

These infographics present the key results of the independent evaluation of the Government of Mongolia and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2017-2022). It is based on the Evaluation Report issued in December 2021. The UNDAF 2017-2022 was developed in alignment with the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030, which was the country's long-term strategic policy document. The UNDAF was signed by 15 United Nations Agencies and describes the collective response of the UN system to national development priorities. The UNDAF was built around three strategic outcome areas:



Promoting inclusive growth and sustainable management of natural resources



Enhancing social protection and utilization of quality and equitable social services



Fostering voice and strengthening accountability

## EVALUATION OBJECTIVES



Support greater accountability of the UN system



Promote learning from the experience

## KEY FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS



### Relevance

- Evidence shows that the UNDAF was aligned with the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030, which very well reflected the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The UN has adapted its work and responded to the emerging and unforeseen needs of the country. The most prominent example is undoubtedly the UN collective response to COVID-19.
- However, there are frequent changes of Government in Mongolia, and the context evolves rapidly, presenting challenges for retention of institutional knowledge and continuity of UNDAF implementation.



### Effectiveness

- Some UNDAF indicators are formulated in a way that does not allow for the effective monitoring & evaluation (M&E) of results, as several indicators are too ambitious for the UN to make significant contributions.
- An indicator validation exercise/evaluability exercise could have been useful to ensure the suitability of the results matrix to better measure results.
- A Theory of Change (ToC) would have been useful to ensure that the outputs were sufficient for the achievement of the outcomes, with suitable indicators that can capture all the UN contributions.
- For the next United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the UN will need to be realistic in terms of outputs, outcomes, indicators, and targets formulation, to ensure that the results can be measured, and the contribution of the UN is determined.



### UN contribution to UNDAF outcomes

- The evaluation report describes the outputs that have been achieved for each of the three UNDAF outcomes. This is not meant to be exhaustive but rather illustrative. In particular, the evaluation looked at the UN's plausible contribution to UNDAF outcomes (changes observed at national level, including changes in relevant statistical indicators).
- In Outcome 1, the UN plausibly contributed to the legal environment for national development policy planning and budgeting and expansion of the protected area network in Mongolia.
- For Outcome 2, the UN credibly contributed to the achievement of national targets on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and national COVID-19 response which include provision of vaccines and child protection (CP) services for children and families, and sustaining learning through tele-and e-learning.)
- In Outcome 3, improving the legal framework to protect and uphold human rights, including the right to freedom from violence (Gender-Based Violence / Domestic Violence (GBV/DV)) and Violence Against Children, as well as in implementing and monitoring these laws, can be regarded as a key plausible contribution to the UNDAF outcome.



## Sustainability

- There are many concrete examples of collaborative projects launched under the UNDAF that have been maintained by national partners and counterparts or replicated and scaled up by the government.
- However, a lack of resources and of a scale-up or replication strategy hinder the potential to maintain some UNDAF benefits over time. Some successful UN interventions related to the delivery of social services to children ended due to the lack of budget for scale-up and replication.
- The government engagement is crucial for the sustainability and alignment of the UNDAF with government priorities, from the onset of the development of the UNDAF.



## Impact

- The UNDAF was oriented towards having a real impact on people and made a difference towards protecting the rights of people and their living environment. Many public health measures supported by the UN have reached people on the ground.
- Interesting observations on impact were also made in some UN agencies' evaluations, which attest that the UNDAF influenced numerous programmes of UN agencies. In some cases, however, it is too premature to evaluate the impact of its results.



## UN Coherence and Coordination among UN agencies

- Internally within the UN, the UNDAF has not fully served as an effective and strategic tool for the collective interventions of the UN system except in a few joint programmes, however, these are generally not derived from the UNDAF, and are rather resource-driven, taking advantage of funding opportunities.
- Nevertheless, UNDAF gave broad directions for all UN agencies and provided the big picture on which agencies tried to align, and a rationale for joint interventions and programming.
- The evaluation team suggests that a joint programme that particularly focused on marginalized and vulnerable populations could be a possible model to address the geographic spread of UN interventions through a more integrated approach and can be replicated and scaled up.



## Coherence of UN's intervention with its partners

- Externally, the UN has contributed to the coordination and coherence among the Government organizations, by promoting the SDGs as the heart of long-term development policy of Mongolia.
- However, an enhanced cooperation would be needed with the Government, which should have a stronger ownership of the UNDAF implementation.
- The Resident Coordinator (RC) and UNCT have a close relationship with development partners. There are efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation between the UN and development partners, through the establishment of Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Development Partners Group (DPG).
- In addition, under the leadership of the RC, the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) is coordinating and helping to establish sub/thematic groups for the DPG to enhance coordination and effectiveness of specific thematic areas. This should help to better address sensitive issues, through structured discussions with the Government. CSOs can complement well both the UN and development partners, and there are opportunities of collaboration with the Academia and the private sector in the implementation of the UNDAF.



## Management structure and decision-making processes

- The UNDAF National Steering Committee has not been involved in many substantive discussions, and there are opportunities in this direction through regular meetings (twice or thrice a year), and dealing with more substantive issues, which could ensure more meaningful participation and increased ownership of high-level Government officials in the future Cooperation Framework implementation.
- The Outcome Groups (OG) and the Thematic Groups met infrequently in this UNDAF cycle. There has been a limited role and involvement of both RC and the UNCT in the coordination of Outcome Groups. The evaluation team considers that OGs could be co-chaired by UN agencies and the Government on a rotational basis (2 years) and involve government counterparts in substantive discussions to review the results. Co-chairing an OG can most likely be done only by agencies on the ground with enough staff and capacity.



### Joint Work Plans, monitoring and reporting

- While the UNDAF document had foreseen to be made operational through the development of Joint Work Plans (JWPs) and/or agency-specific work plans and project documents, the Outcome Groups, the UNCT did not develop JWPs in the format recommended by DCO in the UNDAF Guidelines, that they would have used to monitor the UNDAF implementation. JWPs have not been considered indispensable to implement the UNDAF.
- Instead, all projects implemented by UN agencies have been listed in the UN-INFO platform. As a result, it has been difficult to show common results. However, the UNCT, with the support of the Outcome Groups and RCO, analyzed and monitored all the UN interventions in Mongolia using the UN-INFO since the UNDAF start which contributed to very well-documented UNDAF annual cumulative progress reports.



### Efficiency

- The Operational Management Team advanced common business operations to ensure greater economy of scale and reduce operations costs through common business processes in procurement. Transaction costs have decreased thanks to the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), through a common operational framework for transferring cash to government and non-governmental partners. With the common back-office initiative, which is part of the UN reform efficiency agenda, transaction costs have the potential to further decrease.



### Human Rights-Based Approach

- The UN is one of the more consistent voices on human rights and encourages Mongolia to implement human rights conventions, and the UNDAF implementation has focused on human rights and contributed to the fulfillment of Mongolia's international and regional commitments and obligations.
- Nonetheless, the UNDAF implementation did not pay significant attention to the Human Rights-Based Approach and the observations and recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other HR mechanisms. There are certain observations and recommendations repeatedly provided by the mechanisms, which were not addressed by the government.
- The UN Human Rights Team Group was created at the end of 2020 and there has been no active engagement with Outcome Groups.
- The Human Rights-Based Approach is not clearly reflected and translated at the Government policy level. CSOs claim that Civil Society has a more curtailed space than before, and that human rights have been threatened by the restrictive measures taken during the pandemic.



### Leaving No One Behind

- The current UNDAF has not identified precisely the vulnerable groups for addressing the principle Leave No One Behind. During the UNDAF implementation, the Leave No One Behind has been discussed on an ad-hoc basis.
- The groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, LGBTIs, ethnic minorities, and people in prisons have hardly been covered by UN interventions. Other sensitive issues include GBV and sexual violence against children.
- There is an important need to address these sensitive issues, through structured discussions with Government, development partners, academia, and CSOs.
- The indicators were not disaggregated by vulnerable groups to see if these groups benefitted from the UNDAF.
- Moreover, poverty and inequality have been even more exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, so that more situations of vulnerability need to be taken into consideration.



### Mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) has been taken into account in the UNDAF design and implementation of all outcomes, especially Outcome 3.
- Nonetheless, there have been no organic links and active engagement between Outcome Groups and the Gender Theme Group. The latter played and can play an important role to encourage discussions on issues related to gender.
- The group can facilitate a joint UN response to these issues, which capitalize on the different comparative advantages of each agency. With worrisome trends on gender inequalities and GBV due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are opportunities for an increased attention to GEWE.
- There is also a need to focus on men when the gender gap is discussed, e.g., the significant gap in male and female life expectancies, and the role boys and men can play in GEWE.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations with higher priority:

1. The UNCT and government should improve the design and usefulness of the next UNSDCF as an instrument to capture a shared vision and mission in the context of the SDGs.
2. The government should strengthen its ownership and strategic management of the next UNSDCF
3. UN agencies should implement the UNSDCF and increase their cooperation through the Outcome and Thematic Groups and use them to help the UNCT managing the UNSDCF strategically, with the RC/UNCT leadership.
4. The UNCT should ensure greater mainstreaming of the UNSDCF guiding principle Leave No One Behind and the Human Rights-Based Approach under the leadership of the RC.
5. The UNCT should ensure a greater mainstreaming of the UNSDCF guiding principle on gender equality and women's empowerment.
6. The UNCT and the Government should contemplate creating an integrated funding framework in the next UNSDCF, and adequate funding instruments to ensure the scale of impact necessary for attaining the 2030 Agenda.

### Recommendations with medium priority:

1. The UNCT should promote effective partnerships and strategic alliances around outcome areas, and with a variety of stakeholders, in order to enhance UNSDCF effectiveness.
2. The UNCT is invited to strengthen joint programming, resource mobilization and implement joint targeted programmes, while taking into account geographic spread of UN interventions, integrated programming, and geographical targeting experiences.
3. The UNCT and government should strengthen their use of effective Results-Based Management (RBM) and M&E systems to strategically monitor and manage the UNSDCF.
4. The UNCT, the National Statistics Office, and ministries should strengthen collaboration in view of improving national capacities for disaggregated data collection, analysis, dissemination and use, especially given their importance for measuring progress on the SDGs and next UNSDCF implementation.
5. The UNCT and the Government should strengthen the sustainability of the UNSDCF.
6. The UNCT should continue its efforts to reduce transaction costs where possible.

### Recommendations with lower priority:

1. The UNCT should create an enabling environment for the participation and involvement of UN Non-Resident Agencies in UNSDCF processes, and these agencies should participate to the UNSDCF in a sustained effort.
2. The UNCT should Communicate as One through the United Nations' Country Communications Group, and internally, there should be more organic links between this group and Outcome and Thematic Groups.

## UNDAF M&E Framework

### Current Progress of the Indicators as the end of 2020

(Source for the current progress of the indicators is UN Country Results Report Mongolia 2017-2020 unless stated otherwise)

Dashboards:

■ target achieved/ improving    
 ■ stagnating    
 ■ decreasing    
 ■ information unavailable

	#	Indicators	Dashboards
1	1.1.1	Reduction of GHG emission from BAU scenario	
2	1.1.2	Increase in share of renewable in the national energy mix	
3	1.1.3	Forestland, mln ha (or percentage of Forest land in total area, %)	
4	1.1.4	Special protection area as proportion of total area	
5	1.2	Inclusive and sustainable industrialization for economic diversification - Share of manufacturing value added (MVA) in GDP	
6	1.3	Disaster impact - disaster economic loss	
7	1.4.1	Proportion of people living below poverty line (urban/rural, children)	
8	1.4.2	Unemployment rate (disaggregated by sex)	
9	2.1.1	Percentage of population using improved water sources	(national target only)
10	2.1.2	Percentage of population using improved sanitation facilities	
11	2.2.1.1	Social health insurance coverage (disaggregated by geographical area, socio-economic quintiles and content)	
12	2.2.1.2	Benefit incidence analysis (disaggregated by gender, urban/rural, geographical area and socio-economic quintiles)	
13	2.2.2.1	Percentage of women who underwent antenatal check-ups at least 6 times during pregnancy	
14	2.2.2.2	Incidence rate of syphilis among youth from 15-24 years of age per 10 000	
15	2.2.2.3	Percentage of population above 40 years of age screened for hypertension and diabetes	
16	2.2.2.4	Adolescent birth rate (15-19 years old) per 1000	
17	2.2.3.1	Number of new and/ or revised national health policies, strategies and plans revised during UNDAF period	
18	2.2.3.2	Number of aimags and districts endorsed and implemented Sub-national Health System Strengthening Strategies	
19	2.2.4.1	Disease specific standardized mortality rate (disaggregated by urban/rural, gender, geographical area)	
20	2.2.4.2	Probability of dying between 15 and 60 years (disaggregated by gender)	
21	2.3.1	Primary and secondary education net enrollment rate of children from the poorest quintile	
22	2.3.2	Enrollment of children with disabilities in general education schools	
23	2.3.3	Percentage of children under 5 years of age from the poorest quintile who are developmentally in track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being	
24	2.3.4	Percentage of children aged 36-39 months who are attending an early childhood education programme from the poorest quintile	
25	2.3.5	Learning achievement for 4th and 8th graders in mathematics and science	
26	2.4.1	Percentage of economically active population contributing to the social insurance system	
27	2.4.2	Public social protection expenditures as percentage of GDP	
28	2.5.1	Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years old	
29	2.5.2	Prevalence of overweight students aged 13-17 years old	
30	3.1.1	Proportion of implemented recommendations from UPR, CEDAW and other HR instruments relating to the protection/ promotion of human rights and basic freedoms for all	
31	3.1.2	Specific comprehensive policy measures and legislation are adopted and effectively implemented against discrimination of all kinds, especially women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, LGBTI and others	
32	3.1.3	Prevalence rate of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)	(baseline was determined in 2017)
33	3.2.1	Proportion of seats held by women in national and local parliament and government (SDG 5.5.1)	(except state secretaries and local governors)
34	3.3.1	Young people turnout in parliamentary elections	
35	3.3.2	Civil participation	