



SEP 2020



HIGHLIGHTS

RC editorial: The importance of vision and setting priorities for development [page 1](#)

COVID-19: CRF, impact assessments, ongoing response by UN [page 2](#)

Common Country Analysis: Leaving no one behind [page 3](#)

In focus: Disability inclusion – turning challenges into opportunities [page 4](#)

EDITORIAL by the UN Resident Coordinator

In difficult and challenging times of COVID-19 pandemic the inequalities and socio-economic gaps have grown and became blatantly evident across countries, regions and continents. Structural shortcomings and fragility of our economies have been exposed with full force, posing a challenge in itself and profoundly influencing lingering social issues such as gender inequality, domestic and gender-based violence. It sometimes seems that within weeks the results of hard work from that past have crumbled, giving space to the reign of social inequality and discrimination.

that will make the journey more bearable as we reach hurdles and have to take difficult decisions along the way – for example, how to spend limited resources.



We need to plan better, at all levels, with foresight and based on evidence. Only by diligently collecting and fully utilizing data, assessing risks and considering all options on the table – particularly those that involve innovation and go beyond day-to-day solutions. Planning is key for preparedness and resilience, which are required to mitigate global challenges. One can, however, only plan well if the vision and the goals that we want to achieve are clear. And these goals need to take into consideration the wellbeing of all citizens, regardless of who has been entrusted to form, lead or take part in a government. The future is owned and shared by the entire society.

The shock has demonstrated that we are – locally, regionally and globally – less well prepared than we thought to deal with global and interconnected threats, despite the progress, growth and positive changes of the recent past. It has also shown that what is considered as given – growth, prosperity, stability, access to services, commodities and access to the rest of the world – can quickly slip away or at least become severely restricted.

But difficult situations, although uncomfortable, are a good opportunity to grow stronger, if only we can capitalize on lessons learned. Here are two from the last few months:

Getting priorities straight – as a team, community or society – is key. This requires consensus-building, which, in itself, is a process that can unlock opportunities and potentials. As we look forward, discuss, rebuild, restart or continue – as individuals and organizations – we need to strive towards consensus about our future priorities.

I cannot overstate how important this is for achieving sustainable development goals at municipal, regional and national level. Emphasizing the importance of that consensus and making sure that individuals' or groups' voices are heard and their rights fully respected and considered is a fundamental step

This is why I am encouraged by the emerging consensus for the need to discuss and formulate a long term vision of North Macedonia that goes across party lines and involves all parts of Macedonian society. UN in North Macedonia is, together with its international partners, eager to support an inclusive and consultative nation-wide process in the coming months that would result in a national sustainable development strategy. The time is ripe, maybe more than ever, that we rally around our joint objectives and accelerate the delivery of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Rossana Dudziak
UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia

KEY DATES

SEPTEMBER

1 UNEP and partners [launched a public campaign to promote Sharr Mountain \(Шар Планина\) as a national park](#) and submitted the [consolidated version of the corresponding valorisation study](#) to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP);

24 UNHCR supported a [classic jazz music concert by the string chamber orchestra ARKO](#) at the Museum of Macedonian Struggle to raise solidarity with Syrian and other refugees;

25 UNHCR started a participatory assessment with persons of concern to initiate dialogue with asylum seekers and refugees to shape future interventions;

29 Launch of the UN Women project Transformative financing for gender equality towards a more transparent, inclusive and accountable governance in the Western Balkans, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

OCTOBER

7 FAO will present its holistic COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its region-tailored actions at a virtual Regional Dialogue for Europe and Central Asia.

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