



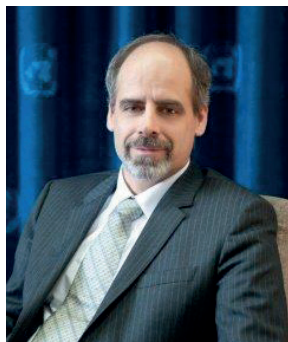
UN in Uzbekistan

Spring Edition



2015

UNAIDS | UNDP | UNESCO | UNICEF | UNFPA | UNODC | UNRCCA | UNV | UN Women | WHO | The World Bank



Dear Readers,

I am pleased to present the first 2015 issue of the quarterly bulletin of the United Nations in Uzbekistan. As the United Nations System at the country level, we are represented through different United Nations-Funds, Programmes and specialized Agencies, but

our overarching purpose remains the same – that is, serving the people.

Our work at country level is guided by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

(UNDAF), our plan of cooperation with the Government, and introducing our current and future UNDAF frameworks is the focus of this edition. We also give you a “snapshot” of just a few of the manifold United Nations activities in Uzbekistan in pursuit of the UNDAF Outcomes.

I wish you interesting reading and will be happy to receive your feedback. Your opinion is very important for us, since the United Nations is “your world” and it is all about you.

Sincerely,

Stefan Priesner

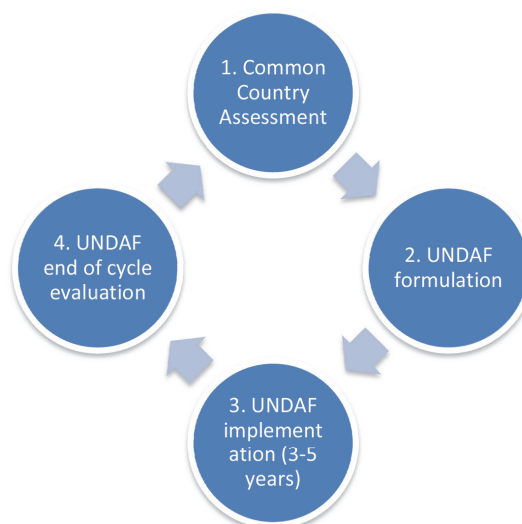
UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan

UNDAF – COHERENT VISION OF UN SUPPORT

The UNDAF and its companion document, the Common Country Assessment (CCA), have served as an integral part of United Nations programming at country level for nearly two decades (see Diagram 1). In 1997, then-United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan introduced a reform agenda aimed at bringing to the United Nations System “greater unity of purpose, greater coherence of efforts, and greater agility in responding to an increasingly dynamic and complex world.” The Secretary-General’s words still have resonance for strengthening the efficiency of United Nations System operational activities at country level.

Priority has increasingly been given to transcending Agency-specific mandates and to working as “One UN,” while building on the United Nations’ comparative advantages in a specific country. For the UNDAF process, this begins with a CCA to jointly identify key development needs and national priorities. The UNDAF itself then makes the themes emerging from the CCA operational, following up with a strategic results framework that helps to ensure that all Agencies are working toward the same goals and objectives.

UNDAF implementation is a joint endeavour among the United Nations Country Team (UNCT),



UN programming cycle at country level

national partners and donors; in Uzbekistan, for example, 12 Agencies, as part of the UNCT, are involved. Thematic groups focused on each chosen strategic priority area help to ensure effective coordination throughout the UNDAF cycle. In addition, an UNDAF Steering Committee, established by a Resolution of the Prime Minister, has provided further strategic guidance to overall UNDAF implementation in the country (see box below).

For Uzbekistan, its first UNDAF covered period 2005-2009; the United Nations System is currently nearing the completion of the second UNDAF (2010-2015), which focuses on the following priority areas:





- Economic well-being, with particular attention to vulnerable groups
- Social services, emphasizing increased access to and use of quality services
- Environment, encompassing integration of the principles of sustainable development into national policies and programmes
- Governance, focused on enhanced effectiveness, inclusiveness and accountability at central and local levels

Now, the United Nations System in Uzbekistan is poised to embark upon a new UNDAF for the period 2016-2020. In addition to conducting the CCA, other major steps taken in preparation for this important transition included:

- Independent evaluation of the UNDAF 2010-2015
- Consultation with Parliament and NGOs
- Strategic prioritization meeting with Government
- Government-United Nations Working Group consultations

Crucially, the new UNDAF builds on and deepens the strategic UNDAF priorities already in place. It takes its inspiration from the President's 2010 "Concept on further deepening democratic reforms and establishing civil society in the country," which sets a people-centred development vision "to build an open, democratic and law-governed State with a stable developing economy and a society." This focus on people-centred development is very much in line with the United Nations' core development paradigms, in particular, human development and human rights, as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their post-2015 successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be finalized later in the year.

Thus, the UNDAF ensures the inter-linkage between national development initiatives (Welfare Improvement Strategy [WIS II], other policy priorities) and the international normative framework and standards, with

Connection between normative framework and development interventions is one of key UN comparative advantages

"UNDAF was negotiated with 35 Government agencies, 15 (including non-resident) UN agencies and consulted with donors."

particular attention to Uzbekistan's obligations under ratified United Nations Conventions. This represents a key comparative advantage for the

UNDAF Steering Committee:

- Co-chaired by Minister of Economy and UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan.
- consists of high level representatives of national partner organizations and UN agencies;
- meets annually to review the progress of UNDAF implementation;
- provides strategic guidance.

United Nations System. In all, UNDAF priorities were negotiated with 35 Government agencies and 15 United Nations Agencies, as well as in consultations with donors.

Following the key principle of the nascent SDGs, which stress the need to effectively reduce development inequalities, the vision and strategy of the new UNDAF are built on the following crosscutting principles:

Addressing inequalities through an emphasis on disadvantaged social and economic groups, as well as regional disparities

- Ensuring that all actions respect and advance human rights, in coherence with international standards

- Basing development analysis on credible data and evidence, while also enhancing data capacity, availability, disaggregation, literacy and sharing

Overall, the Government of Uzbekistan and the United Nations System have agreed to pursue a set of eight Outcomes grouped into four thematic areas:

- Inclusive economic development, with a focus on employment, social protection and regional disparities
- Health and education to fully realize human potential, through enhanced access to quality health and education services
- Environmental protection to ensure sustainable development
- Effective governance to enhance public service delivery and the protection of rights

For each strategic priority area, the Government and United Nations System will develop biennial workplans. These workplans will define in detail specific activities to be undertaken by United Nations Agencies in the country for achievement of UNDAF Outcomes, and hence, national priorities.

THE UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE IN UZBEKISTAN

The United Nations “family” in Uzbekistan comprises the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA), International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UN Volunteers (UNV) administered by UNDP. Additional contributions to the United Nations System’s work are made by a number of non-resident Agencies, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The World Bank, as an independent, specialized Agency of the United Nations System, also significantly contributes to the United Nations’ work in the country.



Under the current UNDAF 2010-2015, the United Nations System has delivered some US\$132 million in technical assistance. Our support is wide-ranging, from economic reform and strengthening governance to promoting human rights. We assist in healthcare and education reform as well as the protection of Uzbekistan’s cultural treasures. We also support efforts to counter drug trafficking, to protect the environment, and to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

In the following briefs, we offer a “snapshot” of the breadth of the United Nations System’s engagement in the country.

Marking the anniversary of Uzbekistan’s membership to the UN

Twenty-three years ago, on 2 March 1992, Uzbekistan joined the ranks of United Nations member countries. To commemorate this important date as well as the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, Tashkent State Law University hosted an event to honour winners of the essay competition “Seventy Years to the Rule of Law,” with representatives of the United Nations System in Uzbekistan in attendance.

United Nations Resident Coordinator Mr. Stefan Priesner, invited as an honourable guest to the award ceremony, delivered a speech focusing on the rule of law and the MDGs/SDGs. In particular, Mr. Priesner highlighted the role the United Nations has played since its founding in 1945 in various aspects of globalization, with a special focus on two pillars of the UN’s work: human rights and development. Mr. Priesner also lauded the continuing positive collaboration between the United Nations System and the Government of Uzbekistan under the UNDAF.

New Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of UNRCCA Appointed

Mr. Petko Draganov, of Bulgaria, has been appointed as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and the head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. He succeeds Mr. Miroslav Jenca, of Slovakia, who was recently appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

The UNRCCA, established in 2007, assists the Governments of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in finding solutions for emerging challenges to regional peace and security and works to eliminate potential threats in this regard.

Mr. Draganov previously served as Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), a position he had held since 2009. He also has served as First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and in numerous diplomatic postings in Africa.

STRENGTHENED DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS CRITICAL FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING



Surveys provide important data for planning programmes to promote healthy family values

Statistical data about growth, movements, structures and living conditions of a country's population are vital for relevant policy formulation, planning and implementation.

With a wide range of partners, UNFPA has been supporting the Government to obtain quality data through small-scale thematic surveys whose results can

be used to foster sound, evidence-based policymaking. During the current UNDAF cycle, five surveys have been conducted, covering tens of thousands people in the capital city, Tashkent, and in the regions. These surveys ranged from analyzing family relations in times of transition to access to reproductive health services and awareness on overall health issues.

Moving forward, UNFPA plans to engage in research on other topics particularly relevant to Uzbekistan and the post-2015 development agenda, including adolescent health and early marriage.

“For UNFPA and a number of national institutions, the surveys like this fill an important gap in statistics on family-related matters in Uzbekistan, including gender-related data,” says UNFPA Representative Mr. Karl Kulessa. The results, he adds, are used in the design of national programmes as well as for fine-tuning of UNFPA's own interventions.

GOVERNANCE

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OFFERED FOR EXPANDED WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC DECISION MAKING



Regular dialogues are held with national partners on promoting women's empowerment in Uzbekistan

A key area of cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United Nations System is related to the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women's participation in the socioeconomic and political life of the country.

To this end, multi-stakeholder policy discussions at the end of 2014 have been vital in the recent development of recommendations for temporary special mea-

sures to be applied in Uzbekistan to promote women's participation in public decision making. The discussions, held with the technical support of UN Women, included participation by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the National Human Rights Centre, parliamentarians, political parties and NGOs.

Among the key recommendations was one for an amendment to Article 15 of the Family Code to establish an equal age for marriage for both women and men. Other recommendations focused on the introduction of quotas for women in higher education; adoption of the “Concept on State cadre policy” to increase the number of women in Government leadership positions; and ensuring 30 percent representation of women within the civil service.

The recommendations have been submitted to the Ministry of Justice for further consideration and approval.

SNAPSHOT OF UN ACTIVITIES IN UZBEKISTAN

GROUNDWORK LAID FOR FIRST CHILD RIGHTS UNIVERSITY COURSE

The understanding of child rights in Uzbekistan is being deepened through the introduction in 2015 of a child rights course in the curriculum of Tashkent

State Law University, with UNICEF support. An international consultant on child rights, Ms. Ingrid van Welzenis, is expected to work with national experts

on development of a syllabus and textbook, incorporating interactive methods for adult teaching.

“I am happy that the University is willing to do this, so the students will be provided with the modern knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to apply child rights awareness beyond the limits of a legal subject,” said Ms. Van Welzenis. “This will empower them to understand how child rights are functioning – not only in theory, but also in reality”.

As part of her visit, Ms. Van Welzenis conducted a half-day training of trainers (TOT) to demonstrate the adult interactive training methodology for teaching staff. More than 20 teachers from different departments of the University took part in the TOT.



Van Welzenis: “This (training) will empower them (Uzbek specialists) to understand how child rights are functioning – not only in theory, but also in reality”

PROMOTING AN ENABLING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR BETTER LIVELIHOODS

The United Nations System has long been a proud contributor to improving people’s economic well-being in Uzbekistan, generating employment opportunities, improving rural livelihoods, introducing business advisory services, facilitating learning and encouraging entrepreneurship.

In recent months, and with United Nations support, Uzbek entrepreneurs have taken part in several international fairs on food and textiles, where they were able to sign export contracts worth more than US\$43 million. Further tangible results are expected in terms of strengthened capacities of national agencies to promote trade and exports, as well as an analysis of how integration into multilateral trade agreement processes can influence specific sectors.

Meanwhile, the United Nations System also is supporting the strengthening of export promotion institutions and the productive export capacities of local small and medium enterprises.

ECONOMIC WELLBEING

A FOCUS ON SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE ELDERLY

Strong social protection is one of the key principles of Uzbekistan’s national development strategy. The United Nations System supports the Government in strengthening its social protection system at national level through policy advice in such areas as improving the efficiency of social assistance schemes and enhancing the sustainability of the pension system. A Social Protection Inter-Agency Group, established between the Government and the United Nations System, serves as the platform for such dialogue. At local level, support is provided through piloting social enterprises to employ vulnerable people and developing social services delivered by non-Government organizations (NGOs).

In 2015, which has been declared the ‘Year of Care for the Elderly’ in the country, the United Nations System is dedicating particular efforts to social



Care for the elderly is a deep rooted national value in Uzbekistan

protection of the elderly and persons with disabilities (PWDs). With a focus on these groups, Agencies are working to strengthen the quality of the institutions, standards, and services within the social protection system. Special efforts are focusing on enhancing the legislative framework for social protection for the elderly, including home-care service, old-age homes, social service delivery in rehabilitation centres, and provision of a minimum package of support for elderly persons who are alone.

SNAPSHOT OF UN ACTIVITIES IN UZBEKISTAN



VOLUNTEERS WORK TOWARD HEALTH EQUITY IN THE ARAL SEA REGION

Stigma around tuberculosis represents a major obstacle to effective medical service delivery in Uzbekistan's Aral Sea region, which is most severely affected by the Aral Sea disaster. To address this challenge, more than 1,500 trained community volunteers under a United Nations Joint Programme in the region are visiting households to promote the fact that tuberculosis is curable, if the right diagnosis, along with rapid and full treatment, is provided. At the same time, encouraging health-seeking behaviour is an important element of the volunteers' work, so that the region's overall health indicators can improve. This was illustrated during one

recent visit by a volunteer, Ms. Kalbike Uzakbergenova, to the home of Vera, a resident of the Erkin-Darya rural community. Vera was complaining about chest pain and other symptoms, and was afraid she might have TB. Based on Kalbike's advice, Vera finally visited a local rural health point, where the doctor found that Vera did not have TB – but noticed that something was wrong with her pancreas. After receiving treatment for that unanticipated health issue, Vera's health fully recovered. Without having a UN-supported volunteer encourage her to take a medical examination, she might not have been as fortunate.



PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Farmers, rural communities and rural officials alike have benefited as the United Nations System promotes sustainable development and effective use of natural resources in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, an area particularly challenged by environmental issues. In a series of recent trainings, mid-level officials from regional departments of several Ministries in three districts of Karakalpakstan deepened their knowledge of how to formulate and implement sound development policies and environmental crisis mitigation strategies, based on best international practices. They were joined by students of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The trainings were organized in cooperation with Khorezm Rural Advisory Support Service (KRASS) and national experts on sustainable development. In addition, a rural extension cabinet has been established in Urgench to provide continued support and extension services to farmers and rural communities in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

Speaking at the training, the UNESCO Representative in Uzbekistan, Ms. Krista Pikkat, highlighted the importance of the active involvement of professionals at all levels of Government to address environmental issues in the country. She called for future cooperation to promote sustainable development in the post-2015 development agenda.



41/3, Mirabad street, Tashkent, 100015, Uzbekistan
Tel.: (+99871) 120-34-50, Fax: (+99871) 120-34-85
E-mail: uno.tashkent@undp.org