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Draft country programme document**

Albania

Summary

The draft country programme document (CPD) for Albania is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comment. The draft CPD includes a proposed aggregate indicative budget of \$4,345,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$20,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2022 to 2026.

* E/ICEF/2021/23.

** In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, country programme documents (CPDs) are considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. This draft CPD, and a costed evaluation plan, will be presented to the Executive Board for review from 16 June to 6 July 2021. The final CPD will be posted to the Executive Board web page in English six weeks in advance of the 2021 second regular session and in the other designated languages four weeks in advance.

Programme rationale

1. Despite recently achieving upper-middle-income status, Albania remains one of the poorest countries in Europe. The country is implementing important reforms towards European Union integration and economic growth revitalization. For 10 years, the economy has grown by 2–5 per cent per year.¹ The estimated 2021 population of Albania is 2.83 million, including approximately 300,000 girls and 315,000 boys. The population has been decreasing since 2001, primarily because of emigration and a declining birth rate.²

2. Human, technical and financial capacities require further enhancement to uphold children’s rights and address the socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Children’s lives have been affected in many ways, including through school closures, confinement, reduced household incomes and exacerbated non-monetary deprivations. Women and girls face greater risks of gender-based violence, economic hardship, increased caregiving, worsened emotional health and well-being, and decreased access to health services. Especially affected are those from rural areas, Roma and Egyptian communities and those living with disabilities. The COVID-related reduction in government revenues could reduce spending on children.

3. Enhanced national efforts are needed to address environmental hazards – changing climate, deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution, earthquakes, floods and droughts. Albania scored poorly in the Environmental Performance Index 2020 for air quality, waste management, climate change and water resources.

4. Children and adolescents at greatest risk of being left behind include those from low-income and single-parent households (particularly females), girls, those from Roma and Egyptian communities, those with disabilities, those from isolated rural communities, and those who arrived in Albania as refugees and migrants in mixed movements, including unaccompanied and separated children and victims of human trafficking. Despite a strong institutional framework for gender equality, women’s access to education, markets, resources and decision-making processes remains limited and women face negative stereotyping, gender-based discrimination and exposure to risks of violence, abuse and exploitation.³

5. Despite ratifying international human rights instruments Albania does not systematically monitor child rights. The State Agency for Child Rights and Protection of the Child (SACRPC), line ministries, municipalities and national human rights institutions lack resources to generate data and analysis on child and adolescent well-being,⁴ missing the opportunity to use these tools for effective decision-making.

6. Between 2012 and 2019, the absolute poverty rate fell from 39.1 per cent to 35.5 per cent but remains the highest in the Western Balkans.⁵ The 2018 Income and Living Conditions Survey found that almost a quarter of Albanians were at risk of poverty, against a European Union average of 16.9 per cent. Almost a third of those at risk were children. COVID-19 and the 2019 earthquake worsened households’ situations and exacerbated poverty, which could rise to 40–44 per cent by spring 2021, according to World Bank estimates. The social protection system articulated in policy

¹ World Bank figures, 2009–2019.

² Albania Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) population estimates as of 1 January 2021.

³ United Nations, *Albania: Common Country Analysis 2020*; and UNICEF Albania, *Situation Analysis of Children in Albania 2020*.

⁴ Ministry of Health and Social Protection, “*Implementation Report of the National Agenda for Children 2021–2026*”, 2021.

⁵ World Bank, *Western Balkans Regular Economic Report: Spring 2019*.

is not adequately implemented. Spending is low on cash benefits for families and children, and even lower for social care services: all national and local social protection institutions lack sufficient resources.

7. Fewer children today die before their fifth birthday compared to 20 years ago, though infant mortality and under-5 mortality in Albania increased moderately in the period 2016–2020,⁶ with children in certain regions and in Roma and Egyptian communities being more vulnerable than others. Infants face a triple burden of stunting, overweight and anaemia. Only 57 per cent are breastfed within an hour of birth, and only 29 per cent of children aged 6 to 23 months receive minimum acceptable diets. While vaccination coverage of children aged 12 to 23 months was 96 per cent or higher in 2017–2018, according to the Albania Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS) 2017–2018, only 79 per cent of them received the measles-containing vaccine. There is no referral to a higher-level system for monitoring child development, detecting early risks and managing child development difficulties, and there is no systemic provision for enabling inclusive education for children whose development is at risk or impeded.

8. Eighty per cent of children aged 3 to 6 years receive early childhood education, yet children from disadvantaged families are often excluded because of indirect costs, geographical location and stigma related to disability and ethnicity. Though Roma attendance increased in recent years, it remains at only 35 per cent.⁷ Standards and curricula for early learning have improved but early childhood education programmes still do not emphasize the educative role of play. Literacy is almost universal, but female literacy is still 2.3 percentage points lower than that of males.⁸ In 2017/2018, some 25 per cent of women and girls aged 6 years and older did not complete primary school, compared to 23 per cent of males, according to the ADHS.

9. While education reforms and implementation of a competency-based curriculum are improving school learning outcomes, many students leave school without having basic competencies, and only 2 per cent develop higher-order skills by age 15, according to the latest reporting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).⁹ While women significantly outnumber men across higher education graduates, in 2018 only 15 per cent of females graduated in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. Of young people 15 to 29 years of age in 2019, 25.3 per cent of females and 25.8 per cent of males were not in employment, education or training.¹⁰ Gender stereotypes influence both education and participation in the labour market. While Roma access to compulsory education for grades 1 to 9 has increased to 66 per cent, educational outcomes for that group remain among the lowest in Albania.¹¹ The 2018 PISA reporting revealed that around 60 per cent of Albanian students were functionally illiterate, ranking Albania 61 out of 78 countries assessed. Compared with rural schools, urban schools have a greater quantity and quality of teaching staff and a higher quality of education.

10. Although government documents demonstrate awareness of adolescents' needs, all adolescent-friendly services that previously operated are no longer functioning.¹² In treating adolescents, the health care system generally focuses on their physical

⁶ United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation for 2016–2020.

⁷ World Bank, European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, *Regional Roma Survey*, 2017.

⁸ INSTAT, 2019.

⁹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) PISA "Results in Focus–Albania", 2018.

¹⁰ INSTAT, *Labour Force Survey*, 2019.

¹¹ OECD PISA, "Results in Focus – Albania", 2018.

¹² World Health Organization, *Assessment of sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in the context of universal health coverage in Albania*, 2020.

health and not on building their resilience, coping skills and confidence. Health-seeking behaviours, particularly regarding mental health, generate stigma and discrimination. Parents insufficiently support adolescent children's health. An increasing number of adolescents are overweight because of unhealthy food environments, the marketing of unhealthy food, inadequate labelling of foodstuffs, and low nutrition literacy among parents and adolescents.

11. In a 2017 Save the Children survey, children and adolescents emphasized that parents and stakeholders need to listen better to them and engage more in their concerns. The most excluded from participation in decisions affecting their lives are adolescents with disabilities, girls, those from Roma and Egyptian communities, and those in rural/remote areas. Existing governmental participation models or mechanisms reinforce a pattern of inequality and exclusion.

12. In 2019, around 700 children were living in large-scale residential institutions, with Roma children and children with disabilities overrepresented. Around two thirds of the institutionalized children had living biological parents; most were separated from their families by poverty. About 70 per cent of children in care display developmental difficulties.¹³ The near total lack of early detection and early identification of family vulnerabilities increases child-family separation. The gatekeeping system is ill-defined and lacks adequately resourced staff. Cash and care support are unavailable for strengthening families or supporting kinship care. Community-based alternative care services are either completely absent or insufficient.

13. Violence against children in home, school, community and online settings takes multiple forms. Some 61 per cent of all sexual abuse cases involve children.¹⁴ An estimated 48 per cent of children aged 2 to 14 years have suffered at least one form of psychological or physical aggression,¹⁵ and 33.9 per cent (mostly boys) had been involved in physical fights at least once in the previous year. At school, 22 per cent of children have reported being bullied, and 83 per cent of schoolchildren aged 11, 13 and 15 years reported experiencing various types of violence, according to the World Health Organization 2017/2018 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey. Online abuse is pervasive. Each year, international law enforcement officials refer between 5,000 and 20,000 cases of online materials featuring child sexual abuse to Albanian police. However, only 12 cases have been investigated in three years, with only one successfully detected.¹⁶ One in ten children has reported at least one unwanted online sexual experience, many initiated by acquaintances.¹⁷ Acceptance and a culture of denial make violence difficult to address, and many parents still legitimate using physical violence against children.

14. Gender-based violence is also widespread and accepted. The Albania Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) 2018 National Survey on Violence against Women and Girls found that 52.9 per cent of women had experienced one or more forms of violence in their lifetimes.

15. In 2017–2018, 11 per cent of women and 2 per cent of men aged 20 to 49 years had married before age 18, and 3.5 per cent of females aged 15 to 19 years had begun childbearing, compared to 2.8 per cent in 2008–2009.¹⁸ Preferences for child marriage

¹³ Albania National Plan on Deinstitutionalization of Children.

¹⁴ INSTAT, Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, 2018.

¹⁵ Albania Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS) 2017–18.

¹⁶ UNICEF Albania, *The Lost Cases*, 2020.

¹⁷ UNICEF Albania, *Children's experiences of internet use in Albania*, 2019.

¹⁸ ADHS 2017–2018.

– particularly among Roma – are deeply rooted in social norms, personal beliefs, and lived poverty.¹⁹

16. Around 17,500 children interact annually with a justice system that is not friendly to children and adolescents. The system operates in a context of social inequality and little assessment of social circumstances. Girls, Roma and Egyptian children, those from poor families and children with disabilities disproportionately lack access to justice.

17. The 2022–2026 country programme of cooperation will address lessons identified in the 2017–2021 country programme evaluation:

(a) A life-cycle approach will enable intersectoral work to maximize programming coherence;

(b) Public financing for children and increased monitoring of services will support ongoing decentralization;

(c) Emphasizing gender-responsive programming in each outcome, addressing gender norms within communication for development interventions in several outputs, and developing a gender-targeted output will embed gender equality principles and gender mainstreaming.

Programme priorities and partnerships

18. The country programme has an overarching vision: all children will enjoy their full rights, guaranteed by accountable, inclusive and transparent institutions, and families and communities that offer them nurturing care and protection and promote their participation and inclusion. To achieve this, the country programme includes components on young children; school-aged children and adolescents; protecting children; and the enabling environment.

19. The country programme aligns with national development priorities, including the National Agenda for Children, National Gender Equality Strategy (2021–2030), the draft third National Strategy for Development and Integration (2022–2030), the National Health Strategy (2021–2025), the National Education Strategy (2021–2026), the National Action Plan on Deinstitutionalization (2020–2022), the National Action Plan for Persons with Disability (2021–2025) and the National Cyber Security Strategy (2020–2025). The programme will support implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Universal Periodic Review recommendations and will support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

20. UNICEF will further support the European Union accession process for Albania, develop partnerships around the European Union acquis and leverage the European Union Child Rights Strategy.

21. The programme will cover the whole country at policy level, support ongoing decentralization processes, and make subnational structures more effective for children, particularly in rural or poor municipalities.

22. Partnerships with United Nations agencies will continue advancing results for children. The country programme is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026. UNICEF will partner with other United Nations agencies to advance child rights and may engage in joint

¹⁹ UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, *Child Marriage – Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceptions among Affected Communities in Albania*, 2018.

programming on quality social services, human and children's rights, justice, disability, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change, youth/adolescents, migration, and violence against women and children.

23. UNICEF will also address fundamental grievances related to inequity, exclusion and marginalization of children most at risk, and will promote social inclusion and cohesion.

24. UNICEF will increase the participation and engagement of young people in subregional initiatives and will employ communications, advocacy, partnership-building and programmatic engagement to ensure that all children can develop to their fullest potential.

25. UNICEF will broaden its resource mobilization strategy to explore opportunities with emerging donors and leverage private sector resources. It will further develop cross-border cooperation, particularly in the Western Balkans region.

26. The country programme follows a life-cycle approach in convening multiple stakeholders around windows of opportunities for critical age groups to holistically advance child rights. Every opportunity will be embraced to support gender equality in accordance with the UNICEF Gender Action Plan.

Young children

27. This component is aimed at ensuring that the most vulnerable young boys and girls, as well as parents and caregivers, demand, access and utilize quality health, early learning and child development services.

28. UNICEF will support the Ministry of Health and Social Protection to increase the health care system's capacity to provide adequate maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition services, focusing on early detection of developmental difficulties and early intervention. UNICEF will partner with World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank to generate evidence on neonatal mortality and conduct evidence-based advocacy to support policy and fiscal measures protecting and promoting newborn health and well-being.

29. UNICEF will contribute to the timely detection of – and support for overcoming – developmental difficulties during the first years of life and to improved service quality for young children. This will be done through: supporting updates of care standards; developing evidence-based guidelines and protocols for family-centred care; supporting developmental monitoring and early risk identification and referral; modelling interventions and increasing the capacities of health care professionals; and technically supporting the tracking of newborns at risk.

30. UNICEF will also advocate for the integration of child nutrition into the new health sector strategy and the new non-communicable diseases strategy.

31. Engagement will take place with families and communities to improve parenting skills and behaviour for nurturing care. This will include addressing vaccine hesitancy and early gender socialization in childhood as well as harmful norms and stereotypes affecting the life outcomes of girls and boys.

32. UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth in evidence-generation on and advocacy for universalizing the pre-primary year to assist the most vulnerable children left behind. With UNICEF support, selected municipalities will increase their technical capacity for planning and budgeting to support quality and inclusive preschool education and to model good practice. Preschool associations and parents will be capacitated to strengthen demand for quality preschool education.

School-aged children and adolescents

33. Under this component, school-aged and adolescent boys and girls will benefit from a healthy, resilient and gender-sensitive environment in which to learn and acquire skills for life and to demand, access and utilize services.

34. UNICEF will work for quality, gender-responsive education services that support inclusive access and incorporate innovation and DRR. UNICEF will support the introduction of equitable formula-based funding, enabling schools to provide vulnerable children with education. Technical capacity development will enable the early warning system for identifying the vulnerabilities of children and support more of them to stay in school, particularly girls from minority communities. UNICEF will support systems for teaching and learning online and will help to build capacity to deliver a competency-based curriculum and increase capacities for DRR planning and implementation.

35. With the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, UNICEF will empower adolescent girls and boys with knowledge and skills for obtaining healthy nutrition to prevent overweight and obesity. UNICEF will partner with stakeholders, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WHO to address adolescent health concerns through schools, communities and digital platforms. This will include promotion of mental health and health-seeking behaviours and prevention of mental health conditions.

36. With the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, UNICEF will support formal and non-formal opportunities to build twenty-first-century skills for youth, focusing on life skills, entrepreneurship skills, and media and digital literacy. UNICEF will also engage the private sector to mobilize young people, advocate for participation platforms and empowerment, and invest in skills development. Girls from marginalized communities will receive particular attention. UNICEF will also support the expansion and utilization of the U-Report platform to monitor service quality and engage youth in decision-making.

Protecting children

37. This component is aimed at ensuring that most vulnerable children are protected from violence and poverty and utilize social and child protection services.

38. To reduce the number of children in institutional care, UNICEF will support revision of the legal and regulatory framework on gatekeeping and advocate for an adequately financed framework encouraging family reunification. UNICEF will provide technical advice and capacity-building to improve data collection on children in alternative care. Finally, at the subnational level, UNICEF will support modelling and scaling up of quality alternative services, including specialized professional foster care for emergencies.

39. UNICEF and partners will develop evidence on child multidimensional poverty and social protection benefits. Various pieces of national legislation governing cash benefits will be aligned to ensure that the social protection system is shock-responsive and able to deliver cash and care benefits to vulnerable children, including the most marginalized adolescent girls. The shock-responsive system will help households to cope with COVID-19 and other emergencies. UNICEF will support development of an integrated collection of services addressing the multiple needs of vulnerable families. It will help to develop a quality-assurance system for social work and to pilot an integrated basket of services linked to cash programmes.

40. To ensure delivery of a continuum of integrated child-protection services to survivors of violence (including gender-based violence), abuse and exploitation, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of

Justice and municipalities to ensure that the child protection normative framework meets international standards. Government bodies will systematically collect, analyse and use sex-disaggregated data on child abuse, violence and exploitation. Key duty-bearers and civil society partners will enhance reporting mechanisms on violence against children. UNICEF will increase parental awareness about the online safety of children and adolescents, with child-protection training institutions enhancing sectoral curricula and providing multidisciplinary capacity-building modules for frontline and child protection staff.

41. UNICEF will proactively seek establishment of inter-agency cooperation and coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of unaccompanied and separated children arriving in Albania in mixed movements of refugees and migrants.

42. Finally, law enforcement and justice actors will develop capacities and tools to further improve the legal and policy framework for justice for children, determine children's best interests and offer holistic child-friendly justice services, including on gender-based violence. UNICEF will support data system improvements for justice for children and advocate to appoint professionals to handle legal processes affecting children. UNICEF will advocate for free legal assistance, support the Government to build children's and communities' trust in the justice system, emphasize children's status as rights holders, challenge certain patriarchal values that push children towards criminality and promote rehabilitation in justice for children.

Enabling environment

43. This component is aimed at generating a conducive environment for policy and child rights governance, focusing on equity, accountability and change in social and gender norms.

44. National and local authorities will receive technical support to increase capacity to plan for, generate, efficiently use and report on social sector budgets and to leverage adequate domestic and external resources for equitable, child-focused investments.

45. UNICEF and the Government will ensure that the child rights and gender equality commitments of Albania are prioritized in national planning and contribute to the use of data and evidence to benefit children, particularly the most marginalized, minorities and those in humanitarian situations. UNICEF will work with ministries and INSTAT to enhance administrative data systems. Discussions are ongoing for the next round of the multiple indicator cluster survey to support monitoring achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

46. UNICEF will assist the National Council for the Protection of Child Rights, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, SACRPC, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and targeted municipalities to strengthen their planning, monitoring and reporting systems under their cross-sectoral coordination mandate on children and adolescents.

47. UNICEF will support public oversight institutions to ensure accountability for child rights violations, promote child rights awareness and demand and provide remedies for rights violations.

48. Finally, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and other authorities and work with UNFPA, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other members of the United Nations Gender Thematic Results Group to improve the national legislative and policy framework for gender equality and contribute to changing gender norms,

in particular by empowering adolescent girls from marginalized minorities to be valued equally with boys by their families and communities. UNICEF will support the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and others to combat and prevent child marriage and engage with parents, adolescents and communities to change harmful social and gender norms and stereotypes.

Programme effectiveness

49. Country programme coordination and implementation will be delivered through results-based management, relying on cross-cutting approaches in all key areas, including risk-informed programming and emergency preparedness. The programme will support the overarching vision that all children will enjoy their full rights, guaranteed by accountable, inclusive and transparent institutions and by families and communities that offer nurturing care and protection and promote children's participation and inclusion.

50. To achieve this, the programme will prioritize cross-cutting issues of poverty, disability, climate-change action, early childhood development and education, promoting the well-being and participation of children and adolescents, and reducing violence, abuse and harmful social norms and practices. Greater emphasis will be placed on multisectoral integration and accountabilities to mainstream gender-responsive programming. Robust data and evidence-generation will underpin efforts to enhance government decision-making, programme communication, fundraising and private-sector alliances, partnership with other United Nations agencies and public support.

51. UNICEF will continue enhancing results for children through the United Nations Country Team's cooperation framework. Relying on the lessons learned to date, opportunities for joint programmes will be sought out for system-wide advocacy, policy dialogue and implementation around complex issues. The COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery plan of the United Nations is supporting the Government, and UNICEF will strengthen its role in ensuring national emergency preparedness, including by supporting civil protection strategies, policies and plans.

Summary budget table

<i>Programme component</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Young children	550	2 800	3 350
School-aged children and adolescents	750	6 300	7 050
Protecting children	1 850	7 600	9 450
Enabling environment	950	1 600	2 550
Programme effectiveness	245	1 700	1 945
Total	4 345	20 000	24 345

Programme and risk management

52. This CPD serves as the primary instrument of accountability to the Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme.

Accountabilities of managers with respect to the country programme are described in the organization's programme and operations policies and procedures.

53. UNICEF will work towards strengthening government and non-government partners' internal capacities and systems, particularly focusing on the harmonized approach to cash transfers. Performance will be monitored through management indicators, and reviews will steer necessary programme adjustments and improvements.

54. Risks related to outcomes include:

(a) Significant capacity gaps hindering delivery of services and realization of child rights. UNICEF will invest in capacity-building of local actors, develop and cost models, and invest in data management;

(b) To mitigate the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 and the November 2019 earthquake, UNICEF, the Government and other partners will make sure that children in vulnerable situations and their families are prioritized in interventions, including through maintaining adequate social sector spending;

(c) Out-migration and population-ageing place health insurance, social protection and social welfare services under strain. UNICEF will invest more in adolescents and young people, addressing quality learning, life skills, access to twenty-first-century skills, and mental health;

(d) The European Union accession process may intensify decision makers' focus on more visible and easily achieved elements of the accession *acquis*, rather than on the more challenging aspects of realizing the rights of vulnerable children. UNICEF will develop a diversified advocacy agenda to leverage children's rights in the European Union agenda and mobilize additional investments.

Monitoring and evaluation

55. The results and resources framework, aligned with the UNSDCF, will enable monitoring and timely progress towards the planned results. The main country programme planning and monitoring partner is the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. UNICEF will enhance data generation and analysis across the national statistical system, enabling the monitoring of the rights and needs of different groups of children and adolescents. This will provide a comprehensive picture of progress and gaps in implementation of recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, national strategies and Sustainable Development Goals. During emergencies, Humanitarian Performance Monitoring will be used to ensure clear alignment of the results with the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

56. Joint United Nations-Government rolling workplans will monitor and steer actions. The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan will chart evidence-generation to improve delivery of results and UNICEF strategic positioning. A gender programmatic review will be conducted within the midterm review.

57. In the United Nations Inter-agency Monitoring and Evaluation Group, UNICEF will contribute to monitoring UNSDCF achievements. UNICEF will also support national efforts to monitor implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Annex

Results and resources framework

Albania – UNICEF country programme of cooperation, 2022–2026

<p>Convention on the Rights of the Child: articles 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 18–20, 23, 24, 26–29 and 40</p> <p>National priorities: Sustainable Development Goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16; National Agenda for Children</p>
<p>United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework outcomes involving UNICEF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – By 2026, there is increased and more equitable investment in people, removing barriers^a and creating opportunities for those at risk of exclusion. – By 2026, governance is more transparent and accountable, enabling people (women and girls, men and boys, and persons at risk of exclusion), to enjoy quality, inclusive services, enhanced rule of law and access to justice in line with the human rights commitments of Albania. – By 2026, gender responsive governance strengthens equality and non-discrimination, promotes women’s empowerment and human rights, and reduces violence against women and children.
<p>Related UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal Areas: 1–5</p>

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
The most vulnerable young boys and girls, as well as parents/caregivers, demand, access and utilize quality health, early learning and child development services.	Proportion of children under 1 year of age that received measles vaccines (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.2.1) (United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, UNSDCF) B: 94% (2019)	World Health Organization (WHO)-Global Health Observatory ^b Ministry of Health and Social	1.1 The health care system has increased capacity to provide integrated, quality, financially sustainable and equitable maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition services, focusing on early detection of development	MoHSP Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) MoESY INSTAT	550	2 800	3 350

^a Including policy and legislative, institutional (capacities as well as norms and behaviours), geographic and financial.

^b See www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/uhc-index-of-service-coverage.

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
	T: >95% (2026)	Protection (MoHSP)	difficulties, early intervention and nutrition.	Municipalities Save the Children Bashki te forta European Union United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) WHO Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)			
	Percentage of infants aged under 6 months exclusively fed with breastmilk (SDG 2.2.1, 2.2.2) (UNSDCF) B: 37% (2019) T: >40% (2026)	Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) MoHSP					
	Children under 5 identified with developmental risk, delay or disabilities who received standard early intervention services through a UNICEF-supported health programme B: 0 (2020) T: 200 (2026)	UNICEF					
	Gross early childhood education enrolment ratio in pre-primary education (children 3–6 years), disaggregated by sex (SDG 4.2.2) (UNSDCF) B (2019): Total: 79.9; M: 81.9; F: 77.9 T (2026): Total: Increase by 5 percentage points (pp)	INSTAT Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY)	1.2 By 2026, stakeholders (including parents and caregivers) have increased capacity, improved behaviour and resources to demand and deliver inclusive and quality early childhood education services.				
School-aged and adolescent boys and girls learn, acquire	Average Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) score of students aged 15	PISA Albania	2.1 National and local authorities have strengthened capacities to design,	MoESY MoHSP	750	6 300	7 050

<i>UNICEF outcomes</i>	<i>Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)</i>	<i>Means of verification</i>	<i>Indicative country programme outputs</i>	<i>Major partners, partnership frameworks</i>	<i>Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
					<i>RR</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Total</i>
skills for life, demand, access and utilize services in a healthy, resilient and gender-responsive environment.	<p>years, in reading, mathematics and science, disaggregated by sex (proxy-SDG 4.1.1) (UNSDCF)</p> <p>B (2018): <i>Reading</i> Total: 405; M: 387; F: 425 <i>Mathematics</i> Total: 437; M: 435; F: 440 <i>Science</i> Total: 417; M: 409; F: 425</p> <p>T (2022): Reading: 410 Mathematics: 437 Science: 422</p>		implement and scale up inclusive (quality) gender-responsive education services incorporating innovation and disaster risk reduction.	German Agency for International Cooperation European Union Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation World Bank Save the Children World Vision United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNFPA WHO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) UNHCR			

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
	Percentage of adolescents overweight and obese, by sex B (2019): Total: 27.9; M:30.8; F:24.8 T (2026): 2 pp decrease	FAO survey	2.2 Adolescent girls and boys are empowered and equipped with knowledge and skills for healthy nutrition to prevent overweight and obesity and address mental health concerns.				
	Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, by sex (SDG 8.6.1.) (UNSDCF) B (2019): Total: 26; M: 26; F: 25 T (2026): Total: 21.4; M: 21; F: 21	INSTAT	2.3 Girls and boys are empowered with twenty-first-century skills, engage in civic platforms and have increased capacities to amplify their voices.				
The most vulnerable children are protected from poverty and violence, are accessing justice and social and child protection services, and are thriving in a caring family environment.	Number of children in residential care at end of year, per 100,000 population aged 0–17 years, by sex (UNSDCF) B (2019): Total: 96.6; M: 98.4; F:94.6 T (2026): Total: 50 (M/F)	State Social Services INSTAT	3.1 Policymakers and childcare, social protection and justice systems are capacitated to improve the policy-legal framework and prevent child and family separation and safeguard all children’s chances to grow up in a caring family environment.	MoHSP Ministry of Justice (MoJ) MoFE Ministry of Interior (MoI) INSTAT Municipalities People’s Advocate Private sector Save the Children European Union	1 850	7 600	9 450

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
				UNFPA United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) UNHCR United Nations Development Programme			
	Number or percentage of: (a) households; (b) persons with disabilities; and (c) refugees and persons granted temporary protection covered by the social protection system (SDG 1.3.1) (UNSDCF) B (2020): (a) 66,269 (b) 72,711 (c) 2.3% T (2026): (a) 65,000 (b) 70,000 (c) 15%	MoHSP UNHCR	3.2 Normative frameworks are adopted for an integrated and shock-responsive national social protection system with stronger capacity to deliver cash and care benefits to the most vulnerable boys and girls and men and women in selected municipalities.				

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
	<p>Rate of child victims of criminal offences, per 100,000 child population (0–17 years), in previous 12 months (UNSDCF)</p> <p>B (2019): Total: 203.1; F: 106.9; M: 294.8</p> <p>T (2026): Total: 20% decrease</p>	<p>INSTAT</p> <p>MoI</p>	<p>3.3: Decision makers and front-line professionals at all levels have improved capacities to identify in a timely fashion and deliver a continuum of integrated child protection services to survivors of violence, abuse and exploitation.</p>				
	<p>Proportion of children aged 1–14 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month, disaggregated by sex and age group (SDG 16.2.1) (UNSDCF)</p> <p>B (2019): Total: 47.5; M: 49; F: 45</p> <p>2–4 years: 43</p> <p>5–9 years: 51</p> <p>10–14 years: 46</p> <p>T (2026): Total: 30 pp decrease</p>	<p>INSTAT</p>					
	<p>Rate of pretrial detention for children per 100,000 population aged 14–17 (SDG 16.3.2) (UNSDCF)</p> <p>B (2019): Total: 12.3; M:24; F: 0</p> <p>T (2026): Total:8</p>	<p>MoJ</p> <p>INSTAT</p>	<p>3.4 Law enforcement, justice institutions and professionals involved in legal processes affecting children have capacities and tools to address the remaining gaps in the justice system for children, including the legal and policy framework, to</p>				

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
			determine the best interests of the child and to collaboratively offer child-friendly integrated services.				
There is a more conducive environment for policy and child rights governance, with a focus on equity accountability and on social and gender norms change.	<p>Proportion of total government spending on essential services as a proportion of total government spending and gross domestic product: (a) education; (b) health; and (c) adequate housing (SDG 1.a.2) (UNSDCF)</p> <p>B (2019): (a) Total: 11.4%; GDP: 3.3% (b) Total: 10.5%; GDP: 3% (c) Total: 1.8%; GDP: 0.05%</p> <p>T (2026)^c: (a) greater than baseline value (b) greater than baseline value (c) equal to baseline value</p>	<p>INSTAT</p> <p>MoFE</p> <p>Government of Albania Housing Entity</p>	4.1 National and local authorities have increased capacity to plan for, generate, and efficiently use and report upon adequate social sector budgets, and to leverage domestic and external resources for equitable, child-focused and gender-transformative investments.	<p>Office of the Prime Minister</p> <p>MoFE</p> <p>People's Advocate</p> <p>Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination</p> <p>Municipalities</p> <p>Academia</p> <p>Civil society organizations</p>	950	1 600	2 550
	<p>Multiple indicator cluster survey implemented</p> <p>B (2020): No T (2026): Yes</p>	INSTAT	4.2 Government and other actors have strengthened capacity to regularly generate and use data and evidence, especially for girls from minorities, contributing to child- and adolescent-centred policy development, monitoring and reporting.				

^c Pending approval of the third National Strategy for Development and Integration (2022–2030).

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
	<p>Proportion of child-related valid complaints for which a remedial action was taken by the People's Advocate</p> <p>B (2020): 50%</p> <p>T (2026): 10 pp increase</p>	People's Advocate	4.3 Public oversight institutions have improved capacity to monitor and ensure accountability for child rights and gender rights violations, to provide remedies, as well as to promote child rights and gender-equality awareness and demand for remedies for violations of rights.				
	<p>Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (SDG 5.3.1) (UNSDCF)</p> <p>B (2019): 1.4% (under 15) 11.8% (under 18)</p> <p>T (2026): 1% (under 15) 11% (under 18)</p>	INSTAT	4.4 The Government has strengthened capacity to improve and implement the normative framework aiming at promotion of positive gender norms and eliminating deeply entrenched gender-based discriminatory and harmful practices, especially rooted in the interaction with and within minorities and rural populations.				
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Programme delivery performance index</p> <p>B: 0.9 (2020)</p> <p>T: 0.9–1 (2026)</p>	UNICEF calculations			245	1 700	1 945
Total resources					4 345	20 000	24 345