



# JUN 2021

## HIGHLIGHTS

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## KEY DATES

### JUNE

• **3-17** UN Women supported the Municipalities of Kumanovo, Gazi Baba and Gjorce Petrov in developing Strategies and Action Plans on Gender Equality through strategic planning workshops with the intersectoral working groups on gender responsive budgeting.

• **4** FAO and the Cabinet of the Deputy President of the Government in charge of economic affairs organized a Workshop for Validation of the climate change needs assessment in the context of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Work Programme development for North Macedonia

• **7** FAO and WHO joint online event on World Food Safety Day -"Food safety in the context of sustainable food systems: Moving forward to a healthy tomorrow in Europe and Central Asia"

• **7-11** The UNODC-WCO-INTERPOL Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) met with high officials from North Macedonia and INTERPOL to finalize the next steps of the establishment of the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF) at the Skopje International Airport.

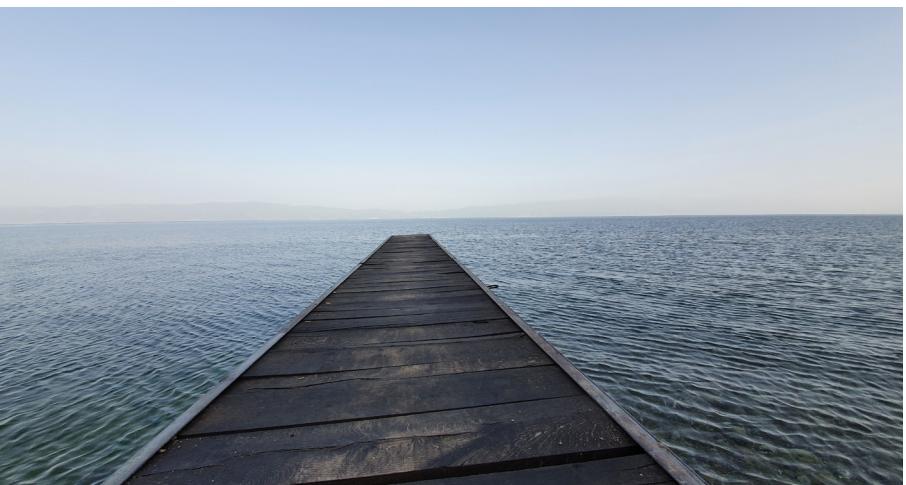
• **8-29** FAO and the National Designated Authority organized focus group discussions with private sector entities on climate finance and investments in the context of the Green Climate Fund.

• **11** UNODC meet with Prosecutors from the General Prosecution Office of North Macedonia to discuss joint event regarding inter-institutional exchange of information in firearms related cases.

• **23** Gender Responsive Budgets Workshop for Club of Women MPs and the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BULLETIN

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## EDITORIAL by the UN Resident Coordinator

Regional cooperation is a key aspect of sustainable development, as it can accelerate the economy, ensure peaceful and prosperous development and ensure solutions to issues that reach beyond borders, and I am glad that several regional initiatives have been undertaken recently. To name a few - the recent abolishment of roaming fees in the Western Balkans, or the simplified procedures for crossing borders. All these initiatives, agreed among the leadership from the region, bring tangible improvements in the quality of life of all citizens throughout the region and are an excellent accelerator for economic development.

The recent Prespa Forum Dialogue Conference, which brought together leaders from political, economic and civil society spheres as well as youth throughout the region, Europe and beyond, is also an excellent example. This is the largest international conference organised by North Macedonia, opens a new important platform for dialogue and building bridges between the countries in the Western Balkans and beyond by promoting peaceful, consensus - and dialogue - based solutions to the remaining open issues of regional cooperation. I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government of North Macedonia for their initiative and successful organisation of this Conference that brings the countries from the region closer.

Not less important is the transboundary cooperation on environment. With growing risks from climate change, such as water scarcity and more severe natural disasters, regional cooperation in this area will continue to gain in importance. The UN is working in three countries to develop an integrated transboundary flood risk management for the Drim River Basin, as a climate change adaptation measure. Greater transboundary cooperation in management of Ohrid, Prespa and Dojran Lakes is also an important challenge to be addressed over the next period.

There is also the important contribution of youth to sustainable and peaceful regional development. Tapping into their great potential, the UN promotes youth engagement, activism and agency for change. We join forces in creating opportunities for youth voices to be heard and influence regional leadership and challenges

in innovative and creative ways, through initiatives like the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), Youth Peer Education Network (Y-Peer), Regional Programme on Local Democracy (ReLoOoD) and others. This initiative focuses on long-term impact, aims at fostering trust and cohesiveness within and across communities in the Western Balkans by empowering youth to embrace the values of diversity, tolerance and inclusion. Based on the Y-Peer model, young people of different backgrounds, especially those that are hard to reach, have a chance to meet, befriend and learn from their peers how to build and maintain a safe and peaceful environment and build lasting bridges between them and their countries.

Of course, there are many more things that can be done. A lot of work is still ahead in terms of larger infrastructure projects to ensure easy transfer of goods and travel throughout the region. More can be done in terms of the cultural exchange, enhancing touristic offers with regional approach or improving administrative procedures that can accelerate and enhance trade, investments and cooperation across borders. These are all segments that can have a significant impact for the economic development of all countries in the region, and of the whole region as well.

Finally, there is the potential for greater exchange in dealing with common issues, like poverty, discrimination, unemployment... Good practices must be shared with neighbours, along with lessons learned from those that weren't successful. I believe that ultimately all governments in the region have the same goals - to improve the lives and outcomes of all people living in these countries. By increased exchange between them, between all of us, in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goal 17, we can make sure that no one is left behind.



Rossana Dudziak

UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia

# UN ACTIVITIES

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has procured and delivered new equipment for conducting environmental analysis to the Laboratory for Chromatographic Analysis of the Institute of Chemistry. The equipment worth \$94,000 has been donated by the Kingdom of Norway through the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia project and will be used for independent monitoring and control of the environmental effects of the OHIS lindane deposits clean-up process. The Laboratory has received different types of equipment such as gas chromatograph, samplers, concentrators, labware, solvents and standards that will ensure regular monitoring of pollutant emissions in the air and the soil in line with the OHIS clean-up monitoring plan. In parallel, UNOPS will also support the laboratory in the accreditation process to ensure that the methods used by the laboratory are in accordance with the highest standards.

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, in partnership with USAID and Finance Think, published an [update of the analysis](#) of the social and economic effects of COVID-19 on children, originally presented in July 2020. While government COVID-19 socio-economic measures have mitigated the impact on extreme child poverty, more children are living below the average standard of living. Furthermore, disruptions to services in social protection and education and decreased demand in health services are putting children at further risk as the pandemic lingers. Videos and dynamic infographics were published on social media portraying some of the topical results and recommendations.

In an open letter to all local office contenders, UNICEF Representative, Patrizia Di Giovanni opened a dialogue and call to put children and young people at the heart of the upcoming local elections.

More than 50 representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities, the Government, UN entities and other relevant stakeholders, as well as persons with disabilities, strengthened the understanding of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and disability inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a training. This training took place in the weeks of 18 and 28 May 2021 and followed the globally developed UNPRPD methodology. The training helped develop



UNOPS procured new equipment for environmental analysis for the Laboratory for Chromatographic Analysis

a common understanding of the participants of the cross-cutting approaches underpinning UNPRPD joint programmes, setting the foundations for the next two components of the inception phase: situation analysis and project proposal development.

In close cooperation with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF has finalized the digitalization of the recording and reporting system and its connection with other modules in "Moj termin". These modules are expected to be operational as early as June 2021. Parenting Guide has also been digitalized and will provide additional assistance for families with newborns on how to follow child health and development.

UNICEF successfully completed the third phase of behavioral interventions to increase the uptake of MMR vaccine (prototypes include information posters and leaflets for parents in the waiting and vaccination rooms, as well as "tent" reminder for medical staff with frequently asked questions). Pending is final report with recommendations for roll-out materials around the country.

In May and June 2021, UNICEF North Macedonia and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) organized Training of Trainers (TOT) for 36 professionals from the five resource centres across the country, to further

support these centres in their new function as facilitators of the inclusion process in primary schools. The training, which took place over 12 online training sessions, sought to strengthen the participants' knowledge of inclusive education practices and to reinforce their facilitation skills, to better prepare them for their role in hiring, training and managing state-provided educational assistance in schools. The transformation of the former special schools into resource centres for mainstream schools and teachers is part of a UNICEF-supported education reform that was intensified with the adoption of the Law on Primary Education in 2019, that foresees that by 2023, all children with disabilities in North Macedonia will be included in mainstream education.

As part of the UNICEF supported programme on environment and climate change education funded by the Government of Sweden (SIDA), a webpage was promoted [www.climateedu.mk](http://www.climateedu.mk) on which over 350 people took the pledge to support the environment and climate change initiatives.

New research findings were published on 7 June by UNICEF, highlighting the fact that children who attended school in person during the 2020/2021 school year experienced less difficulties despite shorter instruction time, and that they were able to follow COVID19 safety protocols. These findings together with other data on the "[Experience and Attitudes towards Distance Learning](#)" introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic" highlights the importance of preparing to reopen schools for all children in September.

Over June and July [UNICEF in Partnership with the Cabinet of the President of North Macedonia will be holding a series of Youth Consultations](#) giving children and young people the space to engage in defining the vision they want for their future and future generations.

UNICEF in partnership with the Youth Cultural Centre developed an eco-programme to be presented during Cinedays, Festival of European Film in Skopje (15th-21st July). Domestic and international eco-films will be screened, and a panel discussion will be organized with experts and film makers. Reuse & Repair Chill corner made of waste materials will also be part of the Festival.

**UN Women** North Macedonia office took part in the first regional Western Balkans meeting on the Gender Equality

At its heart, climate change is a children issue

The new webpage ([www.climateedu.mk](http://www.climateedu.mk)) created by UNICEF and funded by SIDA

# UN ACTIVITIES (continued)

Facility project in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina (10-11 June 2021).

UN Women extended the support on applying gender-responsive budgeting in local policymaking and budgeting processes through signing a Memorandum of Understanding with 10 new municipalities: Karposh, Struga, Staro Nagoricane, Makedonska Kamenica, Vinica, Gevgelija, Cashka, Delchevo, Makedonski Brod and Kavadarci. In the month of June, UN Women organized a three-day training for 23 representatives from the 10 LSGUs for strengthening their knowledge on mainstreaming gender in the local policies and budgets. The training was part of the project "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia", funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – Sida.

UN Women and the State Audit Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the frames of the gender-responsive budgeting project, that will provide a framework for strengthening the capacities of the SAO and systematic application of gender-responsive budgeting in the regular activities and annual audit plans. In June, over 90 auditors and employees in the SAO took an active part in the trainings organized in the frames of the project. More activities and trainings are planned to further strengthen the role of SAO in carrying gender audits.

HERA organized the fifth and final series of trainings for strengthening the capacities of CSOs for providing specialized services to survivors of violence. HERA is a partner organization to UN Women within the regional EVAW project, funded by the European Union.

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights organized a two-day training for strengthening the capacities of CSOs to monitor the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and produce GREVIO shadow reports. Helsinki Committee is a partner organization to UN Women within the regional EVAW project, funded by the European Union.

To observe "World No Tobacco Day" (31 May every year), **World Health Organization (WHO)** organized

an event in partnership with the Public Health Institute, during which data on tobacco use in North Macedonia and the world was presented and WHO's quitting toolkit was promoted. Other flagship days observances through social media included World Bicycle Day (3 June), World Environment Day (5 June), World Food Safety Day (7 June) and World Blood Donor Day (14 June).



Campaign materials from the WHO No Tobacco Day activities for 2021

On 17 June, Dr Jihane Tawilah, WHO Representative to North Macedonia met with representatives of the Macedonian Association of Nurses and Midwives and received a plaque of appreciation for WHO's continuous support to the nursing profession in the country. 2020 was designated by WHO as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and 2021 as the International Year of Health and Care Workers in appreciation and gratitude for their unwavering dedication in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The high-level hybrid event "Bodily Autonomy – the foundation of human rights", organized by **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Embassy of France, Office of the President and UN Resident Coordinator Office, took place on June 10, in Skopje. The event marked one of the Action Coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum, co-lead by UNFPA,

- Action Coalition on Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, the new partnership of governments, including the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, civil society, the United Nations and the private sector aimed to promote the rights of all women and adolescent girls. The event can be followed virtually in three languages - [Macedonian](#), [English](#) and [French](#).

After the release of the [2020 Global Trends report](#) of forced displacement, the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or the UN Refugee agency (UNHCR)** marked World Refugee Day with various activities for raising awareness, including media appearances, such as the [interview](#) that the Representative Ms. Monica Sandri gave to MIA.



UNHCR's 2020 Global Trends [report](#)

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** has rebuilt the only kindergarten in Shuto Orizari Municipality with support of the Kingdom of Norway, after it burned down in 2017. Within the rebuilt kindergarten is the Center for daily support for at-risk children that will provide care and educational activities for approximately one hundred at-risk children between the ages of 5 and 13. Since North Macedonia established a remote learning process during the pandemic, these at-risk children have once again been left to their own devices, resulting in them abandoning their learning practices due to school lockdowns and a lack of suitable IT equipment to facilitate educational activities in the future. UNDP is now organizing a crowdfunding initiative to give at-risk children from Shuto Orizari a chance to continue their learning process, gain new skills and stay off the streets.

**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, organized the last training module for rangers on June 10 and 11 of 2021, under GEF/STAR5 project, at Hotel "Scardus" – Popova Shapka as part of the future NP Shar Mountains. The training is specifically designed according to the needs for management in protected areas.

US\$2,304 / US\$15,000

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UNDP's crowdfunding initiative is available [here](#)

# National Development Strategy 2021-41

## A shared long-term vision for development

The Common Country Analysis, prepared in early 2020 to establish the context of the North Macedonia – UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025, identified the absence of a long-term development vision as one of the key challenges for sustainable development in the country. Soon after, the COVID19 crisis transformed our reality. The vulnerabilities we were already aware of were further exposed and some new ones came to the forefront, but the way we think about our future and the ways to address the challenges completely changed. In this context, a properly developed long-term strategy that sets out the direction of travel within an inclusive and transparent process, embracing innovation and flexibility to remain relevant in 20 years, could be a strong opportunity to ensure continuity and stability of North Macedonia's development path.

Admirably, national authorities expressed strong commitment to seize this opportunity, embarking on the process of formulation of a National Development Strategy (NDS) 2021-2041 based on four key principles. First is to ensure a strong national ownership, with process led by key national stakeholders including the state authorities, academia, business and civil society. Second is to ensure wide and thorough consultations, working with a maximum number of stakeholders to achieve and reflect cross-generational, cross-ethnic, inter-party, geographical and gender consensus. While the process and the strategy must remain wide and cross-societal, the Governments in the next 20 years will have an important role in translating the priorities into policies, testing and designing the best ways to achieve the consensually agreed long term goals. Third is to provide framework for ongoing processes, including both the EU accession and Agenda2030, and ensure leverage instead of duplication of the strategic documents and initiatives that already exist in the country. And fourth is to be innovative, learn from international trends, models and experience and anchor these into the national context for strategic planning.

The process was divided in two phases to ensure proper attention to both the design of the methodology and to the consequent process of formulation and implementation, with the parliament, local government and academia included from the beginning. The first phase was set to develop an innovative methodology and operational structure that would best implement it. This phase is almost finalized within the UNDP implemented project, with financial assistance from the UK, in which a large team of international and national experts made extensive analyses that resulted with a proposal for a new and innovative methodology and operational framework that rationalizes and innovates the current structures instead of creating new.

The methodology uses Kate Raworth's Doughnut economic model as inspiration, mainly as a tool to identify the risks and opportunities over the time horizon and build resilience capabilities to deal with uncertainty. These repetitive assessments will set the context for a deep growth, i.e. status when all twelve social foundations are met without overshooting any of the nine ecological ceilings, which is the green area between the two rings, considered as safe and just space for humanity. It is essential to recognize that 21st century nation is an entangled system of flows and interconnected vulnerabilities, which requires deep code transformation, by building horizontal and vertical collaborative capabilities across the society. In that

context, the key innovation in the NDS methodology is that it sets out a living, evolving process (instead of just one document) to ensure that the vision is as relevant in 20 years as it will be in the present. This will be accomplished in five steps, starting with i) sense-making (1-3 m); ii) future imagining (9-12m) and iii) decision making (1-12m) for the formulation of the strategy which then continue during the entire process of implementation accompanied with iv) (Policy) Experimenting and v) Learning and Development.

The proposed operational structure extends and rationalises the existing structures at strategic and operational level, but also introduces novelty functions such as the Quadruple Helix1 Council for consultations, Innovation in Policy and Data Councillors coordinated by a NDS unit within the General Secretariat of the Government. A special consideration for the EU accession will be secured via EU councillor. The process of consultations and co-production includes a digital engagement platform and around 50

dream labs within the Quadruple Helix format organised in a period of at least 9 months throughout the country, to ensure widest possible stakeholders' participation. This includes active, constant and effective communication with the public to ensure joint understanding, buy-in and participation at all times.

The second phase of the project in the final phase of preparation and should start immediately after the methodology is approved by national stakeholders, i.e. the second part of 2021. UNDP will continue to implement the project and, in cooperation with the Resident Coordination Office, will engage the collective and thematic knowledge of all UN entities in the country to ensure that existing sustainable development initiatives are incorporated within the long-term vision. In addition to the UK, few other strategic partners and donors have also shown interest to support.

Read more on related topics [here](#) and [here](#).

## IN FOCUS Ending statelessness

The COVID-19 restrictive measures made us feel powerless and made it almost impossible for many of us to even cover our basic needs. For stateless persons, this is an everyday struggle.

Who are stateless persons? According to the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons, a stateless person is "a person that is not considered as a national by any State". States have the prerogative to decide who their citizens are, yet it is also their responsibility to undertake legal and policy reforms that are needed to effectively make sure that people are not left stateless. What are the causes of statelessness? Gaps and conflicts in nationality laws are a major cause of statelessness: lack of birth registration can put children at risk of statelessness; the emergence of new states and changes of borders may also lead to statelessness situations. Stateless persons have difficulties in accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, or decent work due to lack of documentation.

UNHCR has set ahead an ambitious goal to end statelessness in the world by 2024 with its #Belong campaign. To achieve this objective, UNHCR in consultation with States, UN Agencies, international organizations, and civil society, developed a Global Action Plan that establishes a guiding framework of 10 actions to be undertaken by states to end statelessness. Globally, UNHCR and UNICEF have joined forces and established a Coalition that aims to develop, expand, and strengthen international cooperation to raise awareness about and combat the hidden problem of childhood statelessness. It also aims to promote the right of every child to acquire nationality.

In North Macedonia, the population at risk of statelessness comprises of two groups: persons lacking birth and civil registration, and persons with undetermined nationality because of the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. The problem with undocumented persons is often inherited across generations, as an unregistered person cannot register their children at birth. According to data of UNHCR and its legal partner, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, there are some 558 persons at risk of statelessness identified by the two organizations. The Government issued a public call in 2018 inviting persons lacking birth registration to report to the nearest civil registry office. Some 760 persons responded to the call and 250 of them had their status clarified. In 2020, the Government adopted a Law on Unregistered Persons at the Birth Registry Records (lex

specialis) as a temporary solution to enable access to four rights (employment, social protection, education, and health protection) to the persons identified following the public call until they acquire full civil registration: 250 persons benefitted of the provisions of this law.



UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, said: "To protect and save lives, we urge governments to resolve statelessness and make sure that no one is left behind." Considering the magnitude of the problem and the fact that North Macedonia is a signatory to both statelessness conventions, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, UNHCR strongly believes that the statelessness situation in the country is manageable and can be easily addressed through proper legislative initiatives that would properly record the individuals at risk of statelessness.

The latest version of the Sustainable Development Bulletin is available on UN North Macedonia website. For additional information, please contact [rc-northmacedonia@un.org](mailto:rc-northmacedonia@un.org). Produced by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in North Macedonia | 10 June 2021