



UNITED NATIONS  
REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE  
PLATFORM



EUROPE AND  
CENTRAL ASIA

# 2022 REGIONAL RESULTS REPORT OF THE REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



© UNHCR/Chris Melzer Families carry their belongings through the Zosin border crossing in Poland after fleeing Ukraine.

# Executive Summary

1. The 2022 system-wide results report of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Europe and Central Asia (RCP ECA) provides an overview of the actions of the UN development system taken in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region. This report was developed in line with ECOSOC resolution 2020/23<sup>1</sup> and General Assembly resolution 74/297<sup>2</sup> which welcomed the efforts of the UN Secretary-General in formulating the recommendations to harness the regional assets of the United Nations development system, including to enhance transparency and report annually on UN system-wide results at the regional level in support of the 2030 Agenda, underscoring the impact of the RCP in assisting countries to progress towards their SDG commitments.
2. Europe and Central Asia (ECA) faced large-scale crises as a result of the direct regional implications of the war in Ukraine as well as its global impact and the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Existing structural inequalities across social, economic, and environmental dimensions are exacerbated, and weak governance models are overwhelmed. Further, women, youth, migrants, refugees, and already vulnerable populations are being disproportionately affected. Despite unprecedented emergency measures taken by the international community and by governments, further robust action is necessary to rescue the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in the region.
3. The RCP ECA advanced in the implementation of the five transformative areas set out by the UN Secretary-General for the repositioned regional architecture of the United Nations development system (UNDS).<sup>3</sup> Through its Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs), the RCP focused its activities on Gender Equality; Adolescents and Youth; Social Protection; Health and Well-being, Large Movements of People, Displacement and Resilience; Environment and Climate Change; and Sustainable Food Systems. It also made significant progress in the area of data and statistics for the SDGs through the consolidation of statistical and data capacities.
4. Through its Peer Support Group (PSG), the RCP ensured strategic planning and development of high-quality UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. Results were achieved through joint work that primarily sought to support Resident Coordinators (RCs) and United Nations country teams (UNCTs) in strengthening institutional capacities, build a strong evidence-base for policy making, facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Examples include joint policy analysis and advice, inter-agency programmes at subregional and regional levels, capacity building initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and knowledge management systems.
5. The current context offers a set of opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs by focusing on addressing the social, economic, environmental and governance impacts of the war in Ukraine and the long-term impact of the

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=e%2Fres%2F2020%2F23> .

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FRES%2F74%2F297> .

<sup>3</sup> Included in his report A/74/73-E/2019/14.

pandemic. Going forward, the UNDS will continue to support Member States' efforts to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in this context. The UNDS will remain mindful of the 2030 Agenda's "leaving no one behind" principle to ensure that vulnerable groups, which have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and other crises, remain at the centre. The RCP ECA will mobilize efforts to provide integrated and coordinated support to RCs and (UNCTs), prioritizing cross-border, subregional, and regional support.

# 1. Overview of key regional development challenges

6. On top of its severe national impact, the war in Ukraine has significantly impacted the region as a whole. Millions have been displaced and thousands of civilians killed. It is estimated that since the beginning of the war in February 2022, almost one third of the population of Ukraine was forced from their homes.<sup>4</sup> Within the country, there are over 18 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>5</sup> By the end of 2022, over 4.9 million refugees have registered for temporary protection across Europe, with women and children representing 86% of the overall refugee population.<sup>6</sup>
7. The impact of the destruction of strategic, social, and economic infrastructure - affecting access to basic services (water, electricity, health, education etc.) - has also been felt across the region. Neighbouring countries are struggling with the large inflow of refugees, as well as with the economic consequences of the war, particularly on energy, food, trade and supply chains disruptions.<sup>7</sup> In several countries, for example in the Republic of Moldova, refugees as percentage of the population are above 4 percent.<sup>8</sup>
8. The economic consequences of the war have presented governments in the ECA region with uneven challenges. For example, despite the drop anticipated in the early months of the war, large increases in remittances were seen in some countries in 2022, in particular Armenia and Georgia. In Armenia, large inflows of Russian citizens resulted in a four-fold increase in personal money transfers from the Russian Federation. However, vulnerable groups have borne the brunt of the inflationary impact as real wages are unable to keep pace with inflation.<sup>9</sup> This is increasing the risk that poverty will rise without an appropriate response to support vulnerable groups.
9. The war in Ukraine and rising inflation have driven an additional four million children across eastern ECA into poverty, a 19 percent increase since 2021. The

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://data.humdata.org/visualization/ukraine-humanitarian-operations>.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR (2023), Ukraine Situation. Regional Refugee Response Plan January-December 2023.

<sup>7</sup> UN, Global Impact of war in Ukraine on food, energy and finance systems - BRIEF NO.2.

<sup>8</sup> Kiel Institute for the World Economy, The Ukraine Support Tracker: which countries help Ukraine and how? Kiel Working Paper, No. 2218 February 2023.

<sup>9</sup> DESA (2023), World Economic Situation and Prospects: March 2023 Briefing, No. 170.

sharp increase could result in an additional 4,500 children dying before their first birthdays and learning losses could be equivalent to an additional 117,000 children dropping out of school this year alone.<sup>10</sup>

10. The war has caused environmental and climate concerns both in Ukraine as well as beyond its borders, also impacting human lives extensively. The losses in wildlife and flora have been significant with major protected areas and forested areas being ravaged by fire. Ukraine claims that more than 2,000 cases of environmental damage have been recorded since the beginning of the war. Similarly, UNEP's initial scoping report on the environmental impact of the conflict in Ukraine indicates that 812 specific protected areas are under threat. Damage to the water infrastructure not only left millions of people across Ukraine without adequate access to safe water, but also led to contamination and depletion of water resources.<sup>11</sup>
11. Reducing oil and gas exports from the Russian Federation and increasing energy prices could lead to energy insecurity in ECA, potentially also complicating progress on climate change. High energy prices coupled with high fossil fuel dependency are putting Governments in challenging situations. In the short run, investments may shift back into fossil fuel-based energy production, including the use of coal. On the other hand, the war and the rise in energy prices may increase the attractiveness of alternative solutions such as renewables and the significance of energy transition to cheaper, cleaner and more reliable power generation.<sup>12</sup>
12. The economies of the ECA region are being impacted in different ways by the conflict, sometimes in ways that were not anticipated at the outset of the war. The one consistent factor is that rising inflation is eroding real incomes and purchasing power of vulnerable households across the entire region as salaries fail to keep pace. Food and energy price increases have been driving the growth in headline inflation, which reached double digits in many countries. In Moldova, annual inflation reached more than 30 percent in October 2022.<sup>13</sup> The varying impacts are dependent on structural factors and the extent to which the economy is linked to affected markets.
13. Growing challenges to social cohesion are observed across the region. At the same time, the war is affecting women and men in different ways and is exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities well beyond Ukraine.
14. The war in Ukraine continues to create adverse regional economic conditions, building pressures and difficult policy trade-offs for countries, despite continued economic resilience. Many economies are exiting the COVID-19 pandemic with limited fiscal space, but now need to provide support for the increasing cost of

---

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF (2022), The impact of the war in Ukraine and subsequent economic downturn on child poverty in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Regional Brief.

<sup>11</sup> UNEP, The Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Ukraine: A Preliminary Review, 14 October 2022.

<sup>12</sup> IEA, Russia's War on Ukraine Analysing the impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on global energy markets and international energy security.

<sup>13</sup> Reach initiative, Republic of Moldova: The impact of cost-of-living changes on Moldovan and refugee populations, January 2023.

living. Governments have enacted support packages in various forms. Sometimes this has involved making tough funding decisions about how to direct finance and to whom. Despite this, financial sectors and foreign direct investment have shown resilience.

15. The 2023 SDG progress report for the ECE region<sup>14</sup> shows that further acceleration is required halfway to 2030. At the current rate, the region will achieve only 21 out of 169 SDG targets by 2030. This is down from 26 targets assessed as on track last year. For 79 targets, progress must accelerate, up from 64 last year. As in the previous assessment, the current trends need to be reversed for 15 targets. Data availability has improved and in this year's assessment it was possible to cover ten more targets as compared to 2022. However, data are still insufficient for assessing 54 targets.<sup>15</sup>

## **2. Advancing the UN Secretary-General's reforms at the regional level in Europe and Central Asia**

16. Given the challenges the ECA region faced in 2022, the RCP focused on several key priority areas. It conducted joint regional analysis of the impact of the war in Ukraine on countries in the region and identified where the RCP can best add value. The impacts of the war in Ukraine on the region have been a standing item on the agenda of the RCP throughout the year and have been addressed in the work of the IBCs. In line with the framework and the strategic objectives of the RCP, IBCs place an emphasis on data collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the impacts of the war, support to policy development and advocacy among UNCTs and countries in the region, and the convening of multi-stakeholder events to promote common solutions.

17. The RCP continued to work towards establishing a Knowledge Management Hub and a new regional UN collaboration website for Europe and Central Asia was recently launched.<sup>16</sup> The website provides enhanced features for the IBCs and groups to disseminate information, reach out to stakeholders and offer support services. The website will be linked with the MANARA system (part of the knowledge management hub) developed for the Arab States region, once the system is adapted to the requirements of ECA. MANARA will add a number of applications, including a search tool of UN publications and a functionality for institutional profiles, e.g. IBCs. Platforms for improved internal collaboration of IBCs and groups are currently being explored. The RCP took action to enhance

---

<sup>14</sup> The ECE region covers 56 member states, in many of which the UN does not have programmatic activities.

<sup>15</sup> UNECE, Growing Challenges for Sustainable Development: Can the UNECE Region Turn the Tide in 2023?, Geneva, 2023. <https://w3.unece.org/sdg2023>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://uneuropecentralasia.org>.

transparency and results-based management with the annual production of the results report.

18. A consolidation of statistical and data capacities has been achieved. The Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics was established in 2020 to provide support in closing the data gaps in economic, social, demographic and environment statistics and to promote the modernization of statistical production. It provides a mechanism to coordinate such activities, with a specific focus on capacity development. One of its key roles is to provide capacity building support to data management and results monitoring/reporting officers in Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs), and to connect key players to ensure that the UN and key external partners are delivering as one.
19. The UNECE, in collaboration with regional and national partners, will continue to support the countries in the region to improve the production of data on SDGs. All UNECE and RCP partner statistical activities are in support of closing the data gaps in economic, social, demographic and environment statistics and promote the modernization of statistical production. This is achieved through preparing methodological guidance and delivering capacity development activities. The work is managed through a dedicated Steering Group on statistics for SDGs, annual expert meetings on SDGs and capacity workshops. The Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics provides a mechanism to coordinate these activities.
20. Progress is underway to achieve regional efficiencies. A regional Business Operations Strategy (R-BOS) was developed in 2022. Capacity-building support was provided for the implementation of the BOS 2.0 guidance and online tool. In 2022, based on the R-BOS, three areas of work were identified for enhanced collaboration to achieve efficiency gains: Finance, Human Resources and ICT service lines. Along with an expected increase in quality of services offered to UN agencies, the total cost avoidance identified at this stage is USD 220,374. The R-BOS is being reviewed in the first semester of 2023 to increase the areas of collaboration.
21. Issue-based Coalitions worked to ensure support to UNCTs in addressing the priorities of Cooperation Frameworks and in translating global priorities into action at country level. The IBCs in the region that preceded the UNDS reform were systematically reviewed in 2021 to ensure their full alignment with the ambitions of the regional repositioning, to share best practices and provide thought leadership to other regions rolling out similar regional mechanisms. All recommendations of the IBC Review Management Response Plan were implemented.
22. As a result, all IBC Terms of Reference have been revised to include clear accountability lines to the RCP; provisions to ensure that the IBCs do not become operational entities that conduct project design or implementation, and do not undertake resource mobilization activities; provisions to ensure that the support provided by the IBCs is demand- and not supply-driven; and a sunset clause, outlining the conditions under which an IBC can discontinue its activities. Additionally, the IBCs have developed individual Service Offers detailing a menu of support services they can offer to UNCTs, such as policy advice, technical

support in the development of Common Country Analysis (CCA) and Cooperation Frameworks, and system-wide knowledge management and information sharing, among others. These Service Offers have also been shared with the RCP Secretariats in other regions in the spirit of cross-regional experience sharing and mutual learning.

23. Based on the direction set through the IBC review and the creation of additional IBCs on priority issues (Environment and Climate Change; Sustainable Food Systems), IBCs have been engaging in ever closer exchanges and coordination with RCs and UNCTs on support needs and priorities on the ground and the best ways to respond to them, intermediated by the DCO regional office. A To better match the policy support offered by the regional level with the demands at the country level, a standard process was established whereby the RCP Secretariat runs an annual survey to collect the RCP support needs expressed by the UN Country Teams and RCOs. Together with this survey, updated IBC Menus of Services are re-circulated every year to ensure UNCTs are fully aware of their support offers. The results of this survey represent the basis for the annual work plan of the IBCs and of the RCP overall.
24. Steps have been taken to map and access relevant expertise. The mapping of the UN system-wide expertise around the most relevant development priorities for ECA had organically started to unfold in the region since the establishment of the first regional IBCs as early as 2015. Throughout the past seven years, the IBCs have gradually transitioned into genuine communities of practice providing agile and demand driven support to UNCTs. With the IBC review finalized and the management response plan completed, the IBCs will continue to grow into more mature communities of practice providing access to expertise for the country level.

### **3. Highlights of system-wide results at the regional level**

25. Against the backdrop of development challenges and trends in the region, the regional UN system has focused its joint action on substantive, technical and operational support on cross-cutting issues and key bottlenecks as well as on continuing to harness opportunities for overcoming the consequences of the war in Ukraine and continued sustainable COVID-19 recovery.
26. The RCP, and its inter-agency mechanisms, have continued in 2022, to provide support to the UNCTs and the Resident Coordinator System in ECA on policy coherence, advocacy, technical advice in the development of the Cooperation Frameworks, as well as knowledge management and knowledge sharing. The thematic coverage has included health and well-being; gender equality; youth and adolescents; social protection; large movements of people, displacement and resilience; environment and climate change; digitalization; sustainable food systems; and data and statistics. The survey administered by the RCP ECA provides good indication on the support that can be offered to the specific UNCTs

in the ECA countries, which will constitute an important component of the work plans of IBCs.

27. The collective activities and products in the thematic areas are geared towards all Member States in the region, regardless of their level of development, and taking into account varying priorities. Below are selected flagship results of the IBCs, other inter-agency groups and joint initiatives of UN entities in the region in 2022, in response to the regional challenges and in support of the work of UNCTs on the sustainable development priorities identified.

### 3.1 Health and well-being

28. The Issue-based Coalition on Health and Well-being provides tailor-made country specific support to address health-related challenges across sectors, assists in Cooperation Frameworks and CCAs, engages with UNCTs, and supports the implementation of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All. Under the IBC-Health, the key focus workstreams for 2022 included: i) WHO-UN-Red Cross Movement Emergency Coordination Platform; ii) Building a healthier and greener world (encompasses one health); iii) Joint Programme on Ageing (JPA)
29. The WHO-UN-Red Cross Movement Emergency Coordination Platform works closely with official regional representatives and focal points, improving responses through enhanced inclusive collaboration amongst partners, the sharing of programmes and core documents for consideration and use, and discussions on complementarity of mandates. Meetings hosted on the platform pertained to the Ukraine crisis, including general updates on the sub-region, the Refugee Health Extension (RHE), health information and data exchange in the field, the role played by emergency medical teams and mobile medical teams in service delivery in Ukraine and preparedness to radiological and nuclear emergencies, and winterization efforts in the sub-region, including the provision of thermal equipment and warm clothing.
30. The workstream on 'building a healthier and greener world' reports on the regional One Health Coordination mechanism (the quadripartite partnerships for One Health<sup>17</sup>). Responding to calls from RCs and UNCTs on the need to raise their awareness and knowledge about the One Health approach and to ensure RCs deliver consistent and evidence-based messages on One Health interventions to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR), zoonotic parasites/diseases and food safety issues, the IBC-Health delivered two webinars during 2022 to enhance UNCTs' and RCs' awareness and familiarity of the One Health approach to address health threats originating in the animal, human and environment interface and how one health can be operationalized at the country level. The IBC further developed guidelines for UNCTs and RCs on key one health messages for key target groups on one health interventions to address Food Safety issues.
31. The Joint Programme on Ageing (JPA) provides coordinated support to RCs and UNCTs in their leadership and engagement with national partners to collectively

---

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.who.int/news/item/27-03-2023-quadripartite-call-to-action-for-one-health-for-a-safer-world>.



step-up action for older persons to preserve their rights and dignity. The JPA prepared and published a Joint Statement on the situation of Older Persons in Ukraine in June 2022, which was signed by the OHCHR, UNFPA, WHO and HelpAge International. In June 2022, JPA organized a side event on the Decade of healthy Ageing at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Rome.

32. The IBC on health developed a guidance note on supporting mainstreaming and elevating health and well-being in the Cooperation Frameworks. This guidance note is a tool that can support RCs, UN agencies and development partners that have a role and an interest in health, development, and humanitarian support to support mainstreaming and elevating health and well-being into the Cooperation Framework process. It details evidence, explains the reasons why we should prioritize and invest in health and well-being, and outlines what the specific health priorities are and how partners can collaborate better.

### 3.2 Environment and Climate change

33. The Issue-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change provides a platform for UN agencies to promote coordinated support to all member States in the region in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to support the region's UNCTs on environmental and climate change issues. The Coalition addresses activities dedicated to strengthening environmental and climate change governance, improving environmental management and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and promoting sustainable management of natural resources.
34. Following the publication of the Guidance on Mainstreaming Environment and Climate in 2021, the IBC on Environment and Climate Change used this guidance to build the capacity of 120 UNCT members, RCs and RCO staff members in the region through three sub-regional online training workshops. The trainings equipped RCOs and UNCTs with a set of approaches and tools for mainstreaming environment and climate change, including identifying synergies using matrix analysis, undertaking multidimensional risk analysis when developing the CCA, and the identification of indicators for tracking progress on key environment and climate change issues as part of results frameworks and monitoring and evaluation. The trainings resulted in increased knowledge and experience sharing among RCOs and UNCTs on the development of results frameworks and identification of environment and climate change indicators for monitoring and evaluation of mainstreaming in Cooperation Frameworks.
35. Green transition is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and directly contributes to the achievement of most SDG targets. Increasing the UNCTs' capacity in green transition is key to supporting countries' in turning the fossil-fuel dependent economy to a green economy and in support of increasing UNCT readiness to support countries. The IBC on Environment and Climate Change developed and delivered a Green Transition Training Programme dedicated to RCOs and UNCTs. The training further built capacities to design strategies and action plans for green transition. The content was based on the expertise and resources among the IBC members. The work was led by UNDP, UNECE, UNEP and UNESCO and facilitated by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), with contributions from the other IBC organizations and external experts. Over 250

participants benefited from dedicated webinars across five main themes identified through various consultations with RCOs and UNCTs: (1) Sustainable Finance; (2) Energy; (3) Circular Economy; (4) Plastics; and (5) Enabling policies and strategic frameworks for Green Transition at the country level. In addition, theme-specific guidance notes were produced and are available on the RCP website,<sup>18</sup> together with the recording of the webinars.<sup>19</sup>

36. During the preparatory phase it was acknowledged that green transition is a broad topic that requires a variety of expertise from different organizations. The IBC co-chairs created a new task team to map available capacity among the member organizations and requested all IBC members' support for selected topics. Pooling of resources and in-kind contributions from IBC members made it possible to produce training content which included the introduction of the latest concepts, policies, guidance and other tools that the UN can offer. A follow-up activity on just transition is anticipated.
37. The IBC Environment and Climate Change supported the development of key messages on the importance of continued focus on climate action in support of UNCT engagement with Governments. The request-based document looks at why climate change must continue to be a leading focus of communications between UNCTs and Governments in the ECA region, combined with recommendations for action, including a comprehensive set of policy actions that might be taken across sectors and within key sectors. The policy actions include transboundary, cross-border and finance considerations. Transboundary and finance issues are also addressed in the key messages on mitigation and adaptation.

### 3.3 Large movements of people, displacement and resilience

38. The Issue-based Coalition on Large movements of people, displacement and resilience (LMPDR) has the overarching objective to support UNCTs on issues at national and regional levels. It served as a platform to exchange key advocacy messages related to large displacement of refugees and migrants for use during high-level events, as well as to feed into public policy and legislative dialogues. By also assuming the functions of a regional UN Migration Network (UNMN), the IBC also aims to facilitate effective UN system-wide support to Member States in their implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). In addition, the IBC worked to complement efforts towards the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.
39. Most relevant to the IBC LMPDR was the impact of the war in Ukraine in terms of refugee outflows and internal displacement, as well as economic dimensions, such as remittances, the impact of sanctions, the impact on fuel/energy prices, etc. In addition, COVID-19, while less widespread than in previous years, continued to impact the region, with particular consequences for refugees and migrants. The advocacy messages and recommendations that came out of the events and joint advocacy briefs provided UNCTs and RC Offices with common messaging and positioning on issues of cross-cutting and regional importance.

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://uneuropecentralasia.org/en/knowledge-and-expertise>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://uneuropecentralasia.org/en/ibc-environmental-coalition>.

40. The IBC LMPDR collaborated with the IBC on Gender Equality to produce a Joint Advocacy Brief on the impacts of COVID-19 on refugee and migrant women and girls and the importance of including their specific needs and rights in COVID-19 recovery plans. The IBCs called for inclusive, human rights-based and gender-responsive policies and programmes, to uphold the rights of refugees and migrants of all regardless of gender, age, and socio-economic status, including those living with disabilities, to advance the rights of all persons irrespective of their refugee or migration status, and to release their full potential as agents of positive change.<sup>20</sup>
41. In March 2022, the IBC LMPDR also co-organized with the IBC on Gender Equality a side event on the margins of the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development aimed at relevant UNCTs to discuss the evolving needs and evidence related to Ukrainians fleeing from their homes; formulate recommendations for ensuing a gender-sensitive refugee response tailored to the specific needs of women and children – immediate and short-term actions; and to identify ways to support the immediate needs of women and girls, including the most vulnerable groups by women's organizations on the ground and other stakeholders. The key recommendations and take-aways from this discussion focused on the following dimensions, among others: a) need for more advocacy as a joined-up UN system on ensuring the humanitarian corridors and that humanitarian assistance reaches those who need it most; b) the production of data and having analysis through an intersectional lens by focusing on disaggregation of data to the greatest extent possible; c) the need for financing and resources to reach grassroots CSOs on the ground both in Ukraine or in neighbouring countries. Finally, the importance of working in a much more joined up and meaningful way including through the work as issue-based coalitions, through advocacy work and through programming support to countries was stressed.
42. As Regional Network and under the umbrella of the IBC on human mobility, IOM and UNDP led on delivering training to four UNCTs (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine) in the region on strengthening the UN system to implement the GCM, with contributions from UNHCR and other agencies. The GCM was reflected in the respective Cooperation Frameworks of these four countries.
43. In the lead up the first global review of the GCM, the International Migration Review Forum, the IBC LMPDR – also in its capacity as UNNM – has been sending bi-weekly updates on the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to all its members, including country networks, and ensuring all resources and requests for inputs or support were well received by the country networks. This resulted in good contributions as well as participation by agencies to the International Migration Review Forum.

---

<sup>20</sup> <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03/joint-advocacy-brief-on-the-impacts-of-covid-19-on-refugee-and-migrant-women-and-girls-and-the-importance-of-including-their-specific-needs-and-rights-in-covid-19-recovery-plans>.

44. Functioning also as the Regional UN Network on Migration, members of this IBC and Regional Network made suggestions on non-state actors' participation at the first Global Review of the GCM, namely the IMRF. In the lead up to the IMRF, the IBC invited members to contribute to an IMRF preparatory meeting, at which the International Organization of Employers (Private Sector) and the Platform for International Cooperation for Undocumented Migrations (NGO) presented to the 56 UNECE member States on GCM-related challenges, opportunities and activities.
45. At the end of 2022, the IBC LMPDR combined their efforts with other actors to bring together available data, analyse the policy response so far and formulate jointly policy recommendations for national and local public authorities, donors, UN agencies and other humanitarian and development partners to better respond to the Ukraine crisis, by taking into consideration the entire spectrum of possible impacts on people on the move, their families and communities of origin, in transit and host countries. These efforts will be transposed into a joint regional UNDP, UNHCR and IOM study on the socio-economic impact of the Ukraine crisis on host communities and emerging migration and displacement patterns.

### 3.4 Social Protection

46. The Issue-based Coalition on Social Protection serves as a platform for exchange of information, advocacy, and policy advice as well as for building and strengthening partnerships in relation to social protection. The IBC provides support to UNCTs to accelerate progress towards the SDGs that relate to social protection. Most ECA countries face similar challenges, and each have tried different approaches and are at different stages of reforms. This creates a unique opportunity for exchange and peer learning between development agencies to enhance the support they are providing to national stakeholders.
47. To facilitate such exchange and share the latest relevant evidence and practices in the field, a webinar series was organized by the IBC on Social Protection and the World Bank, facilitated by UNICEF. The webinar developed common understandings of the key elements of the Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD) shift of paradigm implication for social protection; built a common overview of the state of play of reforms towards inclusive social protection system in ECA; facilitated exchange between UN and World Bank teams on key challenges and promising practices; and identified further joint learning and cooperation opportunities.
48. The webinar series featured country case studies selected from a multi-agency survey of examples across ECA of effective support to disability-inclusive social protection. In particular, examples showcased in 2022 focused on reforms to disability assessment and determination and support for children with disabilities. Countries profiled in the case studies including Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, Portugal, and Romania. The main outcome of the webinars is a shared understanding of the challenge and of the very few case studies that demonstrate progress.
49. This webinar series, which will continue in 2023, is intended to build a common narrative and understanding of the issues that limit universal and effective

coverage of people with disabilities in social protection systems in the region and increase the capacity of UNCTs to engage effectively with each other and with governments on a comprehensive reform of social protection systems to better meet the needs of people with disabilities. This is an area where the ECA region plays a leading role, as it has the highest levels of coverage of pre-existing social protection benefits for people with disabilities. Yet, significant gaps in adequacy, coverage, and quality, as well as legal and policy structures, remain.

### 3.5 Sustainable Food Systems

50. To realize the SDGs, the global food system needs to be reshaped to be more productive, more inclusive of poor and marginalized populations, environmentally and economically sustainable and resilient, and able to deliver safe, healthy, and nutritious food to all. The IBC on Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) addresses these complex and systemic challenges that require the combination of interconnected actions at the local, national, regional, and global levels.
51. The initiative of the Food Systems Talks was launched in 2021 by the IBC-SFS in the context of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), as an opportunity to increase awareness in the ECA region on how food systems are interlinked in all three dimensions of sustainability, and why a food systems transformation is necessary to achieve healthy people and a healthy planet. The series of Food Systems Talks is an advocacy initiative that allows the IBC-SFS to reach a wide audience, both within the region and outside, and to raise awareness on the importance of the urgent food system transformation for the delivery of the 2030 agenda. Different key regional priorities were discussed with distinguished guests and experts from the field providing a regional and/or country-level perspective and elevating the discourse at the global level.
52. In March 2022, the IBC-SFS initiated a series of talks on “Environmental sustainability to transform agri-food systems”<sup>21</sup>, followed by a November talk on “Rural women and girls in sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems”<sup>22</sup> co-organized with the IBC on Gender Equality (IBC-GE). These sessions, part of the follow-up to the UNFSS, exemplified the commitment to sustain dialogues on various aspects of sustainable food systems, showcasing successful initiatives and facilitating an integrated, multistakeholder approach. The talks aimed to address the complexities and interconnections in food systems transformation, especially in the ECA region, by identifying entry points for addressing trade-offs and creating synergies. The success of these events, particularly the cross-IBC collaboration seen in the talk co-produced with the IBC-GE, has led to the IBC-SFS receiving proposals for co-organizing additional talks in 2023 with a focus on research, academia, and finance. These efforts are crucial in enhancing multi-agency and sectoral collaboration, with plans to organize three more talks in 2023, further advancing long-term progress in sustainable food systems.
53. In order to inform shifting country priorities in light of the war in Ukraine, a webinar was organized together with the think tank Chatham House on food systems in ECA in July 2022. It provided an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning between

---

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPBNscsn7yk>.

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eMSZPdVY\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eMSZPdVY_E).

UNCTs and for sharing perspectives and key resources from the IBC-SFS Members. In addition, all available regional UN resources were summarized in a Digital Repository of key UN agencies' messages, evidence, data analysis, tools and policy recommendations. Based on the outcomes of the webinar and other similar discussions and country experiences, a brief information note was prepared highlighting the most significant changes in food systems being observed due to the war in Ukraine, combined with the pandemic and climate change entitled "Reforming the resilience of sustainable food systems" (to be published).

### 3.6 Gender Equality

54. The main goal of the Issue-based Coalition on Gender Equality (IBC-GE) is to ensure a coordinated UN system approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in ECA. It aims to strengthen regional engagement to promote gender equality, provide more coherent and timely programming, policy guidance and technical support, and improve coordination, communication as well as information sharing on key lessons and good practices. The IBC ensured collaboration through the pooled expertise of 14 UN entities at the regional and country level, as well as the Regional Gender Task Force comprised of more than 70 members from nearly 40 organizations including UN agencies, international NGOs and CSO networks. IBC-GE developed and enhanced its Menu of Services in a demand-driven manner through consultation with the Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) and Gender Results Groups (GRG) as the sister structures of the IBC-GE at the country level to respond to UNCT needs and priorities.
55. To facilitate improved knowledge sharing between UN mechanisms focused on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment at the regional and country-level, the Regional IBC-GE organized a virtual experience exchange session with 18 GTGs/GRGs from across the ECA region. The session aimed to facilitate the exchange of good practices (with presentations by Albania, Kosovo<sup>23</sup>, Montenegro and Serbia GTGs) and to solicit feedback on the usefulness and application of the revised GTG Standards and Procedures endorsed by the UN Sustainable Development Group. During the discussion, GTGs identified further areas of support required, identified areas of collaboration with the IBC-GE and recommended to continue holding GTG experience exchange sessions on a regular basis in 2023.
56. In line with the demand from ECA GTG/GRGs during the annual retreat, IBC-GE organized an 'exchange of experience' meeting during which 18 GTG/GRG chairs, co-chairs and members together with IBC-GE members discussed the needs and challenges of GTGs/GRGs in addition to sharing best practices from across the region. At the end of the meeting, GTGs/GRGs increased their commitment to implement the new GTG Standards and Procedures within their respective country context. Moreover, documentation of the meeting fed into the UNCT SWAP Gender Scorecard Guidance update as well as structuring the sub-regional trainings for GTGs for the next work plan.

---

<sup>23</sup> In line with UN Security Council resolution 1244.

57. The IBC-GE significantly contributed to accelerating UN system wide progress towards gender equality across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus with the support of IBC-GE. There is increased awareness about the needs and priorities of refugee women and girls fleeing the war in Ukraine as a result of the establishment of a stand-alone gender mechanism (Regional Gender Task Force) under the UNHCR-led regional refugee response and availability of gender analysis and expertise. The needs of women and girls were discussed and prioritized in March 2022 during a targeted discussion that the regional UN system initiated and led by UN Women in collaboration with the regional Issue-based Coalition on Large Movements of People, Displacement and Resilience (IBC- LMPDR) chaired by IOM, UNDP and UNHCR.

### 3.7 Adolescents and Youth

58. The Issue-based Coalition on Adolescents and Youth (IBC-AY) seeks to deliver on specific adolescent and youth policy results in collaboration with civil society, including youth-led and youth-serving organizations, governments, and other key actors by fostering synergies and pooling resources across UN agencies. The IBC further supported the participation of young people in the 2022 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

59. As part of the assessment of progress on Comprehensive Sexuality Education in five countries (Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), the IBC on AY conducted a Sexuality Education Assessment and Review of the UN International Technical Guidance On Sexuality Education using a standardized tool. The assessments were discussed among the five countries (with the participation of young people, governments, civil society and UN participants), and action plans were developed.

### 3.8 Achieving efficiencies

60. The Regional Operations Management Team (R-OMT) was active throughout the year. The co-chairs of the R-OMT are UNDP and UNWOMEN with DCO providing a secretariat function. One of the most significant achievements by the R-OMT was the development of the Regional Business Operations Strategy (R-BOS).

61. Another result of the ROMT related to Common Premises (CP) with the ECA region being among the first to collect and quality-assure Common Premises-related data from 18 UNCTs. Based on the results of data collected and a series of bilateral country engagements, Ankara in Türkiye was selected to undergo CP consolidation stage next year.

62. The R-OMT chairs along with DCO and WHO are engaged in supporting a government-led project on developing CP needs for Istanbul-based agencies. For that purpose, a dedicated working group under the overall leadership of the UN RC Türkiye is being set up to ensure effective UN coordination and single-channelled communication with the Government of Türkiye on the matter.

### 3.9 Contributing to regional intergovernmental processes

63. The regional UN system collaborated in the organization of the 2022 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region, which culminated in hybrid plenary sessions in Geneva on 6 and 7 April, focused on achieving a sustainable COVID-19 recovery while fully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
64. Several IBCs and about 15 regional UN entities were engaged as lead organizers of and contributors to eight peer learning sessions, which enabled an exchange on concrete policy actions by governments and other stakeholders related to the SDGs under in-depth review (SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17).

### 3.10 Peer Support Group

65. The inter-agency regional Peer Support Group (PSG) provided tailored support to UNCTs in the region on UN programming through technical support, capacity development and quality assurance of the Cooperation Frameworks and its related documents.
66. In 2022, the PSG completed quality assurance reviews for the design of Cooperation Frameworks in five countries in the region, namely Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Tajikistan, and Ukraine (for the latter the Transitional Framework was reviewed). All RCOs discussed their country context and Frameworks with the PSG ahead of the quality review thus enabling more specific and relevant contributions by the PSG.
67. Management responses showed that PSG inputs were valuable and contributed to strengthened Cooperation Frameworks through improved SDG sections, more evidence with data and visualizations to back up the priorities and more inclusive consultation processes with key stakeholders (e.g., people with disability, private sector, and young people from minority groups). A global desk review confirmed that products from the region continue to be of high quality.
68. Based on a request from the UNCT, the PSG also supported the quality review of the updated CCA from Tajikistan. The PSG also delivered a training on quality indicators to the UNCT in Moldova. In a post-training survey participants reported an increased confidence in their ability to formulate quality indicators.
69. To enhance understanding of the implementation and alignment of the Cooperation Frameworks, the PSG reviewed six Joint Work Plans (JWP), looking at both the design process and the substantive quality. The aim was to understand different approaches and processes used to develop the JWPs and identify challenges and good practices. The review was comprehensive, consisting of surveys, desk reviews and focus group discussions with UNCTs. Initial findings have been shared with the respective UNCTs to support their annual JWP updates.
70. ECA PSG members participated in a cross-regional exchange with the PSG in Latin America and the Caribbean during their regional retreat. This served as an



incentive for scaling up PSG cross-regional collaboration and exchanges, which is reflected in the PSG work plan for 2023.

### 3.11 Digital Transformation

71. The UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia (UNDTG4ECA) seeks to deliver a one “UN response” to the cross-cutting priority of fostering digital transformation and ICTs development in the ECA region, through the adoption of a multi-agency and multi-stakeholder approach and the implementation of initiatives and projects to achieve remarkable advancements in the digital sector.
72. In 2022, the Group elaborated the “UN Digital Development Toolbox: Guidelines, frameworks and tools supporting the UN System delivery on digital in Europe and Central Asia” (launched in 2023). There is increasing demand from the UN system on the ground to deliver as one UN on digital development. In addition, there is often a lack of knowledge on the breadth of UN materials available to support UNCTs in implementing initiatives advancing digital and ICT development. This report answers this gap and allows for more cohesive collaborative support to the UNCTs, inter alia, supporting harmonization of approaches across the countries of the region.
73. This living document aims to provide a reference to the UNCTs and RCs in the region of available UN system frameworks, guidelines, capacity-building tools, toolkits, and other measurement tools that may be utilized for ICT and digital development-related initiatives in the context of the Cooperation Framework. It further aims at raising awareness of existing materials in an effort to undertake a concerted approach to inclusive and sustainable digital development. The main beneficiary is the UN system in Europe and Central Asia. The information contained in this document is non-exhaustive and only draws on the flagship resources of the following participating agencies: FAO, ITU, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UN Women, UNWTO, WHO, and WMO.<sup>24</sup> The main beneficiaries of the toolbox are the UNCTs in ECA.
74. The Digital Transformation Group held two sessions in the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) for the UNECE region, which also contributed to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2022. The side event ‘Cross-cutting session: digital transformation beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic’ and the High-level peer-learning roundtable ‘Accelerating digital development through multistakeholder partnerships’. The two events held within the RFSD and WSIS allowed to gather numerous experts in the ECA region to review the advancements made on SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15, and 17, under review in 2022. It provided a platform to discuss development trends, challenges and opportunities in the ECA region. Policy actions were presented by: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, CITES, EBRD, European Center for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, European Commission, EDF, Generation Connect Europe and CIS Youth Groups, IDF, Union of Operators of Armenia.

---

<sup>24</sup> For the latest version see “Quick Links” here: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Projects/UNAffairs/2022/DTG4ECA.aspx>.

## 4. Way forward

75. The ECA region is facing challenges but also opportunities for member States to build on past progress toward achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda, and to continue the implementation of the SDGs. Now in its third year, the RCP ECA is providing regional support to RCs and UNCTs and assisting member States to address the socioeconomic consequences of the war in Ukraine as well as the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as tackling longstanding structural inequalities.
76. The RCP ECA has functioned effectively through the comprehensive work of the IBCs, thematic working groups, and operational groups. In 2023, the IBCs and thematic working groups will enhance their efforts to provide the necessary support to RCs and UNCTs by offering a number of services focused on institutional capacity development, comparative policy analysis and integrated policy advice, joint advocacy and communication, and support to inter-governmental processes, to go towards mitigating the consequences of the war in Ukraine and continuing the long term recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while accelerating the implementation of the SDGs. The RCP ECA will promote the development of subregional strategies, facilitate joint actions, and foster regional coherence in overcoming these shared challenges.
77. In 2023, the RCP ECA will prioritize the provision of assistance to RCs and UNCTs to support member States in implementing policy and programming actions that support a sustainable response to the consequences of the war in Ukraine and a sustainable recovery from COVID-19 as well as longer-term development. This includes support to strengthening health systems, fostering the development of sustainable social protection systems, and reducing educational inequities. Central to these efforts will be to target the weaknesses of current economic models around connectivity, energy use and food systems. As the consequences of the war and the continued impact of the pandemic have had a disproportionate impact on certain groups, the RCP ECA sees an opportunity to systematize regional, subregional, and national support to these populations.
78. The RCP ECA will continue to be at the forefront of delivering high-quality policy advice that supports governments in their recovery efforts and lays the ground for the transition to an equitable and sustainable economic model. The RCP ECA will support regional efforts to assess collective progress towards the long-term climate goal, including by following up on the outcomes of COP27 in Egypt and its implications for the region.