is likely to have risen in 2020. The World Bank estimated that the share of people living in poverty would be 8.7 per cent following the outbreak, compared with a projection of 7.4 per cent pre-crisis. This number could quickly increase if the most disruptive restrictions to economic activity are reapplied or extended.<sup>61</sup>

In addition, the effect of domestic disruptions on the incomes of the poor and vulnerable can be compounded by falling remittances, which predominantly accrue to low-income households. Prior to the pandemic, nearly 3.5 million citizens of Uzbekistan had migrated to other countries, mainly Russia and Kazakhstan.<sup>62</sup> While these migrants sent remittances home (between 5-12 per cent of GDP), with the imposition of quarantine and movement restrictions, migration expectations virtually collapsed by April 2020. In April 2020, there was not a single household reporting anyone considering migration abroad, and the share of households receiving any remittances fell by 54 per cent compared to the same period the previous year. In the longer term, reduced legal migration options may also increase the risks of irregular migration and human trafficking, further exacerbating socio-economic vulnerabilities.<sup>63</sup>

By the end of 2020, however, as the pandemic in the country abated and restrictions were eased, remittances picked up. Against the forecasts, the remittances to Uzbekistan increased by 0.3 per cent amounting to USD 6.03 billion in 2020. At the same time, the amount of outgoing money transfers increased by 15 per cent and reached USD 1.2 billion, resulting in net remittances of USD 4.83 billion, down by USD 140 million compared to 2019.<sup>64</sup> According to the authorities at the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, a total of 1,678,400 labour migrants from Uzbekistan were working abroad as of 1 January 2021 down by 782,000 people (32 per cent) compared with early 2020. 481,100 or 28.7 per cent of them were women and 993,700 others or 59.2 per cent were young people.

Interestingly, despite the 32 per cent reduction in the number of Uzbek migrants working abroad, the remittances to Uzbekistan in 2020 ended up being at the same level as in 2019 (SDG10.7).

The pandemic has affected living standards and income. Before the crisis, income distribution had become more equitable over the years with the official Gini coefficient falling from 0.39 in 2001 to 0.29 in 2013. Nevertheless, even before the pandemic, inequality was projected to worsen to 0.33 in 2021 (SDG 10.1 and 10.2).<sup>65</sup> As recovery from COVID-19 accelerates, further analysis in this area requires a more nuanced picture of population groups and geographical areas. Specifically, such analysis would include those that are still below or near the poverty line, and people whose incomes and well-being grow more slowly than those in higher quintiles of the country's income distribution. This being said, the measurement of poverty in Uzbekistan is still based on a restrictive calorie-based method, while a more reasonable cost of living measurement is now being estimated and tested by the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction and is to be introduced in 2021 (SDG 1.2).<sup>66</sup>

## 4.2 Governance institutions

As discussed in the 2020 CCA, the current administration inherited an interlinked set of governance challenges. The former economy was built on a model of strong state control with little room for strengthening democratic governance institutions. Politically, there was a lack of clear separation of powers with weak checks and balances, absence of plurality, a weak

61 World Bank/UNDP. 2020. op. cit.

62 Official government statistics estimate the number of migrants at around 2.5 million (2018).

63 World Bank, UNDP. 2020. op. cit.

64 <https://t.me/centralbankuzbekistan/3091>

65 World Bank, 2019. Toward a new Economy: Country Economic Update (Uzbekistan)

66 See: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/01/28/living-wage/>

parliament in terms of opposition and oversight, flawed elections, and a subservient judiciary. Socially, there was an absence of genuine social dialogue between capital and labour, unequal sharing of wealth, power and opportunities, suppression of dissent by law enforcement agencies, and the use of torture to extract confessions. This created an environment where citizens lacked a voice, resulting in a lack of trust between the state and its citizens, suppression of the media and civil society, and restrictions on labour movements.

The Government has committed to dismantle these economic, political, and social structures. This has already resulted in civil society, including independent media, enjoying greater freedom to discuss and influence the decisions of central and local governments (SDG 16.10). Several governance reforms have already been initiated in the areas of separation of powers, including strengthening parliamentary oversight over executive, judicial reform, accountability of authorities to the people, and a high-level commitment to improve human rights (discussed above). Moreover, while parliament may still lack a genuine opposition party, the parliamentary elections held in December 2019 were the most democratic ever held in the country.

Local government, on the other hand, lacks autonomy and greatly depends on central government.<sup>67</sup> The regional governors are de-facto appointed by the President, while also chairing the regional councils (Kengash), resulting in a conflict of interest and undermines accountability vis-à-vis local populations. Local government, thus, sees itself as an administrator of territory rather than a service provider to citizens.<sup>68</sup> Budgeting is also heavily centralised, with regional governments having limited authority over local budget spending and revenues.<sup>69</sup> The current laws in discussion 'On Local Government' and on 'Regional Development' would strengthen the role of local government, including giving them more autonomy over determining priorities, budgeting, and equipping them with funding. These laws would also contribute to mitigating regional imbalances in development.

The judicial system continues to require strengthening and further reforms. For example, the existing licensing procedures for practicing law deters people from the legal profession.<sup>70</sup> Prosecutors, on the other hand, have broad powers in criminal proceedings, which puts the judges and defense lawyers in a disadvantageous position and compromises the adversarial system. At the same time, in 2019 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers identified some positive steps, including an increase in the number of acquittals in recent years, the creation of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Supreme School for Judges, in addition to the gradual introduction of electronic procedures meant to increase transparency and facilitate access to justice (e.g. the E-sud system introduced with UN support).<sup>71</sup> For example, in 2016, according to government records, only six acquittals were recorded, whereas the number rose to 263 in 2017, to 867 in 2018, and to 859 in 2019.<sup>72</sup>

67 There are 12 regions in addition to the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Tashkent city. Each is led by 'Khokim' (except in the Republic of Karakalpakstan), appointed by the President. The regions are sub-divided into 200 lower level administrative units (169 districts and 31 cities), and each of these is overseen by its own Khokim (mayor/district chair) appointed by the regional Khokim. The local legislative bodies are known as 'Kengash', composed of elected representatives and chaired by the Khokim. As the Khokim has both executive and representative responsibility, the Kengash has limited scope to exercise an oversight function over the executive branch. The three main actors that constitute the core of local authority are: executive head (appointed khokim), a representative body (elected deputies in Kengashes) and managerial/administrative/technical staff (civil servants) (reporting to khokim and central ministries). [Final Project Evaluation: Local Governance Support Programme (LGSP), Phase-2, UNDP, October 2017].

68 Ibid.

69 <https://www.pefa.org/node/196> (See pages 29, and 47-48)

70 The UN Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers noted the low number of lawyers during his visit to Uzbekistan in September 2019

71 <https://www.uz.undp.org/content/uzbekistan/en/home/media/infographics/infographic--e-sud-national-case-management-system.html>

72 <http://www.un.uz/eng/news/display/346>

Although some legislative safeguards exist concerning child-friendly approaches and treatment in the justice system, Uzbekistan does not yet have a separate juvenile justice system. There are no juvenile courts nor specialised judges to consider cases involving children.<sup>73</sup> The application of a restorative justice approach is not envisaged in current national legislation apart from the possibility of charges being dropped through reconciliation with a victim, implying compensation of harm caused to a victim. There is a need to broaden the scope of existing community-based alternatives to post-trial detention by putting more emphasis on their rehabilitative effects on children to prevent reoffending.<sup>74</sup> Deprivation of liberty in closed educational institutions is a common approach used with children who are involved in antisocial behaviour and for children who commit socially dangerous offences when they are too young to be prosecuted.<sup>75</sup> Children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility may receive sanction in the form of placement in a special educational institution for up to three years. As a result, in Uzbekistan, girls and boys are deprived of liberty for offences in violation of international standards. In the context of the justice sector reform, more efforts should be made to strengthen access to child-friendly justice for children in contact with the law and introduce good practices of alternatives to detention, such as diversion and probation, as well as restorative justice approaches.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, more attention should also be given to the emergency release of detainees, including the old, people with disabilities, children and other vulnerable groups, which could be affected by the disease. In addition, courts should consider the application of alternative sanctions to deprivation of liberty to reduce overcrowding in penal institutions and decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Additional reforms have also been undertaken with respect to the Bar Association in line with Presidential Decrees of 2018 and 2019, and a new Law on the Bar Association has been developed. The new system will provide for the independence of the Chamber of Advocates, which was not fully independent from the Ministry of Justice. Moreover, guaranteed access to a lawyer of one's choosing and broader powers of lawyers in criminal proceedings should

be reflected in the new Criminal Procedure Code under development. In addition, a new draft Law on Free Legal Aid was posted on the Government's portal for public discussion (SDG 16.3).

Despite corruption being a key challenge (as discussed above), Uzbekistan acceded to the UN Convention against Corruption in 2008, participates in the implementation review mechanism, and completed the first review cycle focusing on criminalisation and international cooperation. The second cycle, focusing on prevention and asset recovery, will be completed in 2021. Moreover, state anti-corruption programmes for 2019-2020 adopted by the Decree of the President in May 2019 included strengthening judicial independence, adoption of law on the civil service, introduction of an income declaration system in public service, promotion of zero tolerance towards corruption, introduction of corruption risk assessments in organisations and "compliance control" systems, and increasing the role of civil society (SDG 16.5). These efforts have continued despite the pandemic and lockdowns. For instance, 80 per cent of government decisions on preventing and countering corruption were developed and adopted during the period of lockdown and remote work of government agencies. Moreover, introducing the anti-corruption and preventive tasks and provisions into every government decree that adopts certain national development or investment programme became a standard practice in the second half of 2020.

In 2020, the Government accelerated anti-corruption efforts and took legislative decisions to strengthen the institutional environment reducing the risks of corruption, to identify and prosecute corruption offences, to raise the awareness of people on signs of corruption and necessary actions to oppose it, to engage civil society in anti-corruption efforts, and to promote zero tolerance for corruption. In this regard, in 2020 over 22 presidential decrees, two decrees

73 UNICEF. 2015. *Analysis of the compliance of national legislation with International Justice for Children Standards*.

74 UNICEF. 2016. *Justice for Children in Uzbekistan: Consolidated Report*. Tashkent. Unpublished report

75 UNICEF. 2018. *Assessing and Reintegrating girls from closed institutions in Uzbekistan back into their families and communities*. Tashkent.

of Cabinet of Ministers laws, and two resolutions of the Ministry of Justice were adopted to articulate certain preventive anti-corruption measures and instruments, to reduce corruption risks, and to ensure transparency and accountability. These include adoption of sectorial anti-corruption roadmaps, requirements for corruption proofing of legislation, and development of targeted anti-corruption action plans.

To address the issues of weak coordination of anti-corruption measures and policies and to develop comprehensive prevention and counter-corruption mechanisms, the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established that was charged with the development and enforcement of the state policy on preventing and combating corruption.

Understandably, the impact of these decisions taken in 2020 and the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Agency have not yet been fully implemented or reflected in different international comparisons of corruption. For example, Uzbekistan still ranked 158th among 180 countries in the 2019 Corruption Perception Index (SDG 16.5).<sup>76</sup>

With respect to the media, restrictions on the independence of the media have eased over the past four years, and the President has publicly stated that there must be no going back on reforms in freedom of speech (SDG 16.10).<sup>77</sup> Many previously blocked websites have been unblocked;<sup>78</sup> however, some websites critical of the Government are closed, and bloggers are closely monitored for critical content.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, despite public promises to provide registration, the foreign media presence is limited and the World Press Freedom Index ranks Uzbekistan at 156 out of 180 countries globally.<sup>80</sup>

### 4.3 Social Infrastructure

Even before the pandemic, Uzbekistan had ensured a reasonable allocation of public expenditures by international standards for health, education and social protection. Thus, providing social sector services remains a key priority. World Bank estimates showed that the Government spent 6.3 per cent of GDP on health (2016), 6.0 per cent on education (2017) and 5.9 per cent on social protection (2018).<sup>81</sup>

In the case of health, overall performance before COVID-19 was good in terms of life expectancy and a decline in infant mortality (SDG 3.2); however, maternal mortality (SDG 3.2) has not seen progress since 2010, with a sharp increase during the pandemic, and low stocks of essential drugs including contraceptives. At the same time, the dramatic rise in non-communicable diseases (SDG 3.4), which account for 79 per cent of all deaths in the country, poses serious health and development challenges. These have a negative impact on the development of the country with high economic costs and disproportionate resources going towards tackling lifestyle diseases, while primary health care remains underfunded. The health delivery model also focuses on specialised hospitals over primary health centres, equipment over skills, and curative over preventive health care. This is neither efficient nor equitable and may increase the cost of healthcare, including high out-of-pocket expenses, resulting in greater exclusion (SDG 3.8).

The outbreak of the pandemic has noticeably increased spending on the health system and delivery while also straining health centres and personnel. The Consolidated Multilateral Response and Offer resulted in a total of over USD 337 million of new and repurposed commitments to the health sector by the 6 IFIs and the UN to mitigate the impacts of the disease, with expected downstream residual benefits for the health sector.

76 Source: <https://www.transparency.org/country/UZB>

77 See: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2019/08/27/blogers/>

78 Source: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/uzbekistan-small-dose-media-freedom>

79 Refer to: <https://eurasianet.org/uzbekistan-unblocks-websites-taking-muzzle-off-critical-reporting>

80 See: <https://rsf.org/en/uzbekistan>

81 Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/uzbekistan>

82 WHO estimates the economic burden of non-communicable diseases to be 4.7 percent of GDP. See WHO-UNDP. 2018. Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in Uzbekistan- The case for Investment.

83 The Government has closed down nearly one-third of primary health centres and turned them into polyclinics. [WHO personal communication]



While the country has achieved universal literacy for both men and women (SDG 4.2), the quality of education remains a concern, as the system does not prepare young people for the knowledge economy (SDG 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.7). Preschool enrolment, although improved since the reforms began, remains low with rural-urban and socioeconomic class differences affecting learning outcomes in later years of life.<sup>84</sup> There are also about 100,000 children estimated by the UN to be out-of-school<sup>85</sup> (SDG 4.5). Moreover, more men than women are likely to participate in higher education, which impacts adversely on women's employability and further perpetuates gender inequality in the country. Contemporary Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) remains at a developing stage, and skills training is not aligned with labour market and industry needs. Finally, children with disabilities are more likely to be out of school.<sup>86</sup>

The nationwide lockdown introduced in mid-March 2020, resulted in significant loss in school-based education for close to 1.4 million preschool children, 5.85 million students in general secondary schools, 728,000 students in secondary specialised and professional institutions, and 360,000 students in higher education institutions. To ensure uninterrupted learning, the authorities, with the support from the IFIs and the UN, swiftly introduced distance learning (DL) mainly through televised lessons. The Government's efforts to introduce online and televised learning during the pandemic, while laudable, are generally considered to have met with mixed success due to unequal access to internet and availability of in-home computers, especially in rural areas.

Turning to social protection, Uzbekistan's social protection system incorporates many of the main features associated with international social security standards: social assistance and elements of social insurance while social and employment services are in the embryonic stage of development. The social protection system (including social assistance, social insurance, and labour market programmes) supports about 55 per cent of the population, mostly through social insurance which covers 44 per cent of the population. Old-age pensions cover close to 38 per cent of the population and 85 per cent of the elderly above 65 years, which is by

far the largest coverage of a programme (due to the fact that workers have contributed towards social insurance in case of old age), including coverage of the poor (29 per cent). In contrast, social assistance programmes cover only 16 per cent of the population, mostly through family allowances (covering 12 per cent of the population). It is estimated that only one out of three poor people receives any form of social assistance and that only 37 per cent of poor families receive family allowances.

In the face of the pandemic, Uzbekistan expanded coverage of some social protection measures to cope with the shocks of poverty, unemployment and loss of livelihoods generated by COVID-19. As discussed earlier, the Government expanded a range of social protection measures to the population, together with resources to cover additional health care costs and to cope with a surge in unemployment, especially in small and micro businesses and the informal sector (see Box 3). The spread of COVID-19 has resulted in three shocks to the Uzbekistan economy and population: loss of income from employment because of self-isolation; reduced flow in remittances from migrant labour;<sup>87</sup> and reduced demand for exports. In total, twelve decrees of the President have been adopted to counteract the effects of the pandemic on the living standards of the population and the economy, supported by an allocation of nearly UZS 30 trillion or 5.9 per cent of 2019 GDP.<sup>88</sup>



84 Coverage by pre-school education reached 40.5 percent in June 2019. It was 27 percent in 2017. Source: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2019/08/05/preschool/>

85 See: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/uz>

86 Source: [http://www.un.uz/files/UN%20Brief%20Report%20Disabilities/Snapshot\\_UN\\_en\\_UNColor.pdf](http://www.un.uz/files/UN%20Brief%20Report%20Disabilities/Snapshot_UN_en_UNColor.pdf)

87 The impact of reduced migrant labour flows has resulted in a lower average amount in remittances because of reduced income and devaluation of the currencies in the accommodating countries - primarily Russia (77 per cent) and Kazakhstan (7 per cent), United States (4 per cent), Turkey (4 per cent), Republic of Korea (2 per cent) and Israel (1 per cent) —and fewer labour migrants because they could not return or take up jobs in the recipient countries (Russia, Kazakhstan etc.) due to prohibitions on entry and exit.

88 ILO/Ministry of Finance. 2020. National Strategy for Social Protection (NSSP): Concept Note. See also video conference on 19 May 2020 chaired by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan concerning additional measures in support of business and the population.

### Box 3. Specific measures taken to extend social protection and protect jobs

#### Social Protection Measures:

- Wages were paid during quarantine for 1.04 million workers at educational, sports and cultural institutions subject to closure.
- From 1 April 2020 the number of recipients of benefits for families with children under 14 years of age, on leave to care for a child less than 2 years of age and on maternity leave increased by 10 per cent from 595,400 to 655,000. In May 2020, the measures were extended to another 70,000 families, a further 10 per cent increase.
- Benefits for families with children for childcare and financial assistance whose benefits would have terminated between March to June 2020 were automatically extended (without any requirement for additional application).
- Supplement to daily wages (of 6 per cent of monthly wages) for 5,482 medical, public health and other workers involved in combatting COVID-19 were paid.
- Essential food items (18 items, personal hygiene products, disposable masks and antiseptic cleansers were provided free of charge during quarantine to the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- From 1 April 2020 to 1 October 2020, donations of money, goods and services to the Mahalla, Kindness and Support and Uzbekistan foundations (Mekhr-shavkat va Salomatlik) and also to individual persons registered as needing social support were exempted from all taxes.

#### Jobs Protection Measures included:

- Guaranteed job retention in the public sector of the economy.
- Prohibition on dismissing parents with children infected by the coronavirus or placed under quarantine.
- Provision of leave during quarantine for parents with children in kindergarten or primary school.
- Benefits for temporary incapacity to work (sick leave) of 100 per cent of average wages for parents under quarantine and persons caring for their children.
- Simplified system for sick leave.
- Transition to remote work and flexible work hours for workers, especially for pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- In 2020 the amount of income to workers that is not subject to individual income tax increased from 4.22 to 7.5 times the minimum wage.
- Expansion of one-off unemployment benefits.

Despite these impressive efforts during the pandemic, before the pandemic, the country's social protection system already faced inefficiencies in execution and problems of design.<sup>89</sup> Inefficiencies in the system worsen long-term problems, creating new challenges for a system currently delivering weak results.<sup>90</sup> The absence of clearly defined and communicated cost-of-living estimates limit understanding of the adequacy of social assistance payments. Until recently, the social protection system focused mainly on social insurance, pensions, and, to some extent, allowances to low-income families. Thus, attention was not paid to labour market interventions including unemployment benefits, skills and temporary employment. Ongoing structural reforms, notably the restructuring of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), require additional resources to ensure skills and training for these newly unemployed. There are also major gaps in coverage, notably, people with disabilities, including children.<sup>91</sup> Exclusion of most children from the national social protection system means their development is being held back, negatively affecting the quality of the future workforce.<sup>92</sup> Rationing social protection resources at local levels also results in exclusions. It is evident that the main reasons for social exclusions are lack of resources, poor design and implementation inefficiencies, meaning that the most deserving groups, who often have overlapping vulnerabilities, face serious challenges in accessing social services.

Of major concern is that social security remains out of reach for most of the population. Approximately 50 per cent of working-age people are in the informal sector, and they do not participate in contributory social insurance schemes. In line with the social protection "floor" approach, it is recommended to extend social security coverage (including social insurance, maternity protection, decent working conditions, and a minimum wage) for the working age population by extending social insurance programmes to workers in the informal economy, independent of their status, while also making parallel and concerted policy efforts to formalise employment. The coverage across all contingencies and population groups needs to be improved to ensure all households in need are protected. This could be done through increasing financing, introducing

objective and transparent selection rules, formalization mechanisms for unemployment benefits, improving the targeting mechanisms of low-income allowances and strengthening data collection and analysis.

After the pandemic subsides, the debate over social protection in Uzbekistan will continue to revolve around whether it should be targeted or universal. While the preference for a targeted approach is still dominant in Uzbekistan, there is room to protect the legacy of a universal social protection system, especially where poverty and vulnerability are significant. A universal approach looks at social protection as an investment in human development and as a safeguard to temper the effects of business cycles and deep reforms (SDG 1.a).

The Government, at the highest levels, is aware of need for reform to complement the economic reform and support targeted groups while increasing efforts to reduce poverty and vulnerability. However, Uzbekistan has neither a formal definition of social protection nor a dedicated institution to design, coordinate, and manage the many different programmes that currently exist. At present, social protection is fragmented across various institutions with none responsible for the coordination or integration of interventions. In general, when compared with similar countries, there is scope for improving social protection coverage in Uzbekistan. The results of enterprise restructuring, the expansion of digitisation, and the impact of floods, earthquakes, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic on households and livelihoods demonstrate that social protection coverage plays a strategic role in social stability, developing human capital, and in the financial and budgetary affairs of the State. Thus, a more

89 <https://www.jointsdgfund.org/where-we-work/uzbekistan>

90 UNICEF. 2019. Building A Better Future: A child-sensitive social protection system for Uzbekistan [https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media/1406/file/Building%20a%20better%20future\\_02.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media/1406/file/Building%20a%20better%20future_02.pdf)

91 Source: [https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media/1406/file/Building%20a%20better%20future\\_02.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media/1406/file/Building%20a%20better%20future_02.pdf)

92 UN. 2019. Project proposal on Social Protection for the Joint SDG Fund. See: <https://www.jointsdgfund.org/where-we-work/uzbekistan>

effective social protection system is integral to achieving poverty reduction, maintaining living standards, achieving economic growth, and creating a functioning labour market.

#### 4.4 Climate change, environmental protection and natural resources

Uzbekistan ranks 88 out of 180 countries according to the 2020 Environmental Performance Index (EPI), which measures performance against 24 indicators across ten categories covering environmental health and ecosystem vitality.<sup>93</sup> However, across categories the results are mixed. For example, the country scores better on 'water and sanitation' (SDG 6) and 'forests' and tree cover loss (SDG 15.1, 15.2, 15.3), but performs poorly in air quality (SDG 11.6), water resources and wastewater treatment (SDG 6), and environmental health and biodiversity (SDG 15).

The Third Environmental Performance Review (EPR)<sup>94</sup> provided the Government with 99 recommendations for improving the environmental situation and the wellbeing of the population, while greening the energy, agriculture, transport, housing, industry and health sectors. Following the launch of the EPR in October 2020, the State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection has developed a roadmap for implementation of the EPR recommendations with assistance from UNECE. The roadmap details measures and concrete activities to implement recommendations, identifies relevant stakeholders for coordinated implementation, and offers estimates of required financing.

Natural resources, if used sustainably, have the potential to contribute to growth and reduce poverty, as Uzbekistan is endowed with a rich natural resource base including natural gas, oil, gold, copper, lead, zinc, tungsten, and uranium. However, unsustainable exploitation of these resources has left the country with serious environmental problems.

For example, the Aral Sea, which used to be the fourth largest lake in the world, has been reduced to 10 per cent of its size after the rivers that fed it were diverted for irrigation. The irrigation was used mainly for cotton production (previously

termed white gold) -- a crop that yielded enormous profits shared by the powerful and well-connected. The irrigation system continues to be wasteful, resulting in massive depletion of water and salinity of once fertile soils (SDG 15). Moreover, reliance on cotton and wheat required increased use of fertilisers and pesticides, and run-off from these fields washed chemicals into the shrinking sea, creating serious pollution and public health problems. People living around the Aral Sea are losing control over the natural resources that provided their livelihoods, and these marginalised populations face devastating health outcomes, especially for women and children, including higher than average anaemia, cancers and tuberculosis. The impact of climate change, degradation of natural resources, and toxic waste from mining and agriculture also seriously limits the country's future growth prospects as well as human capabilities.

Seen from a wider perspective, Uzbekistan is dependent on upstream countries for 80 per cent of its water needs and faces significant challenges in water management, in part due to climate change. During the period 2009–2017, water use in agriculture remained around 89–92 per cent of total water use, with approximately one-third of the total water use in this sector being lost. Water inefficiencies are estimated to cost about of 8 per cent of GDP. Reducing or eliminating losses the country would solve water shortages and save enough water to mitigate the changes in annual available water caused by variable precipitation (SDG 6.4).<sup>96</sup> However, despite ongoing institutional reforms in this area, water-saving techniques are not expanding at a satisfactory pace.<sup>97</sup> In 2019, the total area under water-saving techniques reached only 9.6 per cent of irrigated lands, and under the recently adopted Agriculture Development Strategy for

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93 Source: <https://epi.envirocenter.yale.edu/epi-country-report/UZB>

94 UNECE. 2020. op. cit.

95 Refer to: [https://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/landsat/news/40th-top10-aralsea.html](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/landsat/news/40th-top10-aralsea.html)

96 ADB. 2019. Country Partnership Strategy- Uzbekistan 2019-2023 – Supporting Economic Transformation, footnote 13, page4

97 See: [http://www.cawater-info.net/yearbook/pdf/yearbook2017\\_en.pdf](http://www.cawater-info.net/yearbook/pdf/yearbook2017_en.pdf)



2020–2030 this indicator is targeted to reach 32 per cent by 2030. It is not clear how the COVID-19 crisis will impact the Government's efforts at promoting crop diversification away from cotton due to its relatively high water consumption compared to other crops (SDG 2).

Forests are especially valuable in Uzbekistan because of their contribution to protecting fragile ecosystems, including around the Aral Sea. To address deforestation, Uzbekistan joined the Bonn Challenge, a global effort to restore 350 million hectares of forests by 2030. At the Ministerial Roundtable on Forest Landscape Restoration and the Bonn Challenge in the Caucasus and Central Asia in 2018, the countries of the region committed to restoring 2.5 million hectares of forests and to strengthening partnerships and regional cooperation.<sup>98</sup> However, many challenges remain, including protecting existing forests from degradation, pressures from grazing, and excessive harvesting of wood for fuel. Consequently, measures to improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent people and development of a national consensus on the role of forests are urgently needed (SDG 15.1 and 15.2). These challenges remain unabated in the face of the pandemic.

Turning to the energy sector, although Uzbekistan is a net exporter of energy (mostly natural gas), energy use inefficiencies are high, and the share of renewable energy is low (SDG 7). Prior to the COVID lockdown, Uzbekistan recorded 0.45 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per USD of GDP compared to the world average of 0.27 kg (SDG 7.3).<sup>99</sup> More than 40 per cent of energy capacity is in power generation plants that are 40-50 years old and in need of urgent replacement. Transmission losses are as high as 20 per cent (compared to global average of around 8 per cent).<sup>100</sup> Increases in energy tariffs in 2018-2019 created some incentives for investors, but have not yet resulted in matching improvements on delivery and service (SDG 7.2 and 7.b). Energy shortages and failures, especially during winter, are frequent in remote regions and result in casualties and human security threats. The country's outdated irrigation infrastructure consumes 20 per cent of the country's electricity, while mining, chemicals, oil and gas, and electricity used for producing construction materials are

among the country's most energy-intensive industries.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, the existing housing stock is energy inefficient.<sup>102</sup> This represents a wasted development opportunity, especially for possible gains from energy efficiency to finance SDGs.

The economy of Uzbekistan relies largely on the gas sector, mining, and agriculture, and hazardous chemical substances are widely used in these activities (SDG 12). Due to climatic and geographical conditions, Uzbekistan is prone to natural hazards which can in turn trigger technological accidents, so-called "NaTech" events. This situation increases accident risks for numerous hazardous industrial facilities in Uzbekistan, such as tailing management facilities (i.e., uranium mining) which hold waste resulting from mining operations. Under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, the UN has supported Uzbekistan by improving industrial safety.<sup>103</sup>

Urbanisation has the potential to be a key driver of economic development (SDG 11), but urban centres are vulnerable to climate change and disaster-related risks (SDG 11.6). The urban population, currently at 50 per cent, is expected to go up to 60 per cent by 2030. In this regard, a dedicated Department on Urbanisation was created within the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction to

98 Refer to: <https://www.bonnchallenge.org/about-the-goal#commitments>

99 Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>

100 ADB. 2019. op cit.

101 ADB. 2019. op. cit.

102 Industrial air emissions, which are relatively high for such components as SO<sub>2</sub>, hydrocarbons and dust, combined with air-polluting emissions from the growing number of vehicles and the emissions (mainly in rural areas) from domestic heating with firewood and other solid fuels, create severe air pollution in industrial and urban areas, which causes serious health problems. See UNECE. 2020. op.cit.

103 See "Project on strengthening industrial safety in Central Asia through the implementation of and accession to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents" on <http://www.unece.org/env/teia>

formulate and implement urban development policy.<sup>104</sup> The key urbanisation challenge is to create cities that are clean, efficient, inclusive, resilient and economically vibrant. To accomplish this, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, evidence-based land-use planning, local risk assessments, and risk-informed investments are crucial for enhancing urban resilience. Cities also need to be sensitive to the different needs of women, children and people with disabilities when designing and providing sustainable municipal infrastructure.

With respect to climate change actions, Uzbekistan ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in September 2018, and has committed to reduce CO2 emissions by 10 per cent as well as strengthen resilience to climate change by 2030 (SDG 13).<sup>105</sup> To this end, the Government has developed a National Strategy on Transition to a Green Economy. It sets several targets and initiatives aimed at reducing emissions by increasing energy efficiency, including the use of renewable energy sources, improving resource efficiency and crop yields while ensuring a neutral balance of land degradation.<sup>106</sup> According to the UN, and given the trajectory of the reforms, the target of reducing CO2 emission by at least 10 per cent by 2030 can be easily achieved. Even with the reductions in CO2 emissions during the pandemic, this trajectory can be maintained, once the economic slowdown has reversed, hopefully later in 2021.

Uzbekistan is making continuous efforts to develop modern environmental assessment systems in line with the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA). To date Uzbekistan is not a Party to the above instruments but decided to initiate a legislative reform of its environmental assessment system with a view to aligning its legislation with the provisions of the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA. At the request of Uzbekistan, in 2020 UNECE assisted in developing a draft law on SEA and a law on amending to the current environmental expertise law. The draft law on SEA became an integral part of the draft Environmental Code that is being finalised by the Government.

However, it remains unclear how the draft code will address the existing deficiencies of its environmental assessment legislation vis-à-vis the Espoo Convention.

With respect to air pollution, the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its key substantive protocols are effective tools for reducing air pollution, with its negative effects on health and environment and related economic losses. Thus, Uzbekistan is encouraged to ratify and implement the Convention and its protocols, which will bring several advantages to the country (see Annex A). Adherence to the Convention will also be an important step towards reducing air pollution, therefore contributing to achieving several SDGs, including SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

According to numerous scientific studies, long-term exposure to air pollution is an important public health concern because it increases the severity of health effects of COVID-19. It has been hypothesised that long-term exposure to fine particulate matters (PM2.5) negatively affects the respiratory and cardiovascular systems and increases the risk of mortality. It may therefore exacerbate the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and worsen the prognosis of the disease.

Air pollution experts of the Task Force on Health have discussed the effect of the lockdown on emission projections for 2020 under the UNECE Air Convention. Their analysis shows that while transport-related NOx pollution decreased as a consequence of the COVID lockdown, a reduction in traffic does not have a similar effect on levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in cities. The main, mostly unaffected, sources of particle pollution during the lockdown are the heating of residential and other buildings and application of fertilizers in agriculture.

104 Draft Urbanization strategy, Institute of Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research, prepared by the former Agency on Urbanization of the Republic of Uzbekistan (unpublished, 2019).

105 Source: [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Uzbekistan%20First/INDC%20Uzbekistan%2018-04-2017\\_Eng.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Uzbekistan%20First/INDC%20Uzbekistan%2018-04-2017_Eng.pdf)

106 See: <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4539506>

To effectively reduce exposure to air pollution in cities, it is therefore important to look at comprehensive cross-sectoral abatement strategies that go beyond just the transport sector. The Gothenburg Protocol establishes legally binding emission reduction commitments for almost all major air pollutants, for all economic sectors and emission sources.

Uzbekistan, and most of Central Asia, are prone to natural hazards like earthquakes, mudslides, glacial lake outburst floods, flash floods, heat waves, droughts and dust storms. Moreover, these are becoming more frequent and intense, resulting in increased morbidity and mortality. Climate change in Uzbekistan is bringing excessive cardiovascular and respiratory morbidity and mortality and acute intestinal infections. The most vulnerable parts of Uzbekistan are in the east of the country (including Tashkent, Fergana valley). The exposure to risk is particularly high in view of the high population density in these areas. Women, children and the elderly bear a disproportionate burden of these natural disasters. The economic impact of flooding alone in Uzbekistan due to climate change is estimated at USD 236 million, while GDP losses due to extreme weather events are estimated at 2-3 per cent.<sup>107</sup>

Accordingly, investing in disaster risk reduction and preventive measures is a key step towards a sustainable future, as it not only helps to reduce vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of communities but also to protect economic growth and development gains. Coordinating with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Uzbekistan and relevant entities at the local and national level, the UN provides technical support to strengthen the national systems of collecting disaster loss data to support risk-informed decision-making. The UN also provides support to strengthen the focus in the national DRR strategy on new emerging threats, including biological hazards.<sup>108</sup> Activities include developing local level DRR strategies and a plan of action for the city of Tashkent.

Accordingly, investing in disaster risk reduction and preventive measures is a key step towards a sustainable future, as it not only helps to reduce vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of

communities but also to protect economic growth and development gains. Coordinating with the Committee of Emergency Situations and of Uzbekistan, as an entry point for disaster risk management and relevant entities at the local level, the UN will support the improvement of risk knowledge and the strengthening of disaster risk reduction governance through better disaster loss data collection and the implementation of national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that governance, the rule of law, and transparency in environmental matters all play vital roles in environmental protection and building the resilience of communities against increased environmental risks. The country is committed to promoting effective online access to environmental information, including an open data pollutant release and transfer registry (PRTR). Despite the pandemic, the capacities of authorities must be strengthened to carry out effective and inclusive public participation procedures for projects, plans, programmes, policies and legislation related to the environment. Enhancing capacities are also needed for the judiciary, review bodies and law enforcement agencies to deal with environmental issues and for providing more support to members of the public who are seeking environmental justice.<sup>109</sup> Measures supporting the country's efforts to accede to the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTR will substantially help to address these challenges.<sup>110</sup>

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107 See: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/958801481798204368/europe-and-central-asia-country-risk-profiles-for-floods-and-earthquakes>

108 Source: <https://www.undrr.org/about-undrr-where-we-work/europe#CentralAsiaDRRInitiative>

109 See the study on access to justice in environmental matters: [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/a.to.jAnalyticalStudies/EECCA\\_study\\_AJ/EECCA\\_study\\_EN\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/a.to.jAnalyticalStudies/EECCA_study_AJ/EECCA_study_EN_Final.pdf)

110 See the study on access to justice in environmental matters: [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/a.to.jAnalyticalStudies/EECCA\\_study\\_AJ/EECCA\\_study\\_EN\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/a.to.jAnalyticalStudies/EECCA_study_AJ/EECCA_study_EN_Final.pdf)

## 4.5 LNOB: The Five Factor Framework

“Leave no one behind” is a key UN programming principle and this CCA, like its predecessor, identifies vulnerable groups in the country based on official data sets, human rights reports, survey and polls, and personal interviews. As a programming principle, without a clear identification of the specific groups, some groups may be left behind from development efforts, including groups that are:

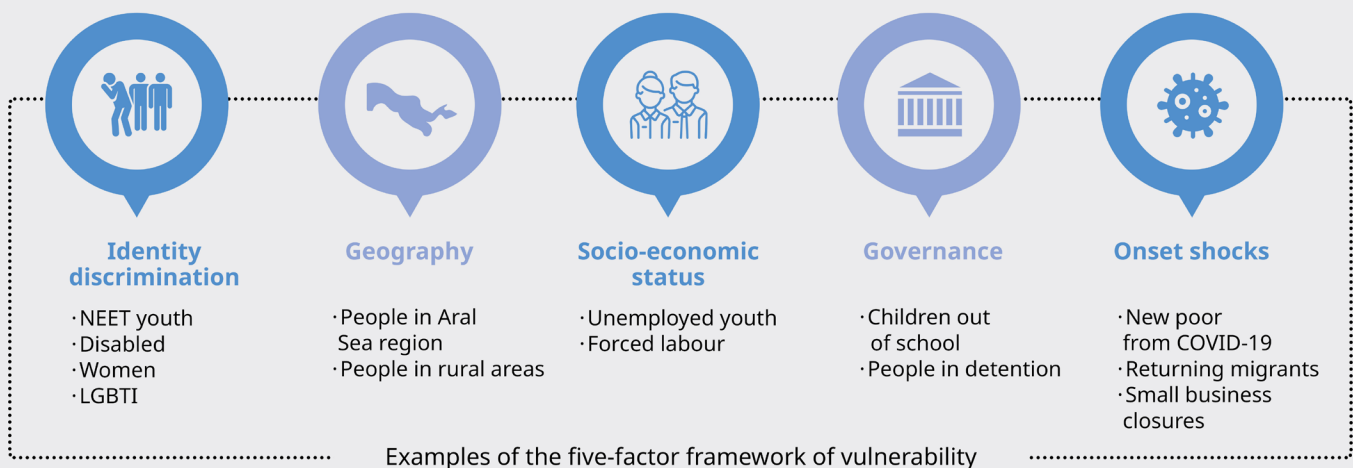
- discriminated against based on who they are, their identity or status, age, sex, ethnicity, religious beliefs, health status, or disability. International human rights mechanisms provide evidence on groups that are discriminated against
- geographically isolated and lack of transport, communication (including internet), and where administrative machinery has difficulty reaching the most reach far-flung areas and often results in exclusion of people living in remote areas
- vulnerable to shocks. Some areas or people may face setbacks due to these shocks more than others. These shocks could be natural disasters, social conflict, cross-border tensions, violence, or economic shocks
- adversely impacted by governance structures, laws, policies, institutions, budgets, taxes and traditional practices limiting their ability to engage in decision-making. They may also face shrunken democratic space

- members of a certain socio-economic group facing multidimensional poverty, extreme poverty or inequality and lack of access to livelihoods and labour markets

Based on the description above, Annex C identifies vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind, along with immediate causes, underlying causes, and root causes. It also provides possible solutions about what could be done to assist them, linking each group to a cluster of SDGs and associated targets. The national statistical system does not have more granular data to identify who they are, what is their level of well-being, or why they are left behind. As such, only people who ask for help, prove that they need it, and are persistent in trying to get it, might be visible to the Government. In the earlier CCA, specifically excluded groups were identified that merit further analysis since they constitute numerically large groups, namely women, sexual minorities, and youth.

With respect the economic and social welfare impacts of COVID-19, the Uzbeks most affected fall into the LNOB category of “vulnerable to shocks” (notably the increased numbers of people falling into poverty) but other groups have also been affected due to the strains on the overall economic and social systems. In this regard, this category of LNOB population represents new, suddenly affected persons who now join the other more historical and institutionalised LNOB groups.

Figure 4. Examples of the five-factor framework of vulnerability





## 4.6 Women

Focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment has both intrinsic value and instrumental value, thereby improving gender equalities to accelerate achieving the SDGs. This can be done by ending discrimination against women and improving their labour force participation. For example, according to the ILO, GDP could grow by an extra five per cent if the gender gap in labour force participation were reduced by just 25 per cent.<sup>111</sup> Reducing the gender gap is also a crosscutting issue and one of the three triggers for sustainable development identified by the UN Secretary-General.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, reducing the gender pay gap, notably for women in the informal economy and unpaid care work, would be an additional step in the right direction.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights of women are also fundamental human rights (SDG 5.6), which are still being constrained by existing social norms and limited capacities of the healthcare system. Family planning (the use of contraception to avoid unintended pregnancies) is viewed as the sole responsibility of women. The Government has taken measures to stop forced marriages, including by equalising the minimum allowed marriage age for women and men (SDG 5.3.)<sup>113</sup> After the pandemic is mitigated, further investments will be needed in the healthcare system to ensure safe motherhood. Effective screening and treatment programmes for cervical and breast cancers should be put in place to prevent long-term health consequences and deaths, and to ensure that women are in good health and empowered to realise their full potential in society (SDG 5.6). Moreover, being a woman with disabilities, being a single woman, being HIV positive, unemployed, of old age, an ex-convict, a victim of trafficking, a returnee from a conflict zone or a resident of rural, disaster-prone areas makes women many times more vulnerable than their male counterparts.

In 2020, for the first time in Uzbekistan, an expert group was formed consisting of representatives of the Ministry to Support Makhalla and Family, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Republican Rehabilitation Center in conjunction with UNFPA and the Gender Commission of the Senate. The group piloted the coordinated response mechanism to prevent and respond to the needs of survivors of domestic violence (i.e., 'Standard Operating Procedures on multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence') which are designed to provide effective, survivor-centered services in a safe and confidential manner. In 2020, a total of 14,774 victims of harassment and violence were provided with protective orders. Also, the hotline of the Ministry of Internal Affairs received 2,746 calls seeking information on issues related to violence and harassment against women.

### Demographic indicators for women

In 2019, life expectancy for women was 77 years compared to 72.3 for men. The maternal mortality ratio declined from 21.6 per 100,000 live births (2010) to 19.3 (2018) according to official statistics (SDG 3.1). Similarly, infant mortality (below 1-year/ per 1000 live births) declined from 31.6 to 10.3 over the same period (SDG 3.2).<sup>114</sup>

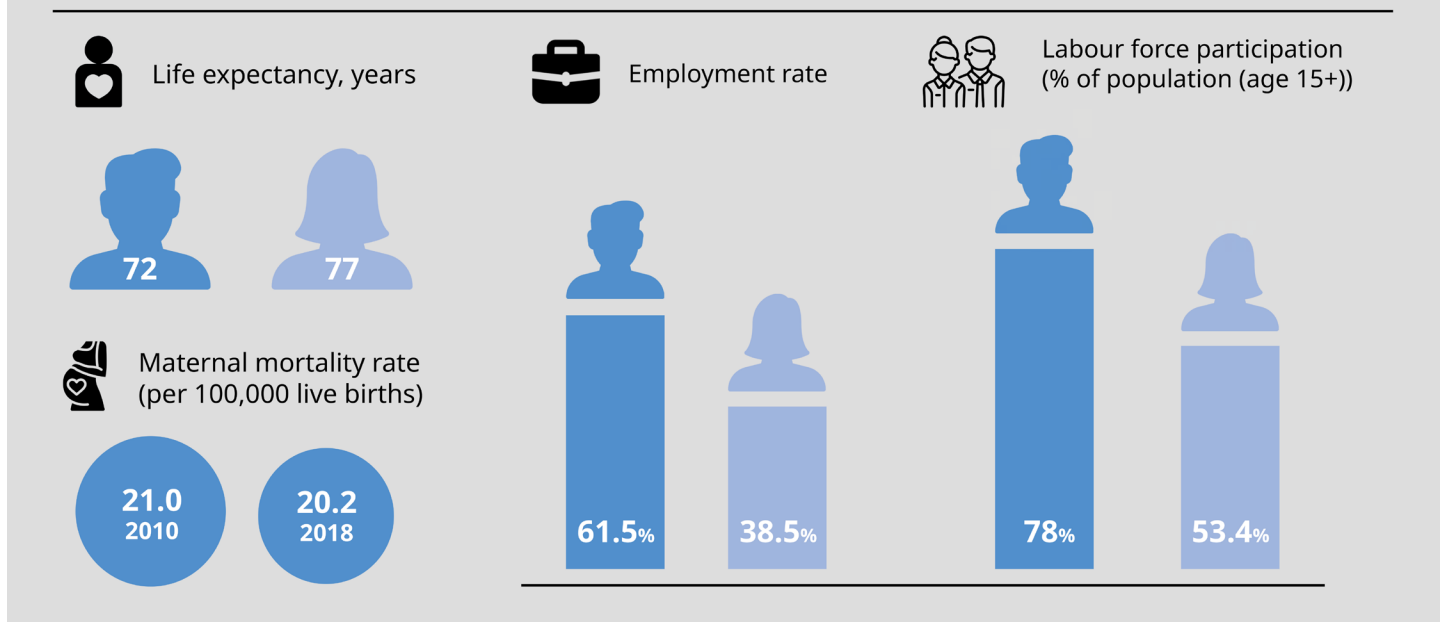
111 See: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/enhanced/WCMS\\_556526/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/enhanced/WCMS_556526/lang--en/index.htm)

112 Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1046712?>

113 Found at: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/society/20190422/11321429/Brachnoe-ravenstvo-v-Uzbekistane-podnyali-minimalnyy-vozrast-dlya-nevest.html>

114 Although UNFPA estimated MMR at 20.2 in 2018.

**Figure 5. Snapshot of gender demographics**



Source: Various sources including Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and <https://gender.stat.uz/en/>

### Education and employability: challenges and opportunities

Much to Uzbekistan's credit, the country has achieved 99.6 per cent literacy with no significant gender gaps (SDG 4.2).<sup>115</sup> However, at the stage of academic lyceums, higher educational institutions and research positions, the share of women declines sharply (SDG 4.3). There is also gender asymmetry in the choice of study programmes because of deeply ingrained stereotypes about gender roles in society.<sup>116</sup> Introduction of part-time programmes at higher education level has significantly improved women's enrolment and should increase women's employability.<sup>117</sup> Increases in affordable and subsidised childcare (SDG 4.2) may also create incentives for expanding women's education and employment opportunities (SDG 8.5).

Numerous obstacles limit women's full participation in the labour market. These include restricted access to affordable private and state-funded childcare support; gender discriminatory family obligations, patriarchal norms and stereotypes about the role of women in society; an absence of jobs in the formal sector; as well as a lack of technical skills that often prevent women from participating fully in the labour market. As a result, women's labour force participation rate in 2018 was 53.4 per

cent compared to 78 per cent for men. Also, only 44 per cent of women in the labour force were employed compared to 69 per cent of men.<sup>118</sup> These trends reflect the fact that labour markets are gender biased and follow gender stereotyped divisions of labour. Moreover, women often work in social sectors that offer wages that are 50-60 per cent below what men earn in the formal sector (SDG 5.4). Likewise, rural women have limited opportunities to work apart from in agriculture.<sup>119</sup> Women, who make up a large part of the labour force in agriculture (44.3 per cent), also tend to be low-skilled manual labourers. While they contribute significantly to

115 See the Education Sector Plan 2019-2023 found at <https://resources.norrag.org/resource/576/education-sector-plan-esp-of-uzbekistan-2019-2023>

116 With girls accounting for over 62 per cent of humanities studies.

117 In part-time programmes, women account for 67 per cent and men 33 per cent.

118 See: <https://stat.uz/ru/164-ofytsyalnaia-statystyka-ru/6580-rynok-truda2>

119 Men represent 94.2 per cent of formally employed workers in construction sector and 92.8 per cent in transport, information and communications. Women constitute 76.6 per cent of total workforce in healthcare, social security and sports; 75.6 per cent in education; and 44.3 per cent in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. See Gender statistics of Uzbekistan at <https://gender.stat.uz/ru/>



dehkan (private small plot) farms, only 5.4 per cent are headed by women (SDG 5.a).<sup>120</sup>

The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index, 2019, gives Uzbekistan a score of 70.63 which is the lowest among Central Asian countries.<sup>121</sup> A Presidential Decree on strengthening support to women entrepreneurs envisages the reinforcement of labour legislation in the areas of contracts and women's rights.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, it calls for establishing a Commission for the Protection of the Equality of Women and the creation of strong and coherent state gender machinery (instead of leaving these functions with the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan) (SDG 5.a). Hopefully, efforts in these areas can regain momentum once the pandemic is over.

### Women in politics and public administration (SDG 5.5)

Following elections in December 2019, women's representation in the national parliament (Oliy Majlis) doubled from 16 per cent to 32 per cent - the highest in the Central Asian region and above the global average of 24 per cent. However, only 2.9 per cent of ministerial positions are held by women and all hokims (governors) in 14 regions and Tashkent are held by men.<sup>123</sup> Likewise, only 12 per cent of judges are women, and women in public administration are more likely to work in non-managerial and technical positions.

### Gender-based violence (SDG 5.2)

According to a 2015 survey conducted in Uzbekistan, only 5.8 per cent of women-respondents reported being subjected to physical violence. This low response rate is assumed to be a gross underestimation when compared with regional averages.<sup>124</sup> For example, WHO estimates 23 per cent of women in Central Asia have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, according to an UNFPA study in the EECA region, over 30 per cent of women in Central Asia (excluding Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) reported physical violence.<sup>126</sup> It is believed that underreporting of violence is either the result of pressure, fear of repercussion, or social conditioning. Until the law on violence and harassment against women and girls was passed in September 2019, the

issue had rarely been discussed in public, and there was no legal framework that recognised it as an offence. The cultural acceptance of violence against women remains so high that about 65 per cent of women and 60 per cent of men believe that it is justified for a husband to beat his wife.<sup>127</sup>

Broadly speaking, there is now greater openness to talk about this issue and to address it, including under the national SDG framework. To address the issue of violence against women, in September 2019, Uzbekistan adopted the law on Protecting Women from Harassment and Violence. In addition, the Government established rehabilitation centres with 197 branches covering all districts, as well as a national hotline to help women to receive psychosocial support, legal advice, and to find shelter and protection from perpetrators.

- .....
- 120 FAO. 2019. Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Uzbekistan: Country Gender Assessment Series.
  - 121 World Bank. 2019. Women, Business and the Law, 2019 - A Decade of Reform. The reason for the lower score for Uzbekistan was cited as establishment of mandatory retirement ages that are unequal for men (60 years) and women (55 years). This has recently been abolished and both men and women now have same mandatory retirement age. Scores from other Central Asian countries were Tajikistan (81.88), Kyrgyzstan (76.88), Kazakhstan (75.63). No data were available for Turkmenistan.
  - 122 Decree No. 4235 of the President dated 07.03.2019 On measures to further strengthen the guarantees for labour rights and support to women's entrepreneurship.
  - 123 The figure of 2.9 percent is from a presentation made by UNFPA to the CCA team (16 October 2019). The number of ministerial positions was initially 5.3 percent which declined due to resignations of some women ministers. Although the Chairperson of the Senate is a woman, she was directly appointed by the President. Source: UNDP. Women's Participation in Public Administration
  - 124 Study by the Institute of Social Research under the Cabinet of Ministers, and UNFPA in 2015.
  - 125 WHO. 2013. Global and regional estimates on violence against women: prevalence and health effect of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, Appendix 2, page 47. Available at: <http://who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en>
  - 126 UNFPA. 2014. Prevalence studies on intimate partner violence and domestic violence in the EECA region. In Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia; pages 24-28. Available at: <http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/WAVE-UNFPA-Report-EN.pdf>
  - 127 UNICEF. 2012. Statistics and Monitoring. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index\\_step1.php](http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_step1.php).

However, due to limited funding support, there were only 14 operational shelters at the onset of COVID-19, while the rest faced staff and resource shortages. These shelters are in need of adequate funding, capacity building, and multi-sector coordination involving police, health and mahallas (local community governing bodies). During the COVID-19 lockdown, there is antidotal evidence to suggest that gender-based violence was on the upswing, although by how much is uncertain. In terms of the pandemic's impact on GBV, while aggregate numbers are not available, the level of demand for GBV hotline services increased fivefold in the first week of the stay-at-home orders. From 2 October to 15 December the hotline received over 6,000 calls out of which 4,800 calls were from women and girls, including 806 cases related to the issues of family conflicts, violence, or harassment in the workplace.

In 2020, quarantine restrictions created barriers to social support services, which have increased the potential for vulnerable families to become over-stressed or abusive. Survivors of GBV during lockdown could not go out to seek help — hotlines and online resources became a source of support to them, and centres for rehabilitation of survivors of gender-based violence continued to operate. The shelters are also facing a shortage of funds to accommodate the increasing number of survivors – predominantly women and children.

The system of GBV shelters, once fully operational, has a strong potential to address the needs of survivors of GBV, but it is evolving and needs support during and in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic. The existing shelters experienced an increase in the number of survivors seeking support. Due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, even operational shelters experienced a sudden drop in the resources they were receiving from local authorities, communities, and private individuals. NGO shelters experienced overcrowding their facilities and increasingly had to refuse to accept survivors because they could not provide space, food, and adequate social distancing.

## Women's rights

The constitution of Uzbekistan guarantees equal rights for women and men. This is further reinforced by the adoption in 2019 of the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities and The Law on Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence (SDG 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.c). The institutional mechanisms for enforcement of the legal rights are:

- The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, which was merged with the newly created Ministry of Mahalla and Family Affairs
- Commission on Gender Equality of the Republic of Uzbekistan (established in 2019)
- Committee of Senate on Women and Gender Issues
- Commission on Women and Family Issues under the Legislative Chamber

While the overall legal environment for women's rights has improved, thanks to the passage or amendment of several laws, the practice on the ground may not have changed much. For example, while the legal age of marriage for girls increased to 18 years (equal to that of boys), marriages of minor girls still take place through unregistered religious ceremony (nikah). Also, divorce petitions by women have to go through Mahalla Reconciliation Committees where women are invariably shown in a bad light and often blamed for destroying the institution of family. This often results in women being forced to go back to their families at the expense of their mental and physical health, or even lives. Finally, while the laws in the country aim to prevent violence against women, they attempt at the same time to preserve the sanctity and unity of family—a dual objective that is sometimes contradictory and works against the rights of women.

Globally, Uzbekistan also ranks poorly on women's rights. For example, National

Geographic's Women, Peace and Security Index ranks Uzbekistan at 89th position out of 167 countries.<sup>128</sup> In the 2020 UNDP Human Development Report, Uzbekistan ranked 106 out of 189 countries in both the Gender Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index.<sup>129</sup> It is further evident that the root causes for women's exclusion, including those with multiple vulnerabilities (e.g., age, disability, HIV status) can be traced to societal attitudes towards women that are reflected in gender stereotyping about women's role in society, discriminatory family obligations and patriarchal norms.

#### 4.7 Sexual minorities

Another population group that faces discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation or identity is the LGBTI<sup>130</sup> community. They are among the most vulnerable and discriminated groups in the country. They face persecution by law enforcement authorities and society alike, and are subjected to physical assaults, insults, and discrimination at the workplace. They also face denial of services, including adequate medical care, damage to their property, and rape attempts based on their sexual orientation. According to the Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network (CAGSAN), law enforcement authorities do not provide enough protection to victims of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SDG 10.3).<sup>131</sup> On 9 May 2018, Uzbekistan underwent the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), accepting 198 out of 212 recommendations received and taking note of 14, 12 of which were LGBTI-related. During the last state reporting before the Human Rights Council, Uzbekistan repeated the governmental position on the rejection of these 12 recommendations.<sup>132</sup>

In March 2020, the Human Rights Committee reviewed the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan and raised its concerns over continuing reports of discrimination, harassment and violence, including extortion, arbitrary arrest, torture and sexual abuse, against LGBTI persons by government officials and private individuals, including in places of deprivation of liberty, and about the mandatory disclosure of private medical information.<sup>133</sup> The high level of

impunity for crimes against LGBTI persons as well as criminalisation of consensual same-sex relations between adult males under article 120 of the Criminal Code undermine LGBTI persons' ability to report violence and discrimination committed against them for fear of prosecution. Also of concern are the lack of a quick, transparent and accessible procedure for legal recognition of gender reassignment and the existing requirement of mandatory psychiatric hospitalisation for a minimum of one month.<sup>134</sup>

#### 4.8 Youth

##### Youth and economic participation

The country is passing through a youth-weighted demographic bulge, which offers an opportunity to tap this demographic potential. However, large sections of youth are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Being NEET is a form of exclusion, and, if this status continues for a long time, it has serious long-term health and welfare implications. Young women are more likely to be in this category, thus overlapping with and perpetuating gender inequality. Youth with disabilities are also more likely to be excluded. With the right and timely investment in health, education and decent employment opportunities, youth can be a driving force to improve the lives of all people and health of the country.

128 See: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/10/peril-progress-prosperity-womens-well-being-around-the-world-feature/>

129 UNDP. 2020. 2020 Human Development Report. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report>

130 Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual, intersexual

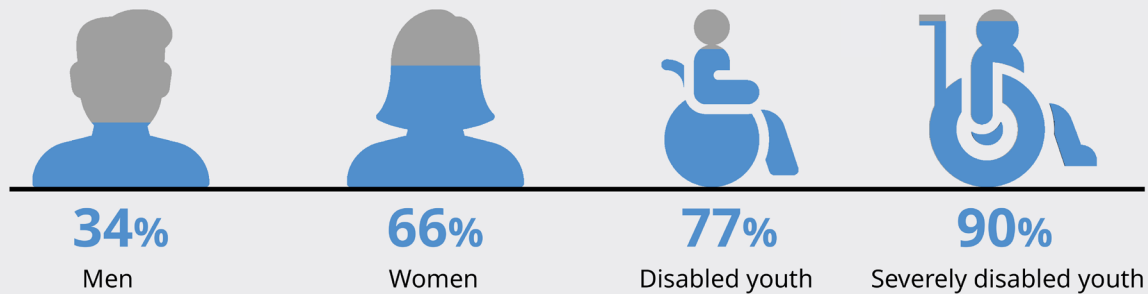
131 Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network (CAGSAN) submission to the Human Rights Council, Working Group on UPR, May 2018

132 Source: <https://ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23602&LangID=E>

133 Source: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/UZB/CO/5](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/UZB/CO/5)

134 Source: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/UZB/CO/5](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/UZB/CO/5)

**Figure 6. Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) (18-30 age cohort)**



Source: UNICEF, 2018

Presently, combined with limited places in higher education and low-quality vocational education and skills (SDG 4), the economy struggles to provide gainful employment for over 600,000 young people entering the labour market every year (SDG 8).<sup>135</sup> Against the overall unemployment rate in 2019 of 9.1 per cent, youth unemployment was 14.9 per cent (SDG 8.5).<sup>136</sup> As a result of the pandemic, youth unemployment is estimated to have increased to approximately 17.1 per cent,<sup>137</sup> leading to even larger numbers of young people becoming NEET. According to a UNICEF study before COVID-19 (2018), NEET youth accounted for about 42 per cent of all youth in the 18-30-year age group, while NEET women accounted for 66 per cent (SDG 8.6).<sup>138</sup> In the recent UNICEF/Youth Task Force study in 2020, the number of NEET youth rose to 54.6 per cent.<sup>139</sup>

Prolonged periods of unemployment can be a major determinant of exclusion and a trigger for social unrest, or worse, violent extremism. With the total labour force projected to grow by 3.5 million between 2020-2030, reaching all 23.5 million people through market reform and historical labour markets will be challenging in the face of demographic trends, especially post-pandemic.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, without employment opportunities at home, many young people will continue to migrate to other countries in search of employment, once the pandemic's economic impacts subside. According to a Ministry of Labour survey (2019), 87.4 per cent of migrants were men and 52 per cent of migrants were in the 16 to 30 age group, although COVID-19 has, as noted earlier, shrunk the total number of migrants considerably.<sup>141</sup>

Consultations with youth in Tashkent city and the regions conducted in 2019 as part of the 2020 CCA revealed that young people face many obstacles in the transition from education to the labour market. These challenges include lack of work experience, mentorship, career guidance in schools, lack of diversity in tertiary education, relevant skills including IT and foreign languages. Corruption in the education system was also cited as a barrier in transitioning from education to employment. Over 60 per cent of young people surveyed said they would prefer to start their own business rather than work as employees.

135 World Bank. 2018. op.cit. Prior to COVID-19, Uzbekistan created 280,000 jobs every year on average against 600,000 jobs needed for demographic reasons alone. The country thus needs to at least double the jobs it creates to absorb new entrants to the labour market.

136 Ibid. As per latest estimates released by the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, the overall unemployment during January-September 2019 was 8.9 percent, youth unemployment was 14.9 percent and female unemployment 12.5 percent.

137 <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/11/14/unemployment/>

138 These estimates were based on a study by UNICEF, 2018. Building a Social Protection System fit for Uzbekistan's children and young people However, the Government estimates of NEET youth are much lower at 22.6 percent. Source: <http://nsdg.stat.uz/goal/11>

139 UNICEF/Youth Task Force. 2020. Youth of Uzbekistan: challenges and prospects. <https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/en/node/1431>

140 According to the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations cited in the PBF Project on Youth in Fergana Valley, 2019

141 Source: <https://mehnat.uz/ru/news/informacionnoe-soobschenie-ministerstva-zanyatosti-i-trudovyh-otnosheniy>



#### Box 4. Youth Focus Groups Discussions

During youth focus group discussions, the following groups were discussed as among the most vulnerable: unemployed youth, young women, youth with disabilities and youth-at-risk. Youth-at-risk includes youth infected and affected by HIV, drug- and alcohol-using youth, sex workers, trafficked youth, youth in orphanages or correctional homes, out-of-school youth, school drop outs, youth in conflict with the law, youth exploited for labour, victims of violence or abuse, migrants, LGBTI youth, and youth stigmatised for their ethnic identities.

Source: UNICEF/Youth Task Force. 2020. Youth of Uzbekistan: challenges and prospects. <https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/en/node/1431>

The root causes for youth being excluded can be traced to the societal attitudes towards them, especially those with overlapping vulnerabilities (e.g., youth NEET, youth at-risk, in conflict with law, and disabilities). The underlying causes include insufficient and ineffective policy, legal and institutional framework for supporting youth and insufficient economic growth to absorb labour. The education system, although being reformed, is still in need of greater flexibility and modernisation to prepare youth for the emerging requirements of skills in the market. Youth voices are not heard in decision making, and NEET youth are often referred to as “unorganised youth” in government publications.

#### Youth well-being and security

While it is important to promote the economic empowerment of youth through education, skills and employment, youth still face considerable challenges beyond their participation in the labour market. Youth health is an important issue and awareness is low concerning healthy lifestyles, reproductive health, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Eastern Europe and the Central Asia region have the second highest growth rate of new HIV cases. As significant numbers of young people engage in seasonal labour migration, there is concern that this number could grow. The results of testing for 2.5 million migrants by the Russian authorities in 2017 showed that migrants from Uzbekistan are among the top three countries

with the highest number of new HIV cases registered.<sup>142</sup> At the same time, promoting healthy lifestyles among youth is equally important and addressing youth health issues early on in their lives significantly reduces the incidence of non-communicable diseases (SDG 3.4 and 3.5).

Radicalisation of youth is also a serious concern, especially so for those with prolonged unemployment.<sup>143</sup> Youth in Uzbekistan, especially in the Fergana Valley with its densely populated multi-ethnic communities and high migration rates, have been exposed to radical ideology and messaging.<sup>144</sup> Working to prevent violent extremism, by providing psychological and social support to migrants, has been a key feature of many UN interventions.

Above all, there is a need to provide space to youth so their voices can be heard and to participate in decision-making. This was the recurring theme in focus group discussions with youth conducted during the 2019 consultations. The high number of youths not engaged in education, training or employment makes it all the more pressing that their hopes, creativity, and energy are positively channeled.

#### Youth and changing dependency ratios

Presently, Uzbekistan has a young population with over 33 per cent of the population below 18 years old and 24 per cent between 18-30 years (i.e., 57 per cent below 30 years old).<sup>145</sup> The graph below shows that the current dependency ratios are favourable, meaning that an engaged and more youthful workforce can support an aging population. However, this window of demographic opportunity will not remain open for long. The young population will begin to age and the ratio will become unfavourable in around 2048. It is therefore urgent that investment in children and young people is made now as age cohorts begin to shift in the next 15-20 years.

142 See: <http://afew.org/interesting-to-know/hiv-and-migration-in-central-asia-and-the-russian-federation/>

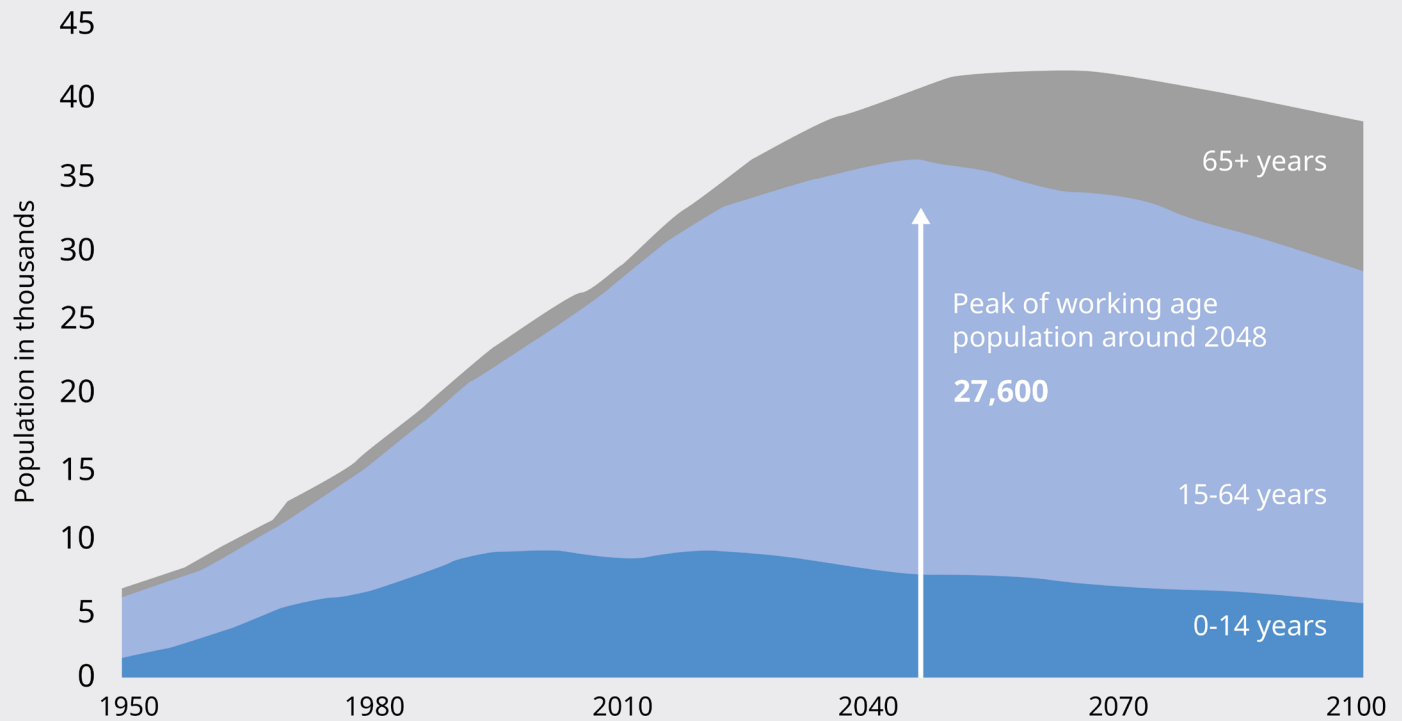
143 UNDP. 2019. Youth for Social Harmony in Fergana Valley, PBF Project Concept Note

144 See for example: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/ferghana-valley-syria-and-beyond-brief-history-central-asian-foreign-fighters>

145 UNICEF. 2018. Generation 2030 Uzbekistan. *Investing in children and young people to reap the demographic dividend*. Tashkent



**Figure 7. Composition of total population by age groups 1950-2100**



Source: UNICEF/Youth Task Force. 2020. *Youth of Uzbekistan: challenges and prospects*. <https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/en/node/1431>

#### 4.9 People with disabilities

According to research by the UN and World Bank, there are 780,000 people with disabilities in Uzbekistan. Yet according to government data, only 670,800 people are registered as disabled, which points not only to a weak system of disability assessment, but significant under coverage of people with disabilities by the national social security system (SDG 1.3).<sup>146</sup> According to another estimate, 2.7 per cent of children have some form of disability and 1.3 per cent of children have a severe disability.<sup>147</sup> About one-third of young people with disabilities are unable to complete any diploma-granting programme (SDG 4.5), and about 77 per cent of young people with severe disabilities and 91 per cent of young people with profound disabilities are likely to be unemployed (SDG 8.5).<sup>148</sup> In general, underreporting remains a major challenge and impedes developing appropriate policies and programmes for equal participation.

Children and people with disabilities are more likely to be excluded from mainstream education,

adequate health care, employment, and social life than their non-disabled peers. People with mental disabilities are worse off and face social stigma.<sup>149</sup> For example, children with disabilities are less likely to leave their homes to socialise, only half as likely to visit a theatre or cinema, and only one-third as likely to eat out or go to a café as children who do not have disabilities.<sup>150</sup> Moreover, the education system segregates children with disabilities which re-enforces stigmatisation. There is also a biased attitude by employers who are reluctant to employ people

146 Project on Social Protection for Joint SDG Trust Fund, UN, Uzbekistan, 2019

147 UNICEF. 2019. op.cit.

148 Ibid.

149 In a survey, the respondents were less willing to accept people with intellectual disabilities than with physical disabilities [Situation analysis on children and adults with disabilities in Uzbekistan, UN in Uzbekistan, May 2019

150 Situation analysis on children and adults with disabilities in Uzbekistan (SITAN), UN in Uzbekistan, May 2019

with disabilities which further limits employment and skills development.<sup>151</sup> The coverage of children and people with disabilities under social protection schemes is also inadequate and shrinking, and the higher related costs incurred by people with disabilities are not recognised in any social protection scheme.<sup>152</sup> The Child Disability Benefit, for example, reaches only a little over half of children with severe disabilities (SDG 1.3).<sup>153</sup>

Medical approaches to disability assessments fail to distinguish between disease and impairment, and heavy reliance on institutionalisation are key reasons contributing to exclusion. Official data show that in 2016 there were 26,500 children (of which 63 per cent had disabilities) living in various types of residential institutions. Most of these children belong to poor households, and Uzbek law does not recognise the right of people with disabilities to independent living.

The pandemic has no doubt only exacerbated these trends. This was revealed, during the Monthly Marathon on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, from 3 November to 3 December 2020, which was conducted by the OHCHR, Association of Persons with Disabilities, National Media Company UzReport and OSCE. According to the parents of children with disabilities, their children were left out of school due to closures, especially those who have eye problems, who should have been attending specialised schools. The situation was made worse for families without access to Internet or TV at homes. When the schools were re-opened, there were reports of a number of violent incidents against children with disabilities.<sup>154</sup>

Effective response to disability requires early intervention and a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to assessment and provision of social services. In Uzbekistan, doctors are not trained to create individual rehabilitation plans, and a recent UN survey reveals many devices needed by disabled people are not available. From the total number of people with disabilities needing personal devices and products, only a tiny fraction received them from government organisations. Moreover, children with disabilities have significantly greater unmet needs for movement and self-care assistive devices, aids for better hearing and communicating as well as hygiene and sanitation products.<sup>155</sup>

Women with disabilities, who make up a little over 42 per cent of all people with disabilities, are doubly disadvantaged.<sup>156</sup> Gender-based violence faced by women with disabilities, at the hands of friends and even close relatives, is much higher than for women without disabilities. Women with disabilities also face multiple forms of discrimination including access to education, employment, healthcare, and justice (SDG 1.4, 5.1).

Large numbers of people with disabilities also remain disenfranchised because of the lack of physical access and lack of information in a format that is suitable for people with disabilities. Some progress has been made to improve access to voting, and during the 2016 presidential elections polling stations were made step-free, ballots were made available in braille, and voting from home was authorised for persons with limited mobility.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, the disabled are also unrepresented in elections, political appointments, and in policymaking.

A key challenge to providing timely and effective rehabilitation and independent living support to people with disabilities is the lack of social services, including professional social workers available to care for and counsel people with disabilities. These personalised services should, in theory, deliver a set of medical, legal, social, psychological, educational and other measures to improve the quality of their lives, create opportunities to be an active part of society,

.....

151 The Law on Social Protection of People with Disabilities regulates the employment of people with disabilities. The positive actions under the law, like introducing quotas, entitlement to full salary while working part-time, extended annual leave, etc. have discouraged employers from engaging workers with disabilities to avoid additional financial burden. See UN in Uzbekistan. 2019. Situation analysis on children and adults with disabilities in Uzbekistan (May 2019).

152 Project proposal on Social Protection for Joint SDG Fund, UN Uzbekistan, 2019

153 Ibid.

154 For examples of violence against children with autism at specialized schools, see: <https://www.facebook.com/100008522645555/posts/2499509090343155/?d=n>.

155 UN in Uzbekistan. 2019. op.cit. 9

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid.

and live more independently. The coverage of such services is lacking because of a lack of both experts and awareness about services, and because social work and rehabilitation still takes a medical approach rather than a community-based approach.<sup>158</sup>

Finally, while the Government has acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention has not been ratified. A possible reason for non-ratification appears to be the high budget allocations required to comply with the terms of the Convention, especially for improved access, mobility aids, retrofitting infrastructures, etc. Despite the national legal framework for people with disabilities, it does not, in practice, reflect current laws and so does not adequately protect disabled people from discrimination and exclusion. The new law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (October 2020) is remarkable for introducing principles of non-discrimination, equal opportunities, promoting access to physical, social, economic

and cultural environment, and encouraging engagement of persons with disabilities in political affairs. It establishes a special council dedicated to the disabled, the inter-agency body for disability affairs, to coordinate the governmental policies and actions on disability. Likewise, disabled peoples’ organisations can participate in its sessions as per the law.

To promote their right to housing, the disabled are prioritised in government-sponsored development programmes. Their rights to education, employment and information and accessible environment are detailed. One shortcoming of the new law is that the definition of disability remains focused on the medical condition of the individual, not the social model which focuses on how to ensure the disabled can enjoy their rights through an accessible environment. The law also has gaps on access to justice, the right to family, and to decent living standards.



158 Ibid.

## 5. Multidimensional Risk Analysis

This section updates the multidimensional risk analysis that was conducted in the earlier CCA, by taking into account COVID-19 and the ensuing restrictions and hardships that resulted. Both before and after the pandemic, there are numerous risks that can impact Uzbekistan's development, potentially hindering national efforts to achieve SDGs, exacerbate inequalities and exclusion, and impede the country in reaching its obligations under international human rights laws. The current CCA follows the suggested 12-factor multidimensional risk analysis established by the UN (Annex D), with updates for COVID-19.

Even before COVID-19, the interlinkages and speed of reforms in economic, environmental and governance entailed a risk of derailing the country's progress. Large-scale legislative amendments and new policy interventions pose considerable challenges, especially if attention is not paid to the national capacity to manage these reforms, if internal resistance from vested interests is not managed, or if ordinary people's aspirations are not met. It is important, therefore, that the reforms continue to be implemented in an inclusive and transparent manner. There are positive signs in this respect, including the parliamentary elections held in December 2019; establishment of the bicameral Parliamentary Commission on SDGs in February 2020; greater freedoms for media and civil society; empowerment of institutions of governance, parliament, judiciary, and human rights; and greater openness to regional and international cooperation.

The Government has also tried to manage internal security threats, and there have not been any recent notable terrorist attacks inside the country. However, Uzbek citizens had joined terrorist organisations to fight in Syria and Iraq, and citizens of Uzbekistan have been involved in several high-profile suicide bombings in foreign countries. Uzbekistan has shown global leadership by facilitating the repatriation and rehabilitation of women and children associated with foreign fighters, and thus far, 220 citizens

(mostly women and children) have been returned from Iraq and Syria, and provided with medical, psychological and material assistance, in partnership with the UN.<sup>159</sup> In 2020, the UN supported the Ministry for Mahalla and Family Support to ensure the integration of 95 repatriated children and reintegration services for 356 girls and boys leaving closed institutions. Supervision was provided to 350 community specialists working with children from closed institutions and 57 specialists from regional and district Ministry divisions were trained to develop individual reintegration plans and become case managers of reintegration services. Regional and district level specialists in 14 regions were trained to monitor and supervise reintegration services provided by community specialists and other local stakeholders.

The risk of natural disasters, compounded by climate change, could also be devastating to economic growth and human lives. Since 1951, there has been an observed trend of warming within Uzbekistan, and the annual average temperature has increased by 0.29 °C for each of the last 10 years, with minimum temperatures increasing more than maximum temperatures.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, a gradual increase in the intensity and frequency of events such as droughts, mudflows, sandstorms, and other occurrences is becoming statistically significant.<sup>161</sup> Many of these represent significant risks to key drivers of the economy and threaten to reverse recent gains in human welfare. In turn, along with COVID-19 impacts, this may lead to possible deprivation of people to housing (SDG 11), water (SDG 6) and food supplies (SDG 2), exposure to greater levels of pollution, health problems (SDG 3), and loss of jobs (SDG 8).

159 Source: [https://central.asia-news.com/en\\_GB/articles/cnmi\\_ca/features/2019/10/15/feature-02](https://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2019/10/15/feature-02)

160 Government of Uzbekistan. 2008. The Second National Communication of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the UNFCCC. p. 205.

161 See: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TNC%20of%20Uzbekistan%20under%20UNFCCC\\_english\\_n.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/TNC%20of%20Uzbekistan%20under%20UNFCCC_english_n.pdf)

To increase national resilience to climate change, existing coordination mechanisms for multi-sectoral adaptation planning and implementation at different levels are still in need of strengthening. This can be achieved through building technical capacity in climate change information, deploying tools for integration, and improving project development, gender mainstreaming, and monitoring and evaluation across multiple ministries and local authorities. The private sector, NGOs, local communities, the UN, IFIs and other donors also have an important role to play.

Integration of climate change adaptation into developmental planning and processes in Uzbekistan could be supported by the UN through the development and implementation of a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) with a focus on priority climate- and energy-sensitive sectors (agriculture, water, health, emergency situation and buildings) and regions (Aral Sea region). Generally, a NAP is focused on adaptation to climate change impacts by the sectors that are most vulnerable to them and need urgent adaptation measures to increase their climate resilience. The intended result of a NAP is the strengthening of existing frameworks and systems, enhancing capacities of key stakeholders, and expanding the evidence base in order to effectively contribute to the adaptation planning process, and make the country more resilient to climate change impacts and climate risks.

Reducing exposure and building resilience through the efficient use of water, land, and energy resources, reduction of seismic risks (particularly for priority buildings in Tashkent) should also be a government priority.<sup>162</sup> Urban areas are particularly vulnerable to disasters, and cities should be designed to mitigate against these shocks. By the same token, local strategies are needed to reduce disaster risk and enhance resilience in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (towards which the Government has committed to implementing the framework). Joining the Making Cities Resilient Campaign could be another important step towards systematic resilience-building at the local level.

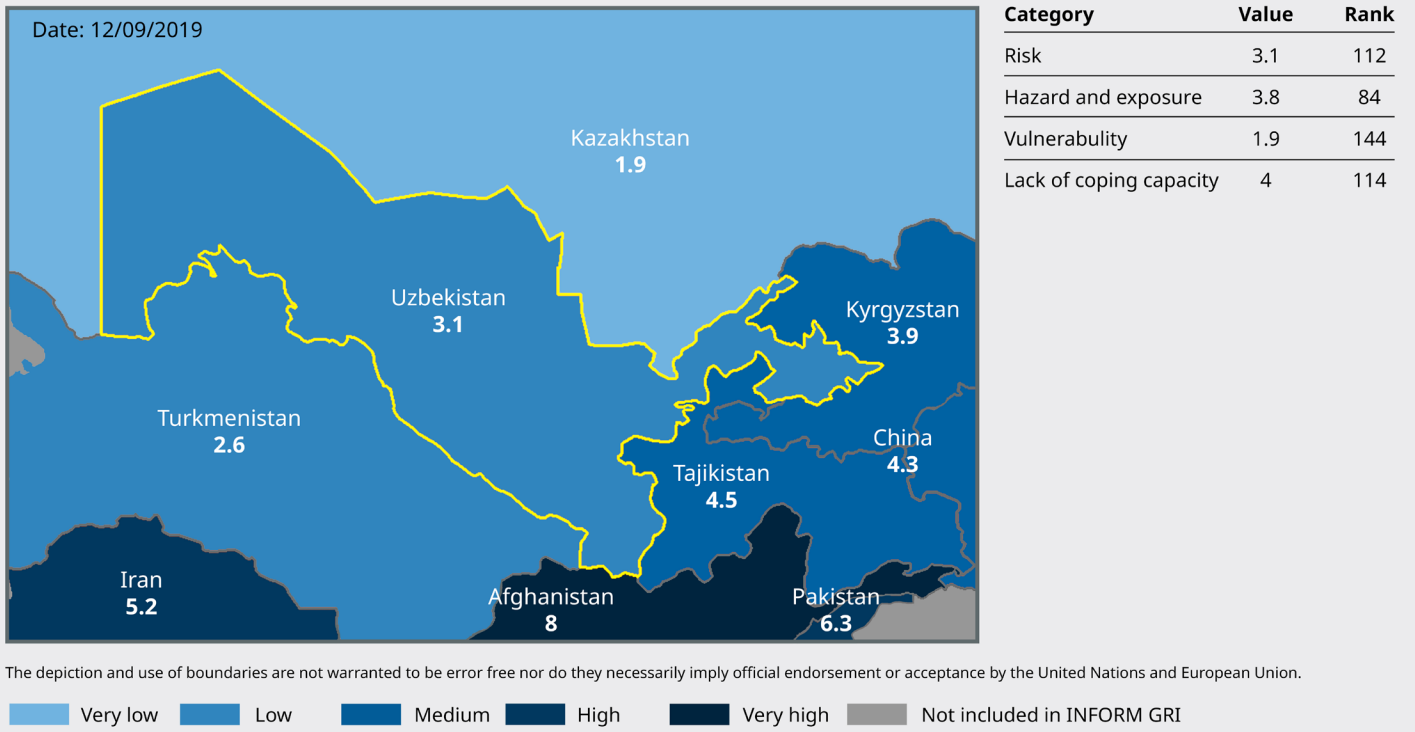
The following figure and table show Uzbekistan's risk profile based on calculations by the European Commission's Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC). Figure 8 shows the risk profile for the countries of Central Asia, with Uzbekistan trailing Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (the lower the number the better the risk profile)<sup>163</sup> and summarises Uzbekistan's risk profile based on different risk values and global ranking out of 192 countries.

.....  
162 Source: <https://www.gfdrr.org/en/uzbekistan>

163 See <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Country-Profile/moduleId/1767/id/386/controller/Admin/action/CountryProfile>

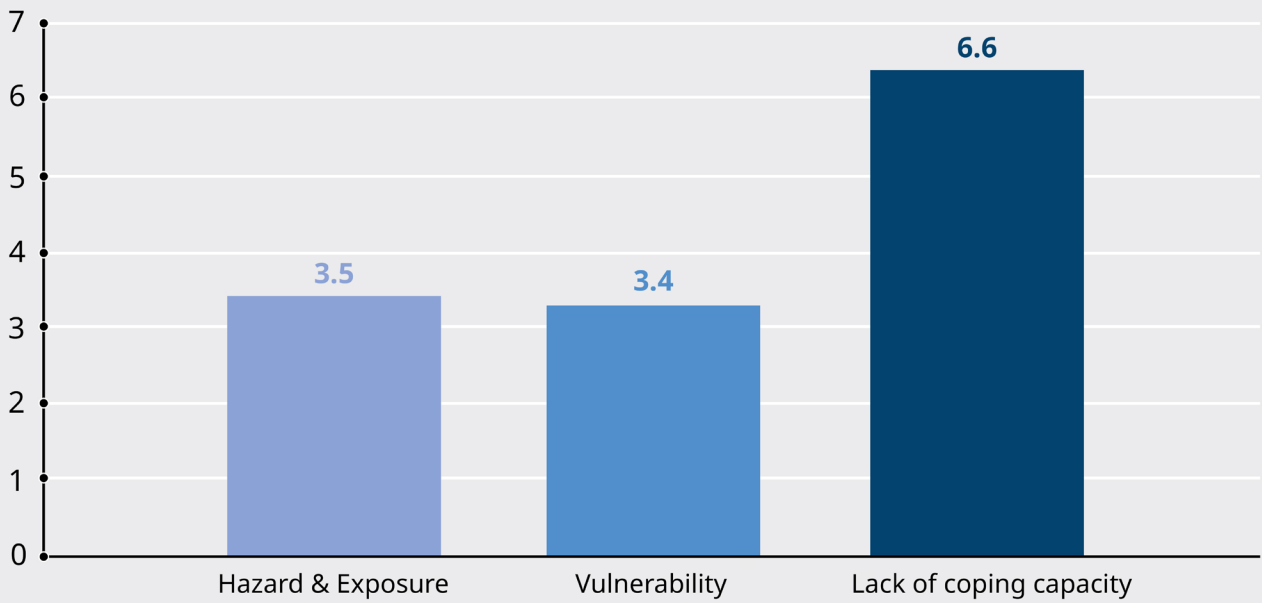


**Figure 8. Global Risk Index, 2020**



More recently, the Commission’s DRMKC has prepared a COVID-19 risk assessment for Uzbekistan as shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9. COVID-19 risk assessment for Uzbekistan**



## 6. Financing the SDGs in Uzbekistan

This section examines the latest trends in financing the SDGs based on the recently completed Development Finance Assessment (DFA). At the outset, it is useful to place SDG financing in the context of potential sources of funding. The following table (Table 2) shows the multiple sources of financing that are potentially available to finance the SDGs.

**Table 2. Potential sources of financial flows for SDGs**

	Public	Private
Domestic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax revenues</li> <li>• Non-tax revenues</li> <li>• Government borrowing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic savings/ investments</li> <li>• Domestic credit</li> <li>• National NGOs</li> </ul>
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official development assistance grants and loans</li> <li>• Other official flows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International financial markets</li> <li>• International NGOs</li> <li>• Foreign direct investment</li> <li>• Remittances</li> </ul>

By the same token, at about 35 per cent of GDP, government spending in Uzbekistan should be made more efficient, transparent, and accountable, notably in the areas of large extra-budgetary and opaque expenditures, weak results orientation, weak internal and external control mechanisms, and insufficient public oversight. Corruption and misuse of public resources are unfortunately still too common. Improvements in these areas, in addition to the creation of a favourable legal and institutional framework for portfolio investment, following development of an effective and efficient capital market, will create opportunities for better mobilisation of resources.

In principle, the programmes and policies to achieve the national SDGs must be mainly funded by domestic resources, both public and private, and, in this regard, the scope for mobilising public domestic revenues is comparatively higher than in other countries in the region. The ratio of budget revenues to GDP is around 25 per cent, comparable with the average for high-income countries and significantly higher than the average for middle-income countries (approximately 20 per cent).<sup>164</sup>

However, even before COVID-19, misalignments and overlaps in policy making are common. For example, strategies are usually not backed by financing plans, without proper KPIs and M&E frameworks, and low alignment to the SDGs. Cost estimates beyond a one-year term are rare and budget processes are centralised, fragmented, and not directly linked to planning documents. This leads to challenges in assessing the impact of policies as well as identifying budget planning priorities. While recent public finance reform aims at a more transparent budgeting process linked to planning priorities, there is still a need to improve public finance/budgeting systems for more effective and efficient public spending.

To increase transparency, the Government started reporting on its SDG spending in its annual Citizens' Budget publication with support from the UN.<sup>165</sup> A preliminary assessment of the spending, conducted for the Citizens Budget 2019, shows 72 per cent of state budget spending related to financing SDGs. In the Citizens Budget 2019, 26.6 per cent of the annual budget went to finance Goal 4 (education), 11 per cent for Goal 3 (health), and 8.6 per cent for Goal 1 (poverty reduction).

164 <https://openbudget.uz/#/>

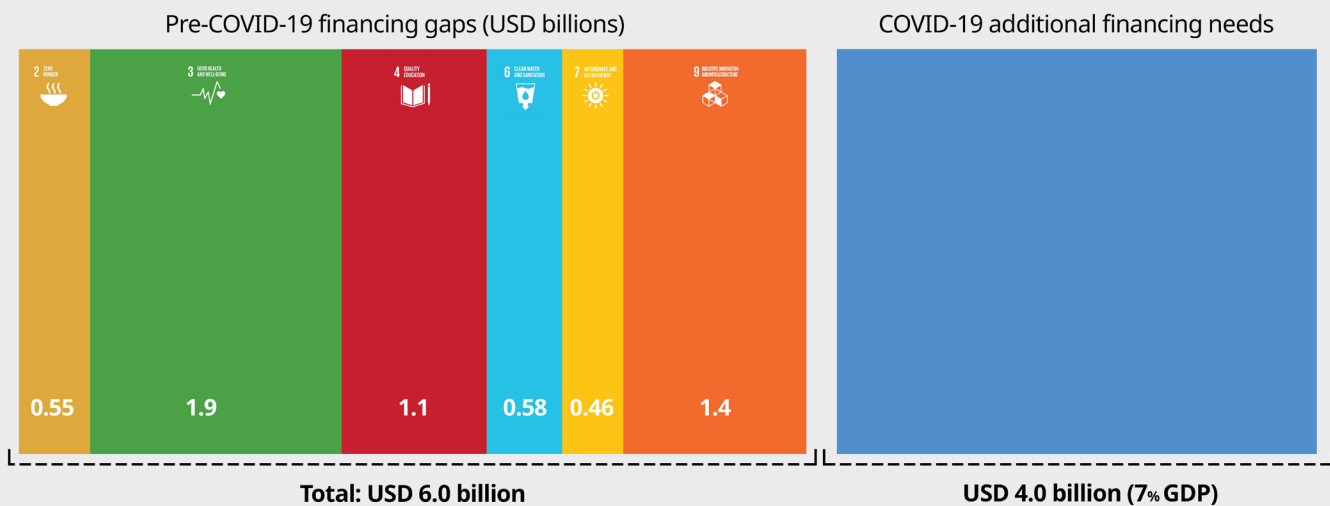
165 <https://openbudget.uz/#/>

Turning to the findings of the DFA conducted by the UN in 2019-2020, the analysis found both promising trends and ongoing challenges. Some of the findings of the DFA are as follows:

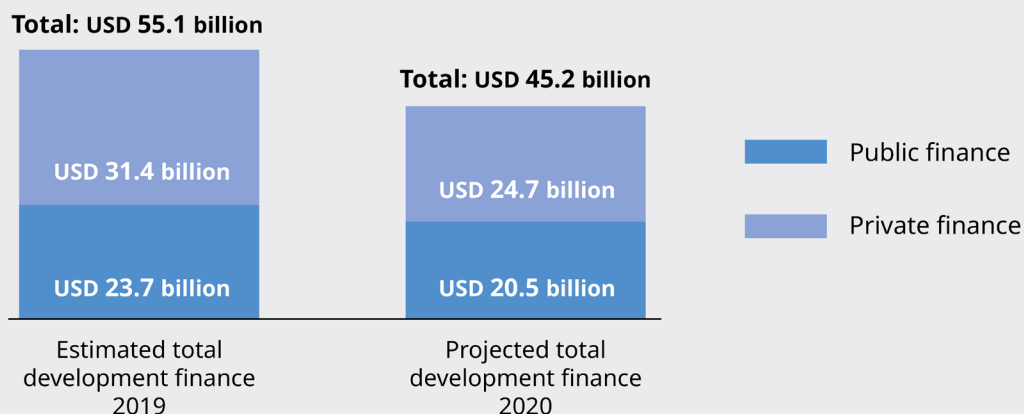
- While the Government remains strongly committed to achieving SDGs, the COVID-19 crisis risks slowing down Uzbekistan's impressive SDG progress. The country's substantial informal sector is leaving a large amount of people vulnerable to the slowdown, driving up poverty and inequality. These socio-economic vulnerabilities are further compounded by environmental threats. In response to the pandemic, the GoU adopted an Anti-Crisis Programme with a USD1 billion fund to support businesses and employment, and to expand social assistance to the most vulnerable.

- Prior to COVID-19, Uzbekistan's available SDG financing was already increasing too slowly to meet the country's financing needs. Estimates from 2019 revealed Uzbekistan needed at least an additional annual investment of USD 6 billion to meet the nationalised SDGs. As of 2020, the IMF estimates that addressing the external shocks and the domestic impact of COVID-19 will require an additional external financing of about USD 4 billion, or 7 per cent of GDP.
- The country's SDG financing gap is projected to further widen in the immediate future. The DFA projected development finance flows will decrease from USD 55.1 billion (94 per cent of GDP) in 2019 to USD 45.1 billion (74 per cent of GDP) in 2020. From 2021 onwards, total available development finance is projected to hover around 77 per cent of GDP.

**Figure 10. Estimated SDG financing needs in Uzbekistan**

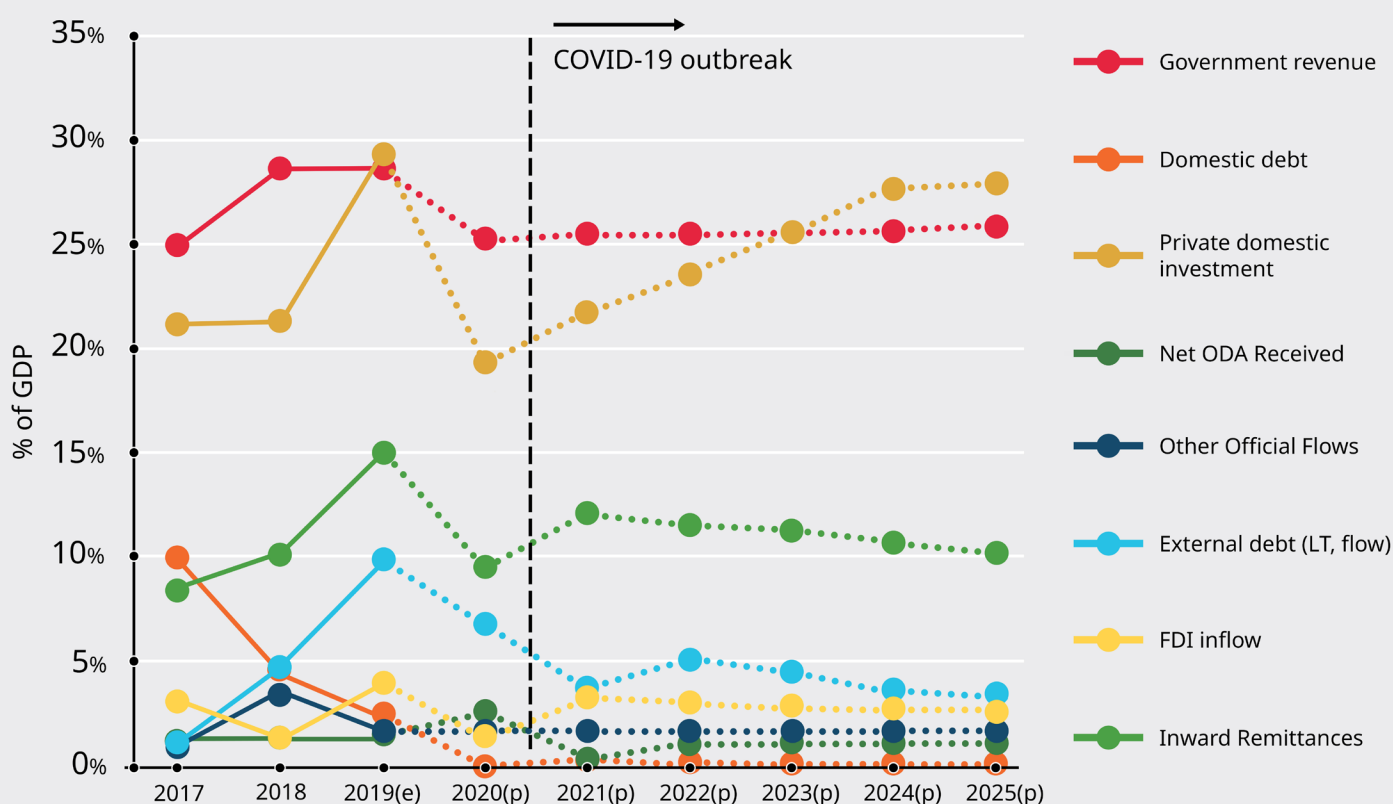


**Figure 11. Estimated available development finance**



- The composition of available development finance in Uzbekistan has changed since 2017. Government revenue and spending dominated development finance flows prior to the COVID-19 crisis, but their share in total development finance is stagnating. Private domestic investment is projected to become the largest flow in the immediate future, pointing to the importance of more effectively engaging the private sector for financing sustainable development in Uzbekistan. Remittances have kept growing and have become an increasingly critical source of external international development finance, significantly larger than FDI and ODA combined.
- Despite significant reform efforts, Uzbekistan’s public financing and planning system remains complex and inefficient. This undermines the effective financing of a sustainable and resilient recovery. Timely implementation of the updated PFM Reform Strategy is critical to progressing towards performance-based budgeting and effectively mainstreaming a medium-term perspective across key budget documents and planning processes. There is significant scope to increase fiscal space for social spending to weather the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through streamlining tax incentives and exemptions and improving public efficiency.

**Figure 12. Shifting composition of development finance in Uzbekistan**



Source: Calculations based on IMF, OECD, Ministry of Finance of Uzbekistan and World Bank data.  
 Note: Estimates and projections account for the impact of COVID-19 as per the latest available IMF data in May 2020.

Table 3 recaps the DFA's main recommendations for harnessing public SDG finance.

**Table 3. DFA main recommendations**

<b>Increase public finance</b>	• Adopt a Medium-Term Revenue Strategy.
	• Establish high-quality monitoring of tax benefits • Build capacity to tackle illicit financial flows.
	• Strengthen the financing of the National Health System.
<b>Promote measures for a greener recovery</b>	• Identify and monitor public and private climate finance to Uzbekistan.
	• Consider reforming fossil fuel subsidies.
	• Strengthen resilience to the impact of climate risks.
	• Develop weather or catastrophe insurance schemes to mitigate against climate risks.
	• Integrate Strategic Environmental Assessments across policies, plans and programs.
<b>Improve the efficiency of public finance management</b>	• Incentivise inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation.
	• Improve SOE governance.
	• Make all existing budgetary data and information publicly accessible.
	• Strengthen effective enforcement of existing anti-corruption measures.
	• Introduce a more transparent system of intergovernmental fiscal transfers.
<b>Mainstream SDGs across budgeting platforms</b>	• Integrate SDGs across the Medium-Term Investment Policy Strategy.
	• Integrate SDG considerations into the Supreme Audit Institution's strategic activities.
<b>Increase aid effectiveness</b>	• Establish a government-led development partner coordination mechanism.
	• Pool grants in a (sectoral) trust fund to untie aid and improve coordination.

- Domestic private investment has been growing as a source of development finance in Uzbekistan. How much of it is state-led versus genuine commercial investments remains hard to identify. The many state-owned enterprises and banks distort the level playing field, critical to developing a thriving private sector. An under-developed banking and financial sector, combined with shallow and illiquid capital markets with high interest rates, limit SME access to credit and the channeling of domestic saving towards financing domestic investments.

- The ongoing political transition and economic liberalisation underpin a slow uptake of FDI and ODA, albeit below their potential. Large infrastructure deficits and persistent perception of high levels of corruption, combined with ineffective dispute settlement mechanisms, limit potential FDI inflows. There remain significant knowledge gaps regarding the SDG alignment of non-commercial private flows, including remittances, philanthropy, and faith-based finance. The COVID-19 crisis has significantly impacted the medium-term prospects of these critical international financial inflows to Uzbekistan.



Table 4 below summarises the DFA's main recommendations for harnessing private SDG finance.

**Table 4. DFA recommendations for harnessing private SDG finance**

<b>Support measures for a job-rich</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonise the COVID-19 SME support measures with an upgraded SME finance policy framework.</li> </ul>
<b>Boost private sector investments in infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversify available bond offerings: green bonds and sukuk.</li> <li>• Develop innovative risk-sharing tools, such as credit guarantee schemes.</li> </ul>
<b>Mainstream SDGs across investment promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream the SDGs across the recently adopted PPP framework &gt; People-first SDGs</li> <li>• Review the SDG alignment and coherence of the BITs and free trade agreements.</li> <li>• Integrate sustainable development criteria across the Investment promotion agency.</li> <li>• Set up a UN Global Compact Local Network</li> </ul>
<b>Harness new sources of private finance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish or expand initiatives to leverage remittances and the diaspora.</li> <li>• Explore the potential of philanthropy to fund SDG targets related to human development.</li> <li>• Access untapped sources of faith-based finance: Zakat.</li> </ul>

- Several cross-cutting institutional challenges limit strengthening Uzbekistan's SDG financing architecture. There is a lack of strategic knowledge regarding the nature and scope of the financing requirements to achieve the national development vision and the SDGs, characterised by no systematic monitoring of development finance trends. Uzbekistan's weak data ecosystem undermines monitoring the impact of different financing policies on the

country's development results. The pandemic and the fast pace of economic reforms have stretched institutional and administrative capacity, compounded by slow progress in developing effective internal and external accountability mechanisms. Combined, these knowledge gaps and institutional limitations undermine a more coordinated and strategic approach to maximise the development impact of the country's scarce development resources.

Table 5 highlights the DFA’s main recommendations for strengthening the enabling environment for SDG financing.

**Table 5. DFA recommendations for strengthening the SDG financing environment**

<b>Address knowledge gaps</b>	• Conduct costing assessment of the national development strategy and priority Sustainable Development Goals and targets.
	• Monitor the contribution of public spending at the level of SDG targets, e.g., Rapid Integrated Assessment
	• Integrate the DFA into the annual budget process.
<b>Build administrative capacity</b>	• Strengthen the Government’s national statistics and capacity to effectively monitor SDG progress and corresponding financing strategies.
	• Building capacity and raising awareness of Parliamentarians regarding the gender and environmental dimensions of SDG financing.

- The DFA argues that financing a durable and resilient recovery from the pandemic requires developing a mid-term comprehensive COVID-19 recovery programme. Such a programme would support simultaneously addressing these cross-cutting challenges and delivering reforms across many aspects of public, private, domestic and international financing, so as to mobilise necessary investments.
- Finally, the DFA argues that operationalising an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) can strengthen national efforts to rebuild better. An INFF would bring together Uzbekistan’s multiple ongoing financing reforms, including the COVID-19 anti-crisis measures, within a coherent, overarching framework that helps prioritise the most strategic ways to finance building back better. An INFF provides strategic guidance about the various public and private finance flows to be mobilised for achieving the nationalised SDG targets according to different financial flows and stakeholders’ comparative advantages.

# 7. Key capacity challenges

Notwithstanding the pandemic, for ongoing structural reforms to succeed significant institutional and capacity development are required. The public administration that ran the former system of top-down, state-controlled, largely public-sector driven development is outmoded, and not fit for purpose. While the Government's response to COVID-19 is to be lauded, the state's role is shifting to more of a policy making and regulatory role which necessitates new sets of skills and competencies. Not only individual capacities must change, but organisational structure, culture and behaviour must align with new requirements.<sup>166</sup>

When compared with other countries, Uzbekistan ranks low against key governance indicators. Interestingly, the country does better in business indicators and the e-governance index, but with respect to the rule of law, democracy and freedom indices, Uzbekistan again ranks poorly. Figure 13 below provides the country's rankings against 23 indices, tracking change over previous years. These rankings are regularly monitored by government, civil society and the private sector. They demonstrate the wide-ranging capacity challenges facing Uzbekistan.

166 World Bank-UN. 2018. op.cit.

Figure 13. Uzbekistan's rankings against 23 governance indices (2020)



## 7.1 Challenges to civil service capacity

A competent civil service is key to service delivery and achievement of the SDGs. An analysis of the civil service in Uzbekistan reveals that lack of accountability is a key factor contributing to the low capacity of the national public administration system. In this regard, the recruitment process of civil servants, which favours nepotism and cronyism, shifts the loyalty of civil servants away from the fulfilment of their constitutional commitments. Similarly, corruption in the civil service remains endemic and culturally tolerated, which is made worse by the weak systems in place to both find and punish those responsible. Strengthening the internal accountability system —including the introduction of digitisation and e-governance with fair, streamlined public procurement, public access to information and decision-making — are important steps towards addressing this concern.

As noted earlier, the Anti-corruption Agency was established in 2020 with a mandate focused largely on prevention. The Agency is authorised to consider individual complaints, carry out administrative investigations on corruption offences, transfer documentation to law enforcement bodies for decision making on criminal investigations, and study materials related to criminal cases with a view to identifying corruption-related trends and patterns. In its initial stage, the Agency requires support for its institutional development and capacity building in law enforcement, as well as support in legislative drafting, anticorruption policy and strategy development, exercising the UNCAC implementation review mechanism and other key functions.

There is also disproportionate favouring of support staff over professional staff which starves the civil service of much-needed technical skills and impedes the improvement of public service delivery. Moreover, a punitive culture is still present in the system which leads staff to be risk adverse, precisely at a time when innovation is most needed. Performance evaluations of civil servants are only done by their direct supervisors with no oversight assessment

mechanism, including from citizens who are the clients of the service delivery.<sup>167</sup> These factors are compounded by the fact that there is no central personnel or human resources related agency that would be able to independently manage recruitment, undertake performance assessments, track career progression, carry out removal from service, develop civil service ethics, or undertake major restructuring of civil service systems.

Central ministries and policymaking functions normally attract the best professional staff, depriving local administrative levels of the technical and administrative skills needed for local service delivery. As a result, local planning, budgeting and execution capacities suffer. Finally, even though Uzbekistan is a party of the ILO Conventions on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining, labour law enforcement remains weak, affecting the ability of civil servants to exercise their labour rights.<sup>168</sup> This results in sub-optimal working conditions for civil-servants, such as long-working hours and weeks, harassment and abuse of authority. These factors, in turn, result in poor performance, low work satisfaction and reduced efficiency of public services.

At the NGO level, capacity constraints are common. Rapid needs and capacity assessment of women's NGOs conducted by UNFPA (35 NGOs participated) revealed considerable shortages in capacities as well as financial difficulties for these NGOs. Almost half of them do not have the knowledge and skills to implement their relevant programmes, and there are gaps between the required professional skills and the existing staff. Similarly, almost half of these NGOs have unstable funding sources.

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167 UNDP. 2019. Report on Civil Service Reform in Uzbekistan (unpublished). See also UNDP project document on Support to Civil Service Reform and Digital Transformation.

168 See ILO C87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention; and C98 on Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention.

## 7.2 Lack of policy coherence and organisational constraints

Uzbekistan has put in place some institutional mechanisms for horizontal coordination on sustainable development issues at the national level, such as the Inter-ministerial Council on SDGs. The Coordination Council has not met since its establishment in October 2018, although the chairman has approved a few documents supporting the implementation of the SDGs, such as decisions on the approval and revisions of the list of national SDG indicators, and the roadmap on VNR preparation. By the same token, ownership of the SDG agenda is not consistent across all government ministries and agencies, which is also evidenced by the different levels of integration of SDGs in sector policies and strategies.

Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the SDGs also needs to be strengthened. For example, Uzbekistan does not apply the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) tool discussed above to increase policy coherence and integration of its existing environmental commitments and green economy priorities into sectoral policies.<sup>169</sup> Another aspect of the lack of policy coherence in sustainable development is the uneven attention given to the triad of social, economic and environmental priorities, with the result that policy choices made are generally neither reinforcing nor synergistic.<sup>170</sup>

In a similar fashion, capacities for coordination among international development agencies working in Uzbekistan require strengthening, to reduce duplication in donor projects, strengthen platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue, and to ensure an open online aid information management system (AIMS) for donors.<sup>171</sup> Attention to these issues will enhance coherent development results. The Aral Sea Advisory Council, launched in 2020, may provide an important step forward in this regard.

Procurement and financial reporting systems in the country do not meet international standards.<sup>172</sup> As such, donors have to create project implementation units with parallel procedures and reporting systems. These increase transaction costs by requiring more administration and coordination efforts.

Frequent staff transfers and administrative reorganisations in ministries result in a loss of institutional memory, thus undermining the capacity of the civil service. Without documentation and knowledge management, individuals, rather than organizations, learn which policies worked and which did not. Decision-making processes are also opaque and business rules are not made public. Therefore, multi-layered decision-making often involves multiple departments within the same ministry dealing with multiple partners over similar issues.

Nor is policy costing yet inherent in policymaking process. Multiple sector policies have been or are being generated with little information on associated operating costs. This results in lost opportunities to gain cost-efficiencies by seeing mutually reinforcing policies in more cohesive and integrated ways.

Finally, there is a lack of performance-based budgeting and inadequate links between budgetary outlays and achieving programme objectives. Public financial management capacities lack the capacity to examine planning and budgeting in an integrated and holistic manner. In short, budget execution capacity is challenged, which risks donor confidence in local systems and fails to meet people's expectations.<sup>173</sup>

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169 Ibid.

170 World Bank-UN. 2018. op. cit.

171 Source: [https://www.uz.undp.org/content/dam/uzbekistan/docs/projectdocuments/egu/Uzb\\_UN\\_pdf\\_Aid%20Effectiveness%20Project%20Document\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.uz.undp.org/content/dam/uzbekistan/docs/projectdocuments/egu/Uzb_UN_pdf_Aid%20Effectiveness%20Project%20Document_Eng.pdf)

172 See: <https://www.pefa.org/node/196>

173 Ibid.



### 7.3 Civil society and citizen engagement

For the Government's reform agenda to succeed and SDG localisation to work, broad-based citizen consultation and engagement are required to build popular support. Without this feedback loop, market-oriented reforms can impact population groups unevenly (SDG 16.7). Old laws severely limiting civil society activities are slowly being replaced, creating more positive and collaborative relations between the state and civil society. Moreover, the National Action Strategy specifically recognises the "need of further development of civil society institutions and improvement of their social and political activism", and the Presidential Decree on civil society has paved the way for the Government to open dialogue with citizens on reforms.<sup>174</sup>

Nevertheless, for a robust and lively civil society to flourish in Uzbekistan, that acts as a partner in sustainable development, further steps are necessary to liberalise current legislation on the role of NGOs in Uzbekistan's governance ecosystem. Current laws governing NGO registration, financing, travel and events are excessively restrictive and are not in compliance with international standards. This means that civil society capacity to monitor government reform, or to act as a countervailing force against arbitrary state action, remains limited. Although the country reportedly has 9,200 registered NGOs, it is estimated that most of these are quasi-state entities, non-operational, and/or entities focused on very limited issue areas.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, independent NGOs dealing with critical or sensitive issues (e.g., sexual minorities, former prisoners, human rights violations) are not able to register, and groups trying to cover these issues have reportedly faced harassment and intimidation.<sup>176</sup>

Increasing outreach from the President's office has led to the gradual increase in communication with citizens, including more open dialogue on the policies that are being implemented. To broaden citizen engagement, the President launched Virtual Receptions, at various public places as part of the Year of the Dialogue with People.<sup>177</sup> The receptions have been received well by the public and receive about 100,000 petitions every month.<sup>178</sup> However, capacity of staff to respond adequately to grievances is reportedly limited.

There has also been some progress in liberalising the space for media including independent journalists and bloggers, and the highest level of Government and Parliament has emphasised the importance of freedom of the press. However, self-censorship continues around some sensitive issues along with some reports of intimidation of journalists.<sup>179</sup>

One factor that can strengthen civil society capacity is effective enforcement of the law on the right to information. This would enable citizens to directly hold the state accountable for its actions by demanding information on how decisions are made, how public money is spent, and how contracts are awarded, among other things. In turn, this would ensure greater transparency by acting as a deterrent against the arbitrary exercise of official power, corruption, and inefficiency. However, despite related laws being enacted in 1997 and 2002, the enforcement of these has been weak due to the challenges cited above.<sup>180</sup> A new draft law on rallies, meetings and demonstrations may further limit space for civil society. The law violates international norms and contradicts the constitutional guarantee of right to assembly.<sup>181</sup>

174 Decree on Measures to Fundamentally Enhance the Role of Civil Society Institutions in the Process of Democratic Renewal of the Country dated 4 May 2018,

175 Source: <https://silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/1803-Bowyer-Uzbekistan.pdf> (p. 54)

176 <https://cabar.asia/en/why-is-it-difficult-to-open-an-ngo-in-uzbekistan/>

177 A new version of the virtual reception system of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was launched in 2018. See: [http://ombudsman.uz/en/press\\_center/news/uzbekistan/a-new-version-of-the-virtual-reception-system-of-the-president-of-the-republic-of-uzbekistan-has-bee/](http://ombudsman.uz/en/press_center/news/uzbekistan/a-new-version-of-the-virtual-reception-system-of-the-president-of-the-republic-of-uzbekistan-has-bee/)

178 Virtual Reception of the President of Uzbekistan. URL: <https://pm.gov.uz/>

179 Uzbekistan: Journalists Prosecuted, Harassed. (2018, March 28). URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/27/uzbekistan-journalists-prosecuted-harassed>

180 See <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/a-new-era-for-press-freedom-in-a-changing-uzbekistan/>, and <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25056&LangID=E>

181 For a critique of this law, see: International Center for Not-for-Profit Law. 2019. Overview of the Draft Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Rallies, Meetings and Demonstrations.

## 8. Cross-border and transboundary perspectives

Uzbekistan is unique in the region as it shares borders with all other Central Asian countries and Afghanistan and is one of only two double landlocked countries in the world. Under President Mirziyoyev, the country prioritised improved relations with its neighbouring countries, which provides the context for keeping borders safe and open. This priority created new opportunities to improve trade relations with neighbouring countries and to promote legal transit of goods and people. Needless to say, COVID-19 restrictions curtailed cross-border relations for much of 2020, but it is still the common understanding that improved relations can be a trigger for greater export facilitation, through establishing transport corridors and initiating local economic development around these corridors at border areas. COVID-19 may have also presented an opportunity to accelerate the digitalisation of trade and transport as a means to minimising physical interaction and facilitate cross-border flows of information and goods.

Sharing of water and energy, a source of past conflict, may now be more easily resolved through mutual benefit. Similarly, constructive approaches and responses to disasters are more likely now. For example, the Aral Sea disaster, which has had a dreadful impact on agriculture, health, fishing, and the environment, requires transboundary cooperation, now more possible than ever before, thanks to improved relations between Uzbekistan and its neighbours in Central Asia.<sup>182</sup>

As COVID-19 restrictions subside, cross-border human trafficking in persons (TIP) is another issue where enhanced regional and international cooperation will continue to be required. The Government reports making significant progress in the prevention of TIP. Pursuant to the Presidential Decree of 30 July 2019 on Additional Measures to Further Advance the System of Countering Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor, Uzbekistan has implemented a range of measures to tackle these problems, such as reorganizing the Interagency Anti-TIP

Commission into a National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor and introduced the institution of a National Rapporteur; ii) including NGOs into the territorial sub-commissions that are headed by regional governors; and iii) adopting a Roadmap for implementation of the anti-TIP policy taking into account the recommendations of the “Cotton Campaign” and “Human Rights Watch” (SDG 10.7 and 16.2). Furthermore, in August 2020, the Government updated the anti-human trafficking law, which introduced a new definition of trafficking in persons, measures for prevention, revised procedures for prosecution as well as the eventual establishment of a national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking. The Criminal Code, which is also being rewritten, likewise increases the penalties for child and forced labour and introduces a new crime of trafficking new-born infants. According to the National Commission report, the number of crimes related to trafficking in persons decreased by 22 per cent, thanks to “solid prevention and organisational measures.”<sup>183</sup>

However, despite this progress, challenges remain, notably in relation to identification of victims of trafficking, victim support mechanisms, as well as investigation and prosecution. According to National Commission, in 2019 only 94 claims out of total 710 were used to open a criminal case. Moreover, the clandestine nature of the crime and the victims’ general feeling of shame that prevents some from reporting to law enforcement may also signal that the data available are not necessarily complete and representative of the full scale and prevailing trends of TIP crimes.

182 In October 2019, Uzbekistan took over the chairmanship of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) from Turkmenistan. As a Chair, Uzbekistan will coordinate implementation of the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development of Central Asia (REP4SD CA) until 2030, which was approved by ICSD representatives at the regional meeting on 24 October 2019 in Nukus, organized on the margins of the international conference Aral Sea Region.

183 Source: <http://www.senat.uz/ru/lists/view/1537>

According to the 2020 U.S. State Department annual Trafficking in Persons Report, Uzbekistan remained on the Tier 2 Watch List for the third consecutive year.<sup>184</sup> A Tier 2 country is defined as one that does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The report also recommended the Government of Uzbekistan to increase investigations and criminally prosecute persons complicit in human trafficking, including officials involved in mobilising forced labour.

The number of reported new psychoactive substances (NPS) and synthetic drugs has been increasing in Uzbekistan in recent years.<sup>185</sup> The scope of the NPS market is so far unclear for Uzbekistan, although a future risk of increased trafficking of NPS exists. Uzbek media and social networks recently reported on an alarming abuse of synthetic cannabinoids and non-medical use of pharmaceuticals by youth. Injecting NPS increases risks of hepatitis C and HIV infection. Seizures of NPS increased from 158 grams for the mid-year of 2019 to 1,205 grams for the same period of 2020 (+664 per cent). Seizures of NPS by law enforcement agencies, as well as data from an independent study (supported by UNODC) on Internet sales of NPS confirm their availability in the illicit market in Uzbekistan.<sup>186</sup>

Uzbekistan's border with Afghanistan carries both opportunities and risks of drug trafficking, crime, and radical extremism. Uzbekistan also has played a leading role in championing collective, Central Asia-wide cooperation with Afghanistan. This includes cooperation to control the illegal movement of illicit drugs, transnational crime, and terrorism, in addition to positive cooperation to help Afghanistan's stability and development (SDG 16.4). For example, opium production in Afghanistan was 6,400 metric tons in 2019, which was 29 per cent less than 9,000 tons in 2017.<sup>187</sup> So far, the country has managed these risks well but with a return to greater border openness, the risks increase.<sup>188</sup> In addition, the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine has been reported in recent years by Afghanistan.<sup>189</sup> Seizures of amphetamine type stimulants (ATS) increased by almost six-fold in

2019 compared with 2018,<sup>190</sup> which indicates the growth of ATS trafficking in Afghanistan as well as a potential risk of further smuggling of ATS through the Central Asian countries bordering Afghanistan, including Uzbekistan.

There are a number of other positive trends in regional cooperation. For example, during a visit to Uzbekistan, the president of Kazakhstan promised to boost bilateral trade to USD 5 billion by 2020, but this target was not met because of the pandemic. The two countries also introduced the Silk Visa to allow visitors with a visa issued by either country to visit the other one. The Uzbekistan President also signed 27 agreements with Tajikistan during his visit to Dushanbe, including restarting flights between the two countries, mutual visa-free travel, resumption of electricity exports from Tajikistan to Uzbekistan, and Uzbek gas exports to Tajikistan. According to the World Bank's 2019 Country Economic Update, bilateral trade between the two countries increased from USD 238 million in 2017 to USD 389 million in 2018. Uzbekistan is also a member of several regional organisations including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SDG17.6).

184 See <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf>

185 UNODC. 2017. Central Asia Synthetic Drug Situation Assessment. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/Central\\_Asia\\_November\\_2017\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/Central_Asia_November_2017_FINAL.pdf).

186 UNODC, DRUGSTAT, 2020. Study on Impact of COVID-19 on Internet Sales of Psychoactive Substances in EECA (in Russian).

187 Ibid. The decline in production was due to drought conditions and lower market prices.

188 Drug seizures in Uzbekistan have declined which the Government attributes to enhanced interdiction efforts and changing pattern of drug trafficking from Afghanistan. All kinds of crime, including drug-related crimes, have also declined, and so have number of cases of human trafficking. Source: UNODC Brief on Uzbekistan prepared for 2020 CCA.

189 UNODC, 2020. World Drug Report 2020. <https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2020/index.html>

190 Data provided by CARICC to the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia.

With the support of the Central Asian Regional Environmental Centre (CAREC), cooperation in the energy sector has also improved. Energy ministers from nine countries signed an agreement in Tashkent in September 2019. This is a step towards establishing a Regional Energy Market to ensure clean, reliable and affordable supply of electricity to all the CAREC member-states. Tourism development is another important area for cooperation under CAREC.

Similarly, Uzbekistan takes part in regional coordination and information sharing in the sphere of disaster risk reduction, initiated and organised by the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction in Kazakhstan. In September 2020, Uzbekistan participated in the Central Asia UN member States regional dialogue on COVID-19; Uzbekistan participates in the annual regional Forum of Heads of National Disaster Management Agencies; the country is engaged in developing the regional strategy for disaster risk reduction and contributes to compiling the regional risk profile.

After several years of consideration, Uzbekistan is now a constructive participant in the UN's Special Programme for Central Asia Regional Cooperation (SPECA). SPECA is now entering a new stage of development, during which Uzbekistan is expected to contribute. The

country also joined other Central Asian countries and Afghanistan in adopting the SPECA Strategy on Innovation for Sustainable Development. It calls for knowledge-sharing and cooperation in importing and creating innovative solutions to national and regional sustainable development challenges (SDG17.6). Uzbekistan is also a signatory to the Bishkek Declaration "Strengthening Regional Cooperation to Support Socioeconomic Recovery in the Wake of COVID-19" adopted in 2020.<sup>192</sup>

On 11 December 2020, Uzbekistan joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) by opting for an observer status. Uzbekistan hopes to use the potential of EEU membership to jointly remove barriers and obstacles in trade and form new markets as well as to find solutions for pressing employment issues and to meet the growing demand for qualified specialists in the economies of the Union. The status of an observer can potentially enable Uzbekistan to be part of the Union dominated by Russia, while retaining a greater degree of flexibility to commit to only those agreements of the Union that align with the current political interests and the reform agenda of the country.

Finally, possible accession to WTO also offers further opportunities for regional integration through trade.

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191 <https://www.undrr.org/about-undrr-where-we-work/europe#CentralAsiaDRRInitiative>

192 See [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Bishkek%20Declaration\\_ENG\\_0.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Bishkek%20Declaration_ENG_0.pdf)

## 9. UN comparative advantages

In informing the UN comparative advantage, this CCA has used both an external partnership survey and an internal self-assessment by the UNCT.

Before the pandemic, a partnership survey was organised (October 2019) to ascertain the UN comparative advantage in supporting the Government and Uzbek society in achieving development targets and the SDGs. The survey, which was based on a questionnaire distributed to 28 international organizations (embassies, IFIs, INGOs, others), found that partners perceive that the UN in Uzbekistan has the mandate, the capacity and the positioning to act in the following sectors (in descending order of ranking):

- (i) Health
- (ii) Human rights and rule of law
- (iii) Governance and public administration
- (iv) Gender Equality
- (v) Environment and Climate Change
- (vi) Education and
- (vii) Social Protection

Areas where the partners did not believe UN had a comparative advantage include:

- (i) Agriculture and water
- (ii) Data and statistics
- (iii) Economic reforms
- (iv) Livelihoods and
- (v) Energy

It is interesting to note that the UNCT's self-assessment and partners ranking were different in several areas. Partners ranked the UN higher than the UNCT assessment in health, environment and climate change and ranked them lower on social protection, data and statistics, and Livelihoods. This may be linked to lack of visibility of the UN's engagement on the latter workstreams.

Notwithstanding the pandemics, partners believe that the UN has the mandate — but

not enough capacity and position —to act in human rights and rule of law, governance, gender, environment, and education. The areas where partners consider that the UN needs to strengthen its internal capacity are (i) data and statistics, (ii) environment and climate change, and (iii) energy.

As the pandemics has evolved, partners consider that the UN is still most effective in:

- Supporting Uzbekistan to report and achieve national SDGs
- Convening national and international partners to address critical development challenges
- Enabling strategic dialogue on mutual priorities and opportunities in support of Uzbekistan's reform agenda
- Supporting monitoring and implementation of international norms and standards and
- Providing impartial policy advice based on international experience, technical expertise and good practices

In the online survey for partners in January 2021, the respondents gave slightly different perceptions of the role of the UN family in supporting Uzbekistan's ongoing development problems and the UN's comparative advantages. Their responses are shown below.

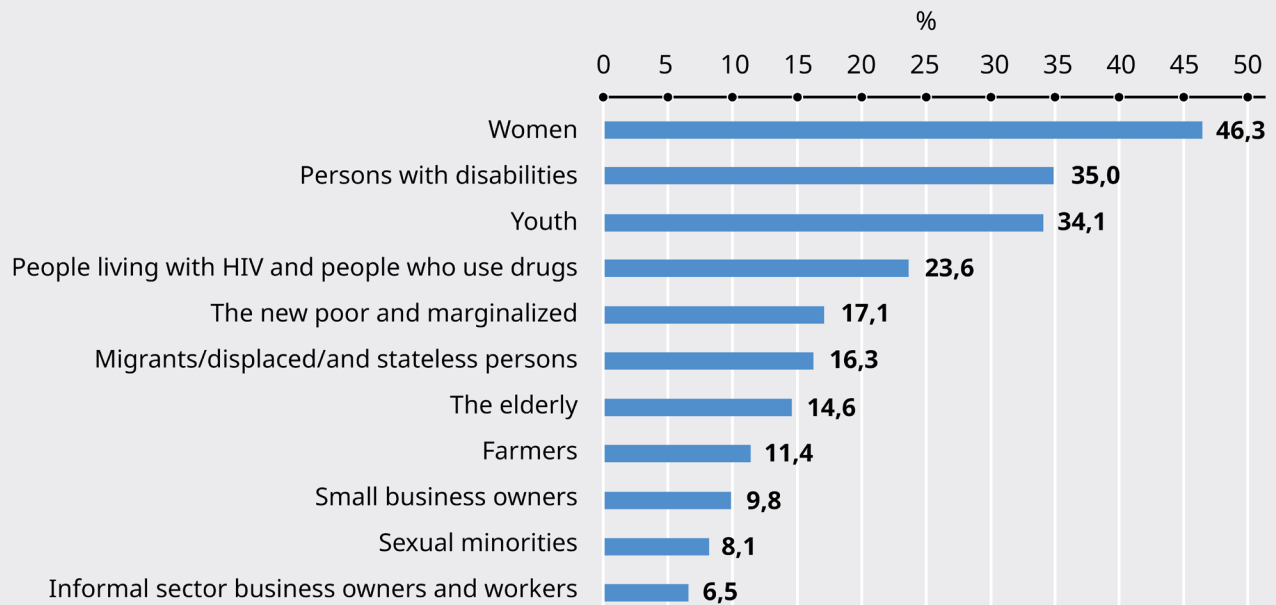
A second question in the survey, when worded somewhat differently, yielded different results.

Overall, partners see the UN's role as a convener and facilitator of a coordinated approach among partners and as an honest broker. This role has not changed because of COVID-19. The key components of UN's comparative advantage include its people-centered approach to development, ability to convene dialogue around sensitive human rights issues, access to global/regional knowledge and best practices, and its normative mandate and custody of the UN conventions and universal values.



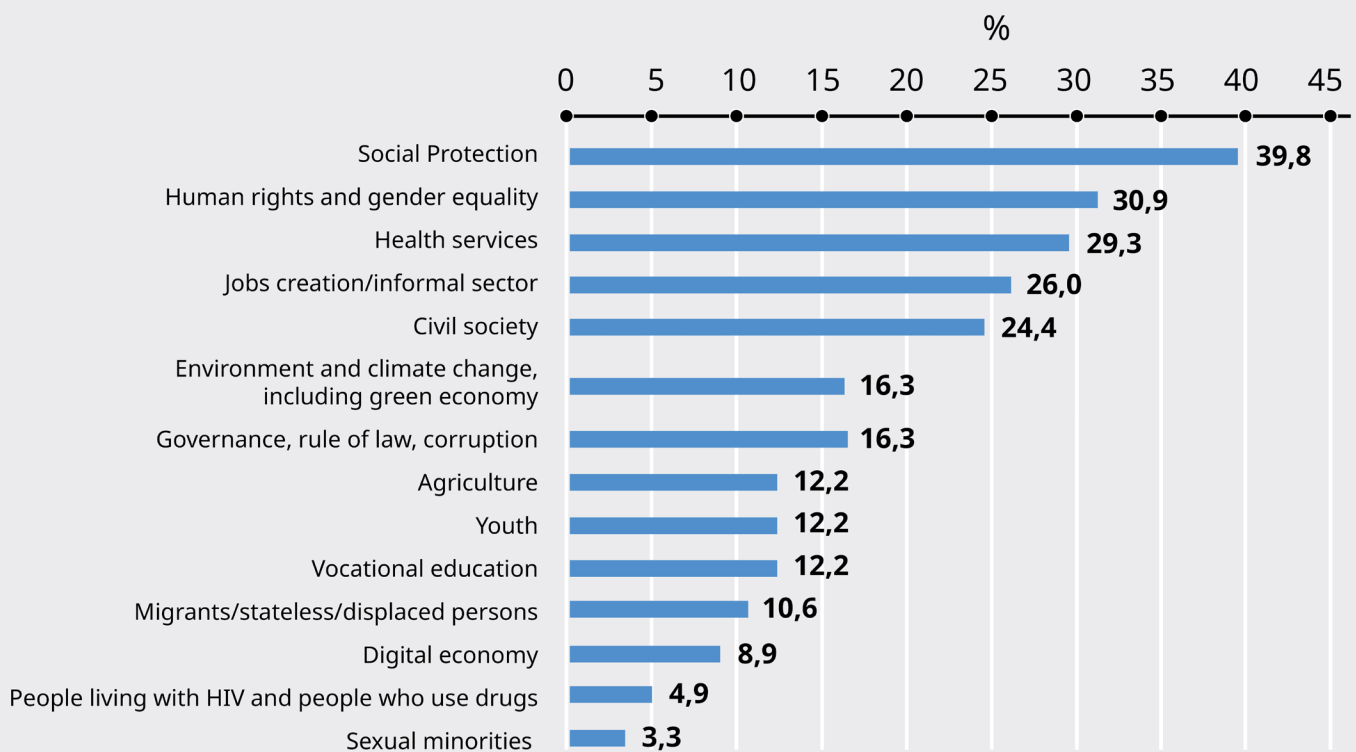
**Figure 14. Partner survey question 1**

In your opinion, to which challenges or groups should the UN give more attention in light of the COVID-19 crisis? (Choose no more than three)



**Figure 15. Partner survey question 2**

In your opinion, to which challenges or groups should the UN give more attention in light of the COVID-19 crisis? (Choose no more than three)



# 10. Conclusions and recommendations

For the earlier CCA, extensive consultations were held with a wide range of groups, including government officials, key ministries, IFIs, UN interagency results groups, ILO constituencies (i.e., association of labour unions and Chamber of Commerce), and civil society. Direct consultations were also held with excluded groups, notably youth, women, and people with disabilities, as well as other marginalised groups. These consultations continued regionally and nationally to hear key challenges and solutions that are now integrated into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). For this updated CCA, additional consultations were held in January 2021 with UNCT members and external stakeholders.

Three broad conclusions are drawn from the previous CCA and this updated CCA. These have, by and large, not changed because of the pandemic.

1. Exclusion and inequalities, defined more broadly to include multiple discriminations, deprivations, injustices and indignities, are key development challenges facing the country in its journey to achieving its national development priorities and realisation of the 2030 Agenda
2. Achievement of the 2030 Agenda requires stronger integration of the national SDGs with the ongoing reforms, national development strategies, and sectoral programmes, calling for stronger national coordination capacities
3. Ensuring policy coherence, fixing statistical gaps, and addressing administrative and civil society capacities will be vital enabling factors for further progress towards achievement of the nationally designated SDGs

## 10.1 Thematic areas for UNCT Interventions

Three thematic areas are discussed below that remain unchanged notwithstanding the pandemic.

### **Transparent, accountable, and responsive governance**

Four broad areas are seen as priorities for UNCT support:

1. Strengthening the rule of law, human and labour rights, judicial reform and access to justice to comply with international norms and standards in line with LNOB principles, implementation of international commitments, and capacity building of human and labour rights institutions
2. Reforming public administration by (i) reviewing the functions of government ministries and departments; (ii) promoting a merit-based, professional, transparent and accountable civil service, while empowering women's participation and role in public services and administration; (iii) taking strong anti-corruption measures including e-governance, public-private partnerships, procurement reforms, and removal of unnecessary regulations; strengthening evidence-based and gender-sensitive decision-making; and (iv) supporting statistical and analytical capacity building; and ensuring effective financing for national development priorities
3. Building capacity of civil society and media to promote freedom of expression and participation, freedom of association for workers and businesses, the right to collective bargaining, and meaningful social dialogue for fair distribution of income and wealth
4. Creating enabling conditions for national local bodies to function effectively and build their capacities to plan and implement national and local development programmes to achieve the SDGs

## Resilience to climate change, disasters, and sustainable resource use

The challenging areas requiring efforts under this theme are:

1. Climate change mitigation and environment protection action that entails (i) protecting the environment and better managing natural resources; (ii) reversing environmental degradation and reviving livelihoods in the Aral Sea region; (iii) aligning environmental impact assessment procedures with international standards; (iv) introducing strategic environmental assessment in sector policies, plans and programmes; (v) mainstreaming environmental protection and climate change in sector policies and programmes; as well as (vi) forging partnerships with business on climate change and protection of the environment
2. Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and preparedness through (i) operationalising early warning systems for flash floods, mudflows and heatwaves; (ii) developing disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and building resilient communities; and (iii) promoting regional cooperation to reduce disaster risk and better sharing information
3. Sustainable resource use by (i) significantly and measurably improving water use efficiency; (ii) promoting climate-resilient water use; (iii) enhancing the promotion of water-saving irrigation techniques; (iv) reforming the system of pollution charges to create incentives for behavioural change; (v) continuing with liberalisation of fuel prices and promoting rationalisation of fossil fuel subsidies; (vi) improving energy use efficiency and promoting renewable energy generation and consumption; (vii) applying sound available techniques to reduce air pollution; and (viii) improving environmental governance

## Human capital and sustainable livelihoods

The human capital dimensions below require strengthening and call for public participation in decision-making.

## For human capital:

1. In healthcare, in the wake of COVID-19 challenges, continue to promote quality and affordable healthcare for all; focus on communicable and non-communicable diseases, HIV, and TB; promote healthy lifestyle and health behaviour; support innovative health financing to reduce high out-of-pocket expenses; and better healthcare infrastructure
2. In education, improve the quality of education and learning outcomes; focus on preschool and tertiary education; and prioritise women's enrolment in higher and technical education
3. In social protection, improve coverage and efficiency in the social protection system
4. In decent work, promote decent working conditions particularly for young people and women, and modernise existing dysfunctional labour inspection systems

## For livelihoods:

1. Build a business-friendly and predictable legal and policy environment by ensuring fair protection of property rights, reducing excessive regulation and transaction costs; promoting public-private partnerships and introducing private financing to areas such as public utility services and public infrastructure, as well as removing barriers to entering markets. This would also apply to the need to ensure the full and complete enforceability of arbitral awards in disputes between foreign investors and the Republic of Uzbekistan, thus improving the confidence of investors.
2. Focus on NEET youth, women, and people with disabilities through teaching market-driven skills, supporting the participation of women in the labour force, and encouraging innovative youth start-ups.
3. Address rural livelihoods to bridge rural-urban gaps including by fostering regular migration and greater internal mobility as a livelihoods opportunity and by providing pre-migration skills and orientation.

## 10.2 Partnerships and cross-cutting areas

The COVID-19 crisis has further underlined the importance of 'leave no one behind' as an organising principle which should be applied more rigorously to all UN efforts. This requires focusing on reducing exclusions and inequalities in the country, including persistent gender inequalities. The LNOB principle should be used as both an approach and a goal. This entails a wider, multidimensional definition of poverty, focusing on multiple discriminations, deprivations, injustices and indignities. Every intervention should mainstream LNOB groups, with a special focus on youth, women, and people with disabilities.

The SDG agenda needs better integration into government reforms by mainstreaming SDGs into national and local development policies and programmes as well as sector policies. Development partners could also become active champions in recommending greater integration of the national SDGs.

Within government, statistical and evidence-based policymaking capacity needs to be further strengthened. Such a requirement includes capacity in collecting disaggregated data, sharing findings of various surveys, and building capacities to analyse the differential impact of policies across population groups. It will be important to promote systems aimed at interoperability between statistical, environmental, health, geospatial, hydrometeorological and other systems through e-governance and the "Open Data" framework which leverage modern digital technologies.

Participation in international agreements, to which the country is not yet a party, should be encouraged so that Uzbekistan can benefit from international experience and good practices, thereby enhancing capacity for implementation of sustainable development.

The Government should be encouraged and supported to improve implementation of human rights, gender equality, and labour rights commitments. This approach has great moral and legal appeal and a sense of urgency.

Inclusive approaches to development through the convening power and non-partisanship of institutions to organise and debate around seemingly sensitive development issues need to be implemented and promoted.

Partnership with business to accelerate achievement of the SDGs also needs to be strengthened, including through the UN Global Compact framework. The UN is well placed to present a strong business case for aligning private sector activities with the 2030 Agenda.

Sub-regional and transboundary cooperation, including with Afghanistan, needs to be reinforced using existing initiatives and programmes, promoting information sharing, and avoiding fragmentation. These areas include local economic development around transport corridors, youth, climate change and disaster risk management, and border peace and security.

Equally important, there is a strong need to support and promote the nascent growth of genuine and effective civil society in the country at the national and local levels. This can be done by building capacities, including a democratic and independent labour movement. A strengthened civil society is needed to promote evidence-based dialogue and advocacy; foster participation and social accountability; monitor government actions, expenditures and programmes; and suggest alternative service delivery models.

Finally, greater coordination is required to capitalise on synergies from multiple development partners working with the same government ministry. Such an approach is necessary to avoid duplication and present a united front amongst development partners, and in developing clear and coherent messaging from the international community. The Economic Council and the SDG Coordination Councils could be used as platforms for donor coordination. In this regard, area-based joint programmes, for example in the Aral Sea and Fergana Valley, can be used to showcase integrated approaches to social, economic and environmental development.

# Annex A. Status of Uzbekistan’s Accession/ Ratification of UN Conventions and Treaties<sup>193</sup>

Name of UN Convention, etc.	Brief Description	Status	UN Agencies in Charge / Mandated
1. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	<p>Purpose and scope: The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.</p> <p>Benefits: There are 4 approaches to disability: a charitable, medical, social and human rights approach. In the first three approaches, a disabled person is considered an object in need of help and dependent on others. In the fourth approach, a disabled person is already seen as a subject, a bearer of rights and obligations. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides such an approach based on human rights. Therefore, ratification of the Convention is of great practical importance.</p> <p>The Convention provides for the creation of an inclusive society where people with disabilities are actively involved in the spheres of life and remove all barriers that impede their active life by creating the necessary infrastructure (equipment, devices, vehicles, auxiliary devices, etc.)</p>	The Convention has been signed and is pending ratification. According to the President’s Resolution of 1 December 2017 the government is making practical steps towards ratification of the convention.	UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, UNESCO, OHCHR, UNHCR

<sup>193</sup> The table contains only pending and recently ratified/signed conventions, treaties, and protocols. Ratified documents are highlighted



<p>2. Optional protocol to ICESCR<sup>194</sup></p>	<p>Purpose and scope: It is an international treaty establishing complaint and inquiry mechanisms for the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Optional Protocol establishes an individual complaints mechanism for the Covenant. Complainants must have exhausted all domestic remedies, and anonymous complaints and complaints referring to events which occurred before the country concerned joined the Optional Protocol are not permitted. The Committee can request information from and make recommendations to a party. Parties may also opt to permit the Committee to hear complaints from other parties, rather than just individuals. The Protocol also includes an inquiry mechanism. Parties may permit the Committee to investigate, report on and make recommendations on “grave or systematic violations” of the Covenant. Parties may opt out of this obligation on signature or ratification. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optional_Protocol_to_the_International_Covenant_on_Economic_Social_and_Cultural_Rights_-_cite_note-11">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optional_Protocol_to_the_International_Covenant_on_Economic_Social_and_Cultural_Rights_-_cite_note-11</a> The Optional Protocol required ten ratifications to come into force. As of January 2018, the Protocol has 45 signatories and 23 state parties. It entered into force on 5 May 2013.  Benefits: Parties agree to recognise the competence of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to consider complaints from individuals or groups who claim their rights under the Covenant have been violated. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optional_Protocol_to_the_International_Covenant_on_Economic_Social_and_Cultural_Rights_-_cite_note-7">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optional_Protocol_to_the_International_Covenant_on_Economic_Social_and_Cultural_Rights_-_cite_note-7</a></p>	<p>Not ratified. Recommended to be ratified by the CESCR Committee.</p>	<p>UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, UNESCO, OHCHR, UNHCR</p>
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194 Also recommended by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Uzbekistan, p.28 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyex-ternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUZB%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyex-ternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUZB%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en)

<p>3. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families<sup>195</sup></p>	<p><b>Purpose and scope:</b> The United Nations Convention constitutes a comprehensive international treaty regarding the protection of migrant workers' rights. It emphasises the connection between migration and human rights, which is increasingly becoming a crucial policy topic worldwide. The Convention aims at protecting migrant workers and members of their families. The primary objective of the Convention is to foster respect for migrants' human rights. Migrants are not only workers, they are also human beings. The Convention innovates because it relies on the fundamental notion that all migrants should have access to a minimum degree of protection. It is applicable to all migrant workers and members of their families without distinction of any kind such as sex, race, colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or other status. The present Convention shall apply during the entire migration process of migrant workers and members of their families, which comprises preparation for migration, departure, transit and the entire period of stay and remunerated activity in the State of employment as well as return to the State of origin or the State of habitual residence.</p> <p><b>Benefits:</b> The Convention does not create new rights for migrants but aims at guaranteeing equality of treatment, and the same working conditions, including in case of temporary work, for migrants and nationals.</p>	<p>Not ratified. Recommended to be ratified by the CESCR Committee.</p>	<p>ILO, IOM, UNDP, OHCHR</p>
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195 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Uzbekistan, para.29 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUZB%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUZB%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en); Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-third session (27 May-14 June 2013), Para. 72 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f3-4&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f3-4&Lang=en)

4.	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance <sup>196</sup>	<p>Purpose and scope: The objective is to prevent enforced disappearances and to combat impunity for the crime of enforced disappearance, to protect the right of any person not to be subjected to enforced disappearance, the right of victims to justice and to reparation, to affirm the right of any victim to know the truth about the circumstances of an enforced disappearance and the fate of the disappeared person, and the right to freedom to seek, receive and impart information to this end.</p> <p>The convention is modelled heavily on the United Nations Convention Against Torture. The widespread or systematic use of enforced disappearance is further defined as a crime against humanity in Article 6.</p>	<p>Not ratified.</p> <p>Recommended to be ratified by the CESCR and CRC Committees.</p>	UNDP, UNODC, OHCHR
5.	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW <sup>197</sup>	<p>Purpose and scope: By ratifying the Optional Protocol, a State recognises the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women -- the body that monitors States parties' compliance with the Convention -- to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction. The Protocol contains two procedures:  (1) A communications procedure allows individual women, or groups of women, to submit claims of violations of rights protected under the Convention to the Committee. The Protocol establishes that in order for individual communications to be admitted for consideration by the Committee, a number of criteria must be met, including those domestic remedies must have been exhausted.</p>	<p>Not ratified.</p> <p>Recommended to be ratified by the CEDAW Committee.</p>	UNFPA (advocating Uzbekistan's ratification of the Optional Protocol), UNDP

196 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Uzbekistan, para.29// [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUZB%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fUZB%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en); Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-third session (27 May-14 June 2013). Para. 72 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f3-4&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f3-4&Lang=en);

197 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan. para.37

		<p>(2) The Protocol also creates an inquiry procedure enabling the Committee to initiate inquiries into situations of grave or systematic violations of women's rights. In either case, States must be party to the Convention and the Protocol. The Protocol includes an «opt-out clause», allowing States upon ratification or accession to declare that they do not accept the inquiry procedure.</p> <p>Benefits: CEDAW Committee at the 5th periodic report of Uzbekistan recommended that Uzbekistan ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention.</p>		
6.	ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers <sup>198</sup>	<p>Purpose and scope: Convention No. 189 offers specific protection to domestic workers. It lays down basic rights and principles, and requires States to take a series of measures with a view to making decent work a reality for domestic workers. The main rights given to domestic workers as decent work are daily and weekly (at least 24 h) rest hours, entitlement to minimum wage and to choose the place where they live and spend their leave. Ratifying states parties should also take protective measures against violence and should enforce a minimum age which is consistent with the minimum age at other types of employment. Workers furthermore have a right to a clear (preferably written) communication of employment conditions which should in case of international recruitment be communicated prior to immigration. They are furthermore not required to reside at the house where they work, or to stay at the house during their leave.</p> <p>Benefits: Convention No. 189 guarantees minimum labour protections to domestic workers on par with other categories of workers, while allowing for considerable flexibility in implementation. It is of special importance for densely populated countries</p>	Not ratified Recommended to be ratified by the CRC Committee.	ILO

198 Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-third session (27 May-14 June 2013), Para. 66// [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FUZB%2FCO%2F3-4&Lang=](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FUZB%2FCO%2F3-4&Lang=)

7.	<p>ILO Convention 144 Tripartite Consultations to promote the implementation of International Labour Standards</p>	<p>Purpose and scope: The ILO is based on the principle of tripartism - dialogue and cooperation between governments, employers, and workers - in the formulation of standards and policies dealing with labour matters. International labour standards are created and supervised through a tripartite structure that makes the ILO unique in the United Nations system. The tripartite approach to adopting standards ensures that they have broad support from all ILO constituents. Tripartism with regard to ILO standards is also important at the national level. Through regular tripartite consultations, governments can ensure that ILO standards are formulated, applied and supervised with the participation of employers and workers. ILO standards on tripartite consultation set forth the framework for effective national tripartite consultations. Such consultations can ensure greater cooperation among the social partners and stronger awareness and participation in matters relating to international labour standards, and can lead to better governance and a greater culture of social dialogue on wider social and economic issues. Because of the importance of tripartism, the ILO has made the ratification and implementation of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) a priority.</p>	<p>Ratified on 13 August 2019</p>	ILO
8.	<p>ILO Conventions on Labour Inspection 081 (in Industry) and 129 (in Agriculture)</p>	<p>Purpose and scope: In promoting a prevention culture and securing compliance, labour inspectors use a wide variety of interventions and tools including prevention initiatives as well as enforcement. An appropriate mix of preventive measures such as risk assessment, promoting a culture of leadership and best practice, implementing occupational safety and health measures, information guidance and awareness campaigns combined with sanctions should be adopted.</p>	<p>Ratified on 19 November 2019</p>	ILO



In this regard, labour inspection should be organised as a system applying to all workplaces in respect of which legal provisions relating to conditions of work and the protection of workers are enforceable; In order to be most effective, labour inspection should be placed under the supervision and control of a central authority so far as is compatible with the administrative practice of the country.

The labour inspection system should ensure both educational and enforcement functions in relation to conditions of work (such as hours of work, wages, safety, health and welfare, the employment of children and young persons and other connected matters) and alert the competent authorities of any defects or abuses not covered by existing relevant legal provisions. In this sense, the mandate of the Labour inspection should comprise Occupational safety and health and possibly “welfare”, general conditions of work and possibly wage issues, industrial relations employment related matters like illegal employment, employment promotion including vocational training. It should also refer to social security issues, usually limited to controlling remittances and other workers’ compensation matters.

Operative performance of the labour inspection system can be achieved through effective cooperation with other government services and private institutions engaged in labour protection as well as with employers and workers and their organizations.

**Benefits:**  
Ratification of both Conventions 81 and 129 offers government and social partners the necessary framework for developing and implementing an effective mechanism for better compliance with labour laws and regulations. This is essential for improving working conditions and creating healthy and safe workplaces. It has a positive impact on economic development, including business and productivity.

9.	<p>P029 - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention 029</p> <p>Purpose and scope: Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (P029) complements and brings to a new era the ILO standards on forced labour, and namely the Conventions Nos. 29 and 105 adopted back in 1930 and 1957. The Protocol is shaped by different realities, where millions of men, women and children are in forced labour around the world – trafficked, held in debt bondage or working in slavery-like conditions, exploited in the private economy, either in their own countries or across borders. The P029 proposes to countries new strategies, including a focus on prevention, protection and access to remedies for victims and punishment for perpetrators. It also emphasises the link between forced labour and trafficking in persons.</p> <p>Benefits: Ratification of the P029 is a reconfirmation of Uzbekistan political commitment to fully eradicate forced labour. It is a strong sign that the reforms that are being undertaken are irreversible. This political commitment also translates into economic benefits, since by ratifying and implementing the standard, Uzbekistan can enjoy being party to international trade agreements (EU, US), which oblige countries signatories to follow P029 provisions.</p>	Ratified on 16 September 2019	ILO
10.	<p>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure<sup>199</sup></p> <p>Purpose and scope: The Third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure (OP3 CRC) is the treaty which establishes an international complaints procedure for violations of child rights contained in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)</li> <li>• The Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC)</li> <li>• The Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC).</li> <li>• OP3 CRC provides two new ways for children to challenge violations of their rights committed by States:</li> </ul>	Not ratified Recommended to be ratified by the CRC Committee.	UNICEF

<sup>199</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-third session (27 May-14 June 2013). Para. 72 // [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f3-4&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CR%2fC%2fUZB%2fCO%2f3-4&Lang=en)

		<p>A communication procedure, which enables children to bring complaints about violations of their rights to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, if they have not been fully resolved in national courts</p> <p>An inquiry procedure for grave and systematic violations of child rights.</p> <p>Benefits: Parties agree to recognise the competence of the CRC Committee to consider complaints from individuals or groups who claim their rights under the Covenant have been violated</p>		
11.	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	<p>Purpose and scope: The objective of the Protocol is to establish a system of regular visits undertaken by independent international and national bodies to places where people are deprived of their liberty, in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It establishes an international inspection system for places of detention modelled on the system that has existed in Europe since 1987 (the Committee for the Prevention of Torture).</p> <p>As per this Protocol, Uzbekistan is to set up, designate or maintain at the domestic level one or several visiting bodies for the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (hereinafter referred to as the national preventive mechanism).</p> <p>Benefits: Under OPCAT, State Parties agree to establish an independent National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) to conduct inspections of all places of detention and closed environments</p> <p>In addition to the NPM, State Parties also agree to international inspections of places of detention by the United Nations Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture (SPT). The SPT engages with states on a confidential basis and cannot publish reports and recommendations unless under agreement with the state party. Furthermore, people who provide</p>	<p>Not ratified.</p> <p>Under consideration, draft regulations on NPM are being developed by Uzbek Ombudsman Office.</p> <p>On 31 May- 1 June , 2018 in Tashkent international «round table» on the topic: «Organizational and legal development of the National Preventive Mechanism: peculiarities of international acts, foreign practice and experience of Uzbekistan» was held, with the participation of international experts on NPM.</p>	UNDP, UNODC, OHCHR

12.	1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol <sup>200</sup>	<p>information to the SPT may not be subject to sanctions or reprisals for having done so.</p> <p>Purpose and scope: The 1951 Convention establishes the definition of a refugee and minimum standards of treatment for refugees in respect to a number of rights. The Convention also recognises the international scope of the refugee phenomenon and the importance of responsibility-sharing in trying to resolve it, and helps promote international solidarity and cooperation. The cornerstone of the 1951 Convention is the principle of non-refoulement contained in Article 33, which is now part of the international customary law. According to this principle, a refugee should not be returned to a country where he or she faces serious threats to his or her life or freedom. The 1951 Convention has been acceded by 145 countries, including all Uzbekistan's neighbouring states. The 1967 Protocol broadens the applicability of the 1951 Convention. The 1967 Protocol removes the geographical and time limits that were part of the 1951 Convention. These limits initially restricted the Convention to persons who became refugees due to events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951. The Protocol has been ratified by 146 State parties, including all the neighbouring countries of Uzbekistan.</p> <p>Benefits: When a State accedes to the 1951 Convention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it demonstrates its commitment to treating refugees in accordance with internationally recognised legal and humanitarian standards;</li> <li>• it gives refugees a possibility to find safety;</li> <li>• it helps to avoid friction between States over refugee questions.</li> </ul>	Not ratified Recommended to be ratified by the CERD Committee.	UNHCR
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200 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, p. 21// [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexter](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexter)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Granting asylum is a peaceful, humanitarian and legal act rather than a hostile gesture, and should be understood by the refugee's country of origin as such;</li> <li>• it demonstrates its willingness to share the responsibility for protecting refugees;</li> <li>• it helps UNHCR to mobilise international support for the protection of refugees.</li> </ul> <p>UNHCR welcomes Uzbekistan's acceptance of the recommendation of ratifying the 1951 Convention at the third cycle of the UPR/HRC. UNHCR stands ready to provide Uzbekistan with technical assistance to develop relevant national legislation.</p>		
13.	Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons <sup>201</sup>	<p>Purpose and scope: The 1954 Convention establishes the definition of a "stateless person" as someone "who is not considered as a national by any State under operation of its law."</p> <p>It also prescribes minimum standards of treatment for stateless people in respect to a number of rights, including the right to education and employment. Importantly, the 1954 Convention also guarantees stateless people a right to identity, travel documents and administrative assistance, which has direct relevance to SDGs Goal 16.9 ("By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration"). The 1954 Convention has been ratified by 90 State parties, including by Turkmenistan from the Central Asian region and several other former USSR countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova).</p> <p>Benefits: The 1954 Convention ensures that stateless persons enjoy human rights without discrimination. It provides the stateless with an internationally recognised legal status, offers them access to travel documents, identity papers and other basic forms of documentation, and sets out a common framework with minimum standards of treatment for stateless persons. Access to the 1954 Convention therefore</p>	Not ratified. Recommended to be ratified by the CERD	UNHCR, UNICEF

201 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, p.20// [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexter- nal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FCO%2FUZB%2FCO%2F8-9&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexter- nal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FCO%2FUZB%2FCO%2F8-9&Lang=en)



	<p>allows States to demonstrate their commitment to human rights, gives individuals access to protection and mobilises international support for the State to adequately deal with the protection of stateless persons.</p> <p>UNHCR welcomes Uzbekistan's acceptance of the recommendation of ratifying the 1954 Convention, made at the third cycle of the Universal Peer Review/ Human Rights Council. UNHCR stands ready to provide Uzbekistan with technical assistance to develop relevant national legislation.</p>		
<p>14. Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness<sup>202</sup></p>	<p>Purpose and scope: The 1961 Convention aims to prevent statelessness and reduce it over time. It establishes an international framework to ensure the right of every person to a nationality. It requires that states establish safeguards in their nationality laws to prevent statelessness at birth and later in life. The most important provision of the Convention establishes that children are to acquire the nationality of the country in which they are born if they do not acquire any other nationality (also relevant to SDGs Goal 16.9). It also sets out important safeguards to prevent statelessness due to loss or renunciation of nationality and state succession.</p> <p>The 1961 Convention has been ratified by 71 State parties, including by Turkmenistan from the Central Asian region and several other former USSR countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova).</p> <p>Benefits: Protection of stateless person under the 1954 Convention should be seen as temporary response while avenues for the acquisition of a nationality are explored. The reduction of statelessness through acquisition of nationality remains the ultimate goal. The 1961 Convention provides States with tools for avoiding and resolving cases of statelessness.</p>	<p>Not ratified Recommended to be ratified by the CERD Committee.</p>	<p>UNHCR, UNICEF</p>

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202 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, p.20// [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexte)

		<p>UNHCR welcomes Uzbekistan's acceptance of the recommendation of ratifying the 1961 Convention, made at the third cycle of the Universal Peer Review/ Human Rights Council. Noting that Uzbekistan hosts a sizable stateless population (at least 80,000 people), UNHCR stands ready to provide Uzbekistan with technical assistance to develop relevant national legislation and statelessness determination procedures. Uzbekistan could make a significant contribution to the global efforts to end statelessness by 2024 (#IBelong, Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014–2024, <a href="http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/">http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/</a>), through resolving the existing situations of statelessness; preventing new cases of statelessness from emerging; and better identification and protection of stateless persons. UNHCR in partnership with UNICEF (on birth registration for all children) and ESCAP (on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics) stands ready to guide and assist the Central Asian Governments.</p>		
15.	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	<p>The objectives of this Convention are: (a) to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions; (b) to create the conditions for cultures to flourish and to freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner; (c) to encourage dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace; (d) to foster interculturality in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples; (e) to promote respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and raise awareness of its value at the local, national and international levels; (f) to reaffirm the importance of the link between culture and development for all countries, particularly for developing countries, and to support actions undertaken nationally and internationally to secure recognition of the true value of this link; (g) to give recognition to the distinctive nature of cultural activities, goods and services as vehicles of identity, values and meaning;</p>	The Convention was ratified on 15 November 2019.	UNESCO

16.	<p>(h) to reaffirm the sovereign rights of States to maintain, adopt and implement policies and measures that they deem appropriate for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions on their territory; (i) to strengthen international cooperation and solidarity in a spirit of partnership with a view, in particular, to enhancing the capacities of developing countries in order to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <p>The ratification of the Convention contributes the cooperation of governments and non-governmental actors in four key areas: supporting sustainable systems of governance for culture; improving the conditions for the mobility of artists, including achieving a balanced flow of cultural goods and services and increasing the mobility of artists and cultural professionals; integrating culture in sustainable development strategies and frameworks; and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.</p> <p>These four goals are closely linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, the Convention is the sole legally-binding instrument that affirms the sovereign right of States to formulate and implement policies to support the creation, production, distribution and access to domestic cultural activities, goods and services, while at the same time promoting international cooperation to create the conditions for the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries.</p>		
Rome Statute, ICC and Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court <sup>203</sup>	Purpose and scope: The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (often referred to as the International Criminal Court Statute or the Rome Statute) is the treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC).	Signed in 2008, not ratified.	UNDP, UNODC

203 101.29 Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court (Estonia). Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. Thirty-ninth session 10–28 September 2018.//Available at: [A/HRC/39/17](#)

	<p>Among other things, the statute establishes the court's functions, jurisdiction and structure. The Rome Statute established four core international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. Those crimes «shall not be subject to any statute of limitations». <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome_Statute_of_the_International_Criminal_Court">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome_Statute_of_the_International_Criminal_Court</a> - cite_note-8 Under the Rome Statute, the ICC can only investigate and prosecute the four core international crimes in situations where states are «unable» or «unwilling» to do so themselves; the jurisdiction of the court is complementary to jurisdictions of domestic courts. The court has jurisdiction over crimes only if they are committed in the territory of a state party or if they are committed by a national of a state party; an exception to this rule is that the ICC may also have jurisdiction over crimes if its jurisdiction is authorised by the United Nations Security Council.</p> <p>Benefits: Around the globe, victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes are demanding justice and redress. By making the ICC and Rome Statute system of international justice truly global, individuals suspected of committing these universally abhorred crimes can be held to account in courts of law around the world.</p>		
17. Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity <sup>204</sup>	<p>Purpose and scope: The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by United Nations General Assembly resolution 2391 (XXIII) of 26 November 1968. Pursuant to the provisions of its Article VIII, it came into force on 11 November 1970.</p> <p>The Convention provides that no signatory state may apply statutory limitations to: War crimes as they are defined in the Charter of the Nürnberg International Military Tribunal of 8 August 1945.</p>	Not ratified	UNODC

204 101.27 Ratify the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (Armenia). Thirty-ninth session 10–28 September 2018.//Available at: [A/HRC/39/7](#)

18.	<p>Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982</p>	<p>Crimes against humanity, whether committed in time of war or in time of peace, as defined in the Charter of the Nürnberg International Military Tribunal, eviction by armed attack or occupation, inhuman acts resulting from the policy of apartheid, and the crime of genocide as defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.</p>	<p>Purpose and scope: The Convention fully registers the rights and obligations of the inland countries set forth in 25 articles, and Part X «The law of the landlocked countries on access to and from the sea and on freedom of transit» is entirely devoted to these countries. It consists of nine articles that detail and comprehensively regulate the rights and duties of the inland countries. In resolution 55/7 of 30 October 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations stressed the importance of increasing the number of States parties to ILC-82. Although the rate of deposit of instruments of ratification or accession has slowed significantly, after the publication of the 2000 report (A / 55/61) by June 2011, the total number of States that had ratified ILC-82 was 162. Benefits: 1. Expanding participation in international legal cooperation 2. Expansion of the international treaty base 3. Consolidate efforts in other VCGs to provide access to the sea 4. Promoting trade capacity-building 5. Establishment of a basis for concluding bilateral / regional agreements. 6. An important prerequisite for accession to the WTO. Freedom of transit is one of the important legal norms of the WTO, contained in Article V of the GATT 1994. Article V of the GATT (1994, «Freedom of transit») establishes the freedom of transit of goods, vessels and other means of transport through the territory of WTO member states along the routes most convenient for international transit. It provides for:</p>	<p>Not ratified</p>	<p>IOM</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the same treatment, regardless of the flag of vessels, place of origin, departure, call, exit or destination or ownership of goods or vessels; prohibition of unjustified delays or restrictions of transit flows;</li> <li>• a ban on the collection of customs duties and all transit or other charges established for transit (with the exception of freight charges or charges commensurate with administrative costs generated by transit or with the cost of services provided);</li> <li>• All fees should be reasonable and account for the conditions of transport;</li> <li>• Most-favoured-nation treatment in respect of all fees, rules and formalities.</li> </ul> <p>7. SDG 14 is formulated as follows: "Conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development". Particularly noteworthy is target 14.7, whose objective is "to increase the economic benefits of sustainable use of marine resources for small island developing States (MOTRAG) and least developed countries (LDCs) by 2030, including through the rational management of fish stocks, aquaculture and tourism ". This formulation underscores the long overdue need to promote the creation of more favourable conditions for MOTRAG and LDCs, where they could achieve the greatest economic benefit. This strategy will lead to radical changes in the management of marine resources and will contribute to securing the oceans a key role in economic and social development.</p> <p>8. An additional tool to protect their rights to access to the sea</p>		
19. International Convention on Plant Protection	<p>The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an international plant health treaty "with the purpose of securing common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control" (IPPC, Art. I). The IPPC mission "to secure cooperation among nations in protecting global plant resources from the spread and introduction of pests of plants, in order to preserve food security, biodiversity and to facilitate trade" (IPPC Strategic Framework, 2012- 2019) is</p>	<p>Not ratified</p> <p>Adherence</p> <p>When adhering to the IPPC contracting parties accept responsibilities, obligations and rights as specified in the IPPC revised text completely aligned with the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. However, the Convention does not exercise compliance mechanism.</p>	UN FAO

	<p>shared responsibility of a membership of 183 contracting parties.</p> <p>The forum established by the IPPC for cooperation among contracting parties, standards development, harmonization of phytosanitary measures, implementation and capacity development, legal and policy guidelines, information exchange has resulted in a very stable and reliable platform for addressing domestic pest problems and for international trade in plants, plant products and other regulated articles.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global protection of plant resources</li> </ul> <p>A world without protection of global plant resources (no measures) would be a very risky or restrictive place (prohibition or too many measures). The IPPC provides the framework to develop and apply harmonised phytosanitary measures that in turn give contracting parties ability to protect plant resources through the use of justified phytosanitary measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International harmonization</li> </ul> <p>The aim of international standards is to harmonise phytosanitary measures for the purpose of facilitating safe international trade. The ability to participate in the standards setting process and availability of ISPMs allow contracting parties to set and use globally harmonised international standards for phytosanitary measures and implement those measures without further need for technical justification. At the same time, ISPMs outline how to set and operate major phytosanitary systems such as plant pest surveillance, pest risk analysis, pest free areas and areas of low pest prevalence, pest diagnosis, phytosanitary export certification and import regulation systems among others.</p> <p><b>International cooperation and capacity development</b></p> <p>One of the main objectives of the IPPC is “to secure common and effective action”, which includes efforts to harmonise approaches, build capacity and share information. To facilitate international cooperation the Convention sets out five main points, which are specified in Article VIII and XX of the Convention:</p>	<p>There are no additional financial obligations when adhering to the IPPC.</p> <p>Becoming a contracting party is a simple process of depositing an instrument of adherence with of adherence with the Director-General of FAO.</p> <p>So far, the State Inspection on Plant Quarantine provided necessary information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for getting through internal process of approval for joining the IPPC. Necessary justification/explanatory note of necessity to join and benefits to Uzbekistan from joining have been provided.</p> <p>No further progress has been made so far.</p>
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(i) exchange information on plant pests, (ii) participation in special campaigns for combatting pests that seriously threaten crop production and that require international action to meet emergency needs, (iii) cooperate in providing technical and biological information for pest risk analyses, (iv) designate a contact point for the exchange of information relevant to the implementation of the Convention and (v) promote the provision of technical assistance to contracting parties, especially those that are from developing countries, with the objective of facilitating the implementation of the Convention. As mentioned, the Convention, in particular, encourages support for developing countries for capacity building and strengthening plant protection infrastructures through projects, assistance with dispute settlement, providing technical expertise, reviewing and updating legislation, possibilities for emergency programmes through FAO or other organizations.

Trade facilitation and economic development  
Trade is an important driver of the economic prosperity of countries. Through the implementation of international standards contracting parties establish, manage and strengthen their phytosanitary systems and position themselves to take advantage of new trade opportunities when they arise. The economics of trade facilitation is often considered as an investment-return or cost/benefit scenario, where investing in a phytosanitary systems provides returns in the form of prevention of pest incursions, safe domestic trade and ability to maintain and gain new market access.

Obligations under the IPPC are consistent with and complementary to the WTO-SPS Agreement. Most major trading partners and WTO Members are contracting parties to the IPPC. Adherence to the IPPC increases the credibility of national phytosanitary systems for trading partners. Opportunities are provided to interact with the WTO-SPS Committee through the phytosanitary community.

20.	<p>Unidroit Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995, Rome)</p>		<p>Environmental Protection The framework of the IPPC, Convention, the IPPC Strategic Framework, ISPMs and Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) recommendations serve to a strategic objective of the IPPC to protect the environment, forests and biodiversity from plant pests (IPPC Strategic Framework, 2012 - 2019). The protection of plant resources is closely linked to the protection of the environment and the prevention of the loss of biodiversity as different biomes, endangered areas and forests (both indigenous and commercial) often are the home to natural flora.</p> <p>Food Security “World Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, [social] and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. Strengthened national regulatory systems of export certification, import regulation and pest surveillance are at the core of food security. The associated ISPMs provide critical guidance to importing and exporting countries alike, to prevent the introduction and spread of pests that threaten plant resources and food security.</p>		
	<p>UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (Rome, 1995) is the international treaty on the subject of cultural property protection. It attempts to strengthen the main weaknesses of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The UNIDROIT Convention seeks to fight the illicit trafficking of cultural property by modifying the buyer's behaviour, obliging him/her to check the legitimacy of their purchase.</p>	<p>Not ratified The ratification of the Convention is considered by the Ministry of Culture; however, the documents not submitted towards the ratification yet.  UNESCO works towards the promotion of the ratification of this Convention.</p>	UNIDROIT / UNESCO		

	<p>This Convention applies to claims of an international character for: the restitution of stolen cultural objects; (b) the return of cultural objects removed from the territory of a Contracting State contrary to its law regulating the export of cultural objects for the purpose of protecting its cultural heritage</p> <p>Also, the purpose of the Convention is not only to enable or trigger a certain number of restitutions or returns (of which perforce there will be relatively few) through the courts or by private agreement, but to reduce illicit trafficking by gradually, but profoundly, changing the conduct of the actors in the art market and of all buyers.</p> <p>Ratification: The UNIDROIT Convention underpins the provisions of the 1970 UNESCO Convention (ratified by Uzbekistan), supplementing them by formulating minimal legal rules on the restitution and return of cultural objects. It guarantees the rules of private international law and international procedure which make it possible to apply the principles set down in the UNESCO Convention. The two Conventions are at once compatible and complementary.</p>		
21.	The Paris Agreement	Ratified on 9 November 2018 <sup>205</sup>	UNEP, UNDP

205 [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=en)



22.	Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances Depleting the Ozone Layer	<p>The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol intended to phase down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) under the Montreal Protocol, helping to avoid up to 0.5 degree Celsius of global warming by 2100, while continuing to protect the ozone layer. HFCs are man-made chemicals that are primarily used in air conditioning, refrigeration and foam insulation, and are powerful greenhouse gases that can be thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide in contributing to climate change.</p> <p>The country will meet its obligations under the Montreal Protocol. Moreover, by contributing to reducing adverse effect to the climate change, the relevant negative consequences to health of people and crop production will be avoided.</p>	Kigali Amendment is at its initial stage of discussions with no clear dates of adoption.	UNDP, UNEP
23.	Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products to FCTC (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control)	<p>Both FCTC and Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes were ratified by UZB. Uzbekistan is also Party to the Convention on the Law of the Non- Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (New York Convention). In addition, the International Health Regulations have been ratified. All other human rights instruments ratified by the UZB have major influence on health, as well as many other international instruments in other health related areas (trade, social affairs, environment, transport, etc.)</p> <p>Three issues of extreme importance to attain positive impact on health from the ratified instruments relate to the process and quality of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transposition of the international law into the national policies and legislation,</li> <li>• Implementation of those through national policies, strategies, plans, programmes, including the legislation as a policy tool, and</li> <li>• Intersectoral collaboration at national level in implementation of those, including the UN partners and donors.</li> </ul> <p>In the discussions with the Ministry of Health, WHO constantly raises the issue of good practices in policy and legislation development &amp; implementation (more specifically related to the FCTC and IHR, but also very much of importance for all the ratified instruments</p>	Not ratified	WHO
24.	Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes	<p>Not ratified</p>	Not ratified	UNECE, WHO

	<p>that impact health) emphasizing the issue of due process and inclusive dialogue in both development and implementation of national policies and legislation that the international instruments are transposed in. In addition, WHO extends technical support to the MoH in raising capacity on developing indicators (M&amp;E frameworks, including the responsibility frameworks) against which the progress/impact should be measured.</p>		
<p>25. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)</p>	<p>Purpose and scope: The Cartagena Protocol to the CBD is an international agreement, which aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility for financial support from the Global Environment Facility (the financial mechanism for the Protocol) for capacity-building;</li> <li>• Enhanced visibility and credibility of national systems for regulating biosafety within the global community;</li> <li>• Contribution to harmonised rules, procedures and practices in managing the transboundary movement of LMOs;</li> <li>• Facilitation of mechanisms and opportunities for governments to collaborate with other governments, the private sector and civil society on strengthening biosafety;</li> <li>• Improved access to relevant technologies and data, and benefiting from a regular exchange of information and expertise; and</li> <li>• Demonstration of commitment to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity through the implementation of biosafety measures.</li> </ul>	<p>Accession on 14 October 2019 with coming into force on 23 January 2020</p>	<p>UNDP</p>
<p>26. Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants</p>	<p>Purpose and scope: Aims to protect human health and the environment by banning the production and use of some of the most toxic chemicals known to humankind.</p>	<p>Accession on 28 June 2019, Entry into force on 26 September 2019<sup>206</sup></p>	<p>WHO, UNDP, UNEP</p>

206 <http://www.pops.int/Countries/StatusofRatifications/PartiesandSignatories/tabid/4500/Default.aspx>

	<p><b>Benefits:</b> The Convention creates a flexible system of technical and financial aid to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet their obligations. Although the Convention does not create a new fund or establish specific assessments, developed countries are to collectively provide new and additional financial resources. The Convention also specifies that developed countries provide technical assistance and capacity building to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition meet their obligations.</p>		
<p>27. The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)</p>	<p><b>Purpose and scope:</b> This convention aims at preventing, reducing and controlling significant adverse transboundary environmental impact from proposed activities by institutionalizing a standardised process of transboundary environmental impact assessment (EIA). This provides for a concrete framework of procedural regulation, which could offset some of the limits of substantial regulation, concerning environmentally harmful activities. <b>Benefits:</b> Transboundary EIA offers the benefits of EIA and more, with many benefits being enhanced through the inclusion of stakeholders from affected countries, by providing information and leading to changes in design: Identification of the key environmental issues of a project, and awareness of the environmental consequences of project implementation; Improvement of project design, and higher standards of mitigation; Protection of the environment, including the avoidance of environmentally sensitive areas through project re-siting or re-design; Identification of project alternatives (alternative locations or technology, for example) and mitigation and compensatory measures that reduce the environmental impact of the project. Suggestions may come from the public, EIA experts, the developer and other stakeholders;</p>	<p>Not ratified. The convention is being considered by the State Committee on Ecology and Environment Protection</p>	<p>UNECE</p>

		<p>Opportunities to consider climate change adaptation: by improving decision-making: better informed and more objective decision-making; a better framework for preparing conditions and legal agreements to govern future operation of the project; public participation in government decision making and more generally: promotion of sustainable development in general; promotion of good governance in the longer term, with public hearings providing “important indirect benefits that can contribute to the capacity for democratic governance and an active civil society” (Almer &amp; Koontz); promotion of understanding between the community and developer; promotion of standards; enhancement of international cooperation, including awareness of the importance of the environment in such cooperation, and avoidance of conflict; encouragement of new approaches; enhancement of the developer’s environmental credibility.</p>		
28.	<p>The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)</p>	<p>The Aarhus Convention ensures the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being. The Convention establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders.</p> <p>The subject of the Convention goes to the heart of the relationship between people and governments. The Convention is not only an environmental agreement, it is also a Convention about government accountability, transparency and responsiveness. It grants the public rights and imposes on Parties and public authorities’ obligations regarding access to information and public participation and access to justice. Moreover, the Aarhus Convention is also forging a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aarhus Convention is the only international legal instrument putting Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development into effect. It also provides a solid and comprehensive framework for Governments to engage the public effectively in setting and implementing green economy programmes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.</li> <li>• Being a Party to the Convention will significantly contribute to the country’s efforts to promote citizen-centred and environmentally sound policies.</li> </ul>	Not ratified.	UNECE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accession to the Convention would greatly support the Government's policies to tackle poverty and inequality by ensuring that all persons, including the poorest segments of society and rural communities, are able to participate in decisions that impact their lives and as a result to benefit from the income generated by different sectors of the economy.</li> <li>• The endorsement of transparent, consensual, participatory decision-making also demonstrates a commitment to build a stable and secure society, which in the long term can become economically prosperous and environmentally and socially sustainable.</li> <li>• By becoming a Party to the Aarhus Convention Uzbekistan will send a strong signal to other States, including its trade and aid partners, as well as foreign investors and international institutions of the government's commitment to effective governance and environmental democracy.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, Uzbekistan will benefit from access to successful experiences, participate in regional and sub-regional activities and will enjoy increased opportunities for capacity building and cooperation.</p>		
29.	<p>The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention)</p> <p>The Aarhus Convention ensures the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being. The Convention establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders.</p> <p>The subject of the Convention goes to the heart of the relationship between people and governments. The Convention is not only an environmental agreement, it is also a Convention about government accountability, transparency and responsiveness. It grants the public rights and imposes on Parties and public authorities' obligations regarding access to information and public participation and access to justice. Moreover, the Aarhus Convention is also forging a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aarhus Convention is the only international legal instrument putting Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development into effect. It also provides a solid and comprehensive framework for Governments to engage the public effectively in setting and implementing green economy programmes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.</li> <li>• Being a Party to the Convention will significantly contribute to the country's efforts to promote citizen-centred and environmentally sound policies.</li> </ul>	Not ratified.	UNECE



30.	The Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents	<p>Purpose and scope: The Convention aims at protecting human beings and the environment against industrial accidents by preventing such accidents to the extent possible, by reducing their frequency and severity and by mitigating their effects. It promotes active international cooperation between the contracting Parties, before, during and after an industrial accident.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <p>The Convention provides guidance on developing a legal and institutional framework to address prevention, preparedness and response measures for industrial accidents - particularly those with transboundary effects. The Convention provides a platform for establishing and strengthening cooperation within and between countries - at the local, national and regional levels - on matters relating to industrial safety and disaster risk reduction.</p>	Not ratified.	UNECE
31.	Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, New York, 15 November 2000	<p>The Protocol deals with the growing problem of organized criminal groups who smuggle migrants, often at high risk to the migrants and at great profit for the offenders. A major achievement of the Protocol was that, for the first time in a global international instrument, a definition of smuggling of migrants was developed and agreed upon. The Protocol aims at preventing and combating the smuggling of migrants, as well as promoting cooperation among States parties, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants and preventing the worst forms of their exploitation which often characterize the smuggling process.</p>	Signature: 28 June 2001 Not ratified.	UNODC
32.	Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, New York, 31 May 2001	<p>The objective of the Protocol, which is the first legally binding instrument on small arms that has been adopted at the global level, is to promote, facilitate and strengthen cooperation among States Parties in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. By ratifying the Protocol, States make a commitment to adopt a series of crime-control measures and implement in their domestic legal order three sets of normative provisions: the first one relates to the establishment of criminal offenses related to illegal manufacturing of, and trafficking in, firearms on the basis of the Protocol requirements and definitions; the second to a system of government authorizations or licensing intending to ensure legitimate manufacturing of, and trafficking in, firearms; and the third one to the marking and tracing of firearms.</p>	Not ratified	UNODC





33.	2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation	Criminalizes the act of using civil aircraft as a weapon to cause death, injury or damage; Criminalizes the act of using civil aircraft to discharge biological, chemical and nuclear (BCN) weapons or similar substances to cause death, injury or damage, or the act of using such substances to attack civil aircraft; Criminalizes the act of unlawful transport of BCN weapons or certain related material; A cyber-attack on air navigation facilities constitutes an offence; A threat to commit an offence may be an offence by itself, if the threat is credible. Conspiracy to commit an offence, or its equivalence, is punishable.	Not ratified	ICAO
34.	2010 Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft	Supplements the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft by expanding its scope to cover different forms of aircraft hijackings, including through modern technological means; Incorporates the provisions of Beijing Convention relating to a threat or conspiracy to commit an offence.	Not ratified.	ICAO
35.	2014 Protocol to Amend the Convention on Offences and Certain Acts Committed on Board Aircraft	The Protocol expands the jurisdiction over offences and acts committed on board aircraft from the State of Registration of the aircraft to the State of the Operator (where the offence is committed on an aircraft leased without crew to a lessee whose principal place of business is, or who permanently resides, in that State), and the State of Landing (where the aircraft has its last point of take-off or next point of intended landing within its territory and the aircraft subsequently lands in its territory with the alleged offender still on board). Where the State of Registration, the State of the Operator, or the State of Landing has become aware that one or more of the other states are conducting an investigation, prosecution or judicial proceeding in respect of the same offence or act, that state will consult the other states with a view to coordinating their actions.	Not ratified.	ICAO
36.	2005 Protocol to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation	Criminalizes the use of a ship as a device to further an act of terrorism; Criminalizes the transport on board a ship various materials knowing that they are intended to be used to cause, or in a threat to cause, death or serious injury or damage to further an act of terrorism; Criminalizes the transporting on board a ship of persons who have committed an act of terrorism; and Introduces procedures for governing the boarding of a ship believed to have committed an offence under the Convention.	Not ratified.	ICAO

37.	1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf	Establishes a legal regime applicable to acts against fixed platforms on the continental shelf that is similar to the regimes established against international aviation.	Not ratified	UNODC
38.	2005 Protocol to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf	Adapts the changes to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation to the context of fixed platforms located on the continental shelf.	Not ratified	UNODC





# Annex B. Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights





<b>List of relevant international human rights instruments (and their acronyms)</b>	
1948	Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)
1965	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
1966	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
1966	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
1979	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
1984	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
1986	Declaration on the Right to Development (UNDRTD)
1989	Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
1990	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)
1993	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW)
2000	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OP-1)
<b>Fundamental Human Rights Conventions of the ILO</b>	
1930	Forced Labour Convention, (No. 29)
1948	Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to organize Convention, (No. 87)
1949	Right to organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, (No. 98)
1951	Equal Remuneration Convention, (No. 100)
1957	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, (No. 105)
1958	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, (No. 111)
1973	Minimum Age Convention, (No. 183)
1999	Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, (No. 182)
2014	Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930

Sustainable Development Goals		Related Human Rights
 <p><b>1 NO POVERTY</b></p>	<p><b>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b> Targets include eradicating extreme poverty; implementing social protection measures; and ensuring equal access of men and women to economic resources.</p>	<p>Right to an adequate standard of living [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11; CRC art. 27] Right to social security [UDHR art. 22; ICESCR art. 9; CRPD art. 28; CRC art. 26; ILO Convention No. 102 – not ratified] Equal rights of women in economic life [CEDAW arts. 11, 13, 14(2)(g), 15(2), 16(1), ILO Conventions No. 100 and 111]</p>
 <p><b>2 ZERO HUNGER</b></p>	<p><b>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture</b> Targets include ending hunger and malnutrition; improving agricultural production, sustainable and resilient food production; correcting trade distortions, and ensuring functioning food commodity markets.</p>	<p>Right to adequate food [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11; CRC art. 24(2)(c)] International cooperation, including ensuring equitable distribution of world food supplies [UDHR art. 28; ICESCR arts. 2(1), 11(2)]</p>
 <p><b>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</b></p>	<p><b>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b> Targets include reducing maternal mortality; ending preventable child deaths; ending or reducing AIDS other diseases; universal health coverage, affordable essential medicines, sexual and reproductive health care; vaccine research, and reproductive health care; vaccine research, and access to medicines.</p>	<p>Right to life [UDHR art. 3; ICCPR art. 6], particularly of women [CEDAW art. 12] and children [CRC art. 6] Right to health [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 12], particularly of women [CEDAW art. 12]; and children [CRC art.24] Special protection for mothers and children [ICESCR art.10, ILO Convention No. 183 – not ratified] Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application [UDHR art. 27; ICESCR art. 15(1)(b)] International cooperation [UDHR art. 28, DRtD arts. 3-4], particularly in relation to the right to health and children's rights [ICESCR art. 2(1); CRC art. 4</p>
 <p><b>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</b></p>	<p><b>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all</b> Targets include universal access to free, quality pre- primary, primary and secondary education; improving vocational skills; equal access to education; expanding education facilities, scholarships, and training of teachers.</p>	<p>Right to education [UDHR art. 26; ICESCR art. 13], particularly in relation to children [CRC arts. 28, 29]; persons with disabilities [CRC art. 23(3), CRPD art. 24]; and indigenous peoples [UNDRIP art. 14] Equal rights of women and girls in the field of education [CEDAW art. 10, ILO Convention No. 111] Right to work, including technical and vocational training [ICESCR art. 6, ILO Convention No. 111] International cooperation [UDHR art. 28; DRtD arts. 3-4], particularly in relation to children [CRC arts. 23(4), 28(3)], persons with disabilities [CRPD art. 32], and indigenous peoples [UNDRIP art. 39]</p>

	<p><b>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b></p> <p>Targets include eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls; valuing unpaid care and domestic work; ensuring the full participation of women; access to reproductive health care; and equal access of women to economic resources.</p>	<p>Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women [CEDAW arts. 1-5] and girls [CRC art. 2], particularly in legislation, political and public life (art. 7), economic and social life (arts. 11, 13), and family relations (art. 16), ILO Conventions No. 100 and 111]</p> <p>Right to decide the number and spacing of children [CEDAW arts. 12, 16(1)(e); CRC art. 24(2)(f)]</p> <p>Special protection for mothers and children [ICESCR art. 10, ILO Convention No. 183 – not ratified]</p> <p>Elimination of violence against women and girls [CEDAW arts. 1-6; DEVAW arts. 1-4; CRC arts. 24(3), 35]</p> <p>Right to just and favourable conditions of work [ICESCR art. 7; CEDAW art. 11, relevant ILO Conventions]</p>
	<p><b>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b></p> <p>Targets include ensuring universal and equitable access to safe, affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all; reducing pollution; increasing water-use efficiency; and promoting participatory management of water and sanitation services</p>	<p>Right to safe drinking water and sanitation [ICESCR art. 11]</p> <p>Right to health [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 12]</p> <p>Equal access to water and sanitation for rural women [CEDAW art. 14(2)(h)]</p>
	<p><b>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</b></p> <p>Targets include ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.</p>	<p>Right to an adequate standard of living [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11]</p> <p>Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application [UDHR art. 27; ICESCR art. 15(1)(b)]</p>
	<p><b>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b></p> <p>Targets include promoting sustained economic growth; improving resource efficiency in production and consumption; full and productive employment and decent work for all; eradicating forced and child labour and trafficking; protecting labour rights including those of migrant workers; and increasing access to financial services.</p>	<p>Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work [UDHR art. 23; ICESCR arts. 6, 7, 10; CRPD art. 27; ILO Fundamental Human Rights Conventions and all other relevant Conventions]</p> <p>Prohibition of slavery, forced labour, and trafficking of persons [UDHR art. 4; ICCPR art. 8; CEDAW art. 6; CRC arts. 34-36; ILO Convention No. 29 and its 2014 Protocol and Convention No. 105]</p> <p>Equal rights of women in relation to employment [CEDAW art. 11; ILO Conventions No. 100 and No. 111]</p> <p>Prohibition of child labour [CRC art. 32; ILO Convention No. 182]</p> <p>Equal labour rights of migrant workers [CMW art. 25, ILO Conventions No. 97 and 143 – not ratified]</p>



	<p><b>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation</b></p> <p>Targets include affordable and equitable access to quality infrastructure; employment generating industrialisation; access to financial services and markets; innovation and technology transfer, and increasing access to ICT</p>	<p>Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application [UDHR art. 27; ICESCR art. 15(1)(b)]</p> <p>Right to access to information [UDHR art. 19; ICCPR art. 19(2)]</p> <p>Right to adequate housing, including land and resources [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11]</p> <p>Equal rights of women to financial credit and rural infrastructure [CEDAW art. 13(b), art. 14(2)]</p>
	<p><b>Reduce inequality within and among countries</b></p> <p>Targets include promoting higher growth rates for the bottom 40 per cent; promoting economic and political inclusion reducing inequalities in opportunities and outcomes; ensuring social protection for all securing participation in economic decision -making; facilitating migration, and reducing transaction costs for migrant remittances.</p>	<p>[UDHR art. 2; ICESCR art. 2(2); ICCPR arts. 2(1), 26; CERD art. 2(2); CEDAW art. 2; CRC art. 2; CRPD art. 5; CMW art. 7; DRtD art. 8(1); ILO Conventions No. 100 and 111]</p> <p>Right to participate in public affairs [UDHR art. 21; ICCPR art. 25; CEDAW art. 7; ICERD art. 5; CRPD art. 29; DRtD social,;art. 8(2)]</p> <p>Right to social security [UDHR art. 22; ICESCR arts. 9-10; CRPD art. 28, ILO Convention No. 102 – not ratified]</p> <p>Promotion of conditions for international migration [CMW art. 64, ILO Conventions No. 97 -not ratified]</p>
	<p><b>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b></p> <p>Targets include ensuring access to housing, basic services and public transport for all; participatory planning of human settlements; safeguarding cultural and natural heritage; and strengthening resilience to disasters</p>	<p>Right to adequate housing, including land and resources [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11]</p> <p>Right to participate in cultural life [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 15; ICERD arts. 5, 7; CRPD art. 30; CRC art. 31]</p> <p>Accessibility of transportation, facilities and services particularly of persons with disabilities [CRPD art. 9(1)], children [CRC art. 23], and rural women [CEDAW art. 14(2)]</p> <p>Protection from natural disasters[CRPD art. 11]</p>
	<p><b>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b></p> <p>Targets include achieving sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; improving waste management; promoting sustainable public procurement; ensuring access to information; and building capacity for sustainable development.</p>	<p>Right to health including the right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 12]</p> <p>Right to adequate food and the right to safe drinking water [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 11]</p> <p>Right of all peoples to freely dispose of their natural resources [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(2)]</p>

	<p><b>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</b> Targets include strengthening resilience and adaptation to climate change and natural disasters, including in marginalised communities; implementation of the Green Climate fund.</p>	<p>Right to health including the right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 12; CRC art. 24; CEDAW art. 12; CMW art. 28] Right to adequate food &amp; right to safe drinking water [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 11] Right of all peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(2)]</p>
	<p><b>Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</b> Targets include reducing marine pollution; conserving coastal ecosystems, coastal marine areas and fish stock; securing market access for small scale fishers; protection of marine biodiversity.</p>	<p>Right to health including the right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 12; CRC art. 24; CEDAW art. 12; CMW art. 28] Right to adequate food &amp; right to safe drinking water [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 11] Right of all peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(2)]</p>
	<p><b>Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</b> Targets include the sustainable management of freshwater, mountain ecosystems and forests; combatting desertification; halting biodiversity loss; combatting poaching and trafficking of protected species.</p>	<p>Right to health including the right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 12; CRC art. 24; CEDAW art. 12; CMW art. 28] Right to adequate food &amp; right to safe drinking water [UDHR art. 25(1); ICESCR art. 11] Right of all peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(2)]</p>
	<p><b>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b> Targets include reducing all forms of violence; ending violence against and trafficking of children; promoting rule of law and justice for all; reducing illicit financial and arms flows, corruption and bribery; developing effective institutions; participation in decision making at all levels; legal identity for all.</p>	<p>Right to life, liberty and security of the person [UDHR art. 3; ICCPR arts. 6(1), 9(1); ICPEd art. 1] including freedom from torture [UDHR art. 5; ICCPR art. 7; CAT art. 2; CRC art. 37(a)] Protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse or exploitation [CRC arts. 19, 37(a)], including trafficking (CRC arts. 34-36; CRC-OP1), ILO Conventions No. 138 and 182] Right to access to justice and due process [UDHR arts. 8, 10; ICCPR arts. 2(3), 14-15; CEDAW art. 2(c)] Right to legal personality [UDHR art. 6; ICCPR art. 16; CRPD art. 12] Right to participate in public affairs [UDHR art. 21; ICCPR art. 25] Right to access to information [UDHR art. 19; ICCPR art. 19(1)]</p>



**Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development**  
 Targets include strengthening domestic and international resources; debt sustainability; technology transfer and capacity building; promoting trade; enhancing policy and institutional coherence; respecting countries' policy space; promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships; measurements for progress, disaggregated data.

Right of all peoples to self-determination [ICCPR, ICESCR art. 1(1); DRtD art. 1(1)]  
 Right of all peoples to development and international cooperation [UDHR art. 28; ICESCR art. 2(1); CRC art. 4; CRPD art. 32(1); DRtD arts. 3-5]  
 Right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application  
 Including international cooperation in the scientific field [UDHR art. 27(1); ICESCR art. 15(1)]  
 Right to privacy  
 [UDHR art. 12; ICCPR art. 17], including respect for human rights and ethical principles in the collection and use of statistics [CRPD art. 31(1)]

# Annex C. Leave No One Behind – Identification of Vulnerable Groups

Basis of Vulnerability	Population Group	Manifestations	Causes	Which SDGs / Human Rights affected	What needs to be done	Principal Duty Bearers
<b>DISCRIMINATION BASED ON:</b>						
<b>Sex</b>	Women, LGBTI, women living with HIV, MSM	Violence, discrimination, detention, stigma based on sex or sexual identity / orientation  Exclusion from social protection (women living with HIV, LGBTI)  Female partners of drug users including PWID  Gender vulnerability to disasters	<u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of access to facilities, care and support especially for women with HIV, MSM, and LGBTI  <u>Underlying causes:</u> Discriminatory laws and policies not aligned to international norms and standards Refusal to decriminalise consensual sex between men, vulnerable to violence based on sexual identity / orientation), arbitrary arrest / detention Legal barriers for MSM to seek help Weak implementation and monitoring of laws No accountability of law enforcement agencies who act with impunity  <u>Root Causes:</u> Patriarchal attitudes, stereotypes about women's role in society, linking women rights with family values and attitudes about sexual identity and orientation	1.3 5.1 5.2 5.3 5.c 8 16 10.2 10.3	Repeal discriminatory laws, Accept UPR recommendations; Promote advocacy by discriminated groups; Repeal article 120 of the Criminal Code; Provide safe spaces, Introduce quotas and affirmative action; Combat discriminatory social norms and practices; Create awareness; Strengthen and sensitise institutions; Ensure better enforcement of laws; Prevent gender-based violence, promote gender equality strategies and approaches; Create a system of social support and decent living; Promote equal economic rights and opportunities for women and men, including through use of enabling technology such as IT.	The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan  Commission on Gender Equality of the Republic of Uzbekistan  Committee of Senate on Women and Gender Issues  Commission on Women and Family Issues under the Legislative Chamber

<b>Age</b>	Elderly men and women especially those living alone	Social isolation, poverty, lack of access to emotional support, stigma and discrimination	<u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of economic security, social protection, social work, old age homes, community living  <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Inadequate policy, legal and institutional framework <u>Root Causes:</u> Out migration of young, change in values	1.1 1.2 3.0	Strengthen social protection for the elderly; Promote professional social work.	Ministry of Health Ministry of Finance
	Children in care centres, Children without parental care, children in institutions, orphans, out of school, Children with special needs (mental stress), Children in conflict with law, Child labourers, Children living with HIV, Victims of domestic violence, Child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation	Corporal punishment and other forms of abuse and exploitation, Neglect (including parental), Exclusion, High suicides among children  No effective mechanisms for public oversight  75 per cent children in homes are disabled and poor	<u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of access to care and socio-psychological support facilities for children at risk.  <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Outmoded model of sending children at risk to care centres No professional help available to children at risk and under stress Guardianship and Custody Act 2014 does not explicitly prohibit corporal punishment, still goes on in day care centres, alternative care centres <u>Root Causes:</u> Poverty, Social attitudes	1.1 1.2 4.2 4.5 4.a	Strengthen psycho-social support (sending children to care homes should be last option); Amend Domestic Violence Bill to make provisions against corporal punishment in all settings.	Ministry of Education Ministry of Interior Ministry of Justice General Prosecutor Republican Centre to fight AIDS Ministry of Health

	<p>Youth NEET, Youth at-risk, youth infected and affected by HIV, drug-abusing youth, sex workers, trafficked youth, youth in orphanages or correctional homes, youth in conflict with law, youth exploited for labour, youth victims of violence or abuse, migrant youth, and youth stigmatised due to who they are, Roma youth (Lulis)</p>	<p>Radicalisation, psychological and mental health issues, depression, violence, exclusion</p>	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of access to education, economic opportunities or vocational training Little social protection or psycho-social support <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Insufficient and ineffective policy, legal and institutional framework for youth. Lack of civic space, Lack of awareness. Lack of rehabilitation and re-integration system (for those in conflict with law) <u>Root Causes:</u> Social attitudes, perception about youth, lack of participation in decision making, discrimination, lack of parental care</p>	<p>4.4 4.5 SDG 5, 8 8.6</p>	<p>Promote healthy lifestyles through youth clubs; Age-appropriate sex education; Health counselling at school level; Drug de-addiction; awareness; skills training for employment; family skills training; Promote responsible use of social media (cyberhealth / cyberhygiene); Promote volunteerism.</p>	<p>Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations  Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction  Ministry of Interior  Ministry of Public Education  Ministry of Health</p>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>Persons with disability, Women with disability, Women with disability and victims of violence,  Children with disability and their parents</p>	<p>Limited mobility, Stigmatisation (worse for people with mental disabilities), Lower employment, Lower participation in politics and administration; Exacerbated vulnerability to disasters Limited opportunity for decent living</p>	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of access to public spaces, inadequate infrastructure, care and support, Higher disability related costs. <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Lower employability, Residential approach to care, Low coverage of social protection, Lack of professional social workers. Ineffective policy environment. <u>Root Causes:</u> Social attitudes, Stereotypes, Stigma, Medical approach to disability</p>	<p>1.4 3.0 3.3 5.5</p>	<p>Ratify CRPD and OP; Enact national law on PWDs; Implement measures to support PWDs; Enhance skills and employability; Improve access to buildings and transport; Support NGOs working with PWDs; Counselling for parents of children with disabilities; Inclusive education (not segregated); Fiscal incentives for quality mobility aids and those who employ PWDs; Guidance on certifying degree of disability; Direct engagement with PWDs in decision making; Ensure disaster risk reduction inclusive approach, including specific measures such as early warning systems.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health  Ministry of Public Education  Ministry of Higher and Specialised Education  Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations  Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)</p>



<p><b>HIV Status</b></p>	<p>Persons infected by HIV, Persons affected by HIV</p>	<p>Stigmatisation and discrimination Lower employment, No / inadequate access to social protection Detention of the MSM, SW. (according to the criminal law). Low coverage for the harm reduction and drug dependence treatment</p>	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> Inadequate access to HIV prevention and care facilities. Access to ART especially by migrant men. <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Lack of awareness, Laws that impede effective HIV response, Lack of HIV impact mitigating strategies like social protection <u>Root Causes:</u> Social attitudes, Stereotypes, Discrimination, Stigma, Inadequate mainstreaming</p>	<p>1.3 3.3</p>	<p>Increase access to prevention and care; Scale up rapid diagnostic strategies; Implement integrated patient centred care treatment and support strategies; Repeal laws that impede effective HIV response; Remove legal barriers that stigmatise the key population: MSM, SW; Provide social protection services to people infected and affected by HIV; Make stigma reduction and raising general awareness mainstreaming part of response; Put more men on ART</p>	<p>Ministry of Health Republican Centre to Fight AIDS</p>
<p><b>GEORGRAPHY:</b></p>						
<p><b>Fragile Ecology / Location</b></p>	<p>Environmental degradation affected rural communities around Aral Sea area Surkhandarya (due to remoteness)</p>	<p>Decline in incomes and productivity, Lower quality of life, Serious health issues</p>	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> Degraded land, lack of irrigation water, salinization, contamination of soil with heavy elements, chemical fertilisers and pesticides, inefficient irrigation system with waste of water. Contaminated water. <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Lack of climate-resilient policies and programmes. <u>Root Causes:</u> Overexploitation of natural resources for cotton production</p>	<p>13.1 13.2 13.3 15.1 15.2 15.3</p>	<p>Promote climate-resilient agriculture and pastoral system; Address unsustainable and outmoded irrigation practices; Direct income transfers to vulnerable farmers.</p>	<p>Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Ministry of Health Ministry of Finance Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan IFAS Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources</p>

VULNERABILITY / EXPOSURE TO SHOCKS:						
<b>Disasters</b>	Communities in Fergana valley (and mostly eastern portion of the country, Tashkent)	Sense of insecurity; Disincentive to invest	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> High exposure to hazards that may cause disruption / damage to people, property, infrastructure and environment</p> <p><u>Underlying Causes:</u> Lack of capacity to implement policies on disaster preparedness and risk reduction; lack of awareness; lack of technologies (e.g. quake proof buildings); weak adaptation to climatic risk</p> <p><u>Root Causes:</u> Public apathy, sense of resignation</p>	11.5	Enhance resilience and local capacity to manage seismic and climatic risks; Improve systems to gather and analyse hazard information; Modernise early warning systems and weather forecasting; Strengthen adaptation to water stress / droughts; Modify building codes; Create repository of database with central authority; Disseminate data; Mainstream DRR in sector programmes.	Ministry of Emergency Situations
<b>Economic Shocks</b>	People in poverty, Migrant labour, households with catastrophic health expenditure	Vulnerability to inflation (electricity, water, food prices); Reduced incomes; Loss of jobs; Catastrophic health expenditures	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> Loss of jobs, catastrophic health expenditure</p> <p><u>Underlying Causes:</u> External factors (e.g. economic slowdown in host countries); Return of migrants; Structural reform; Labour market reform; SOEs privatisation (lay-offs); lack of social protection and health finance support</p> <p><u>Root Causes:</u> Economy based on commodity exports vulnerable to global price changes; regressive health system; lack of employment</p>	1.5 2.1 2.2	<p>Social protection; Income transfers; health financing protection; Active labour market programmes (ALMPs); pre-migration orientation for migrants; skills training.</p>	<p>Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction</p> <p>Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations</p>

GOVERNANCE:						
<p><b>Impact of laws, policies, institutions</b></p>	<p>Women, LGBTI, Forced labour, Persons evicted by force, national and ethnic minorities</p>	<p>Violence based on sex or sexual identity / orientation Exclusion from social protection (LGBTI) Lack of participation Work and studies compromised due to forced labour</p>	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> No immediate recourse available. No access to support system. <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Lack of progressive laws and policies, linking women rights to family code. Impunity of law enforcement agencies. <u>Root Causes:</u> Social attitudes, lack of awareness, Stereotypes, Stigma,</p>	<p>5.1 5.2 5.3 5.c</p>	<p>Remove barriers to gender justice (amend laws, provide protection, civic space,)</p>	<p>Ministry of Justice Ministry of Interior General Prosecutor</p>
<p><b>Civil registration</b></p>	<p>Persons without civil registration, Stateless persons, Refugees, persons of undetermined nationality Lulis/Roma</p>	<p>Vulnerable to police brutality, Denial of social services, Social protection, Inheritance, Restricted mobility for employment</p>	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of legal documents. <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Administrative capacity, Corruption apathy towards stateless <u>Root Causes:</u> Illegality, Hard to reach, Cultural factors (Lulis);</p>	<p>16.9</p>	<p>Strengthen civil registry, provide registration certificates,</p>	<p>Ministry of Interior</p>
<p><b>Persecution</b></p>	<p>Political opponents, journalists, religious leaders in detention, Women in detention</p>	<p>Lack of freedom of expression and association</p>	<p><u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of independent and effective human rights mechanisms and judicial system; no oversight to executive actions; impunity of law enforcement agencies <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Non-ratification of treaties; aversion to international scrutiny; lack of capacity; weak demand for justice from people <u>Root Causes:</u> Legacy of repressive previous regime; intolerance to dissent</p>	<p>16.3 16.6 16.10</p>	<p>Allow human rights defenders to work; Promote independence of judiciary; Comply with UPR recommendations</p>	<p>Ministry of Interior General Prosecutor</p>

<b>Illegality / Stigma</b>	Drug users, sex workers, PLWHIV, MSM Prison population and released prisoners	Stigmatisation, Discrimination, Lower employment, Inadequate access to social protection, poor quality and limited access to prevention, treatment and care services for key population (drug users, IDUs)	<u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of facilities, care and support system; lack of infrastructure to treat drug abusers. Lack of access to social and psychological services and social workers. <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Regressive laws; lack of awareness, no rehabilitation and reintegration policies / programmes <u>Root Causes:</u> Social attitudes, biases, Stereotypes	3.5	Expand access to quality service on prevention, treatment and care. Expand social protection to cover these groups.	Ministry of Interior Ministry of Health Republican Centre to fight AIDS
<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS:</b>						
<b>Employment</b>	Unemployed youth, women in informal employment, national and ethnic minorities	Radicalisation; Violent social behaviour; Exclusion,	<u>Immediate Causes</u> Lack of employment; Lack of higher education, vocational training, skills; Absence of entrepreneurship; <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Economic slowdown; weak GDP growth; lack of social protection for unemployed <u>Root Causes:</u> Job-less growth; capital-intensive economy	8.6	Formulate an action-oriented youth policy and time-bound reduction in NEET youth; Promote skills and vocational education; Co-create curriculum with private sector; Promote safe migration Enhance active labour market policies aimed at expanding employment opportunities for youth including women Develop labour market information system strengthening analytical functions, skills needs and occupations forecasting	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations Ministry of Higher and Professional Education

<b>Poverty</b>	People in extreme poverty Roma	Helplessness; Exclusion	<u>Immediate Causes</u> Unemployment; Inadequate protection coverage <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Lack of education or skills to get out of poverty, inadequate access to digital technology; geographical isolation; lack of legal identity; climatic and environmental factors <u>Root Causes:</u> Job-less growth	1.1 1.2 11.1	Public works; Direct income transfer; Free access to social services; needs analysis of homeless and targeted assistance	Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction  Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
<b>Mobility</b>	Migrants, Disaster-displaced persons	Lack of legal protection, vulnerability to economic slow-downs, Violence, discrimination, psychosocial issue in host countries, exploitation by radical elements	<u>Immediate Causes</u> Economic slowdown in host countries forcing migrants to return; Inadequate access to health, legal, and social services. Episodes of violence or discrimination. <u>Underlying Causes:</u> Ineffective labour and migration policies; limited pre-migration information; poor monitoring of migrants; mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in policies and programmes <u>Root Causes:</u> Limited access to employment at home; lack of disaster resilient infrastructure and livelihoods		Scale up psychosocial support to mobile groups of population, provide social protection services, develop regional cooperation to protect human rights of mobile population; Take resilience building measures to reduce impact to dwellings.	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations

# Annex D. Multi-dimensional Risks, Risk Factors, and Assessment of Likely Impact

	Risk factors	Assessment / Analysis	Impact	Likelihood
1.	Political Stability	<p>After the death of President Karimov in 2016, the transition has been smooth. The current President has taken many steps to reform the governance and the economy. There is some resistance to reform in some quarters but remains muted given the popular support for the overall reform agenda.<sup>207</sup> The cost of living is rising which could trigger some social discontent but is not a source of political instability. Corruption in high places may create mistrust between the people and the authorities and failed aspirations may spill over into violence. Affected SDGs: 16, 17</p> <p>Affected population groups: youth, human rights advocates, civil society, political opponents.</p>	High	Low
2.	Democratic Space/ Civil Society Voice and Participation	<p>Despite the ongoing reforms, overall democratic space remains confined. Moreover, NGOs Youth and other groups have limited platforms to voice their concerns. Civil society activists who assisted the Special Rapporteur on Judicial Independence were hounded by the authorities.<sup>208</sup> LGBTI civil society remains highly restricted. Despite some improvements, critics, activists, media and bloggers are regularly targeted / monitored. Democracy has not fully taken root yet and the risk of reversals is always present. Government is not traditionally equipped to handle social mobilisations, protests and demonstrations and may overreact. Freedom House still ranked the country as “Not Free” in 2020.<sup>209</sup></p> <p><b>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</b> <b>Affected population groups: youth, human rights advocates, NGOs, media, bloggers, academia, political opponents.</b></p>	High	Low
3.	Social cohesion, gender equality and non-discrimination	<p>The key risks to social cohesion include prejudices and discrimination against women, LGBTI and people with disabilities; domestic violence; and high share of youth NEET (42 per cent), among other issues. While the efforts of the Government in this area are commendable, discrimination against ethnic minorities continues (e.g., Lulis), as does hostility at the community level towards families of returning Uzbek fighters from Syria.</p>	Medium	High

<sup>207</sup> World Bank. 2020. Listening to the Citizens of Uzbekistan

<sup>208</sup> Preliminary observations on the official visit to Uzbekistan of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, 19-25 September 2019

<sup>209</sup> Freedom House. 2020. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/uzbekistan/freedom-world/2020>



		<p><b>Affected SDGs: 1, 5, 10, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: youth, women, ethnic, linguistic and sexual minorities, civil society.</b></p>	Medium	Low
4.	Regional and global influences	<p>The country is taking effective steps to curb illicit drugs and human trafficking, terrorism and promoting cross border peace and stability. However, the threat from VE and terrorist groups remains. Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has increased and may remain a risk to Uzbekistan as a transit route for drugs. The country's relationship with neighbouring countries has shown improvement which might resolve the challenges relating to water and energy sharing arrangements. Borders with neighbouring countries are peaceful.  <b>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: population at border areas, youth at risk of radicalisation, migrants</b></p>	Medium	Low
5.	Internal Security	<p>The risk to internal security is minimal. The country has been successful in preventing terrorism in the country. The country has a strong intelligence network. Uzbek fighters and their families returning from Syria are being rehabilitated to which there appears to be some local resistance but government is monitoring the situation. Radicalisation of youth, including due to restrictions on religious practice, is a threat. The 2018 Global Terrorism Index ranks Uzbekistan at 134 / 138 countries with a score of 0.010 (very low impact of terrorism).<sup>210</sup>  <b>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: youth, migrants.</b></p>	Low	Low
6.	Justice and rule of law	<p>Judicial independence remains elusive despite some judicial reforms.<sup>211</sup> Prosecution acts with impunity. Acquittals remain rare. Availability of lawyers is limited and there have been reports that some of those handling politically sensitive cases are subject to harassment.<sup>212</sup> Use of force to extract confessions, later produced as evidence, reportedly continues. Recent evictions of homeowners for a housing project without warning or adequate compensation with no legal recourse resulted in gross violation of human rights and could trigger conflict. People's faith in the judicial system remains low. Judicial reforms are in process, but results are yet to be seen on the ground.  <b>Affected SDGs: 16, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: all rights holders, human rights activists, civil society</b></p>	High	High

210 Global Terrorism Index. 2020. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>

211 Preliminary observations on the official visit to Uzbekistan of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, 19-25 September 2019

7.	Risk factors	<p>By the end of 2020 and early 2021, there are early signs of economic recovery in Uzbekistan. The authorities forecast a GDP growth for 2020 to reach 1-1.5%, which is higher than Q4 2020 forecasts, unemployment rate fell to around 10% by the end of 2020, down from 15 per cent in July 2020.</p> <p>As the country reemerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and continues on the pathway of reform, the risks are still significant. Rising prices and fiscal deficits, diminished trade, high share of informal employment, and gaps in social protection make the country vulnerable to risks. Deceleration of growth may limit the fiscal space to spend on social services. Risk that reforms may not match demographic changes and expectations of young people is high. They may not see any direct benefit for them and perceive reforms to be for a few people and thus may be further aggravating inequalities (between regions and groups of people).</p> <p><b>Affected SDGs: 1,8,9,10, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: people below poverty line, youth, human rights activists, civil society.</b></p>	High	Medium
8.	Infrastructure and access to social services	<p>There are regional disparities in access to infrastructure. Basic access to health, education, and social protection has been severely impacted by COVID-19, and represents a latent risk if not addressed post-crisis. does not pose any immediate risk. Irrigation infrastructure is outdated and may affect water use efficiency and hence agricultural production.</p> <p><b>Affected SDGs: 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: people living in remote areas.</b></p>	Medium	Medium
9.	Democratic Space/ Civil Society Voice and Participation	<p>There has been significant displacement of people from around the Aral Sea to relocate in other areas due to environmental stress. Uzbekistan is a source country for migration for employment. Slowdown in Kazakhstan and Russia adversely affected employment overseas and remittances. Uzbekistan is also a source country for illicit trafficking of women. Very little is known about living and working conditions of these out migrants. Given the large numbers involved, this is a major risk.</p> <p><b>Affected SDGs: 1, 8, 10, 16, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: migrants, Aral Sea-affected population, youth</b></p>	High	Medium

212 See [A/HRC/44/47/Add.1](#)

213 See earlier discussion above in Sections 4.1 and 6 on current macroeconomic context.

10.	Public Health	<p>COVID-19 has shown that a pandemic can have a major disruptive force to development. As the pandemic abates and the vaccination campaigns starts, there are still risks that another wave of mass infection, especially with the new and more contagious variants of the virus, can occur.</p> <p>Uzbekistan is the 3rd country in the region with the most growing HIV epidemic, still having concentrated HIV epidemic. Estimated number is 54,000. Around 44 per cent of them are women. In 2019 4,185 new HIV cases were registered. Almost 73 per cent of new HIV cases are sexually transmitted. Compared to previous years' data, sexual transmission is increasing (in 2011 – 45.9 per cent, in 2015 – 67.6 per cent). Overall prevalence of HIV is high among high-risk groups like sex workers (3.2 per cent), MSM (3.7 per cent) and IDUs (5.1 per cent). Overall coverage of ART remains low (60 per cent).</p> <p>Uzbekistan is among the 30 high MDR-TB burden countries in the world. Lack of professional socio-psychological support results in high adolescent suicides.</p> <p>NCDs account for 79 per cent of deaths and its economic cost is 4.7 per cent of GDP. Risk of communicable diseases coming back and Hepatitis is high. Health sector financing strategy could raise the cost of health care.</p> <p><b>Affected SDGs: 3, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: whole population, especially elderly, women, people living with multiple morbidities</b></p>	High	Medium
11.	Food security, food safety, agriculture and land	<p>The limited agricultural land that is available in the country is prone to degradation. Water wastage is high. Pasture management is unsustainable. Climate change adaptation is poor and with rising population the country might face food shortages. Food quality is another risk factor.</p> <p><b>Affected SDGs: 2, 15, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: Food insecure and mal-nourished population, young children, women (especially with anaemia)</b></p>	Medium	Medium
12.	Environment and climate	<p>The country is subject to climate change and associated rise in temperature and risks of extreme weather events, such as glacial lake bursts and droughts. The pace and spread of natural resource degradation and increased frequency of disasters, including earthquakes, floods, mudslides and droughts, pose high risk. Uranium tailing sites are also an environmental pollution risk factor.</p> <p><b>Affected SDGs: 12, 13, 15, 17</b>  <b>Affected population groups: Population living in disaster-prone areas, close to uranium tailing sites [Aral sea, Fergana valley, east of the country including Tashkent]</b></p>	High	Medium



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