



UNITED
NATIONS
AFGHANISTAN

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Results Report
2024



Contents

P4

P6

P7

P8

P12

P62

P65

Foreword

UN Country
Team

Key
Development
Partners

Chapter I
Key
Developments
in Afghanistan

Chapter II
UN support
to people in
Afghanistan
through the
UN Strategic
Framework

Chapter III
Into the future -
UNCT key focus
for next year

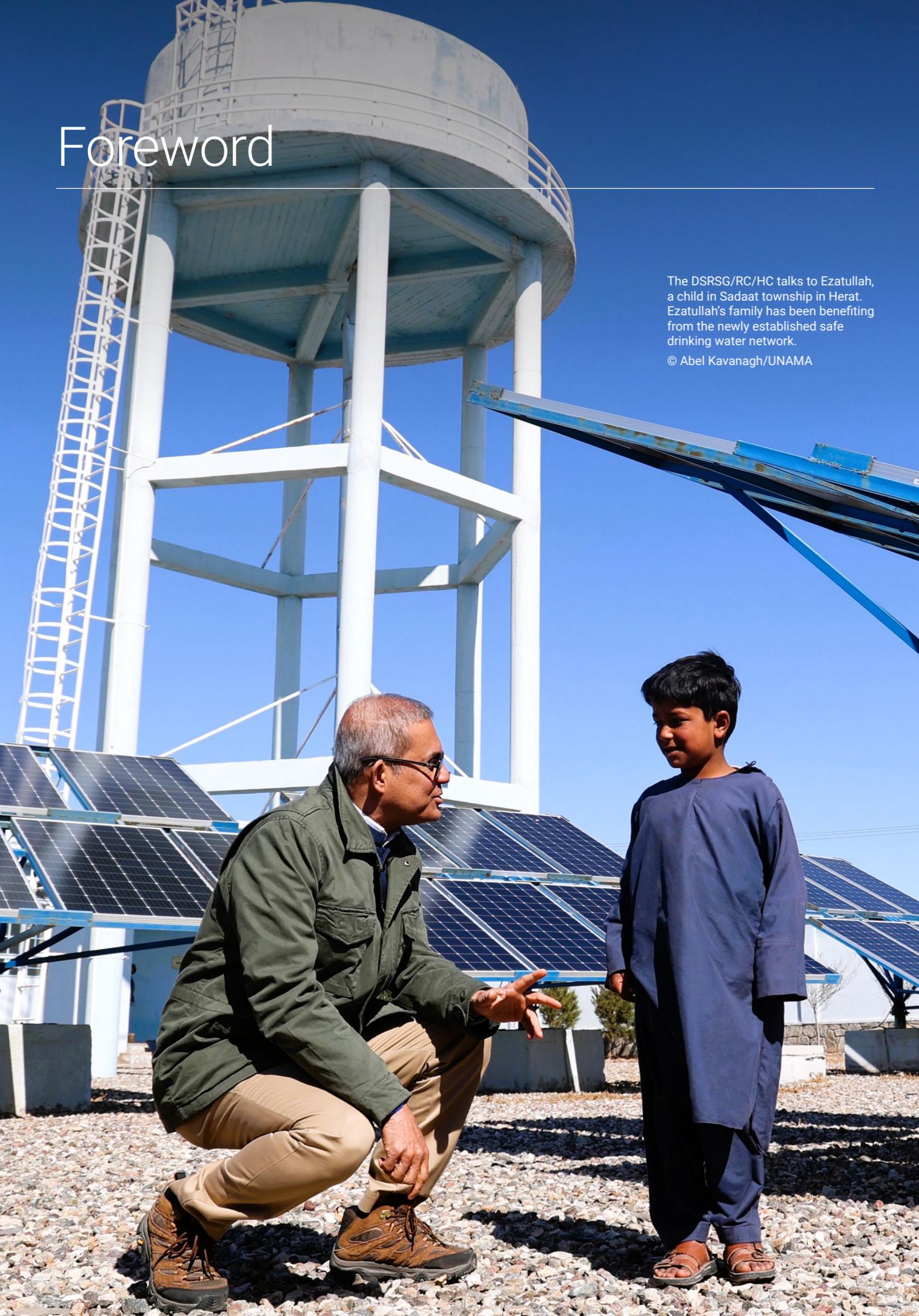
Annexes

Asia and her nephew
Mohammad enjoy access to clean
water, whenever they need it.

©UNICEF Afghanistan/2024/
Osman Khayam



Foreword



Results Report 2024

Looking back at the past three years, the trajectory of assistance to Afghanistan highlights the immense adaptability and unwavering commitment of aid partners towards the Afghan people. Despite complex challenges, our collective efforts—supported by generous donor contributions and the steadfast engagement of International Financial Institutions (IFIs)—have remained focused on addressing urgent needs while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience and stability. In 2022, aid partners mobilized over US\$3 billion in humanitarian assistance to stabilize the country and meet critical needs. The adoption of the United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA) in 2023 marked a pivotal shift towards a more strategic approach, enabling a gradual transition from emergency relief to sustainable solutions that address the root causes of vulnerability.

Building on this foundation, in 2024, we championed a joined-up approach among UN agencies, funds, and programmes (AFPs) and our partners. This integrated coordination model strengthens the linkages between humanitarian assistance, basic human needs, and peace efforts. By enhancing operational coordination and advancing strategic initiatives, we have sought to complement political engagement efforts, including the Doha Process. As part of this endeavour, we expanded targeted consultations with donor partners, IFIs, relevant de facto authorities (DFA), civil society, the private sector—including women-led Micro-, Small, and Medium-Enterprises (MSMEs)—and think tanks.

Our strategic direction aligns with the recommendations of the Special Coordinator's Independent Assessment, UN Security Council Resolution 2721, the Afghanistan Coordination Group (ACG) Framework, the UNSFA, and the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP). These guiding frameworks reinforce our commitment to a principled, needs-based, and sustainable approach to assistance. Our interventions not only address immediate humanitarian and basic human needs but also complement the ongoing Doha Process by fostering dialogue, stability, and mutual understanding.

In 2024, I visited 13 provinces to build trust, assess ground realities, and engage directly with communities, key stakeholders, and the DFA. These visits have been instrumental in shaping our interventions and ensuring that our work remains informed by the needs and aspirations of the Afghan people.

Stories like Meryem, a female entrepreneur who returned from Pakistan to establish a successful clothing business in Kabul; Sumaya the young girl in Herat, determined to continue her education while scaling up her tailoring company with a grant; and community elders championing literacy classes for women showcase the tangible impact of our collective efforts. Similarly, flood protection walls funded through the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan have safeguarded lives and livelihoods, underscoring the importance of sustained investment in resilience-building measures.

None of these achievements would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of donor partners and the critical support of IFIs. Their unwavering commitment has enabled us to implement impactful programmes that not only meet immediate needs but also foster long-term economic stability and social resilience.

As we look ahead, I invite all partners to reaffirm our shared commitment to sustaining the minimum investment necessary to strengthen the resilience of Afghans. By continuing our collaboration, we can help ensure that Afghanistan remains on a path towards stability, dignity, and self-reliance for all its people.

Indrika Ratwatte
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General,
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
(DSRSG/RC/HC)

United Nations Country Team

Resident United Nations agencies, funds, and programmes

 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	 International Labour Organization	 International Organization for Migration	 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
 United Nations HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan	 United Nations Trade and Development	 United Nations Development Programme
 United Nations Department of Safety and Security	 unesco United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	 United Nations Population Fund	 United Nations Human Settlements Programme
 UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency United Nations Refugee Agency	 unicef for every child United Nations Children's Fund	 UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION United Nations Industrial Development Organization	
 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	 UNMAS United Nations Mine Action Service	 UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services	 UN VOLUNTEERS United Nations Volunteers
 UN WOMEN United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	 World Food Programme World Food Programme	 World Health Organization World Health Organization	

Non-resident United Nations agencies, funds, and programmes

 IFAD Investing in rural people International Fund for Agricultural Development	 International Trade Centre International Trade Centre	 UNAIDS The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS	 unitar United Nations Institute for Training and Research
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Afghanistan coordination group partners

 Australia	 Italy	 Sweden
 Canada	 Japan	 Switzerland
 Czechia	 South Korea	 Turkiye
 Denmark	 Luxembourg	 United Kingdom
 Finland	 Netherlands	 United States of America
 France	 Norway	 European Union
 Germany	 Qatar	
 The World Bank	 Asian Development Bank	 Islamic Development Bank
		 International Monetary Fund
		 Aga Khan Development Network

Other development partners

 Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development	 Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance	 Global Child Nutrition Fund	 Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
	 BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation Bill & Melinda Gate Foundation	 GPE Transforming Education Global Partnership for Education	

Chapter I



Two-year-old Rojia and her grandfather look out over the steep-sided Kamdesh valley at a UNICEF-supported health post in Samarbagh village, Nuristan province, Afghanistan.

© UNICEF/UNI646030/Karimi

Key developments in Afghanistan

Now in its year in power, the DFA have consolidated their rule across Afghanistan, asserting greater control over political and administrative structures and focussing efforts to enhance regional engagement and connectivity with neighbouring countries.

However, tensions persist, particularly in the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan, where clashes between the Government of Pakistan and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) fighters continue to cause casualties and displacement. The threat posed by the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISIL-K) remains significant, as evidenced by the December 2024 suicide attack that killed de facto minister Khalil Haqqani in his ministry in Kabul.

The DFA have further tightened societal controls through a series of measures, including the dissolution of the community development councils (CDCs) in May, the adoption of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) law in July, and a directive in December barring women from attending medical and semi-professional institutes. These measures have significantly curtailed women's rights and further constrained the operational space for humanitarian and basic human needs actors.

Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan remain alarmingly high, with over 50 per cent of the population—approximately 23.7 million people, including 12.3 million children—requiring humanitarian assistance in 2024. This represents the third highest number of



23.7 million people
including 12.3 million children—
requiring humanitarian assistance in 2024

people in need globally. Half of the population lives in poverty, and nearly one-third—almost 15 million people—are experiencing acute levels of food insecurity. Since 15 September 2023, nearly 900,000 Afghans have returned from Pakistan, with almost 80 per cent being women and children, many of whom require immediate humanitarian assistance and longer-term reintegration support.

While the economy has shown modest growth of 2.7 per cent from 2023 to 2024, this growth is primarily driven by private consumption and remains fragile—far from a full recovery. The economy continues to lack robust internal growth engines: consumer spending is constrained by high unemployment, particularly among Afghan youth; private investment is hampered by a struggling financial sector, an unstable legal environment, and the high risks associated with doing business; and export-led growth potential is limited by weakened external demand and an appreciating domestic currency. **The ban on female education beyond the primary level further exacerbates existing challenges, restricting the pool of educated women in the workforce and potentially jeopardizing the continuation of international assistance aimed at benefiting the Afghan people.** Additionally, there are limited fiscal and monetary policy tools available to stimulate economic activity, further compounding the economic constraints.



"The ban on female education beyond the primary level further exacerbates existing challenges, restricting the pool of educated women in the workforce and potentially jeopardizing the continuation of international assistance aimed at benefiting the Afghan people."

Despite the deteriorating operational environment and the high level of need, 2024 marked the first full year of implementation of the UNSFA, with funding to basic human needs aid increasing to US\$1.59 billion. Launched in July 2023, the UNSFA aimed to scale up basic human needs programming and strengthen a joined-up approach to enhance collaboration and complementarity across UN agencies, funds, and programmes and partners. Efforts were also made to improve coordination along the humanitarian-basic human needs nexus.

In line with the increase in programming, the UN scaled up its principled and strategic engagement with the DFA to also extend to basic human needs. In May, for the first time, the High-Level Coordination Forum between the DFA and the UN discussed both humanitarian

and basic human needs programming, highlighting the continued importance of both aid modalities in Afghanistan. Co-chaired by the DSRSG/RC/HC and the de facto Minister of Foreign Affairs, the forum was attended by UN agencies, partners—including female colleagues—and de facto line ministries. The forum identified nine priority areas for closer coordination and information-sharing, demonstrating alignment between the DFA's national development priorities and the UNSFA, as well as the key transitions that can have catalytic and multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as food systems, education, climate change, and jobs.

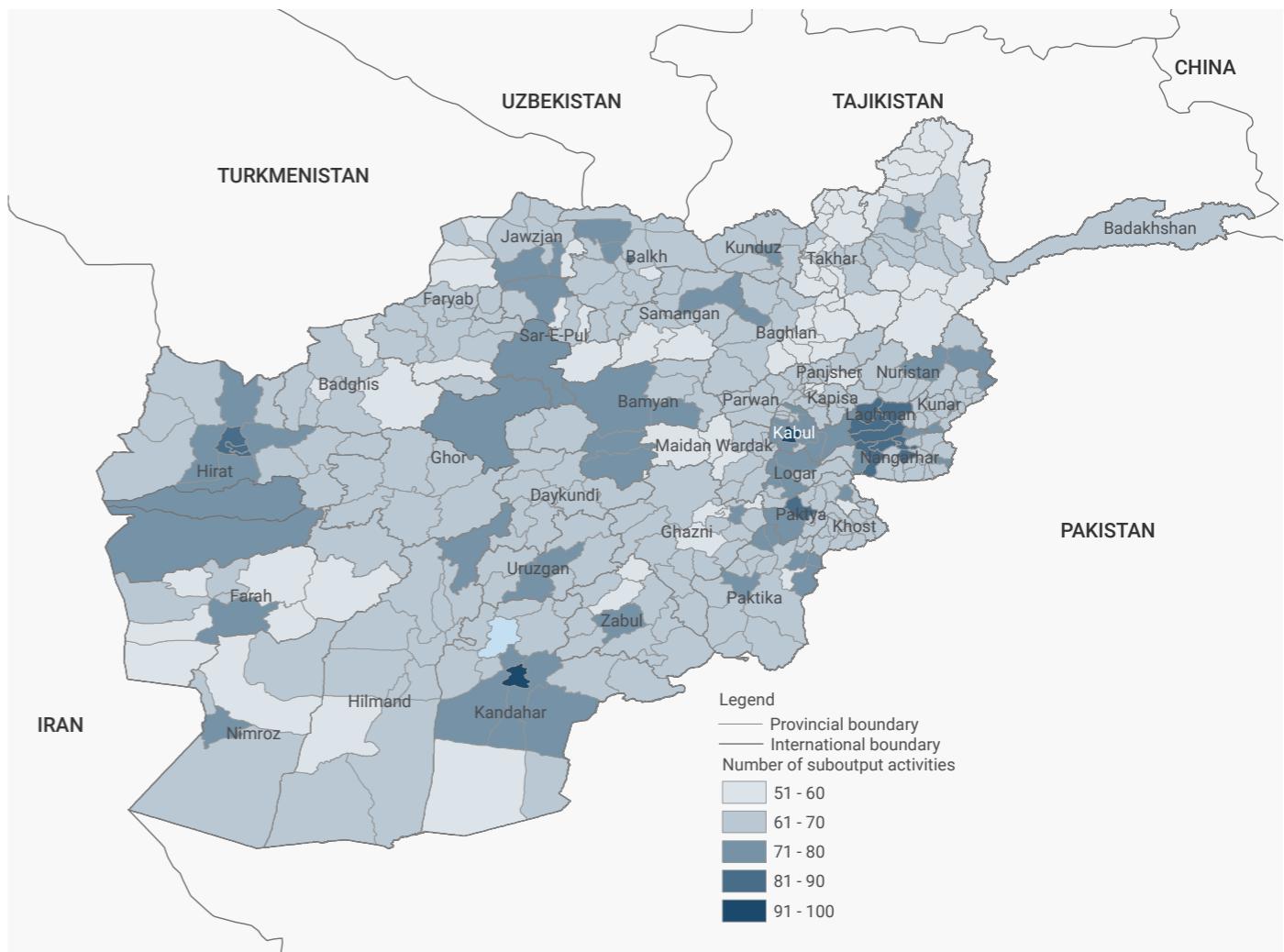
The political track and the Doha Meetings of Special Envoys held their first meeting with the DFA present on 30 June and 1 July 2024.

Earthquake-affected children in Chaahak village, Herat Province, receive vital MHPSS support through an AHF-funded project.

© OCHA/Sayed Habib Bidell

At that meeting, working groups on private sector support and counternarcotics were established. In complementary efforts, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and partners scaled up coordination with the DFA on counternarcotics and private sector development, alongside consultations with

Afghan stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, women-led MSMEs, and farmers. The first Counter Narcotics Working Group (CNWG) meeting was held in November 2024, and consultations for the first Private Sector Working Group (PSWG) took place in December 2024.



Population:
46 million

(Population
Humanitarian Action, 2024)

Economic growth:
2.7%

(Afghanistan Development Update,
World Bank, December 2024)

Food insecure (IPC 3-5):
14.8 million

(IPC Acute Food Insecurity
Analysis, January 2025)

SDG score:
48.24

(162/166 countries) (Sustainable
Development Report, 2024)

Gender inequality index:
0.665

(Human Development report,
UNDP, 2022)

Chapter II



Khalida teaches a group of students, engaging them to foster a positive and interactive learning environment in northern Afghanistan.
© UNICEF/UNI585861/Musadiq

UN Support to People in Afghanistan through the UN Strategic Framework

2.1. Overview of Strategic Framework Results in 2024

In 2024, the UNCT committed to a joined-up approach through increased prioritization and collaboration among UNCT members. The key priorities identified—centred on coordinated high-impact initiatives—include the provision of essential services in health, nutrition, and education, as well as investments in strengthening livelihoods, with a particular focus on women's empowerment. Additionally, two cross-cutting priorities were identified for all UN programming in Afghanistan: advancing climate resilience with a focus on water and promoting durable solutions. Basic human needs aid scaled up from previous years to US\$1.59 billion, equalling levels committed to humanitarian aid. A total of 49 per cent of the required UNSFA funding for 2024 (US\$3.28 billion) was mobilized, with an implementation rate of 84 per cent.

Outcome 1. Sustained Essential Services

By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan, particularly the most marginalized, can equitably access essential services that meet minimum quality standards.

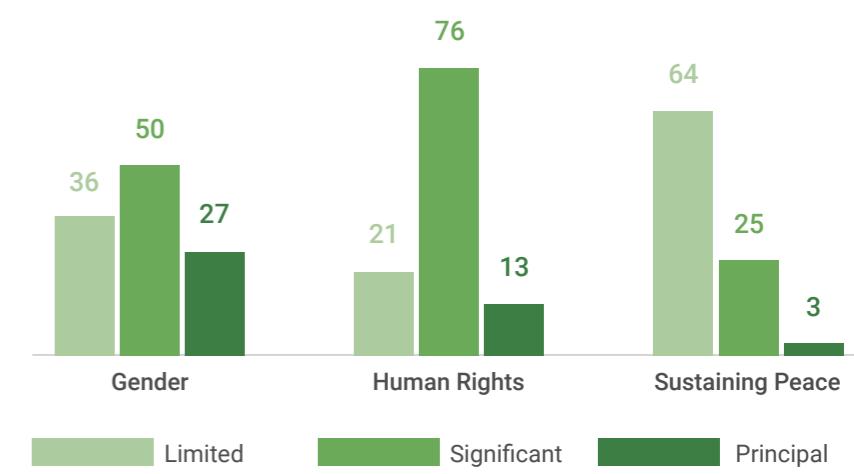
The funding requirements for essential services made up 72 per cent of the UNSFA requirements in 2024. **Scaling up basic human needs funding is critical to improve the well-being of Afghans and allows for a decrease of recurrent humanitarian interventions for essential services.** These interventions depend on critical foundations including human capacities and systems, to ensure equitable and inclusive access and that service delivery meets minimum quality standards. Donor support to Outcome 1 remained high and the scale of the programmes increased significantly.

Under UNSFA outcome 1

From January to December 2024



Output activities contribution to markers (Outcome 1)



UNSF outcome 1 (JAN-DEC 2024) expenditure by SDGs in US\$

SDG 1		36.4M	SDG 8		27.9M
SDG 2		91.6M	SDG 9		196K
SDG 3		564.3M	SDG 10		104.7K
SDG 4		249.7M	SDG 11		29.1M
SDG 5		92.3M	SDG 15		196K
SDG 6		39.6M	SDG 16		196K
SDG 7		4.5M			

Contributing agencies



The solar panels provide energy for Taiwara Family Health House.

© UNFPA Afghanistan

1.1 Health and Nutrition



Health and nutrition systems have improved resilient capacities and resources to deliver accessible, affordable, gender- and age-responsive, and culturally acceptable essential healthcare and nutrition services that prioritize the most vulnerable.

Afghanistan's health sector faces significant challenges, characterised by alarmingly high maternal and child mortality rates. The maternal mortality ratio stands at 620 per 100,000 live births, while neonatal, infant, and under-five mortality rates are 24, 46, and 55 per 1,000 live births, respectively. Despite efforts to improve healthcare, only 36.6 per cent of children aged 12–23 months receive basic immunization, and 44.7 per cent of children under five suffer from stunting. Acute malnutrition affects approximately 4 million vulnerable people, underscoring the urgent need for improved nutrition and healthcare services. Access to basic health services remains limited, with around 25 per cent of the population lacking adequate healthcare. The country is also grappling with multiple disease outbreaks, including acute watery diarrhoea, measles, COVID-19, dengue fever, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, and polio. Despite these pressing needs, healthcare receives only 1.6 per cent of the national budget, highlighting a critical underinvestment in the sector.

Prior to August 2021, Afghanistan's health sector was funded through a mix of domestic resources, donor financing, off-budget allocations, and private out-of-pocket

payments. Currently, the DFA can finance only the salaries of tertiary care hospital staff, and the health budget allocation has decreased from 4 per cent of the national budget under the previous Republic to 1.6 per cent, creating long-term uncertainty for the sector. The health system remains heavily dependent on external support, with an estimated 21 per cent of all services to be funded by foreign aid, but also very high levels of out-of-pocket expenditure (78 per cent) by patients directly, putting a heavy burden on Afghans. To achieve a sustainable health sector, the DFA must increase its financial contributions. Additionally, given anticipated declines in funding and the high number of health partners and donors, stronger coordination of resource allocation—such as through pooled funds—will be essential to avoid fragmentation and ensure effective use of available resources.

In 2024, one quarter of available basic human needs funding for the UNSFA was allocated to the health and nutrition sectors, meeting 73 per cent of overall requirements. While the donor base for health and nutrition remained varied, amongst the key contributors were USAID and the Health Emergency Response (HER) project funded by multiple donor contributions to the World Bank's Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF) active in 24 provinces, and complementary interventions by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the remaining ten provinces of Afghanistan, as well as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI).

"In 2024, one quarter of available basic human needs funding for the UNSFA was allocated to the health and nutrition sectors, meeting 73 per cent of overall requirements."

The 2024 funding levels of the UNSFA have yielded tangible results, with many targets being met or exceeded. Fragile but notable improvements in health access and outcomes have been reported, including an increase of supported health facilities from 422 in January 2022 to 1,026 in October 2024 and a reduction in maternal mortality ratio from 638 to 620 per 100,000 live births – though this remains one of the highest rates globally. A comparatively more conducive enabling environment has also played an important role, with the de facto Ministry of Public Health regularly engaging with health partners on technical issues. The exemption for female health staff and access to female beneficiaries has largely been respected, with women comprising 37 per cent of the health workforce. However, the DFA decree in early December banning medical training for female students poses a significant setback and is projected to exacerbate the already acute shortage of medical staff in Afghanistan.



24-year-old Gul Chehra brought her child to Oshan sub-health centre for vaccination.
© WHO Afghanistan

Key achievements in 2024

Healthcare services reached over 32 million interventions

exceeding targets thanks to additional funding received by some agencies that enabled the opening of additional health facilities.

About 3,700 health facilities

were constructed, rehabilitated, or equipped. While this output fell below target, multiple factors were at play: some agencies received additional funding and delivered above their targets, while others had to stop projects in certain provinces due to access constraints imposed by the DFA.

Skilled birth attendants assisted

57,500 maternal deliveries

exceeding set targets. This over-achievement was partly due to an increase of Family Health Houses from 435 by December 2023 to 531 by the end of 2024, improving the reach of midwives to pregnant women.

Treatment for moderate and severe wasting was provided for

2.1 million children² aged 6-59 months

This figure remained below target due to the closure of more than 400 mobile nutrition teams as a result of funding shortages.

Solar Light Supports Safe Deliveries in Remote Villages

Taiwara, a remote village in Herat Province with 15,000 residents, has long struggled with access to essential healthcare due to its harsh geography and socio-cultural barriers. For many women, these challenges are compounded by security concerns, with only 22 per cent able to visit health facilities unaccompanied, according to a 2023 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) analysis.

To address high maternal and infant mortality, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) established Family Health Houses (FHHs) in Afghanistan's most underserved areas. However, many lacked reliable power and water. In response, UNDP and UNFPA partnered to install solar power systems in 60 FHHs, including Taiwara. These systems, combined with water wells and heating solutions, have revolutionized healthcare delivery.

"Before solar power, deliveries were difficult, nights were dark, and we had no water. Now, we ensure safe births day and night"

With continuous electricity, night deliveries are safer, reducing birth complications. "Before solar power, deliveries were difficult, nights were dark, and we had no water. Now, we ensure safe births day and night," said a midwife. The facility now powers refrigerators for vaccines and medicines, strengthening disease prevention efforts.

The impact extends beyond healthcare. A small garden now thrives, enhancing food security and the clinic's environment. In 2024, the Taiwara FHH served 73,495 people—83 per cent women and girls—thanks to support from USAID; the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; and the Government of Italy.

Solar energy has not only brightened the clinic but also transformed lives, offering hope for safer births and healthier futures in Afghanistan's remote villages.



A midwife from the Taiwara Family Health House cleans up a newborn baby.
© UNFPA Afghanistan



Breaking the Cycle: From Substance Use to Recovery

Zainab, a 32-year-old mother from Kabul, found herself trapped in a nightmare of substance use that threatened to destroy her family. Her world revolved around the toxic grip of drugs, a legacy her husband passed on to their four sons and a daughter.

Amid the despair, Zainab found a ray of hope in the Kabul 100-bed Drug Addiction Treatment Centre for women and children. Funded by the European Union, this is one of many centres in Afghanistan which aims to bring about positive change for families with substance use problems. Supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the treatment centre in Kabul has three outreach teams that conduct home visits, engage with people who use drugs in hotspots, and attend community gatherings to raise awareness. They provide motivational interviewing and referral support to facilitate voluntary treatment for women with drug use disorders.

Zainab's voice trembled as she spoke of her difficult journey. "My kids got hooked on drugs because of their dad," she confided. "They told me that whenever I was out, he made them try drugs."

Her determination to save her family led Zainab to seek help at the EU-supported drug addiction

treatment centre for women and children in Kabul, managed by World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Medical Corps (IMC). "I realized I was losing everything—my family, my home," she said. "So, I left my husband, took my kids, and came here for help."

The treatment centre is offering a comprehensive drug treatment programme, including vocational skills training, with support from UNODC. This integrated approach is designed to improve treatment outcomes and promote sustained recovery by providing a continuum of care.

The road to recovery was not easy. "Every day, I used to take my youngest child and hit the streets to beg for money," Zainab revealed.

But Zainab began to feel hopeful when someone guided her to Kabul's drug addiction treatment centre. "Now, I'm happy here, free from drugs, and my children are able to focus on their studies," she said.

Zainab's story mirrors the struggles of many families across Afghanistan, where substance use disorders affect nearly 10 per cent of the population. As Zainab begins anew, her story offers hope to many other women like her in Afghanistan.

Zainab at the drug addiction treatment centre for women and children, Kabul, Afghanistan.
© WHO/Z. Safari

1.2 Education



Formal and non-formal public, private, and community-based education systems are better able to sustain and increase access to inclusive, safe, and quality education opportunities for girls, boys, youth, and adults—especially girls and young women—across all levels of education.

Afghanistan's education sector faces severe challenges that hinder access to quality learning for many children. Approximately 14 per cent of schools lack textbooks, and one in three school-aged children, including 60 per cent of girls, are out of school. Learning outcomes are alarmingly poor, with 93 per cent of students experiencing learning poverty in reading. Additionally, one-third of public schools lack proper buildings, further limiting educational opportunities. The female teacher workforce is stagnating, affecting the quality and availability of education for girls. The private university sector is also under strain, with 31 per cent of institutions at risk of closure due to declining student numbers, teacher shortages, and reduced revenue. These challenges underscore the urgent need for

systemic reforms and increased investment in Afghanistan's education system.

Before 2021, Afghanistan had one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, with significant gender and socioeconomic disparities. Despite this, the substantial scaling up of assistance over the last three years has yielded positive outcomes for children and youth. Since 2021, there has been a steady increase in primary enrolment—approximately 3 per cent annually—for both boys and girls.

Alternatively, **the continuing ban on female secondary education, which in December was extended to attendance of female students at medical institutes, poses a significant barrier. Additionally, the DFA are pushing towards an education system built on madrasas and localization; in a way that is perceived by international partners as premature and insufficient for building adequate capacity.**

This creates a dilemma for aid actors, which, simplified, is whether to disinvest in education in protest of the DFA's discriminatory policies or to utilize available opportunities to build foundational and critical thinking skills across the learning continuum, spanning from foundational to tertiary and vocational education.

Despite these challenges, donors sustained education funding at 57 per cent of requirements, providing a total of US\$256.5 million in 2024. Limited funding resulted in a reduction in the reach of educational services, including a drastic decline in the supported education facilities. Significant efforts were invested in education sector policy, planning, and tools development. Notable examples include the Gender-and Crisis-Sensitive Education Situation Analysis; the Afghanistan Education Sector Support Plan 2024–2025 and its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan, developed under the ACG's Education Strategic Thematic Working Group (STWG) to guide and align future interventions.

Key achievements in 2024

Education services with UN support, including formal, non-formal, and community-based education as well as TVET, were accessed by

265,000 people

Constructed, rehabilitated, or equipped

48 education facilities

Emergency educating support reached

3.6 million children
in public education

Training was completed for

960 teachers

on inclusive, gender sensitive and innovative pedagogies, digital technologies, remote and blended teaching, and learning

New Beginnings, Lifelong Lessons

Adolescence is a time of change, but for this group of teenage girls, their classroom buzzes with confidence. Though studying in grade four at an age when they should be in secondary school, they embrace education that was once out of reach.

Sakina, 16, had her education interrupted when her family relocated to a village without schools. Her dreams faded as years passed. "I used to attend school, but then we moved, and the school was too far," she recalls.

Enrolling in an Accelerated Learning Centre (ALC) changed everything. "I learned to read and write; now I can find my way around town. Before, I couldn't recognize the girls' toilet or find the right hospital ward."

Sakina also found friendship. "I never had friends because I was home all day," she says, smiling at her classmate. "Raihana is always joking and makes me laugh."

Many Afghan villages are remote, with no schools nearby. Parents fear for their children's safety, and without transport, education remains a distant dream, especially for girls. As restrictions tighten, many fall further behind, making regular schooling impossible.

ALCs offer primary education for children who have missed out and cannot enrol in public schools. The accelerated curriculum covers two grades per year, allowing students to complete grades one through six in just three years. Graduates can then transition to grade seven in public school.

For the first time, these girls sit together in a classroom, flipping through textbooks, solving equations, and calling out answers with excitement. The future that once seemed impossible is now within reach.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supports 3,500 Accelerated Learning Centres in Afghanistan, enrolling 107,000 children – 79 per cent of whom are girls.



"I learned to read and write; now I can find my way around town. Before, I couldn't recognize the girls' toilet or find the right hospital ward."

16-year-old Sakina (on right) walks to the UNICEF-supported Accelerated Learning Centre in Surkhqul Payeen village in Bamiyan Province, central Afghanistan.
©UNICEF/UNI683539/Naftalin

1.3 Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene



Stakeholders at national and subnational levels are better able to manage and provide access to equitable, gender-responsive, sustainable, climate resilient, and safe drinking water, improved sanitation, and positive hygiene practices in rural and poor urban communities.

Afghanistan's water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector remains critically underdeveloped, with significant barriers to accessing clean water and proper sanitation. Approximately 31.2 per cent of the population lacks access to basic drinking water services, and 12.4 per cent of Afghans rely on surface water for drinking, cooking, and other domestic needs, posing serious health risks. Afghanistan is also highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, ranking 179th out of 185 countries in the 2023 ND-GAIN Index. In Kabul City, 16 per cent of households report insufficient water supply, while 24 per cent rely on unimproved water sources. Furthermore, 75 per cent of water in urban areas is bacteriologically contaminated, exacerbating health and sanitation challenges. These conditions highlight the urgent need for improved infrastructure, better resource management, and increased investment in water and sanitation services.

In line with the strategic shift to basic human needs programming, UN agencies working on WASH transitioned their activities from the

HNRP to the UNSFA in 2024. This shift involved re-programming activities from emergency interventions, such as water tracking, to more sustainable interventions, including rehabilitation and upgrading of the existing non-functional water supply system, repairs to damaged water networks, construction of new water supply system, building of canals, and watershed management. However, decades of underinvestment and insufficiencies in water management and governance systems continue to challenge integrated water resource management and WASH interventions.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and World Bank co-led Water Platform expanded its coordination and knowledge-sharing efforts in 2024. Key initiatives included the establishment of a water dashboard by the World Bank, workshops on the Kabul water crisis and groundwater management, and a stocktaking of existing and completed projects. These projects encompass solar irrigation and water distribution systems, rehabilitated karez systems, check dams, and canal/bank protection measures.

Despite the critical needs, the WASH sector remained severely underfunded and received only 14 per cent of its required US\$351 million. As a result of lack of funding, the delivery could not match the increased targets. However, even small-scale interventions yielded significant results, benefitting large numbers of people and creating sustaining impacts through investments in water systems and sanitation and hygiene promotion. For example, over 2,005 communities were certified as Open Defecation Free, benefiting 989,211 people. Additionally, a total of 115,158 students (43,786 girls) and 2,144 teachers (498 females) across 174 schools in 20 provinces accessed WASH services. Furthermore, 10 health centres received a basic WASH package, benefiting 31,446 individuals (14,780 females).

Key achievements in 2024

Access to basic safe water was provided to
600K people

Access to basic sanitation services was provided to
600K people

Access to basic hygiene services was provided to
700K people

From Ruin to Resilience: Restoring Water, Hope, and Community in Kernail Wardak

In October 2023, devastating earthquakes struck Kernail Wardak village in Herat Province, destroying homes and forcing residents to seek shelter in temporary tents. The disaster severely damaged the village's only medical facility and wiped out its water supply system. Families were left dependent on water tankers for daily needs, and access to sanitation facilities became especially challenging—particularly for women and girls.

"We lost everything in just one day due to the earthquakes. It was sudden, we were all devastated," recalled Ghulam Saeed, head of the Kernail Wardak CDC.

In 2024, hope began to return to the village. The severely damaged water supply network was rehabilitated by United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) using a "Build Back Better" (BBB) approach. The new system was designed to be resilient to future disasters, with hydraulic analyses ensuring optimal performance. The BBB initiative also included retrofitting the health centre, upgrading the water network, and constructing a paved community road with essential drainage systems.

"The path to recovery is long, and much work remains to be done," said Saeed, speaking on behalf of the community. "But today, we are grateful to see an important milestone in our journey toward rebuilding."

The project's success was rooted in its attention to detail. High-density polyethylene pipes were strategically installed, and meticulous construction techniques were employed to enhance the network's resilience against seismic events and environmental pressures. The main water reservoir was also retrofitted, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Today, the restored water network provides clean drinking water for over 700 villagers and neighbouring communities, and the health centre is now fully operational, providing essential healthcare services to residents and those from surrounding areas. Thanks to the collaborative efforts, Kernail Wardak village is not only recovering but also building a stronger, more resilient future.



Children using the new water tap built by UN-Habitat in Zindajan district, western Afghanistan.
© UN-Habitat Afghanistan

1.4 Social Protection

Inclusive, equitable, shock-responsive national safety net systems are established and operational providing support to and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in Afghanistan.

In line with its strategy to complement humanitarian assistance and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable, the UNSFA foresees scalable and shock-responsive safety nets. These include maternal and child cash grants, cash for basic needs, protection-related support, school feeding, and take-home rations, especially for the most vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, older persons, and persons with disabilities, among others. These initiatives are complemented by efforts to facilitate service delivery, especially for female staff, and refresher trainings for front-line staff to strengthen procedures. Community consultations on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) remains a key priority.

Key achievements in 2024

Short-term employment through cash-for-work activities benefited

**987,000
people**

Social cash assistance benefited

**1,800
households**

Winterization cash assistance was provided to

**54,000
households**



"Scaled-up cash-for-work activities expanded into additional rural and urban areas, provided more livelihood opportunities for women, enhanced climate resilience initiatives, and supported returning Afghan migrants with employment and services."

The Social Protection sector received 47 per cent of its required US\$376 million in funding. While funding shortages were a significant constraint, several other factors contributed to the mixed results. Cash-for-work activities, primarily funded through the World Bank's ARTF and IDA under the Afghanistan Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project, increased their target and delivery during 2024. These scaled-up cash-for-work activities expanded into additional rural and urban areas, provided more livelihood opportunities for women, enhanced climate resilience initiatives, and supported returning Afghan migrants with employment and services. However, cash assistance programmes faced challenges, including delays in the approval of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) of implementing partners, which significantly delayed the start of activities. Reduced funding, the dismantling of CDCs by the DFA in May 2024, as well as restrictions on the movement of female beneficiaries further hindered cash assistance programming.

Rebuilding Lives: Empowering Afghanistan's Displaced Communities

In Nangarhar Province, renewable energy became a lifeline for displaced individuals. The UNDP-led renewable energy programme, supported by STFA's Joint Regional Programme, revitalized a paper recycling factory that had shut down due to financial struggles.

Now powered by solar energy, the factory provides jobs for 60 people—many of them returnees and women—while supporting 200 others who collect recyclable materials. Mariam, a 23-year-old returnee from Pakistan, shared: "This job is a lifeline, keeping us away from crime and drugs. It allows me to support my family while also helping the environment."

In Laghman, Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) constructed 562 homes, many fitted with solar panels, to provide returnee, displaced and vulnerable families with permanent housing supported through STFA, offering families greater security and stability. Shami Ullah, a refugee returnee from Pakistan, said, "With a home, I can now focus on farming and providing for my family." Similarly, Pekhai, a widow with eight children, emphasized the impact: "Before this, we relied on neighbours for shelter. Now, we have a place to call home."

The UN in Afghanistan is focusing its efforts on resilience building by continuing the provision of targeted humanitarian assistance where needed and increasing sustainable programming where possible. With the engagement of 17 UN agencies, STFA ensures that emergency relief is linked to long-term development, a vision aligned with the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. By combining community decision-making processes, job creation, renewable energy, housing, and women's empowerment, the UN is shaping a future where displaced Afghans can rebuild their lives with dignity and stability.



"With a home, I can now focus on farming and providing for my family."

The recycling factory, operated by solar energy in Nangarhar, produces paper and carton boxes. © STFA Afghanistan

1.5 Protection

Relevant providers and stakeholders have strengthened capacities to increase access to and improve the provision of preventive, mitigating, and responsive protection services – including on child protection, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and explosive hazards—to the most vulnerable at family and community levels.

In August 2024, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) adopted a Protection Strategy and its analysis of the deteriorating protection environment which largely affects women, girls, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, older persons, youth, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and other vulnerable groups. The HCT Protection Strategy identified three key objectives:

1. The risk of discrimination and stigmatization against women, girls, and

Key achievements in 2024

Awareness raising on protection services reached

2.2 million people

Psychosocial support, child protection and sexual exploitation and abuse response services were accessed by

832,000 people (mostly women)

Explosive ordnance risk education reached

3.4 million women, men, girls and boys

To deliver and/or monitor the quality of protection services, resources, and goods, the UN worked with

230 organizations and facilities

other vulnerable groups is reduced through improving the safety and dignity of all women, girls, and ethnic as well as religious minorities.

2. The engagement to address unlawful bureaucratic impediments and human rights violations, is enhanced.
3. Durable solutions for forcibly displaced and returning Afghan people are found and operationalized.

The objectives defined by the HCT Protection Advocacy Strategy equally apply to the basic human needs response. Implementation to date has provided valuable learning.

Integrated, multi-sectoral initiatives that combine protection, education, and livelihoods interventions have proven particularly effective in addressing systemic challenges. Such approaches ensure holistic support while fostering resilience among vulnerable populations.

Community engagement also plays a vital role in sustainability, as empowering local leaders and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities enhances ownership of interventions and aligns them with community needs. Similarly, tailored, community-specific interventions underline the importance of adapting programmes to address unique local challenges effectively. However, restrictive laws like the PVPV Law, and entrenched cultural norms continue to limit women's mobility, access to education, and active participation, posing persistent barriers to achieving equitable outcomes.

Despite partial funding at 64 per cent against the requested US\$133.4 million, the protection sector largely delivered on its targets, with some activities surpassing planned beneficiary numbers.



Restoring Safety and Opportunity: A Collaborative Effort in Afghanistan

Since 2021, donor funding cuts have disrupted mine action efforts, weakening coordination and implementation. Sustainable investment is essential for clearance, risk education, and victim assistance. Without long-term funding, explosive ordnance threats will continue to endanger civilians, hinder recovery, and obstruct aid.

Given critical underfunding, in 2024, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) provided an allocation to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to restore safety and enable development in Baghlan, Kunduz, and Faryab provinces, in partnership with the Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA) and the Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghanistan Rehabilitation (OMAR), complementing and scaling demining efforts also supported by the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF).

Between June and October, the DAFA and the OMAR cleared 17.5 million square meters of land, eliminating 2,449 explosive remnants of war and making 28 schools safe. Cleared roads revived trade, and farmland restoration allowed farmers to grow pistachios and almonds, boosting food security.

Nazia, a 15-year-old from Kunduz, was injured by an explosion at age seven. In 2024, she attended an Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) session led by the OMAR, gaining life-saving knowledge. Now, she advocates for safety in her community. In total, the project conducted 324 EORE sessions, reaching 15,791 people, including 6,623 boys and 5,087 girls.

Afghanistan remains heavily contaminated by explosive ordnance after 40 years of conflict, with children making up 81 per cent of casualties. Explosive ordnance contamination affects 3 million people, restricting access to healthcare, education, and livelihoods. Returning Afghan refugees face heightened risks as many settle in hazardous areas.



Sustainable investment is essential for clearance, risk education, and victim assistance. Without long-term funding, explosive ordnance threats will continue to endanger civilians, hinder recovery, and obstruct aid."

Emdad Ullah, 28, clears minefields in Sesay village, Maidan Wardak Province.
© OCHA/Olivier Jobard

Outcome 2. Economic Opportunities and Resilient Livelihoods

By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan, notably women and vulnerable groups, will benefit from an increasingly inclusive economy, with greater equality of economic opportunities, jobs, more resilient livelihoods, strengthened food value chains, and improved natural resources management.

Within the UNSFA, support for Outcome 2 is critical to ensure the transformation from humanitarian dependency to strengthened resilience and inclusive, bottom-up economic recovery. In 2024, support to Outcome Area 2 remained low, with only 25 per cent of the total requirements of US\$ 860.4 million funded.

In 2024, within the Doha Process consultations between the international community and the DFA, the creation of two working groups, one on Counter Narcotics and one on the Private Sector, were agreed upon. These groups aim to create a platform for promoting collaboration and confidence building among the international community, including Afghanistan's immediate neighbours, countries in the wider region and beyond, the DFA, and private sector actors, specifically women. Their goal is to address key challenges and improve the lives and livelihoods of the Afghan people.

These working groups are part of a comprehensive approach to achieving a prosperous Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbours, fully reintegrated into the international community and meeting its international obligations. Their establishment aligns with the recommendations of the independent assessment undertaken pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2679 (2023) to "build confidence by addressing the immediate needs of Afghans" such as by "cooperating with international counter-

narcotics efforts ... to maintain the current trajectory of the eradication of illegal narcotics" and by "establishing economic dialogue and reforms to begin to resolve the many barriers to economic recovery," as well as by "enabling partial restoration of regular transit, trade and connectivity between Afghans and the world" as priorities. These areas prioritize gender inclusion, women-owned businesses, and female entrepreneurs and employees.

As part of the Doha PSWG preparation, through a wide range of consultations held with private sector representatives, civil society, member states and the DFA, four key areas of focus were identified:

1. Job Creation and Entrepreneurship: Supporting policies that foster entrepreneurship and the growth of MSMEs, with particular attention to women-led businesses. The PSWG aims to enhance Afghanistan's capacity for employment generation by promoting innovation and business development.

2. Access to Finance: Addressing the lack of capital and financial services by exploring structured banking mechanisms and facilitating the transition to Islamic finance. This approach can ensure financial inclusion and stability while fostering resilience across Afghanistan's business ecosystem.

3. Market Integration: Overcoming trade and regulatory barriers to enable Afghan businesses to access regional and international markets. This includes advocating for improved banking relations, streamlined visa processes for business representatives, and greater participation in international trade fairs.

4. Private Banking and Financial Infrastructure

Infrastructure: Strengthening the Afghan banking sector by addressing compliance with international standards on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT). This can ensure legitimate financial transactions and builds confidence among regional and international investors.

Similarly, efforts in the CNWG focused on enhancing coherent, coordinated, and structured engagement between the international community and the DFA to address the immediate needs of the Afghan people and maintain the unprecedented low level of opium cultivation and production in two consecutive years in Afghanistan. Key areas requiring attention in this area were identified as:

1. The lack of licit alternatives to poppy cultivation, which could undermine the sustainability of the poppy ban, leading farmers to adopt negative coping mechanisms or migrate out of the country.

2. The continuing high levels of drug use and disorders and the need to adopt health-oriented policies and strategies, as well as the **expansion of access to treatment and reintegration services**.

3. The need to **revive cooperation on regional law enforcement matters** through regional mechanisms.

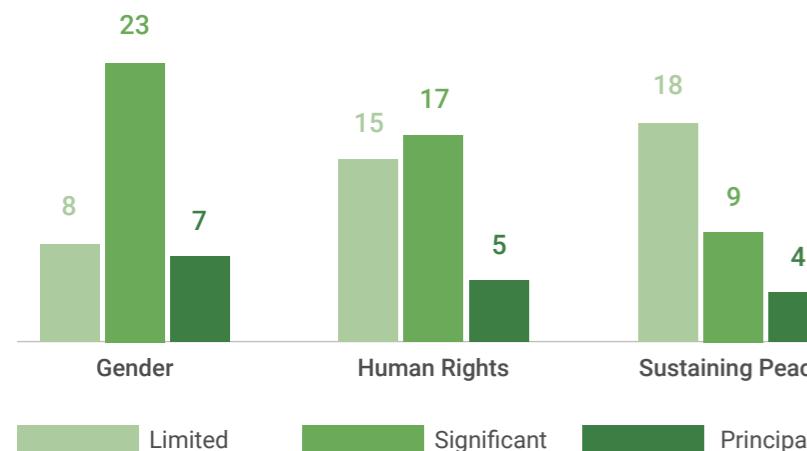
The establishment of the CNWG and the PSWG under the Doha Process format underlines the importance of these areas of work for Afghanistan's stability and sustainable development. Moving forward, the UN will promote holistic approaches to these two thematic areas, building on efforts under the UNSFA and establishing linkages to the activities of non-donor member states and other partners. This coordinated and coherent approach aims to maximize collective impact to the benefit of Afghan people.

Under UNSFA outcome 2

From January to December 2024



Output activities contribution to markers (Outcome 2)



UNSF outcome 2 (JAN-DEC 2024) expenditure by SDGs in US\$

SDG 1		18.2M	SDG 10		1.2M
SDG 2		31.7M	SDG 11		1.7M
SDG 3		9.8M	SDG 12		5.9M
SDG 4		270K	SDG 13		569K
SDG 5		12.8M	SDG 14		311K
SDG 6		2.8M	SDG 15		12M
SDG 8		32.4M	SDG 16		5.2M
SDG 9		19.2	SDG 17		2.3M

Contributing agencies



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



IOM
UN MIGRATION

UN WOMEN



unesco



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



unitar



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



World Food Programme



Khokoly Rohafza Food Processing Company provides women with job creation and economic opportunities
© STFA Afghanistan

2.1 Economic Stabilization



Economic and financial institutions and stakeholders have improved capacities to contribute to economic stabilization and pro-poor, private-sector-led economic recovery.

The unavailability of liquidity in the Afghan market is a major impeding factor for economic and financial institutions and stakeholders to contribute to economic stabilization and pro-poor, private-sector-led economic recovery. Expanding financial inclusion requires the development of specialized financial products, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and enhancing the capacity of financial institutions. **The UN has prioritised facilitating access to finance for MSMEs, especially for women to enable the growth of businesses, contribute to economic development, and foster job creation.**

Building on the momentum from 2023, the second national microfinance conference was held in November 2024, organized by the Central Bank of Afghanistan. During the conference, the DFA announced that they would allocate US\$67.4 million to the sector through government agencies.

Additionally, five new microfinance institutions were provided licenses and two bulk funders for microfinance (Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan, MISFA, and Agricultural Development Fund, ADF) received no-objection certificates. Since then, five more microfinance institutions have applied for licenses and three banks have been certified for microfinance operations. The sector is trying to address two major challenges: the insufficient number of microfinance institutions and the lack of coverage in two-thirds of the country.

In line with DFA directives for financing instruments to comply with Islamic banking

principles, the UN provided technical assistance and capacity-building to financial institutions and developed tailored Islamic financial products. This includes the UNDP-supported development of three Islamic finance products (Salam, Istisna, and Qard Hasan), the launch of an Accounting and Auditing Certification Programme in collaboration with the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Finance (AAOIFI), enrolling 80 individuals from the banking sector, as well as a two-day capacity building training on Islamic financing principles, with a focus on women's access to finance, conducted in partnership with Türkiye's Union of Participating Banks (TKBB) for 39 banking sector staff in December 2024.

Key achievements in 2024

**Disbursed
2,400
loans, totalling nearly
US\$4.3 million**

to the Afghan private sector by financial institutions supported by the UN

**Provided
20
capacity development initiatives**
to economic and financial institutions and employers' and workers' organizations

**The UN significantly contributed to the promotion of the private sector by contracting
US\$558 million
through 1,150 local firms**

for goods and services used in humanitarian response and delivery of basic needs in UN assistance

Bibi Mawjoda Amani: Empowering Women Through Entrepreneurship

Born in 2001 in Mazar-i-Sharif, Bibi Mawjoda Amani excelled academically, graduating with honours in Mining and Environmental Engineering from Balkh New University in 2022.

Determined to create job opportunities for women, she founded Bano Oil Production Company three years ago with an initial capital of US\$5,000. Using modern technology, the company produces high quality sesame, black seed, almond, and mustard oils.

Beyond production, Bano Oil has significantly contributed to women's employment, hiring six direct staff and collaborating with 30 women in Dara District.

A major milestone came in October 2024 when the company secured a US\$5,200 partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO). This funding enabled Bano Oil to expand production, purchase solar panels, and acquire a new press machine, boosting efficiency and creating more jobs.

Bibi Mawjoda also showcased her products at the Imam Abu Hanifa International Third Exhibition 2024 in Kabul, where Bano Oil received widespread recognition and positive feedback.

Through resilience and innovation, Bibi Mawjoda has become a role model for young Afghans, especially women. Her entrepreneurial journey highlights the power of perseverance and its impact on economic and social development. Bano Oil Production Company continues to grow, shaping a brighter future for Afghan women.



"Determined to create job opportunities for women, she founded Bano Oil Production Company three years ago with an initial capital of US\$5,000."

The ready bottle of cooking oil produced at the Bano Oil Production Company in Mazar.
© ILO Afghanistan

2.2 Private Sector Development



Private sector enterprises, particularly MSMEs, have improved access to finance, asset support, and business development services and increased business opportunities that stimulate growth and decent job creation.

Unemployment in Afghanistan has doubled, and underemployment increased by 25 per cent between 2020 and 2023. With the absence of a domestic growth engine, private sector-led economic recovery—especially through small and medium enterprises—is a critical entry point to revive production and create jobs. Given the very limited domestic purchasing power, increases in production must be complemented by access to international markets and cross-border trade. The UN has focused on enhancing the capacity of private sector entities, employers' associations, business membership organizations, and trade unions to jointly address labour market constraints. **Efforts have also been directed towards building the skills of the most vulnerable to enhance employability, livelihoods, and longer-term financial stability, with a strong emphasis on women's economic empowerment and broader social inclusion.**

To facilitate market access, United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) project continued to support customs clearance operations, fostering cross-border trade for the private sector across the country. The ASYCUDA system has been implemented and maintained in 19 customs locations. As a result, from January to December 2024, more than 780,000 commercial imports goods trucks carrying goods valued at approximately US\$11 million, and totalling 21 million tons, along with more than 150,000 export trucks from Afghanistan to other countries carrying goods valued at US\$1.8

million and totalling more than 3.6 million tons, were processed using the ASYCUDA system. Moreover, the ASYCUDA system paved the way for the smooth operation of international transit, enabling goods to be transported from other countries through Afghanistan to third countries. More than 33,000 international transit trucks were processed using the ASYCUDA system in 2024, supporting the private sector and showcasing Afghanistan's role as transit country in the region. However, outside of ASYCUDA's control, regular border closures, particularly to Pakistan, caused significant disruptions, resulting in the loss of production and profits.

Key achievements in 2024

Financial support, technical assistance, and assets were provided to

**13,600
MSMEs**

Access to markets, digital solutions, green energy, and infrastructure was enhanced for

**6,300
MSMEs**

Over

**37,700
jobs**

were created for decent employment and income generation

Over

**200
interventions**

were conducted to strengthen business associations and chambers, particularly women's business associations

Safe spaces to enable women businesses to thrive

As part of UN Women Afghanistan's Women's Economic Empowerment Programme, the Yakawlang Female Entrepreneurs Market Solar Project has brought electricity to 35 women-owned businesses in Yakawlang-1 District of Bamyan province through a 30 kW off-grid solar photovoltaic (PV) system that generates over 58,000 kWh of clean energy annually. The Yakawlang Female Entrepreneurs Market is an exclusive space dedicated to women, featuring businesses owned and operated solely by female entrepreneurs and catering exclusively to a women-only clientele.

The solar project significantly reduces electricity costs, saving approximately USD 87,500 annually and providing significant financial relief to a total of 462 people, including the supported women and their families.

Among them is Rahima Safdari, a 45-year-old entrepreneur and the only breadwinner for her family of eight, who acquired solar-powered sewing and zig-zag machines, enabling her to expand and modernize her handicraft business through this project.

"My business is growing, I have good revenue, and I can now involve other women in my work," says Safdari. "The electricity has increased women's employment in our district and helped save more families from poverty."



Alison Davidian, Deputy Country Representative of UN Women Afghanistan, participates in the inauguration of the Yakawlang Female Entrepreneurs Market Solar Project, celebrating a milestone in women's economic empowerment through sustainable energy solutions.

© UN Women

Bibi Sharifa's Bakery: Feeding Hope

At dawn in Afghanistan's Northern Region, Bibi Sharifa and her four sisters gather around their tandoor, kneading and shaping dough as the first light spills into their home. Every day, they bake thousands of fortified loaves, feeding local schoolchildren through a partnership with World Food Programme (WFP).

The bakery began as a small, uncertain effort. With support—through technical training, an industrial dough mixer, and market access—it has transformed into a thriving business. What was once barely enough to survive now provides the sisters with an income ten times the average Afghan household earnings. Their bread nourishes more than 2,000 students daily.

"These children feel like my own," says Sharifa, a mother of nine.

The initiative extends beyond baking. Across Afghanistan, women are learning to sew, grow vegetables, and run small businesses, gaining financial independence and, just as importantly, a sense of community. "These projects give women a reason to step outside, to connect, to feel like they matter," says Hsiao-Wei Lee, WFP Country Director in Afghanistan.

Sharifa is proud of what they've built, but she dreams of more for her daughters. "I want them to have choices," she says. One of her sisters once aspired to become a nurse, a dream that now feels out of reach. Yet, the bakery gives them purpose and hope. "Our bread feeds the neighbourhood children," Sharifa says with pride.



The bakery began as a small, uncertain effort. With support—through technical training, an industrial dough mixer, and market access—it has transformed into a thriving business."

Bibi Sharifa and her sisters make enough fortified bread to feed more than 2'000 children in four primary schools.
© WFP Afghanistan

2.3 Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods



Rural communities can better and sustainably manage natural resources, increase agricultural productivity and value addition, manage and reduce disaster risks, and enhance biodiversity, contributing to increased resilience, food security and nutrition, decent work, and sustainable livelihoods for all Afghans.

Since 2021, the UN has prioritized food security and agricultural support in Afghanistan, leading to an unprecedented decline in acute food insecurity. The number of people facing acute food insecurity dropped from 22.8 million (55 per cent of the population) in October 2021 to 12.4 million (28 per cent) by October 2024. In 2024, over 9 million people across all 34 provinces received emergency food assistance, while 10.5 million benefitted from emergency agriculture support. This significant level of assistance including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) concerted efforts to bridge the gap between wheat production and consumption, while providing a sustainable path towards self-sufficiency has contributed to an above-average domestic wheat harvest of over 4.8 million tons and record production of more than 60,000 tons of certified wheat seeds. This assistance has boosted national wheat production by an estimated 876,000 tons, representing approximately 17.5 per cent of Afghanistan's total wheat output of 5 million tons in 2024.

Building on these foundations, the UN is shifting its focus from providing food assistance to strengthening and transforming agrifood systems. This approach supports

vulnerable populations, smallholder farmers, and livestock owners by promoting income-generating activities, facilitating market linkages, and equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to withstand climate induced natural disasters. For example, 2,435 rural producers' organizations were established to enhance their practices, improve product value, and strengthen market access. Additionally, 1,047 water structures were rehabilitated or constructed to improve water management and agricultural productivity.

Agriculture plays a critical role in Afghanistan, where 70 per cent of the population lives in rural areas, and 80 per cent depend on it for their livelihoods. Women make up just under half of the agricultural workforce. However, many smallholder farmers face challenges in producing enough food to sustain their families due to outdated farming techniques, limited mechanization, plant pest and animal disease outbreaks, the lack of early warning systems, and the shortage of essential agricultural inputs. As a result, their produce goes to waste, further impacting their livelihoods and food security.

"The UN is shifting its focus from providing food assistance to strengthening and transforming agrifood systems. This approach supports vulnerable populations, smallholder farmers, and livestock owners by promoting income-generating activities, facilitating market linkages, and equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to withstand climateinduced natural disasters."



Animal feed distribution helps locals to increase dairies and animal products.

© STFA Afghanistan

Despite significant efforts to strengthen long-term agriculture and food security, including restoring and rehabilitating irrigation systems, rangelands, forests, and agricultural lands, gaps still remain in fully addressing the sector's needs and challenges. For example, the WFP supported the rehabilitation of 295 km of irrigation systems, contributing to improved water access for farming communities. Additionally, since 2022, 157,998 households in the 15 medium-to-high poppy-producing provinces have received alternative livelihood support, exclusively targeting opium poppy farmers. However, this represents only 13 per cent of the combined total rural population in these provinces, leaving 1,045,976 rural households without alternative livelihood support.

While the UN increased its agricultural and rural development efforts in 2024 compared to the previous year, the sector remained among the least funded, receiving only 21 per cent of its total requirements of US\$ 715.9 million. Despite increased delivery, the high targets were largely unmet due to limited funding:

Key achievements in 2024

Provided

549,000
farmers and livestock owners

with production inputs, services, and/or technological packages to enhance productivity

Rehabilitated and/or established

318 km
of water structures

Rehabilitated or restored

28,000
hectares of rangeland and forest

Rehabilitated, restored, or brought

37,000
hectares of agricultural land under licit cultivation.



Former Poppy Fields Turn into Thriving Citrus Orchards

In Surkhrod District, Nangarhar Province, former poppy fields are transforming into citrus orchards, providing farmers with sustainable alternatives to opium cultivation.

Ghazi, a farmer from Fateh Abad village, relied on poppy farming for years until the DFA banned it, leaving him without income. Having never considered alternative crops, he faced a changing situation in March 2023 when UNODC, through the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) and with funding from STFA and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched an Alternative Livelihoods project. The initiative provided Ghazi with training and resources to establish a citrus orchard, including an efficient drip irrigation system. He also received business development training from the UNCTAD and market development training from ILO.

Today, Ghazi's orchard is thriving, and he estimates his annual income will reach AFN 800,000 to AFN 1,200,000 (US\$11,420 to US\$17,142) – three times his previous earnings from poppy cultivation.

"I'm really happy with the support. I no longer worry about feeding my family," Ghazi says with relief.

UNODC's Alternative Livelihoods programme established 470 citrus orchards in Nangarhar and Laghman between 2023 and 2024. By strengthening farmers' livelihoods, this initiative reduces reliance on illicit poppy cultivation while promoting climate-resilient agriculture.

Ghazi is working in his citrus orchard, Fateh Abad, Sokhrod, Nangarhar province.

© UNODC Afghanistan

"I'm really happy with the support. I no longer worry about feeding my family"

Empowering Afghan Farmers

In 2024, FAO's wheat programme made a significant impact in Afghanistan, reaching millions across its humanitarian and basic needs programmes. By providing wheat cultivation packages, the initiative not only enhances food security but also strengthens smallholder farmers' long term resilience, enabling them to achieve yields worth four times the cost of assistance and ensuring a sustainable livelihood.

In Kandahar, smallholder farmers like Noor Ahmad overcame poverty and food insecurity through FAO's support. With certified seeds, fertilizers, and training, Noor Ahmad cultivated one hectare of land, greatly improving his family's food security. FAO's programme is projected to produce 1.2 million metric tons of wheat by 2025, meeting the food needs of 20 per cent of Afghanistan's population.

A father of 10, Noor had struggled for years with irregular labor. However, the emergency food security project changed his life. The wheat package he received, which included 50 kg of seeds, 100 kg of fertilizer, and training, allowed him to grow enough wheat to feed his family and more. Inspired by a neighbouring farmer's success, Noor Ahmad is confident his harvest will be sustainable.

Comprehensive support for wheat production—including drought- and pest-resistant certified seed distribution, essential inputs, technical training, and sustainable seed enterprises—ensures sustained yields, enhances agricultural resilience, and reduces reliance on imports. By closing the gap between wheat production and consumption, these efforts promote long-term food security and self-sufficiency. The programme also supports the Afghan economy by decreasing the need for imported wheat, conserving foreign exchange, and offering sustainable farming opportunities that reduce rural migration.

For Noor, this support offers hope and an opportunity. He is no longer just a labourer but a farmer, contributing to a more secure future for his family and Afghanistan.



Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. Noor Ahmad is a farmer from Kandahar, sowing the certified wheat seed on his land.
© FAO/Hashim Azizi

Outcome 3.

Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights, and Rule of Law

By the end of 2025, more people in Afghanistan can participate in an increasingly socially cohesive, gender-equal, and inclusive society, where the rule of law and human rights are progressively upheld, and more people can participate in governance and decision-making.

Afghanistan ranks at the bottom of various global indices for human rights and gender equality. In line with trends since August 2021, the situation further worsened in 2024 as Afghanistan remained the only country where girls and women were banned from secondary and university education (the previous exemption to women accessing tertiary-level medical institutions ended in December 2024), while also facing significant barriers to employment and freedom of movement, assembly, and speech.

The DFA detained journalists, civil society leaders, and women human rights defenders, in addition to imposing severe restrictions on the media. **The PVPV Law of 21 July 2024 (published in August) codified existing decrees and edicts that already restricted women and girls' basic human rights and freedoms. It introduced additional prohibitions, such as banning women's voices from being heard in public and prohibiting them from using public transport**

without a mahram (male guardian). The law, however, not only targets women and girls but also men, creating broader societal restrictions. Enforcement of the PVPV Law by the DFA varies at the sub-national level, contributing to an environment of confusion, fear, and self-censorship. It is estimated that over 70 measures directly targeting women and girls were in place by the end of 2024.

In line with the UNSFA's key assumptions that stability, gender equity and equality, inclusive and accountable governance, human rights, labour rights, the rule of law, and international standards, are prerequisites for sustainable development and peace, the UN pursued a three-pronged approach:

- An inclusive approach for consultations with all concerned Afghans—particularly women, youth, persons with disabilities, minorities, and other excluded groups—in planning, decision-making and where feasible implementation of assistance projects to promote social cohesion and address drivers of inequality and conflict;
- Strengthening the voice and activities of civil society, with a special focus on women-led organizations and media, with core funding, capacity-building and collaborations with UN agencies;
- Sustained and coordinated advocacy for the alignment of Afghanistan's normative and legal frameworks with international human rights instruments, especially women's rights, while enhancing access to formal and informal justice systems.

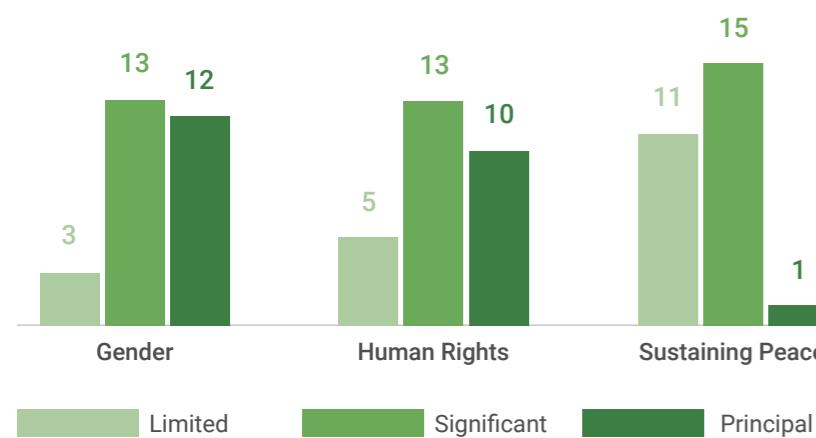
Under UNSFA outcome 3

From January to December 2024



Under UNSFA Outcome 3, from January to December 2024, 12 UN agencies and their partners delivered around US\$21.12 million through 20 programme interventions in Afghanistan.

Output activities contribution to markers (Outcome 3)



UNSFA outcome 3 (JAN-DEC 2024) expenditure by SDGs in US\$

SDG 1		2.7M	SDG 9		56.2K
SDG 2		338.5K	SDG 10		613.5K
SDG 3		334.7K	SDG 11		178K
SDG 4		116.2K	SDG 13		34.3K
SDG 5		14.4M	SDG 15		461K
SDG 6		327.6K	SDG 16		1.1M
SDG 8		63.3K			

Contributing agencies



3.1 Social Cohesion, Inclusion, and Reconciliation



Formal and informal governance mechanisms, community-based institutions, and decision making platforms are more inclusive, responsive, accountable, and better able to contribute to social cohesion and reconciliation.

In line with the UN's direct delivery modality, project planning and implementation were shaped by community consultations. These consultations often included the establishment of community-based organizations, decision-making bodies, or committees, such as UN-Habitat's work with Local Integration Communities (LICS) which in many areas replaced the CDCs abolished by the DFA. Women are integrated as members of "subcommittees" of the LICS, complemented by community mobilizers who regularly consult with women to ensure their inclusion. The results in meeting targets have been mixed due to required adjustments—reprioritization to ensure women's inclusion, the shift from CDCs to alternative modalities such as LICS or Community Representative Groups, and delays as a result of various restrictions placed on non-governmental organization (NGO) implementing partners.

Key achievements in 2024

Trained
4,800
stakeholders and partners
in governance, operational management, and decision-making

Almost
400
civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based structures
contributed to social cohesion and reconciliation

Provided
8,600
people
with capacity-building in participatory and inclusive community planning

Reached
106,000
people
through social cohesion activities



Women working in a tailoring centre, founded by a UNHCR livelihood grant beneficiary, who used the grant money to purchase sewing equipment and raw materials, providing job opportunities for women.
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3.2 Justice and Rule of Law



Formal and informal governance mechanisms, community-based institutions, and decision making platforms are more inclusive, responsive, accountable, and better able to contribute to social cohesion and reconciliation.

The Justice and Rule of Law sector remains the smallest programmatic area under the UNSFA. While 72 per cent of required funds were mobilized, only 35 per cent of the committed amount was translated into programming, reflecting the restrictive operating environment. Still, activities in 2024 largely met or exceeded targets. **The number of partners providing legal services and advice increased, resulting in more individuals receiving legal counselling, legal aid, and mediation support.**

A UN Women-launched programme focusing on access to justice reached 20 times more beneficiaries than recorded in the previous year. Awareness raising and consultations, such as on Housing, Land and Property rights (HLP) when involving the DFA, were often not able to officially include women. In these

cases, awareness-raising activities targeting male community members and parallel consultations with women were conducted as an alternative option. UN support to traditional justice mechanisms and community-based practices declined due to the DFA restrictions and a reduction in donor funding for such activities in 2024. While there are no direct access to justice initiatives, UNDP—through funding from the STFA and the Government of Japan—continues to implement awareness, sensitization, and legal advisory activities.

Key achievements in 2024

Provided	38,700
people	
with legal aid and advice	
Reached	156,000
people	
through legal awareness programmes by NGOs	



During his visit to Badakhshan, DSRSG/RC/HC met with locals to hear from them about the work of the UN and partners in the communities.

© Rafiullah Alkozai/
UNAMA

Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting

The United Nations Human Rights presence in Afghanistan was established by the UN Security Council through the UNAMA mandate. The UNAMA Human Rights component – which also serves as the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Afghanistan – monitors, reports, and engages with relevant stakeholders on the human rights situation. This work is undertaken through its country-wide presence.

2	Thematic human rights reports published: moral oversight in Afghanistan (July); and media freedom in Afghanistan (November)
4	Human rights updates posted online
4	Youth-led organizations engaged
9	Organizations engaged that work on disability issues
15	Press releases and statements on human rights-related issues
28	Women's organizations engaged
69	Members of CSOs engaged
80	In-person monitoring missions
84	Human rights awareness-raising sessions with the DFA
129	Visits to places of detention
137	Advocacy campaigns on human rights topics
390	Human rights defenders engaged
1,752	Incidents verified in person
3,083	Individuals reached (125 females) through human rights awareness-raising, including 2,655 de facto officials, 303 civil society actors and other individuals
6,325	Incidents followed up remotely, including remote monitoring of places of detention

Constructive engagements continued with the de facto Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Information and Culture, and Justice, as well as the de facto Office of Prison Administration, General Directorate of Intelligence, Ministry for Protection of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, and the High Directorate of Supervision and Prosecution of Decrees and Edicts, which contributed to:

- Inclusion of the DFA's comments, as an annex, in the two human rights thematic reports, coordinated through the de facto Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate for Human Rights and International Women's Affairs)
- Engagement with the DFA on the international human rights architecture and human rights terminology
- Continued access to places of detention and prisons
- Continued engagement with the DFA on emblematic cases of human rights violations
- Facilitation of contact between the de facto Office of Prison Administration and UN AFPs to meet basic detention standards as per the Mandela Rules relating to adequate food, healthcare, accommodation, and educational and vocational support
- Continued human rights awareness-raising with interlocutors, including the DFA

3.3 Human Rights and Women's Rights



Communities, CSOs, vulnerable groups, women, and other relevant stakeholders are more aware of and better equipped to promote and protect their human rights aligned with international norms and standards and mitigate threats to their safety and well-being.

In 2024, interventions focused on human rights, women's rights, and gender equality saw increased targets and some multiplied results compared to the previous year. This sector also received the relatively highest level of funding, with 89 per cent of the requested US\$26.9 million mobilized.

UN agencies pursued a deliberate strategy to financially support and build the capacity of NGOs and CSOs to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in an increasingly constrained environment for both women and women-led organizations. Some key initiatives included core grants to women's organizations from UN Women through dedicating programming, project funding to NGOs to help put their training into practice from UN Women and UNDP, and tailored capacity development geared towards ensuring their sustainability.

Two large programmes under UN Women and UNDP focused exclusively on these efforts and together invested over US\$32 million in civil society's capacities over the past two years.

Advocacy campaigns, supported by women's organizations and media outlets, disseminated informative flyers, organized community dialogues, and leveraged mass media campaigns to expand the reach of human rights and gender equality capacity-building and messaging. These activities were implemented not only at the central level in Kabul but also through extensive provincial consultations.

For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established 12 advocacy committees in twelve provinces, which collectively held 218 meetings,

exceeding planned targets, and significantly increasing direct outreach in these provinces. The longer-term contracting of media partners in the last quarter of 2023, with contracts valid until the first quarter of 2024, led to a notable increase in job opportunities for journalists, including a 30 per cent quota for female employment.

Targeted and systematic consultations with Afghan women were conducted throughout the year, including the joint UNAMA/UN Women/IOM quarterly consultations that ask Afghan women and men across the country about the status of women and girls (February, April, July, October 2024); the findings from a civil society submission process on Afghanistan's future (16 February 2024); a Digital Security and Online Protection guidance tool (UN Women/UNAMA 20 February 2024); the Future Projections for Afghan women and girls (UN Women 16 May 2024); Afghanistan Gender Country Profile (UN Women) and accompanying executive summary and infographic (UN Women 10 June 2024); and a policy brief titled Resolve of Afghan women in the face of erasure: Three years since the Taliban takeover (UN Women 13 August 2024).

Key achievements in 2024

Provided financial and/or capacity-building support to

513

national NGOs, CSOs and media outlets

to advance human rights, gender equality, non-discrimination, and media resilience

Produced

58

reports, data sets, tools, manuals

on human rights

Over 16.3 million people

were reached through advocacy, awareness-raising, and behaviour change programming on human rights, social norms, non-discrimination, and media (including media campaigns)

Employed

539

journalists and media activists

in various media positions

Lifeline Support to Afghan Media—Strengthening Resilience Amidst Uncertainty

Amid Afghanistan's deteriorating media landscape, UNESCO remains committed to press freedom, journalist safety, and public access to information. Since August 2021, nearly half of the country's media outlets have shut down, with 90 per cent of women journalists losing their jobs.

In 2024, through the STFA, UNESCO launched a media resilience and community awareness programme, supporting five local radio stations across the provinces of Ghazni, Khost, Logar Paktia, and Paktika to prevent closures.

Training & Capacity Building

UNESCO trained 75 journalists (34 per cent women) in professional ethics, investigative journalism, and digital content creation. Additionally, 65 community leaders received training to enhance media engagement and advocacy for information access. The programme also provided short-term income opportunities, offering financial relief to struggling journalists.

Impact on Journalists & Media

Nawazudin Reza, a journalist from Khost, credited the UNESCO-STFA programme for improving his skills, leading to his recruitment at Zhman Radio and TV. Kabir Khan Moshfiq, Director of Zhman Radio and TV, highlighted how UNESCO's support improved journalists' capabilities, strengthened local media, and raised public awareness for over 1 million people.

Information Dissemination

The programme facilitated 540 news reports on humanitarian issues, health, education, refugees, and climate resilience. Additionally, 105 roundtable discussions engaged diverse voices, fostering community dialogue and participation, reaching an estimated 8 million people in southeastern Afghanistan.

Through these efforts, UNESCO has strengthened Afghan media, empowered local communities, and reinforced the crucial role of independent journalism in promoting an informed and cohesive society.



"Since August 2021, nearly half of the country's media outlets have shut down, with 90 per cent of women journalists losing their jobs."

Nawazudin Reza, a journalist, presenting news at Zhman Radio's news studio following the UNESCO-STFA-supported capacity-building training in Khost Province.

© Zhman Radio

2.2. Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

Donor Engagement

Regular engagement with donors and member states based in Kabul but also those without a permanent presence in the country remained essential to implementing the joined-up approach. The facilitation of donor visits to Afghanistan and visits to donor capitals have proven essential to ensure a shared understanding of the evolving operational context and to demonstrate that the UN and its partners' delivery of humanitarian and basic human needs assistance is in alignment with donor-agreed principles.

For the first time, the European Union (EU) convened a Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Afghanistan addressing the three pillars—political, humanitarian, and basic human needs—over two days on 10 and 11 June 2024.

The meeting brought together representatives from the EU's 27 Member States, 13 additional Member States (including the United States, Canada, Japan, and Gulf countries), and national and international NGOs. The SOM addressed the three pillars of engagement in Afghanistan—political, humanitarian, and basic human needs/livelihoods, marking a holistic approach to the country's challenges. During the basic human needs segment, participants acknowledged that emergency responses alone are insufficient to address the current challenges and risks.

They emphasized the need for medium- and longer-term sustainable solutions to create stabilizing factors and address the root causes of vulnerability. The SOM placed particular focus on livelihood assistance as a cornerstone for job creation, income generation, skills development, and economic resilience. Notably, the discussions were enriched by the active participation of local voices, including Afghan NGO representatives and female activists.

The ACG, comprising donors, UN agencies, and IFIs, remained the main donor consultation structure for basic human needs programming in Afghanistan. The ACG convened two in-

person meetings in 2024—in Istanbul in March and Dubai in October. These meetings were co-chaired by UNAMA, the World Bank, and the EU Delegation as the current donor co-chair. While participants expressed mutual concerns over the adoption of the PVPV Law and its impact on Afghans, particularly women and girls, they reaffirmed their commitment to the transition from humanitarian assistance to basic human needs assistance, as well as to the Doha Process and the UN Independent Assessment. Although the donor community has not yet reached a consensus on the level of engagement with the DFA—particularly regarding capacity development and technical support—there is agreement to consider sector-specific needs and areas of common priority, with discussions ongoing. The STWGs of the ACG, supported by their respective UN, donor, and IFI co-chairs, have continued to serve as a critical platform for strategic discussions on sectoral challenges and priorities. These discussions feed into UN programming as well as thematic dialogues on the political track, including the Doha Process PSWG.

After nearly three years of operation, the ACG initiated a comprehensive review of its practices, structures, and processes in October 2024. This review aims to ensure that the coordination of basic human needs assistance remains relevant to the evolving operating environment since August 2021. The review will consider recent developments, including the 2023 Independent Assessment on Afghanistan and Security Council Resolution 2721, and explore ways to strengthen the ACG as a coordination platform. This includes enhancing its role as an interface with the humanitarian aid architecture while firmly reaffirming the guiding principles of assistance delivery. The review process underscores the ACG's commitment to adapting its approach to meet the changing needs of the Afghan people while maintaining alignment with international priorities.

"The facilitation of donor visits to Afghanistan and visits to donor capitals have proven essential to ensure a shared understanding of the evolving operational context and to demonstrate that the UN and its partners' delivery of humanitarian and basic human needs assistance is in alignment with donor-agreed principles."



Earthquake-affected children in Chahak village, Herat Province, receive vital MHPSS support through an AHF-funded project.

© OCHA/Sayed Habib Bidell

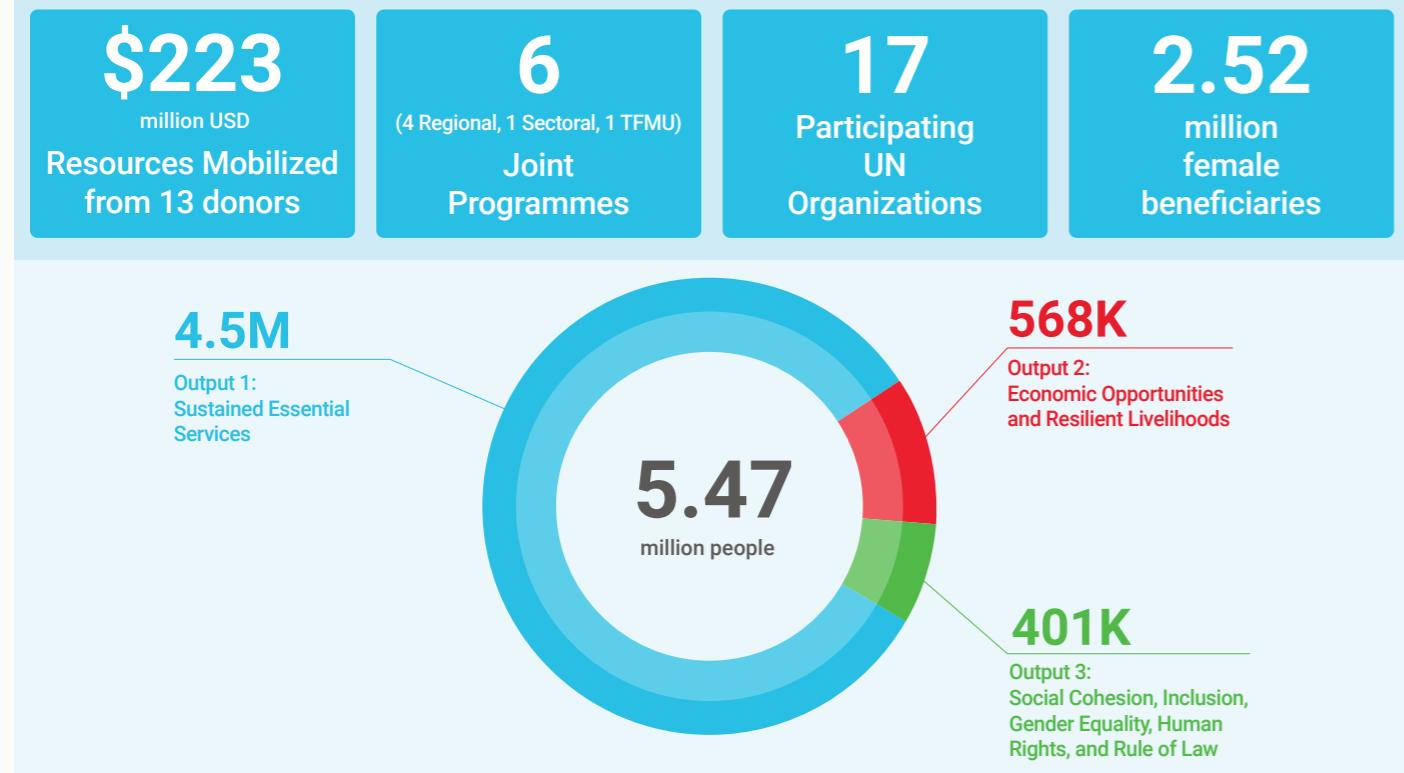
Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA)

Throughout 2024, the UN strengthened coordination with key donors and partners, including through pooled funding mechanisms, to advance the basic human needs agenda and support drivers of resilience for the people of Afghanistan, while continuing to secure resources for the humanitarian response. The STFA streamlined its strategic orientation, focusing on basic human needs with a particular emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment, durable solutions, and climate change adaptation. This streamlining also included tailoring the Fund's strategic direction in terms of the scale, scope, and geographic coverage of programme delivery. In 2024, the Fund commenced implementation of four sectoral projects focusing on durable solutions for returnees, IDPs, and host communities; post-earthquake response to help earthquake-affected

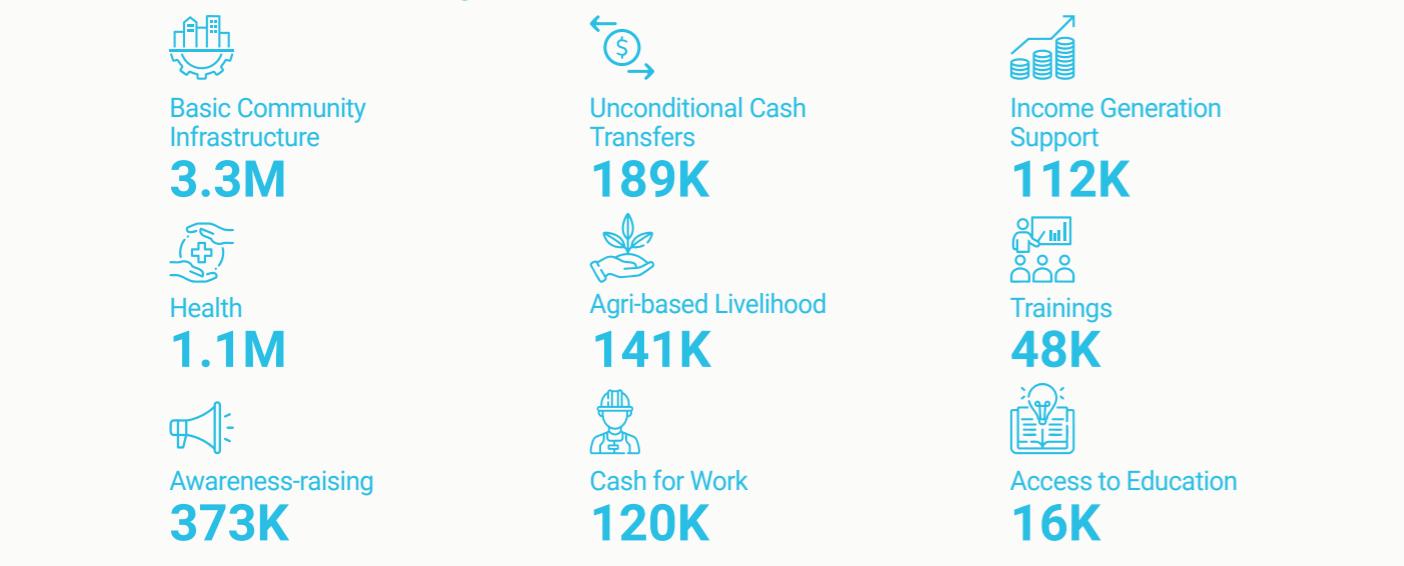
communities meet their basic needs; a drug use prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation initiative targeting drug users; and a capacity-strengthening initiative targeting local organizations with a focus on women.

In 2024, the Fund had 13 contributing partners (an increase from 12 in the previous year) and mobilized US\$43.8 million. The Fund also launched the Opportunities and Means for Internally Displaced Afghans (OMID, the Pashto and Dari word for hope) crowdfunding campaign to complement ongoing resource mobilization efforts. The crowdfunding campaign aims to raise US\$1 million to support displaced Afghans by establishing 1,000 local businesses, creating thousands of jobs, and fostering sustainable economic growth. The businesses will receive technical training, small grants, and essential equipment, making a long-term impact on livelihoods and economic growth for Afghanistan.

STFA progress until June 2024



Beneficiaries reached through STFA



STFA donors



2.3. Results of the UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

Humanitarian-basic human needs coordination

To facilitate the strategic transition from humanitarian assistance to basic human needs programming at every stage of implementation, the UN has prioritized the development of joint and interoperable data systems across humanitarian and basic human needs initiatives. This effort aims to enable more evidence-based planning and strengthen accountability, recognizing the DFA as the primary duty bearers for the delivery of essential services. A joint United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)/ United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (RCO)-organized a data workshop on 7 August, marked the beginning of this work, fostering greater alignment on data management across the humanitarian and basic human needs communities. Key outcomes include the establishment of regular data exchanges on common platforms, the development of joint response monitoring products, and the harmonization of data metrics and collection cycles.

Gender mainstreaming

In line with the focus on maintaining a principled approach, the UN pursued gender equality and gender mainstreaming across all aspects of planning processes, partnerships, leadership, and organizational culture. In October 2024, the UNCT adopted the Gender Parity Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan, as well as completed the first-ever UNCT System-Wide Gender Equality Scorecard Assessment for Afghanistan and its corresponding Action Plan. The Gender Parity Strategy outlines mechanisms and actions to achieve equal representation of women and men at all staffing levels, gender responsiveness in recruitment, retention,

and career advancement, as well as specific considerations for gender parity in field and mission settings. In addition, taking into account best practices developed by UN AFPs over the last couple of years, the operational guidance on "Temporary Provisions for Payment of Mahram for Women Personnel of United Nations in Afghanistan" was revised, to ensure safe travel of the women to the field and ensuring continued commitments towards gender parity in the workforce.

On par with the HCT guidelines for gender-responsive humanitarian programming, the UN developed a technical guidance document for mainstreaming gender into basic human needs programming. A gender capacity and training needs assessment for UN personnel was also conducted, developing priority training materials on gender concepts and frameworks, integration of gender into strategic planning processes, gender mainstreaming in projects and programmes, and designing and implementing gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation systems. Moving forward, a key priority will be the implementation of the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, which includes strengthening gender-responsive leadership, allocating resources, and enhancing accountability for gender equality results.

A review of UN staff dynamics revealed that, despite the significant loss of national staff—431 males (16 per cent) and 268 females (48 per cent) left the country since 2021—the UN increased its personnel by recruiting 307 males (an 11 per cent increase) and 234 females (a 42 per cent increase). As a result, the gender gap among national staff narrowed, with the proportion of women rising from 17 per cent to 21 per cent of the UN's workforce in Afghanistan.

"The UN increased its personnel by recruiting 307 males (an 11 per cent increase) and 234 females (a 42 per cent increase). As a result, the gender gap among national staff narrowed, with the proportion of women rising from 17 per cent to 21 per cent of the UN's workforce in Afghanistan."

Climate resilience

Climate resilience was identified as a key cross-cutting priority within the UNSFA and one that should be systematically integrated into all project designs and implementation plans. Climate change with a focus on water was also identified as a common priority in the High-Level Coordination Forum. Interlinked with Afghanistan's climate challenges, UNAMA and the World Bank launched the Afghanistan Water Platform in February 2024 with the aim of improving knowledge-sharing, coordination, and joint investment in Afghanistan's water sector, addressing one of the country's most pressing climate-related issues.

Throughout the year, the UN has worked to facilitate a more joined-up approach to climate resilience in Afghanistan, including through the creation of an informal climate dialogue platform between national and international stakeholders and the DFA aimed at improving climate resilience for the Afghan people through fostering dialogue, coordination, and knowledge-sharing. This dialogue platform identified priority areas for further engagement, which fed into multistakeholder technical talks hosted by Norway in Doha from 31 July to 1 August 2024, including representatives from de facto ministries, member states, UN, NGOs, and male and female Afghan subject matter experts. During these discussions, the DFA

repeatedly expressed their commitment to Afghanistan's obligations under various multilateral environmental conventions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. In late 2024, the de facto National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) advanced work on Afghanistan's Nationally Determined Contributions. Advancements were also made in Afghan participation at the UNFCCC COP29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November. Notably, while only one Afghan civil society member had attended COP27 in person since 2021, seven Afghans from Kabul attended COP29. This delegation included three civil society members accredited as observer NGOs to UNFCCC, an Afghan female youth climate activist, and three de facto NEPA officials as guests of the host state.

Building Climate Resilience: How a Flood Protection Wall Revived an Afghan Community

Once a thriving community, Shadi Bera in Herat Province became a ghost town as floods forced families to abandon homes, land, and livelihoods. Over 400 families, reliant on agriculture, saw their mud houses repeatedly destroyed by worsening floods linked to climate change.

Despite contributing little to global emissions, Afghanistan ranks among the top 10 countries most affected by climate change. Since 2022, climate change has overtaken conflict as the leading cause of displacement. In May 2024, deadly flash floods devastated several provinces, killing 210 people and destroying over 4,000 homes.

"In spring, we struggle with dust and floods; in winter, with harsh snow," said Fatima, 26, who was forced to leave Shadi Bera. "One time, we had to sleep on our roof for a week because our house was submerged."

Severe droughts and floods have worsened over the past three years, affecting over half the population, causing water shortages, food insecurity, and economic hardship.

However, change has come to Shadi Bera. IOM, working with the local community, built a flood protection wall, shielding the village from the May 2024 floods. "Before, floods destroyed my crops.

This year, thanks to the wall, our wheat production increased," said Gul, 70.

IOM strengthens disaster resilience by constructing protective structures like walls, dikes, and canals; creating jobs; and improving preparedness through early warning training.

Shadi Bera is transforming—families are returning—and the economy is slowly recovering. "Floods forced nearly everyone to leave," said Abdullah, 75. "Thanks to this wall, half the population has returned, and we can farm again."



The flood wall brought life back to the community in Shadi Bera.

© IOM/Mohammad Osman Azizi

Durable Solutions to Displacement

In 2024, the UN and its partners advanced durable solutions for displacement in Afghanistan through significant investments in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus approach. Key milestones included the endorsement of the National Solutions Plan in February 2024 by the Durable Solutions Steering Group, targeting internally displaced populations in five regions. In May, the UN launched the Integrated Appeal for Afghan Returnees from Pakistan, informed by the Afghanistan Returnees Recovery Needs Assessment (ARRNA), a joint initiative by the UN, World Bank, and partners.

In 2024, the UN and its partners reached 3,260,877 people in Displacement

Affected Communities (DACs), focusing on priority Areas of Return.

With a budget of US\$182,945,962, interventions addressed key needs, including unconditional cash grants, housing subsidies, essential services, civil documentation, livelihood support, renewable energy solutions, protection, and social cohesion initiatives. These efforts contributed to long-term recovery and resilience-building for refugees, returnees, and IDPs.

The Durable Solutions Coordination structure expanded at national and sub-national levels across all eight regions of Afghanistan.

International and national NGOs (I/NNGOs) were invited to join the Durable Solutions Steering Group, chaired by the DSRSG/RC/HC. Additionally, four new Technical Working Groups were established under the National Durable Solutions Working Group (N-DSWG), co-convened by international and national NGOs (I/NNGOs). New partnerships, notably with the Joint IDP Profiling Service, supported sub-national displacement data baselines using an area-based approach.

Close collaboration with IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, OCHA, and REACH/IMPACT facilitated a national survey to harmonize and consolidate data on internal

displacement, led by the UN in coordination with the de facto Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation.

A principled, risk-aware approach strengthened engagement with the DFA at national and sub-national levels to support refugees, returnees, and IDPs. A Joint Technical Committee, co-chaired by the Durable Solutions Secretariat at RCO, OCHA, and de facto Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, facilitated the voluntary return of IDPs from Informal Settlements (ISETs). In December 2024, the first pilot saw 111 households voluntarily return to Chahardara District, Kunduz.

A framework to advance the HDP nexus approach

was developed and endorsed, focusing on joint coordination, data collection, location prioritization, and advocacy on displacement issues with the DFA.

Community Resource Centres (CRCs) emerged as a best practice in 2024 and were replicated in several regions. These centres serve as collaborative hubs for multisectoral support, anchored in the joint efforts of UN agencies and NGOs to deliver integrated services to IDPs, returnees, and host communities. CRCs have proven to be safe spaces for women and girls, offering a range of services while minimizing duplication of efforts and maximizing the impact of interventions.

To further advance durable solutions, the UN will continue to prioritize data harmonization and evidence-based decision-making, community-centric approaches for social cohesion sustainable (re)integration, and scaling up area-based programming to address displacement root causes and build resilience.

Chamtala: A Story of Resilience and Transformation

Nestled between Surkhrod and Khogyani districts in Nangarhar Province, Chamtala has become a beacon of hope for over 16,900 households, including returnees from Pakistan and IDPs. Established in 2008 by the Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation, this settlement has transformed through resilience and collaboration.

At the heart of its success is the Chamtala CRC, where UN agencies and NGOs like WFP, UNHCR, UN Women, UNICEF, ILO, IOM, UNMAS, BRAC and Homeland Youths Social Inventive Organization (HYSIO) work together to provide multi-sectoral services to support IDPs, returnees, and the host community. These organizations offer emergency food, healthcare, education, vocational training, legal services, and mine awareness programmes, helping residents rebuild their lives.

For example, WFP provides food assistance to vulnerable households, while UNHCR offers protection and reintegration-enabling support to refugees and returnees. UN Women focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment, partnering with other organizations to provide Women's Rest Area and vocational training for women and linking them with the markets whereas UNMAS provides mine awareness to the returnees from Pakistan as well as to the former IDPs now returning to their place of habitual living in this district.

The CRC facilitates this collaboration by providing space and resources, ensuring effective service delivery, and avoiding duplication of efforts. It plays a crucial role in linking needs and resources, providing referral services, coordinating interventions, identifying gaps, and advocating for the community. For instance, UNICEF works with other agencies to provide child-friendly spaces and education programmes, while the International Rescue Committee (IRC) enhances healthcare services and supports economic opportunities for residents. This coordinated approach enhances the effectiveness of interventions, ensuring comprehensive support for the residents of Chamtala settlement.

Chamtala has overcome challenges such as water insecurity, unemployment, and inadequate healthcare. With improved infrastructure, livelihood programmes, and expanded healthcare services, the community has seen significant progress. Women have benefitted from gender equality initiatives, while children now have access to educational programs and child-friendly spaces.

The coordinated efforts of humanitarian organizations have made Chamtala a model of successful reintegration and community development. Chamtala serves as a good practice of joined-up programming, integrated and complementing various sectoral interventions, each led by a different UN agency or an NGO, contributing to creating a bigger and lasting impact.



A delegation from the STFA co-chair Norway visits Chamtala Community Resource Centre. © STFA Afghanistan

Efficiencies and Business Operations Strategy

In support of the United Nations Secretary-General's Efficiency Agenda, the UN in Afghanistan continued to implement its results-based framework Business Operations Strategy (BOS), adopted in September 2020.

The objective of the BOS is to identify and implement joint business operations with the purpose of eliminating duplication, leveraging the common bargaining power of the UN, and maximizing economies of scale, as well as reducing transaction costs. Significant progress has been made towards achieving the annual objectives outlined in the BOS, demonstrating improved economies of scale, primarily through shared common premises, joint customs clearance, solar powered electricity supply, etc. These efforts have collectively contributed to greater value for money.

The BOS annual review for Afghanistan estimated a cost avoidance and efficiency gain

of US\$10.9 million in 2024, a further increase from approximately US\$8.8 million realized in 2023. In 2024, UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes have focused on increased use of Common Premises, with a focus on ensuring compliance with security standards, adhering to the United Nations Minimum Operating

Security Standards (MOSS), and improving cost efficiency by reducing operational expenses.

To optimize available resources and maximize the use of limited financial resources, eight UN AFPs relocated from individual offices to co-locate within UN compounds in 2024.

UN Common Risk Management Approach

In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2626 and given the heightened reputational risks associated with delivering assistance in Afghanistan, the UN established a system-wide Risk Management Team that, supported by the UNAMA Risk Management Coordination Section, guides the UNCT in adopting a unified approach to risk management. The UN common risk

"Significant progress has been made towards achieving the annual objectives outlined in the BOS, demonstrating improved economies of scale, primarily through shared common premises, joint customs clearance, solar powered electricity supply, etc."

management framework aims to ensure effective aid delivery and strengthen the mitigation of shared reputational risks. The approach is centred around three key objectives:

- 1) Identify and assess common risks across the UN agencies to enable risk-informed decision-making;
- 2) Facilitate joint UN efforts to improve risk management processes including assessment and response to potential fraud and corruption exposure;
- 3) Ensure consistency and transparency in reporting mechanisms to donors and key stakeholders, including information sharing on risks and controls.

Key Achievements in 2024 include:

- Operationalized an online dashboard to monitor and report on common risks and their mitigation measures, ensuring real-time tracking and transparency.
- Strengthened risk mitigation efforts by coordinating with action owners and tracking the implementation of mitigation actions progress.
- Expanded the use of the Contract Information Management System (CIMS), engaging eight UN agencies and compiling a substantial database of contractors and contract details to support the vetting process.
- Established ad hoc task forces to conduct in-depth analyses of critical risk areas. As part of this effort, the Risk Management Team conducted two key surveys: one on the due diligence process for UN contractors and another on UN anti-aid diversion efforts in Afghanistan.
- Organized two Risk Management workshops in collaboration with the World Bank, held alongside the ACG meetings.
- Updated the UN Common Risk Assessment for 2025 as shown in the table below.

Real-life Risk Management Example from Southern Afghanistan

After a food distribution of WFP in the southern region, a small amount of wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses and salt remained. When partner staff attempted to return the food to the warehouse, as per WFP's protocols, they were arrested, and the commodities were seized by the de facto District Governor (DG).

The incident was immediately reported along an established communication chain that included the partner, the WFP Area Office, and the WFP Country Office. All three began engagement with DFA counterparts at district, provincial, and national levels. Priorities were, firstly, to secure the release of the colleagues, secondly, to regain custody of the food, and, thirdly, to obtain credible assurances that such incidents will not be repeated.

Efforts at the district level met resistance, but engagement at the provincial and ministerial levels, including support from the de facto Ministry of Foreign Affairs and de facto Ministry of Interior, applied increasing pressure. Eventually, the de facto DG was summoned to the de facto Provincial Governor, and the staff and commodities were released shortly thereafter.

This incident highlights that WFP and its partners are prepared to quickly mobilize coordinated responses on different levels, and in coordination with enabling de facto authorities, to mitigate risks, including those related to staff safety, interference and diversion, and operational continuity.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH)

In 2024, the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) Network expanded significantly, growing from originally 16 UN entities to 321 member organizations, including UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs, and donors. Co-led by UNFPA and the IMC, under the leadership of the DSRSG/RC/HC, the network now engages over 320 organizations and 560 focal points, 45 per cent of whom are women, to foster a safe environment where affected individuals can access assistance without fear of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) while ensuring aid workers are supported to deliver assistance free from sexual harassment (SH).

The expansion of the PSEAH Network reflects a growing collective commitment to inclusive safeguarding, enabling diverse actors (i.e., humanitarian response, basic human needs, and special political mission) to contribute to its efforts. Afghanistan's UNCT strategically merged SEA and SH programming to address overlapping risks, streamlining standard operating procedures (SOPs), referral pathways, and reporting mechanisms. This approach enhances accountability, builds trust, and ensures timely support for victims, witnesses, communities, staff, and partners.

Key achievements in 2024 included:

- **Strengthening data-driven approaches:**

The Network leads annual mapping for all member organizations to assess network member and partner capabilities, internal policies, and reporting mechanisms.

Quarterly community assessments, conducted with the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Working Group, have engaged 30,000 community members, ensuring tailored interventions based on location, gender, and disability status.

- **Progress in SEA risk mitigation:**

Afghanistan improved its ranking in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Overview (SEARO), moving from one of the highest-risk countries down to the fourth position. The PSEAH protection score improved from 6.1 to 4.9 (10 being the highest risk), reflecting collective efforts.

- **SEARO tool implementation:** Afghanistan is one of two countries globally selected to pilot the SEARO tool, which assesses in-country adaptability and usage. The tool identifies SEA risk factors by integrating structural, hierarchical, situational, and protection indicators, enabling tailored and evidence-based interventions.

- **Victim support and referral pathways:**

The PSEAH Network has launched a dedicated helpline for focal points to access gender-based violence (GBV) referral pathways and victim support services. The Network ensures access to medical and psychosocial support, Victim Rights Advocacy, livelihood assistance, GBV safety planning, and legal guidance, expanding services to male victims (amidst the increased risks for boys).

- **Unified communication strategy:** A PSEAH communication strategy and associated communications materials were developed within an Islamic framework and aligned with local cultural norms, gaining approval

from the de facto Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. This marks the first time PSEA issues were formally discussed with the DFA.

- **Support for PSEA focal points:** Recognizing the significant stress faced by focal points, monthly well-being and security sessions were introduced in collaboration with the UNCT and the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), providing peer support and capacity-building opportunities.

- **Regional Sub-Working Groups:** Four regional sub-working groups in Kandahar (South), Mazar-e-Sharif (North), Herat (West), and Bamyan (Central) were established to strengthen local coordination, adapt safeguarding measures to community contexts, and improve response mechanisms.

- **Scenario-based training:** Training using real-world PSEAH scenarios equips focal points, partners, and frontline workers with practical skills for handling SEA and SH cases, ensuring survivor-centred support.

These collective efforts reinforce Afghanistan's commitment to safeguarding and accountability, ensuring a more coordinated and survivor-focused PSEAH response.

Awaaz Afghanistan: A UN Joint Initiative with Transformative Impact

In a country facing conflict, natural disasters, and socioeconomic challenges, timely and accurate information is critical for millions in need. Awaaz Afghanistan, the country's first humanitarian call centre, exemplifies the UN's commitment to ensuring that every voice is heard.

Launched in May 2018 and administered by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Awaaz has handled over 530,000 calls, directly addressing vulnerable populations' needs. With over 180 humanitarian agencies collaborating and sharing data, it has become a pillar of inter-agency accountability in Afghanistan.

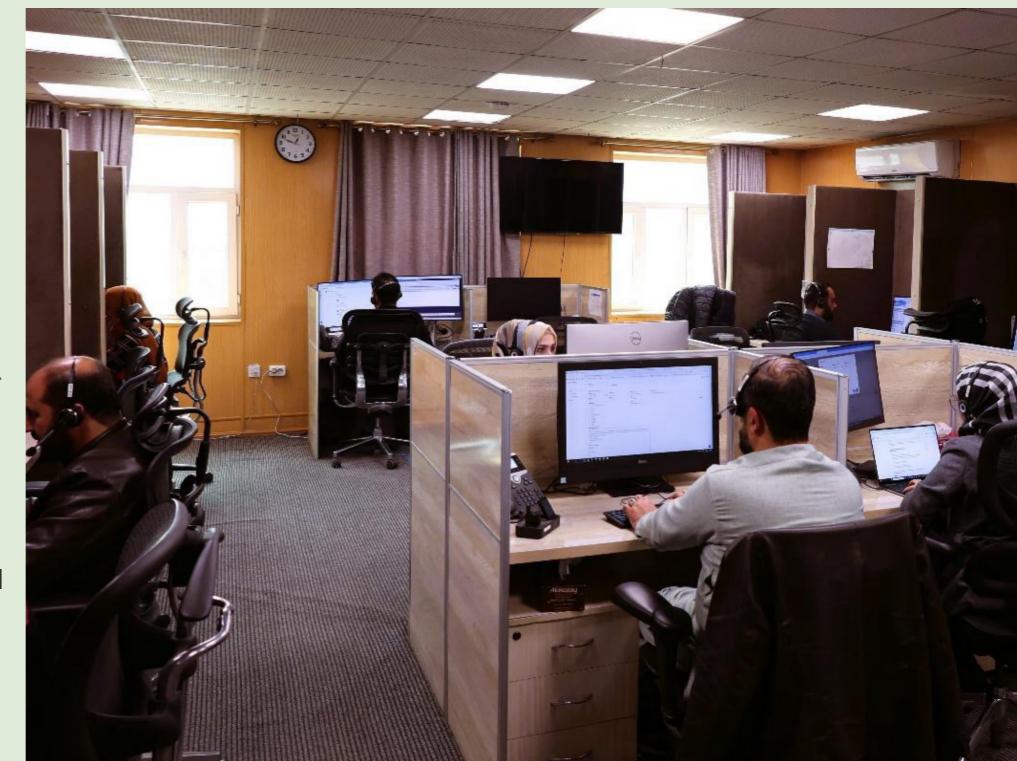
"Awaaz strengthens community engagement, fosters collaboration, and enhances humanitarian accountability," said Jorge Moreira da Silva, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNOPS Executive Director.

One notable case involved a widowed mother in western Afghanistan who received a fraudulent call demanding she return her humanitarian aid. Unsure where to turn, she contacted Awaaz. The team investigated, identified the caller as a scammer, and ensured that she retained her much-needed assistance.

"Awaaz is a shared commitment—an intersection of challenges, hope, and resilience. It amplifies voices, especially those of women and girls, that might otherwise go unheard," said Indrika Ratwatte, DSRSG/RC/HC.

Beyond crisis response, Awaaz plays a key role in shaping future development. "It does more than address immediate needs; it informs long-term solutions," said Takayoshi Kuromiya, Ambassador of Japan to Afghanistan.

With continued support from the AHF, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Japan, UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, IOM, WFP, UNHCR, and the World Bank, Awaaz remains a beacon of hope, helping Afghans navigate crises while strengthening community resilience.



Awaaz Afghanistan call center operators providing vital information and support to affected communities.

© UNOPS/Awaaz

"Awaaz has handled over 530,000 calls, directly addressing vulnerable populations' needs. With over 180 humanitarian agencies collaborating and sharing data, it has become a pillar of inter-agency accountability in Afghanistan."

2.4 Evaluations and Lessons Learned

In April and May 2024, the UNCT (29 April 2024) and the Programme Management Team (PMT) (1 May 2024) held retreats in service of advancing towards a positioning of the UN system in Afghanistan. The following strategic objectives were adopted.

Collaborative and joined-up action: The UN committed to enhancing its efforts towards fostering greater coherence, complementarity, integration, efficiency, coordination, and impact through strengthening and institutionalizing joined-up approaches in support of the people of Afghanistan. Efforts in this regard include:

- Increased and closer collaboration between humanitarian and basic human needs partners and their respective coordination mechanisms (i.e., UNCT, HCT, and ACG);

- Improved complementarity and sequencing of programming to endeavour that basic human needs interventions tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability and humanitarian needs; and

- Improved integrated and multidimensional data collection, research, and analysis.

Consistent and coherent approaches to engagement with the DFA: All UN entities committed to increased transparency and information sharing with regards to approaches to engagement with the de facto authorities, adoption of common advocacy and messaging in their engagements, and ensuring consistent positions with regards to support provided.

In another reflection in August, the UNCT agreed that the overall strategic priorities identified in the UNSFA continue to be relevant to guide the UN's planning and programmatic work beyond 2025 and decided **to extend the UNSFA for another two years (until December 2027)** to align with the duration of regular Cooperation Frameworks and enable stronger focus on implementation and required operational adjustments.

"The UN committed to enhancing its efforts towards fostering greater coherence, complementarity, integration, efficiency, coordination, and impact through strengthening and institutionalizing joined-up approaches in support of the people of Afghanistan."

Advancing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus:

Building on commitments outlined in the UNSFA, the UN endeavoured to increase its efforts on the effective operationalization of the HDP nexus in Afghanistan. This includes:

- Increased and closer collaboration between humanitarian and basic human needs partners and their respective coordination mechanisms (i.e., UNCT, HCT, and ACG);
- Improved complementarity and sequencing of programming to endeavour that basic human needs interventions tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability and humanitarian needs; and
- Improved integrated and multidimensional data collection, research, and analysis.

2.5. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilisation



Despite the globally constrained funding environment, overall resources to Afghanistan for basic human needs but also when combined with support to humanitarian assistance increased in 2024 as compared to the previous year. Key enabling factors were intensive exchanges with donors to ensure greater levels of transparency, particularly on principled engagement with the DFA around the complex operational environment and continuous reporting on delivering results for Afghans, especially for women and girls. In extension of the joined-up approach, the UNCT and HCT developed a Joint Resource Mobilisation Strategy. This initiative aims to proactively address the international community's concerns around aid delivery in Afghanistan. Specifically, the strategy outlines concrete steps to demonstrate a commitment to reaching more women and girls, strengthening the evidence base for assistance, enhancing coordination among UN agencies and partners, and instituting robust monitoring and evaluation. The strategy further stipulates that the aid community will move forward with principled engagement that urges the DFA to meet its international commitments while also:

- Providing donors with realistic proposals that recognise tightening budgets and show **joined up approaches**, including through the use of pooled funds, that put women and girls at the centre of the aid community's work for the Afghan people;
- Operating in a **transparent manner that acknowledges challenges** such as the PVPV Law implementation, aid diversion, and intrusive policies while offering approaches to mitigate these; and
- Encouraging **donors to see for themselves** that while there are many challenges working under the DFA, there are also many opportunities to reach vulnerable groups.

Engagement with a broad spectrum of member states and donor countries is

essential to keep Afghan people on the list of priorities and, critically, to ensure that the UN and partners can fulfil their role as a vital line of defence for women and girls.

Climate Financing: Vertical Funds, Bilateral and Multilateral Support

Since 2021, financing from major climate and environmental vertical funds—such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Adaptation Fund—has been paused or suspended. While two pre-existing GEF projects continued under direct implementation, no new projects were approved by the three funds in 2022 and 2023.

On 13 June 2024, the GEF Secretariat conditionally approved a US\$8.98 million grant to UNDP for the Community-based Climate responsive Livelihoods and Forestry (CCLF) project, marking the first grant approved in Afghanistan by a climate or vertical environmental fund since

August 2021. The project utilizes direct implementation modalities. However, GCF funding remains suspended, with ongoing efforts to explore resumption options.

Afghanistan has also been included in the GEF Small Grants Program, implemented by UNDP with a launch anticipated in 2026. Additionally, opportunities under the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) are being explored. These steps indicate gradual re-engagement with the GEF, though challenges persist in aligning sustainable development goals with urgent humanitarian needs. This dual approach—addressing urgent priorities while building resilience—demands innovative mechanisms to access climate financing effectively.

Beyond vertical funds, climate resilience activities are supported by bilateral and multilateral donors under the UNSFA as a cross-cutting issue. However, there is no clear definition or monitoring framework for these efforts. In June 2024, the EU finalized a preliminary mapping of climate resilience efforts undertaken since August 2021, which highlighted US\$451 million in financing

fully focused on projects in five specified categories: i) resilient community-scaled investments; ii) climate-smart water and agriculture; iii) resilient natural capital; iv) climate hazard resilience; and v) multi-area integrated approaches. An additional US\$971 million involved activities partially focused on climate resilience.



When children reach one of the UNICEF-supported transit centres, social workers interview them about their background, family details and their journey to determine which services to connect them with. While they wait to return home, they enjoy a wide range of recreational activities at the centre.

© UNICEF Afghanistan/2024/Phwitiko

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS (UNSF) 2024 funding US\$					
Thematic areas	Funding required	Funding available	% Funding	Expenditure	
Outcome - 1	2.37B	1.34B	 57%	1.16B	
Health & Nutrition	1.16B	774.0M	 73%	664.1M	
Education	452.0M	256.5M	 57%	224.0M	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	351.0M	49.1M	 14%	45.1M	
Social Protection	376.2M	177.7M	 47%	152.3M	
Protection	133.4M	85.0M	 64%	73.0M	
Outcome - 2	860.4M	213.9M	 25%	156.4M	
Economic Stabilization	2.1M	1.0M	 49%	443.7M	
Private Sector Development	142.4M	61.6M	 43%	54.8M	
Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Management	716.0M	151.3M	 21%	110.2M	
Outcome - 3	49.4M	38.1M	 77%	21.2M	
Social cohesion, Inclusion, and Reconciliation	21.5M	13.3M	 62%	5.0M	
Rule of Law	1.0M	0.7M	 72%	238.6M	
Human rights and Women's rights/Gender Equality	26.9M	24.1M	 90%	16.0M	
Total	3.28B	1.59B	49%	1.33B	

UNSF, UNINFO*

Table 1: Funding by agency (UNSF) 2024 fundings million US\$.

Agency	Funding required	Funding available	% Funding	Expenditure
FAO	582.0	79.6	14%	55.2
ILO	16.9	3.2	19%	2.7
IOM	226.8	54.0	24%	43.8
OHCHR	0.1	0.1	100%	0.1
UNHCR	158.1	69.8	44%	61.1
UNCTAD	6.2	3.7	60%	2.3
UNDP	168.9	138.0	82%	72.9
UNESCO	34.8	17.9	51%	17.9
UNFPA	98.3	97.0	99%	89.5
UNHABITAT	14.1	6.6	46%	4.6
UNICEF	1275.1	700.0	55%	697.5
UNIDO	0.8	0.7	96%	0.5
UNITAR	0.6	0.6	100%	0.6
UNMAS	15.6	1.0	6%	0.7
UNODC	63.6	15.5	24%	11.4
UNOPS	111.3	109.2	98%	102.2
UNWOMEN	54.3	54.3	100%	45.3
WFP	250.3	109.6	44%	68.0
WHO	205.7	133.3	65%	59.8
Total	3283.5	1594.2	49%	1336.1



Chapter III

The UNICEF-supported child-friendly space in Mirwais Hospital brings a smile to children's faces and relieves parents from worrying about childcare while they seek care from the doctor.
© UNICEF Afghanistan/Phwitiko

Into the Future - UNCT Key Focus for Next Year

The funding outlook for Afghanistan remains precarious due to competing global crises and restrictive policies by the DFA, with ongoing financial constraints significantly impacting the scale and scope of humanitarian and basic human needs programmes. Several donors have indicated that their budgets for humanitarian and basic human needs assistance will decrease substantially in 2025, with some reductions as high as 50 per cent.

Empowering a joined-up approach to programming collaboration, fostering inclusivity, and driving sustainable development will remain central to the UN's efforts in 2025. The UN will focus on maximizing synergies across all agencies, funds, and programmes while forging stronger nexus linkages to support the Afghan people in achieving the outcomes outlined in the UNSFA.

Strengthening Efficiencies and Alignment

The UN will continue to enhance joined-up collaboration among its entities and with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment in planning, analysis, and effective resource utilization. Efforts will continue to facilitate a responsible and agile transition from humanitarian assistance to addressing basic human needs and achieving medium-term basic human needs outcomes. Simplifying aid coordination, promoting convergence, and ensuring accountability will be key to maintaining momentum and delivering impactful results. Priority efforts will focus on a comprehensive review of the aid

architecture and coordination structure in Afghanistan to ensure it is fit for purpose as well as on strengthening joint operations for cost savings and efficiencies including through the move towards common premises.

Principled Approach for Inclusive and Sustainable Interventions

The UN will advocate for interventions and engagement that promote basic human needs, human rights, gender equality, and climate resilience, tailored to Afghanistan's unique context and challenges. The UN will prioritize the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, returnees, and refugees. Efforts will focus on ensuring that basic human needs initiatives are inclusive and equitable, leaving no one behind. This includes working with the DFA to ensure principled delivery of assistance and aligning basic human needs interventions with the priorities set out in the UNSFA, reinforced by the ACG Framework and Principles.

"Efforts will continue to facilitate a responsible and agile transition from humanitarian assistance to addressing basic human needs and achieving medium-term basic human needs outcomes. Simplifying aid coordination, promoting convergence, and ensuring accountability will be key to maintaining momentum and delivering impactful results."



Beekeeping offers locals a reliable source of sustenance and income in various regions of the country.

© UNDP Afghanistan

Demonstrating Impact Through Increased Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Interoperability

The UN will strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and report on results in line with the UNSFA results framework. This will include identifying gaps and challenges, adapting strategies accordingly, and ensuring the interoperability of data with the humanitarian response to provide a comprehensive view of assistance across Afghanistan and collective efforts to update baseline data in critical areas such as nutrition, health, and displacement in order to facilitate evidence-based programming and enable demonstration of impact.

Enhancing Humanitarian-Development-Peace Coordination and Complementarity

Effective coordination and synergies among the HCT, UNCT, UNAMA, and other stakeholders will be prioritized to

maximize the impact and sustainability of interventions. This includes advancing the two collective outcomes of the HNRP and the UNSFA: reducing food insecurity and reducing maternal and child mortality rates. Furthermore, the two technical Working Groups established under the Doha Process on private sector development and counternarcotics pertain to core areas of UN agency implementation. The Doha Process working groups provide an opportunity to further strengthen the work undertaken in these areas and to build new partnerships with interested Member States to complement ongoing efforts. The working groups also provide another avenue to engage in aid dialogue with the DFA in line with the Independent Assessment (S/2023/856) to strengthen the resilience of Afghan people in the long-term and reduce aid dependency.

Annexes

Children enjoy using the entertainment facilities at their school, which were built by the United Nations in Kunduz Province.

@Ahmad Khalid Khaliqi/UNAMA



Annex 1

UNSFA Output Indicator Performance

January – December 2024

Output 1.1: Health and nutrition systems have improved and resilient capacities and resources to deliver accessible, affordable, gender- and age-responsive, shock-responsive, and culturally acceptable essential healthcare and nutrition services that prioritize the most vulnerable.

Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
1.1.1. Number of people accessing primary health care (PHC) services with UN support. ¹	29,960,444	32,064,728 18,900,824 F 13,163,904 M	107%	Exceeding target
1.1.2. Number of health facilities constructed, rehabilitated or equipped for the provision of essential health services with UN support.	5,576	3,659	66%	Approaching target
1.1.3. Number of deliveries by skilled birth attendants at service delivery points with UN support.	47,955	57,497	120%	Exceeding target
1.1.4. Number of children under one year reached with Penta-3 vaccine with UN support. ²	1,796,000	1,234,222 599,605 F 634,617 M	69%	Approaching target
1.1.5. Number of children 6-59 months with SAM and MAM admitted for treatment with UN support.	2,672,659	2,129,559 1,214,231 F 915,328 M	80%	Approaching target

Output 1.2: Formal and non-formal public, private, and community-based education systems are better able to sustain and increase access to inclusive, safe, and quality education opportunities for girls, boys, youth, and adults – especially girls and young women – across all levels of education.

Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
1.2.1. Number of people accessing education services with UN support (disaggregated by formal education, informal, non-formal education, community-based education, TVET, alternative education, education level, sex, location, disability status, etc.)	190,557	265,362 134,776 F 130,586 M	139%	Exceeding target
1.2.2. Number of children in public education (including shock affected/vulnerable girls and boys) reached with emergency education support.	6,118,479	3,646,602 1,413,663 F 2,232,939 M	60%	Approaching target
1.2.3. Number of primary and secondary formal and informal education facilities (i) constructed, (ii) rehabilitated, (iii) provided with alternative energy and/or (iv) equipped with gender-appropriate infrastructure with UN support.	228	48	21%	Missing target
1.2.4. Number of teachers trained with UN support including on inclusive, gender sensitive and innovative pedagogies, digital technologies, remote and blended teaching and learning.	1,200	962 333 F 629 M	80%	Approaching target
1.2.5. Number of education sector policy, planning and financing frameworks and tools developed and reviewed with UN support.	4	4	100%	Target Achieved

¹ This indicator counts the number of visits by individuals and an individual might have been counted multiple times. UNCEF only provided data up to September 2024 as they were unable to access the database containing this information during Q4 of 2024.

² UNCEF only provided data up to September 2024 as they were unable to access the database containing this information during Q4 of 2024.

Output 1.3: Stakeholders at national and subnational level are better able to manage and provide access to equitable, gender responsive, sustainable, climate resilient, and safe drinking water, improved sanitation, and positive hygiene practices in rural and poor urban communities.

Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
1.3.1. Number of people reached with at least basic water that is safe and available with UN support.	2,236,200	607,548 297,356 F 310,192 M	27%	Missing target
1.3.2. Number of people who gained access to at least basic sanitation services with UN support.	1,962,880	600,097 293,531 F 306,566 M	31%	Missing target
1.3.3. Number of people having access to basic hygiene services with UN support.	1,060,880	699,839 373,180 F 326,659 M	66%	Approaching target

Output 1.4: Inclusive, equitable, shock responsive national safety net systems are established and operational providing support to and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in Afghanistan.

Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
1.4.1. Number of people benefiting from short-term employment and improved livelihoods through cash for work activities with UN support.	993,650	987,495 62,069 F 925,426 M	99%	Approaching target
1.4.2. Number of households reached with social cash assistance with UN support.	155,000	1,823	1%	Missing target
1.4.3. Number of households reached with cash assistance to meet winter needs with UN support.	70,000	53,612	77%	Approaching target

Output 1.5: Relevant providers and stakeholders have strengthened capacities to increase access to and improve the provision of preventive, mitigating, and responsive protection services – including on child protection, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and explosive hazards – to the most vulnerable at family and community levels.

Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
1.5.1. Number of people reached by the awareness raising on protection services (mental health, GBV/psychosocial support, child protection, legal support) with UN support.	2,133,546	2,192,588 1,243,533 F 949,055 M	103%	Exceeding target
1.5.2. Number of women, men, girls and boys, receiving explosive ordnance risk education with UN support.	4,060,000	3,406,460 941,804 F 2,464,656 M	84%	Approaching target
1.5.3. Number of people reached with psychosocial support, child protection, and sexual exploitation and abuse response services disaggregated by age, sex, and location with UN support.	679,298	832,337 736,245 F 96,092 M	123%	Exceeding target
1.5.4. Number of organizations and facilities able to deliver and/or monitor the quality of protection services, resources, and goods for women, men, girls, and boys with UN support.	235	230	98%	Approaching target

Output 2.1: Economic and financial institutions and stakeholders have improved capacities to contribute to economic stabilization and pro-poor, private-sector-led economic recovery.

Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
2.1.1. (a) Number of loans disbursed to the Afghan private sector (including MSMEs, industries and producers) by financial institutions supported by the UN.	4,000	2,391	60%	Missing target

2.1.1. (b) Value of loans disbursed to the Afghan private sector (including MSMEs, industries and producers) by financial institutions supported by the UN.	5,000,000	4,267,361	85%	Approaching target
2.1.2. Number of newly developed Islamic financing products, including blended finance, available to MSMEs, big businesses and traders, with particular focus on women-led MSMEs, with UN support.	4	3	75%	Approaching target
2.1.3. Number of technical assistance and/or capacity development initiatives provided to economic and financial institutions, and employers' and workers' organizations with UN support.	10	20	200%	Exceeding target
2.1.4 Number of local companies and vendors and value of goods and services they are providing for use in humanitarian response and delivery of basic needs in UN assistance efforts. ³	Number: n/a Value: n/a	1,146 local firms with a value of US\$557.6 million	Number: n/a Value: n/a	Target Achieved
Output 2.2: Private sector enterprises, particularly MSMEs, have improved access to finance, asset support and business development services, and increased business opportunities that stimulate growth and decent job creation.				
Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
2.2.1. Number of MSMEs (formal and informal) including startups that received (i) financial support, (ii) technical assistance/capacity development, and (iii) assets (including loans, grants, asset transfers, etc.) with UN support.	36,474	13,576 9,279 F 4,297 M	37%	Missing target
2.2.2. Number of MSMEs (both formal and informal) that have enhanced access to markets (including regional and international), digital solutions, green energy, and infrastructure with UN support.	6,433	6,261 3,160 F 3,101 M	97%	Approaching target
2.2.3. Number of jobs created for decent employment and/or income generation including (i) creation of new jobs, and (ii) retention of the existing ones with UN support.	68,731	37,783 25,862 F 11,921 M	55%	Missing target
2.2.4. Number of business associations and chambers, formal and informal, particularly women's business associations that have been strengthened with UN support.	153	206 84 F 122 M	135%	Exceeding target
Output 2.3: Rural communities can better and sustainably manage natural resources, increase agricultural productivity and value addition, manage and reduce disaster risks, and enhance biodiversity, contributing to increased resilience, food security and nutrition, decent work, and sustainable livelihoods for all Afghans.				
Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
2.3.1.(a) Number of farmers and livestock owners that have received production inputs, services and/or technological packages to enhance agricultural, livestock or fishery production, processing, and marketing with UN support.	8,263,587	549,133 283,914 F 265,219 M	7%	Missing target
2.3.1.(b) Number of rural producers' organizations that have received production inputs, services and/or technological packages to enhance agricultural, livestock or fishery production, processing, and marketing with UN support.	13,195	2,435	18%	Missing target
2.3.2.(a) Number of water resources and irrigation structures that have been rehabilitated and/or established with UN support.	7,505	1,047	14%	Missing target
2.3.2.(b) Length of water resources and irrigation structures that have been rehabilitated and/or established with UN support (km).	287	317.78	111%	Exceeding target
2.3.3.(a) Number of hectares of rangeland and forest that have been rehabilitated or restored with UN support (Ha).	2,133,042	27,677.4	1%	Missing target

³ UNAMA local spending has not been included in these figures.

2.3.3.(b) Number of hectares of agricultural land that have been rehabilitated, restored, or brought under licit cultivation with UN support (Ha).	37,585	36,828	98%	Approaching target
2.3.4. Number of assessments, surveys, knowledge products and studies that have been produced by the UN or with UN support to strengthen capacities of evidence-based programming for food and nutrition security, agriculture, decent work, and livelihoods.	30	27	90%	Approaching target
Output 3.1: Formal and informal governance mechanisms, community-based institutions, and decision-making platforms are more inclusive, responsive, accountable, and better able to contribute to social cohesion and reconciliation.				
Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
3.1.1. Number of stakeholders, staff, and partners trained in governance, operational management, and decision-making with UN support.	11,250	4,806 2,093 F 2,713 M	43%	Missing target
3.1.2. Number of CSOs and community-based structures that contribute to social cohesion and reconciliation with UN support.	577	395 180 Women-led 215 Male-led	68%	Approaching target
3.1.3. Number of persons whose capacities have been improved in participatory and inclusive community planning with UN support.	7,700	8,552 3,451 F 5,101 M	111%	Exceeding target
3.1.4. Number of people reached through social cohesion activities with UN support.	192,000	106,177 43,355 F 62,822 M	55%	Missing target
Output 3.2: Justice institutions, including customary and traditional community systems, are better able to provide accessible, effective, equitable, inclusive, transparent, and timely services, and these services are increasingly provided in line with international norms and standards, benefiting all communities, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, and minorities.				
Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
3.2.1. Number of people who received legal aid and advice with UN support.	35,065	38,654 19,831 F 18,823 M	110%	Exceeding target
3.2.2. Number of people who are aware of their rights on access to justice through legal awareness programmes by NGOs.	171,050	155,886 62,298 F 93,588 M	91%	Approaching target
3.2.3. Number of local institutions and groups supported by the UN to promote positive, inclusive traditional justice and/or community-based practices.	31	6	19%	Missing target
Output 3.3: Communities, civil society organizations, vulnerable groups, women, and other relevant stakeholders are more aware of and better able to promote and protect their human rights, aligned with international norms and standards, and mitigate threats to their safety and wellbeing.				
Indicator	2024 Target	2024 Results	% of Target achieved	Status
3.3.1. Number of organizations (national NGOs, CSOs and media outlets) who received (i) financial and/or (ii) capacity building support from the UN to advance human rights, gender equality, non-discrimination of women, and media resilience.	910	513	56%	Missing target
3.3.2. Number of people reached through advocacy, awareness raising, and behaviour change programming on human rights, social norms, non-discrimination, and media with UN support (NB: Including via media campaigns).	10,113,400	16,343,102 8,339,109 F 8,003,993 M	162%	Exceeding target
3.3.3. Number of reports, data sets, tools, manuals produced by the UN on human rights, social norms, non-discrimination, etc.	25	58	232%	Exceeding target
3.3.4. Number of journalists and media activists employed in different media positions with UN financial support.	205	539	263%	Exceeding target



Children enjoying learning and fun in a
UNICEF-supported child-friendly space.
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Annex 2

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAOIFI	Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Finance	FHH	Family Health House
AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations	GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
ACG	Afghanistan Coordination Group	GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ADB	Asian Development Bank	GEF	Global Environment Facility
ADF	Agricultural Development Fund	HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
AFPs	Agencies, Funds and Programmes	HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
AHF	Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund	HER	Health Emergency Response
ALC	Accelerated Learning Centre	HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
AML/CFT	Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing	HYSIO	Homeland Youths Social Inventive Organization
ARRNA	Afghanistan Returnees Recovery Needs Assessment	IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ARTF	Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund	IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ASYCUDA	UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
BBB	Build Back Better	IFI	International Financial Institutions
BOS	Business Operations Strategy	ILO	International Labor Organization
CCLF	Community-based Climate-responsive Livelihoods and Forestry	IMC	International Medical Corps
CDC	Community Development Council	IOM	International Organization for Migration
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund	I/NGOs	International and National NGOs
CIMS	Contract Information Management System	IRC	International Red Cross
CNWG	Counter Narcotics Working Group	ISET	Informal Settlements
CRC	Community Resource Centre	ISIL-K	Islamic State in Khorasan Province
CSO	Civil Society Organization	ITC	International Trade Centre
DACs	Displacement Affected Communities	LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees	LICS	Local Integration Communities
DAFA	Demining Agency for Afghanistan	MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan
DFA	De Facto Authorities	MOSS	Minimum Operating Security Standards
DG	District Governor	MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
DSRSG/RC/HC	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator	MSME	Micro, Small, And Medium Enterprises
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
EU	European Union	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
		OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Office
		OMAR	Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghanistan Rehabilitation
		OMID	Opportunities and Means for Internally Displaced Afghans
		PMT	Programme Management Team
		PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
		PSWG	Private Sector Working Group
		PVPV	Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice
		RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEARO	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Overview
SH	Sexual Harassment
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
STFA	Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan
STWG	Strategic Thematic Working Group
TKBB	Türkiye's Union of Participating Banks
TPP	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSFA	United Nations Framework for Afghanistan
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme



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Cover photo:

Ruqia enrolled in a carpet weaving vocational training programme, supported by UNICEF in Herat Province.

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