

**ALBANIA ONE UN COHERENCE FUND  
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINALPROGRAMME<sup>1</sup> NARRATIVE REPORT  
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM 01.01.2012 TO 31.12.2016**

|   |  |                  |              |                  |            |                   |                |                   |               |                   |              |                   |               |                   |             |                     |  |
|---|--|------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b>   | <b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results<sup>2</sup></b>  |                  |              |                  |            |                   |                |                   |               |                   |              |                   |               |                   |             |                     |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Title: OC 2: Inclusive Social Policies. The rights of individuals and groups are ensured through equitable, inclusive and evidence based sectoral policies.</li> <li>Programme Number: n/a</li> <li>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>3</sup> 92626</li> </ul>   | <p><i>(if applicable)</i><br/>Country/Region<br/><b>ALBANIA</b></p>  |                  |              |                  |            |                   |                |                   |               |                   |              |                   |               |                   |             |                     |  |
| <b>Participating Organization(s)</b>  | <b>Implementing Partners</b>   |                  |              |                  |            |                   |                |                   |               |                   |              |                   |               |                   |             |                     |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme</li> </ul> <p><i>UNAIDS, UNODC, WHO, UNWOMEN, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP</i></p>  | <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i></p> <p><i>Inclusive Social Policies</i></p> <p>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Culture, Institute for the Monuments of Culture, Institute for Educational planning</p> |                  |              |                  |            |                   |                |                   |               |                   |              |                   |               |                   |             |                     |  |
| <b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b>  | <b>Programme Duration</b>  |                  |              |                  |            |                   |                |                   |               |                   |              |                   |               |                   |             |                     |  |
| <p>Total approved budget as per project document: <b>2,822,378</b><br/>MPTF /JP Contribution<sup>4</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>by Agency (if applicable)</i></li> </ul> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>UNAIDS</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>25,815.00</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>UNODC</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>25,815.00</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>WHO</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>103,950.00</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>UNWOMEN</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>120,000.00</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>UNESCO</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>188,100.00</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>UNFPA</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>428,723.00</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>UNICEF</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>565,100.00</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>UNDP</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>1,364,875.00</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>by Agency (if applicable)</i></li> </ul> | <b>UNAIDS</b>  | <b>25,815.00</b> | <b>UNODC</b> | <b>25,815.00</b> | <b>WHO</b> | <b>103,950.00</b> | <b>UNWOMEN</b> | <b>120,000.00</b> | <b>UNESCO</b> | <b>188,100.00</b> | <b>UNFPA</b> | <b>428,723.00</b> | <b>UNICEF</b> | <b>565,100.00</b> | <b>UNDP</b> | <b>1,364,875.00</b> | <p>Overall Duration (<i>65 months</i>)<br/>Start Date<sup>5</sup> (<i>01.01.2012</i>)</p> <p>Original End Date<sup>6</sup> (<i>31.12.2017</i>)</p> |
| <b>UNAIDS</b>   | <b>25,815.00</b>   |                  |              |                  |            |                   |                |                   |               |                   |              |                   |               |                   |             |                     |  |
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<sup>1</sup> The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

<sup>3</sup> The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

<sup>4</sup> The MPTF/JP Contribution is the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations – see [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>5</sup> The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>6</sup> As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

Government Contribution  
(if applicable)

Other Contributions (donors)  
(if applicable)

**TOTAL: 2,822,378**

**Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.**

A Mid-Term Review Report of the UN Programme of Cooperation with the Government of Albania was completed in 2014, and an external Evaluation of the Programme of Cooperation – in 2015.

Actual End date<sup>7</sup>(31.05.2017)

Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system? **Yes**  No

Expected Financial Closure date<sup>8</sup>:

30 June 2018

**Report Submitted By**

- Name: Limya Eltayeb
- Title: Country Director
- Participating Organization (Lead): UNDP
- Email address: [limya.eltayeb@undp.org](mailto:limya.eltayeb@undp.org)

<sup>7</sup> If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities. Please see [MPTF Office Closure Guidelines](#).

<sup>8</sup> Financial Closure requires the return of unspent balances and submission of the [Certified Final Financial Statement and Report](#).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

UN support to the national development agenda during the implementation of the Programme of Cooperation, inclusive of the contribution of all UN agencies—specialised and non-specialised, resident and non-resident—was aligned with national priorities in four strategic areas: i) Human Rights; ii) Inclusive Social Policies; iii) Governance and Rule of Law; and iv) Regional and Local Development. The UN supported Government efforts to pursue national priorities by building capacities at all levels and strengthening national ownership. In doing so, it helped Albania work towards its ambitions to join the European Union, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and meet its international commitments.

Joint work under Outcome 2 sought to advance the protection of rights of disadvantaged individuals and groups through a combination of legislation, inclusive policies, social protection mechanisms and special interventions. The areas of health, social protection, social care and social inclusion saw many legislative and policy advances, supported by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UNAIDS, including the National Health Strategy 2016–2020, Strategy for Social Protection 2015 – 2020, Social Inclusion Policy Paper 2016–2020, Social Housing Strategy 2016–2025, National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016–2020, National Strategic Document on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 2017–2021, the law on Social Enterprises, on Social Care Services, and on Local Self-Governance, among many others. The social areas also saw stronger data production and usage through innovative approaches such as, among others, the establishment of a national coordination mechanism for maintenance and update of International Classification of Diseases,<sup>9</sup> operationalisation of coordination mechanisms to address HIV in key populations in several regions of the country, introduction and piloting of several indicators related to mothers and children, and population aging and population health status. UNICEF advocacy efforts addressed child nutrition surveillance and the use of selected child nutrition indicators on a regular basis by all health institutions, as stated in Minister of Health Order No. 242, dated 14.06.16. Six new child nutrition indicators were introduced for nationwide monitoring in all primary and secondary health care facilities. Approximately 1,600 health care professionals and specialists of health statistics departments, accounting for more than 85 percent of eligible personnel at the national level, learned how to monitor and use them. More than 1,000 women benefited from a new cervical cancer screening service. Using the universal progressive home-visiting model, 565 home visits were conducted by trained health personnel in target areas using standard checklists based on national protocols and UNICEF’s regional home-visiting package, reaching about 455 Roma and other vulnerable children under five years of age.

Supported by UNICEF, seven municipalities<sup>10</sup> were each equipped with a social care plan that will ensure the establishment of social care services for vulnerable families and children, establish new social welfare structures and train teams of social workers.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, UNDP assisted three municipalities in developing for the first time social inclusion action plans, outlining key local actions. In this regard, UNDP undertook data collection and analysis of the housing needs of vulnerable groups in the 61 municipalities, establishing a reliable tracking system at the national and local level and strengthening the capacities of 140 housing specialist from all 61 municipalities. UNDP also had actions focused on vocational education for disabled groups, for example for hearing-impaired students in Tirana and Lushnja. Similarly, 220 in-service judges and prosecutors from the School of Magistrates, 216 personnel<sup>12</sup> from the State Social Services and 53 public institution staff providing care services to people with disabilities gained knowledge from UNDP-delivered training on the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the rulings and standards of the European Court on Human Rights.

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<sup>9</sup> Established by Order of the Minister of Health No. 326, dated 29.07.2016. It includes 6 experts from the Ministry of Health, Institute of Public Health, INSTAT and the Mother Tereza University Hospital Centre, Tirana. The coordinating mechanism is a principle requirement for establishing any ICD. The objective is to move soundly towards the adoption of ICD10.

<sup>10</sup> Tirana, Shkodra, Durrës, Kukës, Korçë, Elbasan and Berat

<sup>11</sup> Training focused on local needs assessment, budgeting and outsourcing of services to non-governmental providers, in order to plan the transformation of existing residential institutions into modern community-based facilities guided by the new national Standards for Community-Based Care Services.

<sup>12</sup> 72 disability focal points newly appointed at ministerial and municipality level, 22 state social service staff at regional level, 122 professionals

The UN has also supported making education more inclusive for vulnerable children. Government introduced a universal pre-primary school year along with a new programme for the professional development of teachers, based on early learning and development standards that were validated nationally by more than 400 teachers and head teachers. In line with the inclusive education roadmap prepared with UNICEF support, a series of newly designed policies<sup>13</sup> were developed, including an Inclusive Teacher Profile that is expected to re-shape requirements to be an effective teacher in Albania and improve the content of the pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. Inclusive education modules were incorporated into the Ministry of Education and Sports teacher training programme, reaching 11,000 teachers in 2016 (all teachers from grades 2 and 7). Through the *Every Roma Child in Pre-school* initiative, a total of 1,264 children have been enrolled in pre-school over the last three academic years, contributing to a more than 70 percent increase in the number of Roma children attending pre-school from 2011–2016. Albania Education Policy Review, supported by UNESCO, assessed the system's strengths and weaknesses and proposed recommendations for improved forward policy making in this field. Promotion of inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding was piloted in ten schools in five regions of the country, also with UNESCO support, along with a dedicated teacher training programme. Meanwhile, efforts in promoting and disseminating the Curricula on Sexual Education along with the training of 170 teacher trainers in all thirteen Regional Education Directorates in the country advanced through UNFPA support in collaboration with the Institute of Development of Education.

ILO supported the government's Decent Work Agenda through development of an EU Sectoral Approach Document and a Sectoral Reform Contract for Employment and Skills 2016–2018. This is a prerequisite for 2016 EU IPA funding cycle, with an estimated budget of EUR 30 million for the period 2016–2018 in support of the implementation of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014–2020 (NESS). Government was also supported in establishing a monitoring system, as well as in completing a first full cycle of annual reporting for NESS, as a precondition for the signature of the Sector Reform Contract. Additionally, ILO's expertise enabled the establishment of the government's Integrated Policy Management Group<sup>14</sup> on the Employment and Social Sector, aiming to improve policy coordination, oversight and monitoring of implementation of the sectoral strategies. Other noteworthy developments supported by ILO and UNDP include adoption of the Occupational Health and Safety Policy Document and Action Plan 2016–2020, drafting of a new law on Vocational Education and Training (VET) and revision of the National List of Occupations, along with elaboration of all occupational descriptions. UN Women undertook a technical review of the Albanian Labour Code, capturing all changes related to legal amendments and provisions impacting women in the workplace. Additionally, UNDP supported the development and approval of five active labour market measures, paving the way for implementation of one new employment promotion programme targeting orphans and two programmes targeting women single heads of household. Moreover, a process mapping of the licensing and inspection procedures for private vocational training providers in Albania was carried out and a database and online portal of public and private vocational training providers and their offers was developed, leading to preliminary recommendations with regards to quality assurance of VET provisioning.

Key 2012-2016 results under Outcome 2 Inclusive Social Policies are laid out below:

- ✓ Basic Package of Primary Health Care Services revised and adopted with DCM No. 101, 04.02.2015. New prevention packages included in basic package of PHC service delivery, such as child screening for vision and hearing and support for screening of 40–65 year-olds. No. of consultations in basic health care services increased by > 8% and doctor visits/day by 10%.
- ✓ Development of sectoral strategies: National Health Strategy 2016–2020; National Reproductive Health Strategy; Strategy on Prevention and Control of HIV–AIDS 2015–2019 and Action Plan; National Non communicable Diseases Strategy and Action Plan 2016–2020; Social Inclusion Policy Paper 2016–2020; Social Housing Strategy 2016–2025; National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016–2020; National Strategic Document on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 2017 –2021; National Action Plan on Contraceptive Security

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/albania/sq/resources\\_28006.html](https://www.unicef.org/albania/sq/resources_28006.html)

<sup>14</sup> Due to the need for an integrated, comprehensive and streamlined system to manage the overall policy cycle in key sectors, government has adopted the establishment of Integrated Policy Management Groups (IPMGs), a new nexus or system to guide policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and to strengthen sector and donor coordination. The IPMGs will provide a formal structure that brings together senior representatives of the relevant ministries, agencies and development partners in priority sectors, particularly those requiring cross-ministerial cooperation, allowing them to oversee the entire policy cycle and decide upon adjustments. The IPMG system aims to provide the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and other high-level government committees (e.g. the Inter-Ministerial Committee on European Integration Coordination) with the necessary recommendations for key policy decisions affecting those sectors deemed a priority and that require cross-ministerial cooperation. IPMGs are officially established in four priority sectors: Integrated Water Management; Good Governance and Public Administration Reform; Employment and Social Policy, Competitiveness and Social Innovation.

2017 – 2021; National Action Plan on Health Promotion 2017 – 2021; Antimicrobial Resistance National Action Plan; Revisions of law 8528 on Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding; National Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance; National Guidelines, protocols and standards for provision of Youth Friendly Services in PHC; National Clinical Guidelines “Hypertension in pregnancy: management of hypertensive disorders during the pregnancy” and “Resuscitation of new-born baby”; National Guidelines and protocols for PHC provision of cervical cancer screening services

- ✓ Development of new standards and protocols for MCH care services and costing tool. Use of selected child nutrition indicators on a regular basis by all health institutions, as stated by Minister of Health Order No. 242 dated 14.06.2016. Introduction of new child growth monitoring charts: 80% of health care specialists at regional level used them in 2016, compared to 52% in 2010.
- ✓ Development of comprehensive manual to guide collection of national core health indicators in Albania. Introduction of European Core Health Indicators in Albania and upgrading to new standard of International Classification of Disease indicators ICD10.
- ✓ Preparation and publication of *The Health Status of the Albanian Population*, the 2014 National Health Report of Albania
- ✓ Establishment of a national cancer registry in cooperation with Mother Teresa Hospital. Strengthened national response to prevention and control programmes on cervical cancer at every level of health care provision: 51% of cases diagnosed and treated per year for cancer and cardiovascular diseases through quality care services. > 1000 women benefited from the new cervical cancer screening service integrated into the level of PHC.
- ✓ Integration of the Minimum Initial Service Package into MoH Platform on Disasters and Risk Management
- ✓ Skills upgrade for 700 health care providers in child growth monitoring and nutrition. More than 500 health personnel were trained in child nutrition surveillance, maternal and child health, cervical cancer, and reproductive health. 81 health education teams became active, 923 community-based activities were organised—58% in rural areas, reaching 16,000 community members.
- ✓ Capacity enhancement for 1,600 health care professionals of health statistics departments - over 85% national level eligible personnel
- ✓ 80% of eligible health personnel capable to plan and deliver holistic MCH services
- ✓ 565 home visits - reaching over 455 Roma/other vulnerable children under 5 years
- ✓ Parliament ratification of grant by Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- ✓ The initiative *School, a community centre—a friendly school for all* spread to 222 schools in the country
- ✓ Implementation of MoES Order No. 195, 25.04.2016 ‘On adoption of the document: Education and formation of teachers for all-inclusiveness’. Profile of an all-inclusive teacher. Criteria, standards and profile of all-inclusive teachers drafted, adopted and piloted in eight 9-year schools in four regions. Inclusive education modules incorporated in MoES teacher training programme, reaching 11,000 teachers/100% of teachers teaching grade 2 and 7.
- ✓ Standards of Textbooks 2016 include criteria for gender, race, national and religious equality and democratic principles of non-discrimination.
- ✓ Quality of education and children outcomes improved through development and implementation of Early Learning and Development Standards in the competency-based curriculum.
- ✓ Introduction of a compulsory universal pre-primary school year, validated nationally by more than 400 teachers and school head teachers.
- ✓ First country in the region to sign a cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial agreement for “coordination of work for the identification and registration in school of all compulsory school age children”.
- ✓ Introduction of comprehensive sexuality education modules in school curricula along with promotion of an approach based on life skills and competences.
- ✓ National initiative ‘Every Roma in Pre-school’ increased accountability of service providers in ensuring equal rights for all children, resulting in a larger number of Roma children participating in pre-school, from 26% in 2011 to 70% in 2016.
- ✓ Development of NESS 2014–2020 and related action plan. Establishment and implementation of monitoring system and completion of first cycle of annual reporting.
- ✓ Development of National Action Plan for Women Entrepreneurs 2014–2020.
- ✓ Gender-sensitive Occupation Safety and Health Policy 2016-2020 and Action Plan adopted by CoM in 2016, transposing 21 EU directives and regulations into the national legislation.
- ✓ Preparation of new law on VET. Revision of National List of Occupations along with elaboration of all occupational descriptions. Transferring of VET schools under NES. Harmonisation of VET functions.
- ✓ Increased efficiency of National Labour Council as highest tripartite social dialogue forum in Albania, with 23 recommendations made by Council in 2015 compared to 15 in 2010.
- ✓ Development of NESS 2014–2020 and related action plan. Establishment and implementation of monitoring system and completion of first cycle of annual reporting.
- ✓ Development of National Action Plan for Women Entrepreneurs 2014–2020.
- ✓ Gender-sensitive Occupation Safety and Health Policy 2016-2020 and Action Plan adopted by CoM in 2016, transposing 21 EU directives and regulations into the national legislation.
- ✓ Preparation of new law on VET. Revision of National List of Occupations along with elaboration of all occupational descriptions. Transferring of VET schools under NES. Harmonisation of VET functions.
- ✓ Increased efficiency of National Labour Council as highest tripartite social dialogue forum in Albania, with 23 recommendations made by Council in 2015 compared to 15 in 2010.
- ✓ Legislative framework development, with Orders on Social Workers, the Psychologist, Social Enterprises, and Inclusion of and accessibility for PWD.
- ✓ Key Strategic & Policy Framework development: Social Protection Strategy 2015–2020; Social Inclusion Policy Document 2015–2020; Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2015–2020; Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities 2016–2020; New Social Housing Strategy 2015–2025; Policy Paper for Social Inclusion 2014–2020 including a set of national indicators on social inclusion based on qualitative analysis on the most vulnerable categories of the population.

- ✓ Studies and research for evidence-based policymaking include: social worker job description; review of disability assessment system in Albania; analysis of 2011 Census data on PWD and Roma population; maps of vulnerabilities in the 12 administrative divisions for use as a social protection planning tool by central and local administrations.

## I. Purpose

The purpose of this outcome is for *the rights of individuals and groups ensured through equitable, inclusive and evidence-based sectoral policies*.

Outcome 2—Inclusive Social Policies—consists of four outputs focusing on 1) health, 2) education, 3) labour, and 4) social protection.

This outcome supports GoA in achieving priority 5 of NSDI II: Investing in people and social cohesion. It also contributes to government efforts to achieve SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16.

## II. Assessment of Programme Results

The following is the latest progress attained under each output of Outcome 2.

### Output 2.1 Health

#### **Health care policies and sector reform enabled towards equitable universal health coverage**

Albania has undergone large generally positive political, economic and social changes over the past 25 years and has reached an upper middle-income country status. Despite the progress achieved, the country still faces many challenges to fulfil its aspiration of EU accession. New reforms have been undertaken to improve local government functions and service delivery. Confidence in health services has increased to 50 percent, according to 2016 polls<sup>15</sup>, and out-of-pocket expenditures for health have fallen below 50 percent of total health care expenditures. Spending on health care is about 2.9 percent of GDP and ten percent of the national budget. Disparities and inequalities persist among some groups of the population in Albania, notably between urban and rural, and different population, groups (particularly with Roma and Egyptians). Escalation of health reforms in Albania necessitates financial sustainability for the health system, including an increase in the current low level of public financing for health. The demographic profile of Albania is changing, following an ageing population with rapidly changing health needs, and will need to be met by a wider range of capacities and competencies of health care providers. The health system also faces challenges to address the disparity in the health workforce availability and skills. The UN is supporting Albania in building a comprehensive health system that delivers equity, efficiency, access and affordability for all.

The UN's continued focus on increasing equity in health and access to health care resulted in development of a national framework for a more resilient, responsive and transformative health system. WHO supported the drafting of a National Health Strategy for Albania, outlining the steps for materialising the Universal Health Coverage vision in the course of the next 5–10 years. UNICEF's advocacy and technical advice led to revisions<sup>16</sup> of Law No. 8528 'On Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding', adopted by Parliament in May, development of a package of by-laws, including a Prime Minister's Order, on labelling requirements for breast milk substitutes, and guidelines and inspection tools for monitoring law compliance. As a result of UNFPA advocacy efforts, a number of national policies and strategic documents were approved, endorsed and disseminated widely. Key examples include the development of guidelines, protocols and standards for the provision of youth-friendly services at the level of PHC, a National Strategic Document on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 2017–2021, National Action Plan on Contraceptive Security 2017–2021, National Action Plan on Health Promotion 2017–2021, National Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance, a guideline on piloting selected health indicators, in accordance with the newly developed and approved Manual of Core Health Indicators (based on European Core Health Indicators), and

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<sup>15</sup> 2016 Opinion Poll Opinion Poll "Trust in Governance 2016" <http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2017/02/09/-findings-of-the-opinion-poll-trust-in-governance-2016-presented-in-tirana.html>

<sup>16</sup> The changes aimed to (i) expand the range of products covered under the scope of this law, (ii) clarify and strengthen labelling requirements, and (iii) strengthen administrative measures for law violations.

guidelines and protocols for Primary Health Care provision of cervical cancer screening services. Regarding the last of these, a small-scale pilot programme was launched in the regions of Tirana and Fier, resulting in skills development for 92 PHC professionals on issues such as informing women, taking and handling samples, and referring positive cases and counselling. Additionally, three primary health centres, in Libofshe Commune (Fier), Fier Municipality, and Farke Commune (Tirana), were supported to provide cervical cancer screening services for more than 1,000 women. However, for prevention services such as this one to be scaled-up sustainably, public funding of health care will have to increase.

Major milestones were achieved in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCD). WHO supported finalisation and approval of a National NCD Strategy and Action Plan 2016–2020<sup>17</sup> and development and approval of the Guidelines on Infection Control in Communities and Health Care Institutions.<sup>18</sup> National efforts in combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the country were supported by WHO through the drafting of an AMR National Action Plan, preparation of a survey on the knowledge, practices and attitudes of health providers on AMR, as well as raising awareness on the prudent use of antibiotics. Building on the progress made by Albania in enforcement of tobacco control legislation, WHO provided expert opinion<sup>19</sup> to the State Health Inspectorate on issues related to effective implementation of the Law ‘On the Protection of Health from Tobacco Products’.

A policy dialogue to prevent child maltreatment in Albania, held in November with the support of WHO and the participation of 30 stakeholders representing key sectors, resulted in the issuance of seven recommendations<sup>20</sup> for inclusion in the National Action Plan (Agenda) for Children, 2016–2020. Supported with UNICEF’s advocacy and data, Order of the Minister of Health No. 242, issued on 14.06.2016, created an administrative basis for the scaling up of child nutrition surveillance. Six new child nutrition indicators were introduced for nationwide monitoring in all primary and secondary health care facilities. Appropriate monitoring capacity was established for around 1,600 health care professionals and specialists of health statistics departments, accounting for more than 85 percent of eligible personnel at the national level.

More than 80 percent of eligible health personnel were provided with tools to plan and deliver holistic Maternal and Child Health services focusing on the most vulnerable, benefiting from UNICEF’s training ‘Building on past achievements, enforcement mechanisms for the new MCH regulatory framework’, held in Durres as a target region identified jointly with the Ministry of Health (MoH). Supportive supervision tools were developed in collaboration with MoH and the Institute of Public Health and used in monitoring the quality of service delivery. A collaboration framework between the regional health authorities and local government was developed and institutionalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Regional Department of Health and Durres Municipality, emphasising cross-sectoral collaboration and the new role of local government in health, in the frame of Albania’s decentralisation reform. Equally important, the framework includes dedicated structures within local government to deal with mother and child health and public health issues, as well as modalities for regular information exchange. To ensure adequate resource allocation for maternal and child health, UNICEF assisted MoH and the Health Insurance Fund to design a tool to calculate the present and future costs. Plans to operationalize the use of the costing tool are under way for 2017.

For several consecutive years, UNFPA, in partnership with MoH, has supported initiatives<sup>21</sup> to improve perinatal care by incorporating higher standards of care into the regional maternity hospitals through the introduction of evidence-based best practices. Five regional maternity hospitals, in Durres, Kukes, Shkoder, Vlore and Fier, have benefited from quality improvement initiatives that have addressed capacities in

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<sup>17</sup> The drafting was technically supported by WHO EURO and WHO Country Office. It was approved by Ministerial Order No. 419, date 30.09.2016 ‘On the approval of the document of the National Programme and Action Plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCD) in Albania, 2016–2020’.

<sup>18</sup> Pursuant to the requirements of Law No. 15/2016 ‘On the Prevention and Fighting of Infections and Infectious Diseases in the Republic of Albania’. The Guidelines were launched by the Ministry of Health of Albania during the World Antibiotic Awareness Week 2016 and were officially approved in 21 November 2016.

<sup>19</sup> The technical assistance to the State Health Inspectorate was provided through meetings with Health Inspectorate officials, joint inspections in bars and restaurants, monitoring of the compliance with the law and a one-day workshop with 35 lawyers of the State Health Inspectorate.

<sup>20</sup> Positive parenting training for parents and carers; social marketing to change norms regarding the use of violent discipline; capacity building for health and other professionals to detect and provide services for child victims; home visits to support parents, particularly in at-risk families; school-based training of children to recognise and resist sexual abuse; monitoring and evaluation; and violence-free schools.

<sup>21</sup> The objectives of these important initiatives are in accordance with the long-term strategy of MoH and the objectives of the National Centre for Quality Safety and Accreditation, achieving harmonisation with European standards for health care.

effective perinatal care and introduction of Beyond the Numbers<sup>22</sup>. National clinical guidelines for ‘Hypertension in pregnancy: management of hypertensive disorders during pregnancy’ and ‘Resuscitation of the newborn baby’ were also developed this year, with UNFPA support. Additionally, UNFPA engaged in supporting key elements of quality improvement and demand generation for family planning: (i) development and endorsement of guidelines and protocols; (ii) strengthening the capacity development process through, among others, the establishment of a virtual learning platform accompanied by the first cohort of accredited trainees from the National Centre for Continuous Medical Education; and (iii) development and delivery of a training-of-trainers (ToT) package to a team of 30 health care professionals representing different regions of the country. Improved information and education on HIV and sexually transmitted infections, with focus on young key populations and increased coverage of comprehensive HIV services in prison settings, are some other key results, enabled with UNFPA support.

Recognising the importance of home visits and the key role the health sector plays in identifying and addressing vulnerabilities in the early years, UNICEF ensured that the new home visiting methodology prioritises the most vulnerable, fosters inter-sectoral collaboration and increases emphasis on monitoring child development. Using the universal progressive home-visiting model, 565 home visits were conducted by trained health personnel based on standard protocols for mother and childcare in target areas, Fier and Vlore, using standard checklists based on national protocols and the UNICEF regional home-visiting package. UNICEF supported the training of health personnel, based on standard training modules, to plan and conduct home visits to most at risk children and families, reaching some 455 Roma and other vulnerable children under five years of age. The content of the visits, in addition to health issues, focused on other vulnerabilities that influence poor health outcomes.

A Hospital Index Safety Training,<sup>23</sup> supported by WHO, took place in Tirana in October with national and regional participation, representing significant progress towards improving the safety of health facilities in the event of emergencies and disasters. Additionally, UNFPA supported integration of a Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) into the MoH’s Platform on Disasters and Risk Management, accompanied by an Order of the Minister of Health approving its integration and assigning roles and responsibilities among public health structures for its implementation. Strengthening capacities of health care providers for the provision of reproductive health services in crisis or humanitarian settings was considered a key achievement of the year and a fulfilment of an MoH priority, in light of the regional context and migrations flows in the Mediterranean and the Western Balkans. Sixty health care professionals from Korca, Gjirokaster and Saranda counties received training in MISP in 2016.

Support for national leadership and increased participation of national stakeholders in decision making was supported by UNAIDS for enhanced collaboration among MoH, Institute for Public Health and representatives of civil society in the Global Fund's Country Coordinating Mechanism and beyond. Advocacy efforts of UNAIDS in partnership with the regional departments of health resulted in an increased number of community events<sup>24</sup> organised by social workers and doctors of Voluntary Counselling and Testing in the regions of Elbasan, Shkoder, Vlora and Berat, reaching 2,722 women and men who are empowered to provide peer and community awareness.

Technical assistance from UNAIDS accompanied MoH as the Primary Recipient of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) New Funding Model Proposal through all the steps of the grant application process and resulted in ratification of a grant by Parliament in June 2016. UN, as a member of the Country Coordinating Mechanism in partnership with the GFATM Secretariat, contributed to

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<sup>22</sup> Beyond the Numbers’ is a tool adopted by the World Health Organization as part of its campaign “Making Pregnancy Safer”, supported by UNFPA and UNICEF at regional level in a number of countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, used to guide professionals in reviewing maternal deaths and complications and create a surveillance system for such incidents. The package and its tools are designed to provide valuable recommendations for systemic improvements that strengthen maternal care at country level. See more at: <http://ceca.unfpa.org/events/beyond-numbers-workshop-south-eastern-europe#sthash.x4c1D2ns.dpuf>

<sup>23</sup> National experts were trained in how to apply the tool in hospital settings. The assessment consists of three essential elements: structural hospital safety, non-structural safety, and functional safety, including emergency and disaster management. The trainees were split into two groups for conducting an assessment in two hospitals: University Hospital, Tirana and the Regional Hospital, Durres.

<sup>24</sup> 130 sessions in total for each region with an average participation rate of 15 persons per session



the development of framework documents and procedures for establishment of the Project Implementation Unit.

WHO also worked on linkages between health and water supply. A workshop in September, with WHO support, aimed to advance Albania's work under the Protocol on Water and Health, introducing the objectives and provisions of the Protocol and positioning it as a practical instrument to achieve the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.

## **Output 2.2 Education**

### **Early childhood development and education policies ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for individuals and groups**

The overall efforts made in the field of education are in line with Albania's aspirations to join the European Union. Over the years, the legal and policy framework as well as practices are becoming more aligned with EU standards. Albania impressively improved performance in PISA<sup>25</sup> reading, math and science assessments between 2012 and 2016, yet much remains to be accomplished in order to reach EU education benchmarks. More specifically, while access to all levels of education has increased, there is still room for improvement in development of an inclusive education system, enrolment of children and youth from ethnic and cultural minority backgrounds, as well as with special education needs, and increased access to quality pre-school education, among others. The country's intensive reform efforts are strongly supported by UN Albania, focusing on reducing disparities and aiming to achieve equity and quality learning for all.

Through assessments of progress and gaps, and making recommendations for improving delivery, the UN contributed to making education more inclusive for vulnerable children. In collaboration with the Institute of Education Development (IED) and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), UNESCO conducted an education policy review, assessing both strengths and weaknesses of the education system focused on three national priority policy areas—teachers, curriculum development and use of information technology. Additionally, through UNESCO support, government developed the programme 'Promotion of intercultural and interreligious understanding through education in Albania', introduced as a pilot in ten schools (5 primary and 5 secondary) in five regions—Tirana Durres, Berat, Pogradec and Vlora—in the academic school year 2016–2017 along with dedicated teacher training implemented since September 2016. Other examples of UNESCO's work include the development of an arts and culture educational programme of school exhibitions and education tours and preparation of a set of easily usable educational resources to support and facilitate efforts of Culture and Education regional directorates to promote cultural heritage in the country.

UN efforts towards strengthening Albania's policy framework and institutional capacity building for education included UNICEF support for development and approval by MoES of (i) the national pre-school curricula, (ii) a new programme for professional development of teachers based on Early Learning and Development Standards, (iii) the Inclusive Teacher Profile and inclusive education modules, which were incorporated in the ministry's teacher training programme, reaching 11,000 teachers, 100 percent of those teaching grade 2 and 7. Based on the newly endorsed Inclusive Teacher Profile, three Albanian universities (Durres, Gjirokaster, and Tirana's Social Sciences Faculty) developed and approved a revised syllabus on inclusive education for implementation during the academic year 2016–2017.

Dissemination of the curriculum on sex education and the training of 170 teacher trainers in thirteen regional education directorates in the country was supported by UNFPA in collaboration with IED. Further support was provided for the development of teacher–pupil materials for secondary education and initiation of preliminary work in this regard in the country's high schools. At the end of 2016, a seminar to share best practices and inform on the teacher–student materials produced to date was organised by MoES in collaboration with IED and UNFPA, with participation of around 200 teachers and education inspectors across the country. Equally important, an IOM-developed curriculum for teaching human trafficking prevention in Albanian schools at pre-university level aimed to raise awareness of the phenomenon of

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<sup>25</sup> PISA reading (from 394 to 405), math (from 394 to 413) and science (from 397 to 427) between 2012 and 2016. <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

human trafficking, helping to prevent human trafficking among Albanian youth. Piloting of this curriculum in schools is planned for 2017, in close cooperation with MoES and MoIA, and the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator.

Aiming to increase, and achieve more efficient, education financing, UNICEF supported the development of the study ‘The Cost of Underinvestment in Education: And ways to reduce it’, which will be followed by awareness and advocacy on the importance of investments in education during 2017. MoES efforts to enhance school leadership, identified as one of the gaps in the study on the quality of teaching undertaken by the ministry, were supported by UNICEF through the development of a capacity building programme and training for 214 school headmasters from pre-university education, primary and high schools.

Policy developments that facilitate more equitable access to early learning services and inclusive basic education were further advanced by the ‘Every Roma Child in Pre-school’ initiative across Albania, supported by UNICEF. The results from evaluation of this initiative indicate that the project was highly effective in accomplishing the intended results of building the capacities of key stakeholders, particularly of the different duty bearers (parents, service providers, public institutions) responsible for the equitable realisation of child rights. The initiative reached a total of 1,264 children enrolled in pre-school during the last three academic years. Additionally, the Out-of-School Children initiative was piloted in Durres resulting in the identification of 36 such children in 2016. A new guide was developed by UNICEF on the implementation role of each actor and used by local authorities and service practitioners throughout the year. A mechanism for early identification of children at risk of school dropout was designed and tested in Tirana, Berat and Korca regions as part of the ‘School as the Community Centre’ initiative of government supported by UNICEF, aiming at improved evidence-based policy making in this area.

### **Output 2.3 Labour**

#### **Improved social dialogue leads to active employment and skills development policies, and decent work for men and women**

In 2016, labour force participation rates remained below European and Western Balkan averages (71%), with women participation rates significantly lower than men’s (65.7 overall, 57.6% for women and 73.8% for men)<sup>26</sup>. Despite a slight improvement in early 2016, youth participation rates are considerably lower than for the rest of the population (46% overall, with the gender gap above 15%) and data indicate that, since 2007, Albanian youth have faced increased difficulties in the labour market compared to adults. In a positive change, youth unemployment rate in the third quarter of 2016 declined to 27 percent, its lowest level since early 2013. Yet, Albania’s vocational education and training (VET) and vocational skills development (VSD) system all too often fail to equip students with the requisite knowledge, competences and skills for a successful transition into the labour market. This results in an unsuitably qualified labour force, skills shortages and high youth unemployment that hamper the growth and modernisation potential of Albania’s economy. Skills mismatch in the labour market and the associated inefficiencies of the country’s education model emerged as a priority topic for the government and its development partners. GoA is committed to addressing jobs creation and skills development, with a focus on the employment of youth and women.

GoA’s Decent Work Agenda was supported by ILO through development of an EU Sectoral Approach Document and a Sectoral Reform Contract for Employment and Skills 2016–2018, requisite for 2016 EU-IPA funding cycle in support of implementation of the National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2014–2020. A NESS monitoring system was established and implemented, and a first full cycle of annual reporting completed. Additionally, ILO’s expertise enabled the establishment and operationalisation of an IPMG on Employment and Social Policies, aiming to improve coordination, oversight and monitoring of implementation of the sector’s strategies. Other examples of ILO support in this sector include the finalisation, adoption and publication of the Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Policy Document and Action Plan 2016–2020, the drafting of the new law on VET, as well as the new Labour Code and

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<sup>26</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Enlargement\\_countries\\_-\\_labour\\_market\\_statistics#Further\\_Eurostat\\_information](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Enlargement_countries_-_labour_market_statistics#Further_Eurostat_information)

development of a methodological proposal to align labour force surveys to international labour statistics standards.

The employment promotion programmes portfolio of the National Employment Service (NES) expanded in 2016 with the support of UNDP. All of the service's operational guidelines were revised, related to the selection, implementation and monitoring of employment promotion programmes pertaining to NES and its regional and local employment offices. UNDP undertook a review of the scoring system for allocation of Active Labour Market Measures (ALMM) funding, aiming to maximise the number of unemployed jobseekers benefiting from active labour market programmes and ensure greater participation of the most disadvantaged (e.g. women single heads of households, people with disabilities, youth, orphans) by positively scoring those enterprises that seek to employ unemployed jobseekers from these groups. In March, UNDP started implementation of a self-employment incentive scheme via the platform [www.aftesi.info/vetepunesimi](http://www.aftesi.info/vetepunesimi). Over the one-month application window, 644 applications were received and reviewed, out of which 440 were deemed as complete and subject to further assessment on individual entrepreneurial skills and aptitude. By the end of December, 34 out of the 38 participants were supported by the programme through start-up grants.

The National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualification (NAVETQ) was also supported by UNDP in the process of elaborating occupational descriptions through securing both inter-institutional collaboration and outreach to the private sector throughout the country. Whereas International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08 sets the basis for defining all occupations, it is necessary for the descriptions to capture the realities of the Albanian labour market. Moreover, in the frame of the Skills Development for Employment Programme, MoSWY was supported in conceptualising and organising a skills fair that aimed to promote VET in the country. The fair took place from 20–22 May and aimed to i) expose young people and their parents to public VET providers and their offer, ii) organise up to eight thematic skills competitions among VET providers, iii) highlight and showcase the skills of the new generation that attend VET, iv) foster competition among providers and VET students, emphasising motivational elements such as self-confidence and commitment, and v) offer the possibility for representatives of the private sector to meet and recruit new talent. The fair brought together 32 vocational schools, ten public VET centres, private VET providers and 18,000 visitors.

Capacities of the National Labour Inspectorate and the Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination were strengthened to accurately follow up and monitor labour code legal amendments, entered into force in 2015, and their impact on women in the workplace. In this regard, UN Women, in collaboration with the national labour inspectorate, conducted a technical review of the Albanian Labour Code, capturing all changes related to legal amendments and provisions impacting women in the workplace, and developed a capacity building plan targeting labour inspectorates that was duly implemented throughout 2016. A follow up monitoring process will be conducted in 2017 to measure the impact of trainings.

Moreover, with support from the EU, UNESCO provided training and support to journalists and media organisations, as key drivers for democratic, sustainable and peaceful development in the country, in order to strengthen freedom of expression, access to information, and free, independent and pluralistic media. For example, infringements of the labour rights of journalists in south-east Europe and Turkey were discussed and challenged during a regional ToT seminar organised in December in Tirana with thirteen participants from the region. Additionally, a national consultation on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) started in the country, aiming to enable a cross-sector debate on MIL and initiate the process of creating specific policy recommendations on integrating MIL into formal, non-formal and informal education.

## **Output 2.4 Social protection**

### **Social protection and inclusion mechanisms ensure that social needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups are equally met**

The priorities of government to reduce poverty amongst the most vulnerable groups are set out in the Social Protection Strategy, 2015–2020 and the Policy Paper on Social Inclusion, 2015–2020, which are an integral

part of NSDI II and responsive to the EU 2020 perspective of Increased Social Inclusion through Development of the Labour Market and Social Welfare. Even though the government is paying increasing attention to policies tackling poverty and social exclusion, a large segment of the population is still vulnerable and lives close to the poverty line. Certain vulnerable groups, namely Roma and Egyptian communities, people with disabilities, internal migrants living in suburb areas of big cities, returned migrants, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied children and elderly, continue to live in difficult conditions and often have limited access to services. Public spending for social inclusion programmes is modest with the bulk of expenditures devoted to staffing costs for monitoring of strategies and action plans, as well as awareness activities (for example: public health expenditure accounts for 2.9 percent<sup>27</sup> of GDP, while education 3.3 percent<sup>28</sup>). Although some progress has been achieved with regard to the institutional mechanisms and capacities to address the needs of vulnerable groups, more efforts are needed to enable a combination of targeted and mainstreamed actions by national and local government authorities, to ensure that no one is left behind and that all have full access to quality public services. Supporting vulnerable individuals in ways to self-empowerment through opportunities for learning, skills development, employment, and community-based social services, while increasing access to mainstreamed public services, remains crucial and a focus of UN work in this area.

In 2016, UNICEF's support to MoSWY in advancing reform of the social care services system culminated with adoption of a new Law on Social Care Services,<sup>29</sup> setting the foundation for a modern social protection system in Albania, focused on decentralised service delivery, and defining roles and accountabilities for government institutions to plan, budget, finance, deliver and monitor such services. Equally important, it mandates local governments to establish appropriate and skilled structures<sup>30</sup> able to develop social care plans and assist families and children through case management. While, this Law is the necessary prerequisite for the system to be properly built and become functional, different institutions and segments of society have to take action so that the law is properly understood, implemented and monitored. In order to fill the capacity gap between practice on the ground and the policy intent set out in the Social Protection Strategy and the new Law on Social Care Services, UNICEF supported seven municipalities—Tirana, Shkodra, Durres, Kukes, Korca, Elbasan and Berat—in the development of social care plans to establish social care services for vulnerable families and children, establish the new social welfare structures and train<sup>31</sup> the teams of social workers.

Additionally, MoSWY developed and led the Social Pact Campaign, supported by UNICEF, unfolding under the logo of “Social ImPact as an agreement with all 61 municipalities of the country, pledging to implement the Law on Social Care Services and build the necessary structures and systems. Moreover, credited to UNICEF's comprehensive set of technical recommendations, MoSWY is developing an integrated Management Information System (MIS) for social protection in the country.

Likewise, parallel to its engagement with the service-based component of the social protection system, UNICEF completed an in-depth analysis of monetary and non-monetary deprivation factors affecting the lives of children in Albania, already validated by national stakeholders and planned for dissemination in 2017, aiming to inform the development of specific policies in child-focused social protection at both the central and local level.

UNDP supported implementation of the National Social Inclusion policy, adopted in early 2016, through assisting three municipalities to develop for the first time social-inclusion action plans for vulnerable men and women. Further support was provided to mainstream social inclusion in sectoral policies through development of a new Social Housing Strategy 2016–2025, which will contribute to the advancement of this

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<sup>27</sup> World Bank 2014 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.PUBL.ZS>; WHO 2014 <http://www.who.int/countries/alb/en/>

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports 2016 Budget

<sup>29</sup> For the first time, this law sets the foundations and provides the instruments for a system of integrated services to be planned and implemented at the local level for vulnerable families and children in Albania, allowing the country to take an essential step towards a modern social protection system.

<sup>30</sup> By requesting local governments to establish social welfare directories and to hire social workers for 6,000–10,000 inhabitants, the law provides the instruments to develop local social care plans based on a standard basket of services with financial costs to be covered by the social fund, which will be a separate budget line with funds allocated from social protection central budget and from the LGUs' resources.

<sup>31</sup> Training focused on local needs assessment, budgeting and outsourcing of services to non-governmental providers, in order to plan the transformation of existing residential institutions into modern community-based facilities guided by the new national Standards for Community-Based Care Services.

sector and serve the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded groups in Albania. In this regard, UNDP undertook data collection and analysis of the housing needs of vulnerable groups in the 61 municipalities, established a reliable tracking system at national and local levels and strengthened the capacities of 140 housing specialist from all municipalities. Additionally, government was supported in the development of a new Law on Social Housing, finalised in June, preparation of an assessment on housing living conditions of Roma and Egyptians, two feasibility studies on social housing needs in Tirana and Durres municipalities, and establishment of a Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group (SIIG) along with guidelines and a work plan defining its focus.<sup>32</sup>

An Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities, 2016–2020,<sup>33</sup> developed with UNDP support, was approved in June. UNDP has been improving the quality of vocational education delivered to at least 40 hearing-impaired students every academic year through establishment of a day-care centre in Lushnja Municipality, hosting at least 30 children with disabilities, a resource centre for the Blind Institute in Tirana, equipped with a Braille laboratory and audio recording studio aiding 65 students and 200 visually impaired youths, and rehabilitation of three workshops at the Institute of Deaf Children in Tirana. Moreover, six associations of persons with disabilities were supported in project implementation, capacity development in advocacy for disability rights, partnering and networking for a common cause, promoting the disability agenda and influencing policy and decision making on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Two hundred and twenty in-service judges and prosecutors from the School of Magistrates, 216 personnel<sup>34</sup> from State Social Services and 53 staff from public institutions providing care services to persons with disabilities gained knowledge from UNDP-delivered training on the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and European Court on Human Rights rulings and standards.

The rights of Roma and Egyptian individuals and groups were economically and socially advanced through concrete UNDP interventions. Free legal aid was provided to 309 Roma<sup>35</sup> in seven cities (Tirana, Shkoder, Korca, Berat, Lushnja, Durres, and Cerrik) and 92 Roma<sup>36</sup> youth were supported with income generation and employment coaching, of whom 20 became fully employed. From the Roma and Egyptian communities, 73 individuals benefited from four employment promotion measures targeting these communities directly, designed and made operational in Tirana, Durres, Shkodra and Berat in 2016. Five Roma and Egyptian employment mediators and coaches were trained and positioned within the NES. Community members were mobilised and became key partners in advancing the social inclusion agenda in the country, through the lens of the Community-Led Local Development approach,<sup>37</sup> with the aim of empowering communities to become actors in various local actions. In this regard, thirteen community counselling fora were established and made operational in Tirana, Durres, Berat and Shkoder, and 22 community mobilisation activities organised involving more than 250 Roma and Egyptian community members. These communities have prioritised four community-upgrading infrastructure projects in Tirana, Durres, Shkodra and Berat, with public works having started on three of them. Two models for inclusive education and desegregation—Early Part-Time Primary Adult Education and Schools as Community Centres—are mainstreamed into the public education system in Tirana, Durres, Shkodra and Berat, improving education outcomes for Roma and Egyptians. From these communities, 165 individuals in need of administrative or court support and civil registration were supported to access basic services of social care, health, education and housing. Government supported the operationalisation of the web-based RomAlb system<sup>38</sup> through Order No. 276 dated 30.12.2016 of the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, accompanied by a series of trainings for national and local government staff on the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania, 2016–2020.

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<sup>32</sup> The main focus is to ensure the integrity of data for measuring, monitoring and reporting on exclusionary forces, structural disadvantages and the limitations of capabilities that operate at all levels of policy and programme delivery as stated in the Social Inclusion Policy Document.

<sup>33</sup> The plan addresses problems faced by persons with disabilities, and proposes activities to promote inclusion, prevent discrimination and eliminate barriers in accessing services and rights.

<sup>34</sup> 72 disability focal points newly appointed at the ministerial and municipality level, 22 state social service staff at the regional level, 122 professionals

<sup>35</sup> 183 women and 126 men

<sup>36</sup> 51 men and 41 women

<sup>37</sup> Under CLLD, local people take the reins and form a local partnership that designs and implements an integrated development strategy that builds on a community's social, environmental and economic strengths or 'assets' rather than simply compensating for its problems.

<sup>38</sup> A web-based tool accessible internally by responsible staff in central and local government units.

The access to basic services by at risk groups was voiced out through the participatory coordination mechanism “Local Partnerships” established in municipalities of Vlora, Elbasan, Berat and Shkodra, facilitated by the Joint UN Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), UNFPA and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). These serve as a coordination mechanism to create an enabling environment and enable access of representatives from marginalised groups to be represented at local and regional government and institution level. In this regard, mapping of the work of NGOs in the four municipalities was carried out, along with establishment of social media tools to enhance the mechanisms’ internal communication, annual coordinated planning of activities and engagement. Briefing on SDGs was held with local partners. The networks of local partnerships evaluated the social determinants on health in their respective regions and agreed to establish local mechanisms to monitor the impact of social policies at the local level.

Development of a law on Social Enterprises, supported by UN Women, was approved in Parliament in June 2016, maintaining social re-integration as a key rationale of the law and reflecting fully the core principles of social re-integration. UN Women supported the development of the law’s secondary legislation, resulting in three draft decisions<sup>39</sup> of the Council of Ministers that define clear criteria and guidance for 1) inspection of social enterprises, 2) area of activity and operations of social enterprises; and 3) concrete categories of vulnerable groups, including vulnerable women. Moreover, UN Women participatory budgeting initiatives<sup>40</sup> conducted in the municipalities of Fier, Berat and Tirana supported alignment of municipal plans and budgets with regional development plans. Social and economic assessments were prepared for Fier and Berat providing information and key recommendations on planning and budgeting of services. As a result, Fier Municipality committed USD 1.8 million and 19 million ALL for improving parks in the city, setting up recreational and green areas, reconstructing the city theatre and the centre for elders and youths, building the Horizon Multifunctional Centre for women in need and promoting initiatives for women entrepreneurship. Similarly, Berat Municipality committed USD 1.38 million and 50,000 ALL to, among other things, support families in the social aid and housing scheme, reconstruct the Lira Centre and several schools and kindergartens, allocate an emergency fund for DV survivors, and conduct social activities targeting social groups.

IOM supported MoSWY and the State Social Services with provision of recommendations on how to improve the institutional mechanisms to provide services and address the needs of vulnerable categories, including victims of trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children and returned migrants. Host country authorities were supported to better follow the integration of minors and identify and uphold the child's best interests by assessing economic and social resources and opportunities available in the context of origin of unaccompanied migrant children. A total of 246 family assessments were held throughout 2016.

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<sup>39</sup> CoM draft decisions were consulted with MoSWY but are pending PMO final approval.

<sup>40</sup> The participatory budgeting of local social services engaged a large number of citizens, women, men and municipal authorities in a constructive dialogue in all three municipalities, while local civil society organisations facilitated a constructive dialogue that led to improved service responses to citizens.

## ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

The goal of the 2012–2016 Programme of Cooperation was to promote sustainable and equitable development, social inclusion and adherence to international norms and fulfilment of international obligations, in support of the integration of Albania into the EU. The following are examples of UN Albania's contribution, under the Programme, to the achievement of the country's priorities.

Indicator based performance information is available at UN Albania Annual Progress Reports 2012-2016, accessible at:

[http://www.un.org.al/publications?field\\_publication\\_type\\_value=Reports](http://www.un.org.al/publications?field_publication_type_value=Reports)

<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/AL100>

## iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The UN is supporting Albania to build a comprehensive **health** system that delivers equity, efficiency, access and affordability for all. However, several challenges were observed in the sector, including i) a lack of implementation tools for all policies and concrete models for effective inter-sectoral collaboration, ii) a need for supervision and follow up on capacity development interventions to ensure institutional change and sustainability, and iii) weak government capacities to deal with financial management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies, as well as adequate budget allocations for the marginalised.

In the area of **education**, a lack of clear accountability for pre-school education among central and local governments challenged implementation of programmes at the local level throughout 2016. In this regard, UNICEF provided recommendations to amendments of the Law on Pre-university Education, which is expected to resolve and provide clarity on pre-school accountability regarding the teacher workforce. UNFPA and MoES together with the Institute for Educational Development are preparing plans to ensure sustainability of Comprehensive Sexuality Education through integration in teacher-training universities.

In the **employment** sector, the lack of trade unions in the private sector and the under-development of many of the existing workers and employers' organisations calls for the UN to play a greater role in this area. Much remains to be done to improve the bipartite social dialogue and strengthen the autonomy of social partners at the local and enterprise levels. The legislative framework for the VET reforms is still incomplete, and more capacity-building would accelerate the implementation of all the VET-related reforms. Currently, legislative action in the areas of work-based learning, quality assurance and accreditation is moving too slowly. Furthermore, the governance structures and mechanisms for the management of VET are centralised and the training supply is still not aligned with labour demand.

At the end of 2016, there was a clear national vision to build a transformative system of **social protection and social inclusion** that provides to vulnerable families and children both cash and care that are embedded in the national strategies and legislation. Such policy intent, though, is hard to translate at the local level given the insufficient financial and human resources in the newly formed municipal governments. UN agencies will work with municipalities to build the structures required by the law on social care services and develop the needed capacities. Additional challenges include a weak culture of cross-sectoral collaboration, making it difficult to bring different ministries to the same discussion. Nonetheless, the creation of IPMGs is an important step to overcoming this obstacle and different UN agencies are contributing to advancing the processes. Meanwhile, a lack of data and identification of positive effects of the decision-making processes at local government are a concern, which will be addressed by UN agencies through establishment of good partnerships and networks and the development of monitoring tools to evaluate progress.

*Note: The certification on operational closure reflect the figures after the refund by PUNOs.*





CERTIFICATION ON OPERATIONAL CLOSURE OF THE PROJECT 92626 - OUTCOME 2

| MPTF Project ID | Project Description   | Country | Fund                          | Theme                               | Organization | Period                  | Budget              |
|-----------------|---|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 00092626        | ALB 2014 OC 2: Inclusive Social Policies. The rights of individuals and groups are ensured through equitable, inclusive and evidence based sectoral policies. | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | UNAIDS       | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 25,815.00           |
| 00092626        |   | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | UNODC        | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 25,815.00           |
| 00092626        |   | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | UNESCO       | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 188,100.00          |
| 00092626        |   | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | UNFPA        | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 428,723.00          |
| 00092626        |   | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | UNICEF       | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 565,100.00          |
| 00092626        |   | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | UNWOMEN      | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 120,000.00          |
| 00092626        |   | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | WHO          | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 103,950.00          |
| 00092626        |   | Albania | Albania One UN Coherence Fund | ALB 2012 P4 Inclusive Social Policy | UNDP         | 20.11.2014 - 31.05.2017 | 1,364,875.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |   |         |                               |                                     |              |                         | <b>2,822,378.00</b> |

By signing, Participating UN Organization certify that the project 92626 - Outcome 2, has been operationally completed.

UNAIDS

Ms. Bujana Hoti  
UNAIDS Focal Point

Signature:   
Date: 27.10.2017

UNODC

Ms. Ela Banaj  
National Programme Officer

Signature:   
Date: 27.10.2017

UNESCO

Ms. Ana Luiza Thompson-Flores  
Director

Signature:   
Date: 25.10.17

UNFPA

Ms. Manuela Bello  
Assistant Resident Representative

Signature:   
Date: 27.10.2017


UNICEF

Mr. Ezio Gianni Murzi  
Representative

Signature:   
Date: 27/10/2017

UNWOMEN

Mr. Giuseppe Belsito  
Representative

Signature:   
Date: 27/10/17

UNDP

Ms. Limya Eltayeb  
Country Director

Signature:   
Date: 30/10/17

WHO

Ms. Nazira Artykova  
Representative

Signature: P. GARIBOLDI (P. 71)  
Date: 01 Nov 2017