

## 1. Situation analysis

In June 2014, Albania received EU candidacy status and adopted a road map for approximation with EU laws and standards. The drive for European integration is a main driver of reform in the country and a shared political priority. With a gross national income per capita of \$4,450, Albania is an upper-middle-income country in the high human development category.<sup>1</sup> Following the 2008 Eurozone crises, however, growth stalled and the percentage of people living in poverty increased from 12.4 to 14.3 per cent of the population, reaching 18 per cent among women.<sup>2</sup> Albania remains one of the poorest countries in Europe and disparities affect the enjoyment of basic health, education, and social care and protection<sup>3</sup>. The country's Gini coefficient of 34.5 (2013) is the third highest in the region and the pattern indicates growing inequalities<sup>4</sup>.

The Government aims to reverse this trend and put the country on a path of sustainable and equitable growth through ensuring macroeconomic stability and competitiveness and by investing in people and social cohesion.<sup>5</sup> These objectives of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) are underpinned by the strategic objective of ensuring good governance and rule of law for the ultimate aim of EU accession. Gender equality has a prominent place in the NSDI II, yet despite the progress that has been made to establish a legal and policy framework for the advancement of women's rights and gender equality, inequalities are pervasive.

Albania is a signatory to a number of important and binding international documents, which guarantee the equality of men and women and prohibit gender-based discrimination<sup>6</sup>. Traditional patriarchal attitudes are still prominent, gender inequalities are present in all spheres of social and economic life, and violence against women is still widespread. In 2013, Albania ranked 44th out of 149 countries in the Gender Inequality Index<sup>7</sup>. Labour market inactivity, especially of women, is an obstacle to growth. Women's participation in the labour market increased to 51% in 2014 from a low of 39% in 2003, but average salaries are 18% lower those of men<sup>8</sup>. The wage gap in rural areas is double that of urban areas<sup>9</sup>. One third of young women do not seek work because of family obligations.<sup>10</sup>

The prevalence of gender-based violence has increased from 56% in 2007 to 59,4% in 2013<sup>11</sup> and more than half of Albanian women (aged 15-49) have experienced at least one form of domestic violence in their lifetime, but only 15 per cent of survivors report seeking help from

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1 Human Development Report, 2015, Human Development Index 0.733.

2 Albania: Trends in Poverty 2002-2012, Institute of Statistics (INSTAT)/World Bank, 2013.

3 Analysis of policies and reforms affecting the situation of children in Albania, UNICEF, November 2014 (not published)

4 Analysis of policies and reforms affecting the situation of children in Albania, UNICEF, November 2014 (not published)

5 National Strategy for Development and Integration, Government of Albania, 2015-2020.

6 These include: The Council of Europe's Social Charter, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the European Convention on Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

7 The index reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity.

8 Gender inequalities in pay: an Albanian case, Gender Alliance for Development Centre / Open Society Foundation, 2012 at: [http://www.millennia2015.org/files/files/Publications/Gender\\_Inequalities\\_Pay\\_1\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.millennia2015.org/files/files/Publications/Gender_Inequalities_Pay_1_1_.pdf)

9 Trends and determinants of women's labour force (draft), ILO, 2014

10 INSTAT, Labour Force Survey, 2014.

11 Domestic Violence Survey 2013, INSTAT Albania. Note that a small increase in gender-based violence could be attributed to increased awareness and better reporting.

institutions, with a majority of women seeking protection from family networks.<sup>12</sup> The costs and consequences of domestic violence are significant and it cuts across all socio-economic groups and educational strata. Nearly 62% of children reported having experienced at least one form of psychological violence during their lifetime and nearly 70% reported having experienced at least one form of psychological violence during the past year<sup>13</sup>. Child marriage as a harmful practice is still present in Albania, while the phenomenon is understudied and data are poor. 10% of children are married before the age of 18, and girls are 8 times more likely than boys to be married or in a union<sup>14</sup>. The UNICEF Regional Gender Strategy cites a UNFPA study that puts Albania on top of other countries in the CEE/CIS region, with a prevalence of 27.2 percent<sup>15</sup>. 3% of adolescent girls have given birth and of these, only 8% continue with their education<sup>16</sup>, thereby reducing their chances for an independent, healthy and financially stable life as adults and increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence. The issue of child marriage was also addressed in the CEDAW Committee concluding observations issued to Albania in July 2016.

The Government's reform agenda for de-politicization of the administration and of the judicial, electoral processes and oversight mechanisms must be accompanied by systematic functional improvements in institutional capacities so that citizens, especially women, can turn to them for redress. Strengthening effectiveness, transparency, accountability and service orientation of public institutions is the main pathway towards building trust in institutions and enabling their developmental functionality. More inclusive and gender responsive, evidence based policy making and legislation are required for reducing inequities and corruption risks. Women's representation was significantly improved in the Government emerging from the 2013 general elections with 8 women Ministers (or 42%) and 10 women Deputy Ministers (or 34.4%). The percentage of women MPs increased from 18% to 22.9% in 2015 (32 women out of 140 MPs in total)<sup>17</sup>. The intended objective of 30% women in the Parliament is not yet met. It is also important to note that elected women emerging directly from elections were not high in percentage. The change from the 2009 elections (23 or 16.43 women) to 2013 elections was only with *only* two more women elected totalling 25 or an increase of 1.5% totalling 17.86%. The considerable change in women representation to the parliament by the 2015 happened thanks to the Electoral Code disposition on the Replacement of Vacancy, which enabled women to replace men that were nominated ministers or that left their mandate for other reasons. This means that the actual figures might risk being kept the same with the upcoming elections. The role of women MPs empowered with the establishment of an Alliance of Women MPs in 2013, a group that encourages gender mainstreaming in laws and promotes gender equality and women rights in three main areas. Although they had important achievements their political challenges very often have created difficulties for the Alliance to function as one. As a result, there is still a lot to be done in meeting gender equality commitments in the amended and new legislation as well as in holding the government and other public and independent bodies, independent bodies that protect and oversight human rights to account to fulfil their commitments in achieving gender equality a.

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<sup>12</sup> Domestic Violence in Albania, UNDP/INSTAT, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Cenko E et al Balkan Epidemiological Survey on Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) in Albania, CRCA 2013.

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2016 – A fair chance for every child*, [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF\\_SOWC\\_2016.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_SOWC_2016.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Compare to Turkey (23 per cent), Kyrgyzstan (19.1 per cent), Serbia (5.9 percent), and Ukraine (2.2 per cent).

<sup>16</sup> INSTAT, *The Gender Perspective in Albania*, [http://www.instat.gov.al/media/258326/perspektiva\\_gjinore\\_n\\_shqip\\_ri.pdf](http://www.instat.gov.al/media/258326/perspektiva_gjinore_n_shqip_ri.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Data for 2015 – source: Ministry for Social Welfare and Youth, Gender Equality Sector.

At the local level, Albania undertook historic reforms of its administrative and political structure by consolidating 373 local administration units into 61 functional municipalities which are increasingly led by women mayors (15%) and councillors (35%), thanks to a visionary 50% gender quota for the candidates' lists implemented through the zip system. They now shoulder the principal responsibility for service delivery but lack the technical skills, sometimes relevant knowledge but also financial and human resources needed to fulfil them.<sup>[7]</sup> Transparent and inclusive decision making, where women have equal voice especially over redistributive investments is essential for creating real-life benefits for families.<sup>[9]</sup> However the new levels of representation have enabled women to establish Alliances at the local level for increased impact. Actually there are two Alliances established at Tirana and Vlora Municipality with UN assistance.

With justice reform underway, the judicial system in Albania is still characterized by limited accountability, poor inter-institutional cooperation, backlogs and widespread corruption<sup>18</sup>, and it is not equipped to cater to the needs of marginalised and excluded segments of society<sup>19</sup>. Access to justice is hampered by procedural, economic and conceptual impediments: court capacities are low and fees are high, legal aid services are under-funded, and judicial procedures take too long. There is a lack of counselling and legal aid services, especially for women from ethnic and linguistic minorities and rural areas, and survivors of domestic violence. Once women have access to the justice system, the burden of proof often lies with them. Vulnerable groups, especially, have unequal access to the justice system and cannot fully exercise their rights granted by the Constitution and recognised by law. These concerns echo the findings from the universal periodic review and the concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee in its 64th session for the review of Albania's 4th periodic report on the CEDAW in July 2016.

Albania is a source and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced labour. It can also become a significant country of transit in view of the current refugee crisis in Europe. Trafficking in persons is a serious concern for the Government and civil society as well as a priority outlined in the EU Membership Plan for Albania.

The Anti-Trafficking Strategy and National Action Plan 2014-2017 (Strategy/NAP) adopts a comprehensive approach to countering trafficking in persons, working within four interconnected areas of prosecution, protection, prevention, and coordination. The vision for the Anti-Trafficking efforts in Albania established by the Strategy is: "Human trafficking is prevented effectively through social and economic empowerment of vulnerable persons/groups and the general population, and through effective prosecution and punishment of perpetrators. Every victim of trafficking is identified and provided with the assistance, protection and support s/he needs not only to recover but also to restore their lives, receive adequate compensation and redress."<sup>20</sup>

The key expected outcomes of the AT Strategy/NAP include: Early identification and referral of all categories of trafficked persons (for all forms of exploitation) and provision of

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[7] USAID, Planning and Local Governance Project (PLGP) In Albania: Policy Paper: Creating an Equitable, Transparent, and Predictable Unconditional Grant Formula, September 2015 [http://www.plgp.al/images/pdf/files/USAID\\_Unconditional%20Grant%20Policy%20Paper%20September%202015-ENG.pdf](http://www.plgp.al/images/pdf/files/USAID_Unconditional%20Grant%20Policy%20Paper%20September%202015-ENG.pdf) and 2nd Narrative Report on Cumulative implementation progress of STAR

[9] Opinion Poll: Trust in Government 2015 <http://idmalbania.org/?p=6920>

18 Progress Report 2015 of the European Commission for Albania.

19 In Albania, these are, in particular, children, Roma and Egyptian communities, disadvantaged women, persons with disabilities and groups that are socially stigmatised such as drugs users, HIV+, sex workers, and LGBT.

<sup>20</sup> Strategy/NAP, p.8; <http://www.punetebrendshme.gov.al/al/k-k-a-t/baza-ligjore>

comprehensive assistance, protection and long-term reintegration support to them, according to individual needs, is enhanced. Adoption of the National Strategy for the Reintegration of VoTs in February 2016, in framework of a UN Women, IOM and UNDP implemented project was a step forward in the process of contributing to long-term reintegration. While there is recognized by the MOSWY the need for development and adoption of standards of social care for reintegration process of victims of trafficking, elaborated also in the “Priorities and Action Plan for 2016-2017 in the area of anti-trafficking”,

To accelerate implementation, the UN will work with the GoA to achieve gender equality and reduce gender-based violence and domestic violence. The UN will also support the mainstreaming of gender-sensitive analysis, indicators, and monitoring instruments in the NSDI II and in legislation, policies, and programmes.

## 2. Swedish support to UN work on Gender Equality and Fight Against gender based Violence

The Government of Sweden, represented through Sida, provided support to the One UN Coherence Fund (CF) in Albania as part of the GoA and UN Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016, as defined in the Standard Administrative Arrangement and its addendum no. 1 between Sweden and the UN in its efforts to promote gender equality and eradicate gender-based violence in Albania.

The Sida contribution is intended to support the implementation of gender outputs that are directly related to the new Swedish Results Strategy for Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014 – 2020.

Sida funding supported deliverables under the following PoC outputs<sup>21</sup>:

- ✚ Output 1.3: Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society.
- ✚ Output 3.1: Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions
- ✚ Output 3.2: Line ministries and public service delivery institutions are able to mainstream gender and conduct gender responsive planning and budgeting and evidence-based policy making at all levels
- ✚ Output 4.3: National and sub-national government units have the capacity to generate and strengthen investments, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for youth and women.

The activities implemented by the UN agencies in Albania under the outputs funded by Sida were fully in line with corporate Strategic Plans and specific Gender Equality Action Plans of many individual UN agencies and therefore benefit from regional corporate expertise and knowledge products. These activities were part of the Joint Work Plans, prepared and signed jointly by UN agencies and the Government of Albania’s implementing line ministries.

Main achievements<sup>22</sup> regarding two specific outputs are presented below:

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<sup>21</sup> During the first phase of implementation (201-2014), there were five (gender) outputs supported with funds by the Swedish Government through the UN Coherence Fund. Upon finalization of the Mid-term Review process of the PoC in mid-2014 the gender focused outputs were reduced to four as presented in the text.

<sup>22</sup> Main achievements covering the period 2012-2016 are presented under the revised outputs.

### **Output 1.3 - Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society**

- The UN support on gender-based violence work is spread across different levels: a) on policy and legislation improvement; b) on strengthening mechanisms and capacities for implementation of said legislation/policies at the central and local level; c) on improving data collection, in order to feed into policy-making but also to improve monitoring of progress; d) on investing in prevention through involvement of men and boys as allies in combating gender stereotypes, inequalities and violence.
- With UN advocacy and technical expertise, the Criminal Code was amended twice, in 2012 and 2013 to better address various forms of gender-based and domestic violence and to strengthen accountability of perpetrators. With the entry into force of the amendments to the Criminal Code the number of criminal proceedings against DV increased; 3,967 cases were reported to the state police in 2015 compared to 94 cases in 2005.
- The country ratified the Istanbul Convention in December 2012, signed the COMMITT declaration in February 2012 and held a Parliament hearing on the VAW issue. A Roadmap and costing study to inform preparations for implementation of the Istanbul Convention was developed with several technical meetings on different aspects that require Albania to improve or change to ensure compliance.
- The Parliament and the government developed a package of legislative amendments with UN support to sustain and mainstream Gender Equality in the ongoing Justice System reform, compatible with the Istanbul Convention provisions. The Law on the Measures against Violence in Family Relations was brought in conformity with the international and regional standards through concrete recommendations provided in consultation with judges, prosecutors, defence lawyers, line ministries specialists, and High Council of Justice inspectors. A new draft Law on the Child Rights and Protection is under parliamentary review and massive interventions have been undertaken for the protection of children from violence and abuse (including GBV) in the family, community, schools and in the cyberspace.
- Following a significant step taken in reporting against Gender Equality Normative Standards, 2015 saw increased government commitment to engage men and boys in tackling violence in direct follow up to CEDAW's recommendations. Breaking the Mindsets is Albania's unique National Action Plan (NAP) to engage men and boys in tackling each other's behaviour to stop violence and empower women. Albania's experience on involvement of men and boys was presented globally for the first time in CSW59 in a side event organised with UN support.
- Official statistics, developed with UN support, show that prevalence has increased from 56% in 2007 to 59.4% in 2013. This increase is mainly in the psychological and emotional abuse, also speaking of a stronger awareness on what constitutes psychological abuse.
- There have been significant steps taken in implementation of gender sensitive policies at the local level and mechanisms to prevent and fight domestic violence. A detailed

assessment was conducted on CCRs in practice as one element of UNDP efforts to improve quality and extend CCRs to further municipalities. Progress was reported in the functionality of 27 CCR mechanisms (44%) out of 61 municipalities. Significant efforts are needed to make CCR mechanisms fully functional, effective, sustainable and present in all municipalities. Costing information on the CCRs and each individual service has been conducted and the results have been used in advocating with local authorities to allocate appropriate budgets to respond to the increased reported cases. Information campaigns have been conducted with communities on the costs of domestic violence to the individuals, communities and society as a whole in order to raise awareness on the importance of prevention and zero tolerance to violence.

- Development of a national online database on domestic violence cases has enabled the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth to have statistics available in real time, to evidence non-compliance with CCR legislation and to address system bottlenecks. In 2015, 312 complex domestic violence cases were reported. Meanwhile, there are still significant challenges in sharing, cross-checking and consolidating data across local CCR members.
- A UN study explored in depth the phenomenon of violence against women and girls with disabilities and provided concrete recommendations on improving the legal and policy framework on domestic violence against women and girls.
- UN provided technical support to state-run National Shelter for DV victims to adopt rehabilitation and reintegration programmes with both state and non-state service providers. The support provided ensured that 47% of GB&DV survivors in the National Shelter were successfully employed in 2015 compared to 38% in 2014. For the period January-May 2016, out of the total number of DV survivors, 53.3% were successfully integrated through employment, social housing and legal empowerment.
- A new country strategy on National Strategy on Gender Equality (GE) and against Gender Based and Domestic Violence (2016-2020) and its National Action Plan were developed with UN support.
- Advocacy to tackle violence in society goes from strength to strength. MoSWY is strongly engaged in implementing its National Action Plan on Men and Boys to support women and girls, with support from UN.
- Albania was amongst the first countries to implement the UN Women HeforShe campaign launched at the end of 2014. The campaign was mobilised youth groups, civil society organisations, students, sports institutions and many sportsmen and women and related fans, artists, government officials and development partners strongly contributing the national plan for men and boys.

### **Output 3.1 - Parliament and electoral institutions. Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions**

- Ombudsman and Anti-Discrimination Commissioner (ADC) capacities on gender equality issues increased through tailored capacity building initiatives and technical expertise. EA significant increase of the gender-based and other discrimination cases brought to the attention of her office is evidenced: from 104 cases filed in 2012 to 215

cases filed in 2015. The share of those decisions issued in favour of the alleged victim of discrimination has also increased, from a 6 decision in 2012 to 41 in 2015.

- 2013 Parliamentary elections marked an increase in the number of women in the Parliament; 22.9% v. 16.4% of the previous one. UN supported introduction of the quota in Albanian legislation in 2008 and in 2015. UN continued its advocacy efforts and partnered with international organizations and civil society to ensure implementation of gender quota. The pressure to political parties for GE is demonstrated by the highest number of women ministers in the 2013 cabinet (8), overcoming 30% quota for the first time. The establishment for the first time of the women's caucus (Alliance of Women Parliamentarians) in 2013 is also partly due to UN advocacy. UN support was key in supporting the Alliance of Women Parliamentarians with the introduction and advocacy of 50% of gender quota in the local government elections 2015, where women mayors reached 15% and councilwomen 35%.
- During 2013 Parliamentary elections, women organizations engaged in an outstanding campaign to make authorities more accountable for implementing gender equality commitments. UN supported civic engagement in terms of advocacy and accountability for women's rights. Due to higher civic activism, through well-established methodologies like Community Based Scorecards, candidates for the national elections of June 2013 as well as the local elected officials intensified dialogue with mixed groups of men and women, or with women groups, an approach rarely used in the previous general elections campaigns. CSOs also organized get-out-to-vote activities for women. As a result, the number of voters that cast their ballot on June 23, 2013, was the highest in these last years of democracy (around 76%).
- Central Electoral Commission (CEC) capacities on gender responsive electoral management and outreach were further strengthened. CEC developed and submitted a comprehensive package of Electoral Code reforms to Albanian Parliament. The reforms aimed at improving application of the gender quota, disaggregated data collection in elections, address family voting and improve definitions and references. This initiative resulted in improved CEC capacities to ensure gender quota implementation, collect sex-disaggregated data including for the first time also on voters and establishing a dedicated section on Gender Equality in its official homepage with all available data since 2011 elections.
- The National Study on 'Freedom to vote and Family Voting' aimed at establishing a national baseline for women participation in elections, found that while people agree with having more women in decision making positions, they still would prefer a man leader rather than a woman. Although women express that they felt completely free when they voted, 32% of them report that they cannot leave home without permission and 57% are not interested in politics. The study found that women do face a number of challenges as voters, as commissioners and as candidates.
- CSOs have stronger capacities, networking skills and knowledge products supporting their expertise in advocating for women and youth participation and leadership in elections. The NGOs network implementing Community Based Scorecards built a strong partnership with Citizens Advisory Panels to increase their advocacy with local decision makers and create ten Scorecards. Each elections cycle has further increased

women participation in elections and engaged youth as Gender Advocate, while monitoring of their participation has identified challenges to be addressed. The 7 NGOs of Election Situations Room had a unified voice in advocating including for women issues in elections and produced a unified report on Elections Results.

- A study “Strengthening the decision-making power of council women in Albania” generated concrete ideas among councilwomen, women in political party forums, women in parliament and civil society representatives on how to pursue: i) the advancement of the agenda of women empowerment in politics, ii) increasing the oversight role of central and local parliaments regarding implementation of the gender legal machinery for ensuring the enjoyment of the rights of women, and iii) lobbying for an increase in the gender quota in the electoral code for general elections and ensuring effective safeguards administered by the central electoral management. To strengthen the leadership and decision making skills at local elected bodies, the Albanian School of Public Administration, with UN support, introduced a tailored course as part of its training programme on “Strengthened leadership skills”.

### **3. Lessons learned (2012-2016)**

- The culture of cross-sectoral collaboration is still weak and bringing different ministries to the same discussion table requires special efforts. The UN is undertaking a facilitator role in engaging different Ministries such as Social Welfare and Youth, Health, Education, and Interior to plan, coordinate and take action in improving the situation regarding the women victims of GB&DV.
- The success in the implementation of all the policies and actions strongly depend on the development of support programme for LGUs. A well-developed government support programme for LGUs in cooperation with development partners and civil society is therefore crucial.
- The new territorial configuration will require an adjustment to UN’s work to align with the timeframe of amalgamation of the existing LGUs into bigger ones, stronger advocacy to ensure that the needs of the vulnerable groups are prioritized in the new municipalities’ agenda, and a more strategic approach to dissemination of data and capacity building, especially in the delivery of social services.
- There is a lack of disaggregated and comparative statistical data on the effectiveness of specific anti-discrimination measures and programmes for the vulnerable groups, including vulnerable women as well as on harmful practices against women and girls. This limits formulation as well as evaluation of appropriate government policies and programmes, which calls for immediate concerted and coordinated action to strengthen the country’s capacity to generate, analyse and manage reliable social qualitative and quantitative information for evidence-based policy making.
- The cooperation with civil society should be an essential part of the Government’s strategy for creating a sustainable welfare society today and tomorrow.



- The territorial reform and decentralization provide a great opportunity for expanding the mechanisms of coordination and referral on GBV to the entire country. With the UNDP and other UN agencies support the referral mechanism for domestic violence is operational in 27 out of new 61 amalgamated municipalities. There is a timely need for scaling up and supporting the GoA and new LGUs to make the community coordinated response (CCRs) functional in 61 municipalities to effectively prevent and treat GB&DV cases. Nevertheless, this is dependent on partnerships between central, local and government and civil society organizations relevant capacities and resources, including scaling up of the functioning of the online case tracking system recently established for the reporting and coordinated referral of DV cases by CCRs state and non-state members.
- Changing mind-set of culturally rooted traditions takes time and requires a long-term commitment from the UN, using the normative principles as the banner under which the national priorities are developed, and a sustained programmatic framework.
- Normative developments may serve as the driving force for gains in other aspects of women’s human rights, so investing in these lays the groundwork for more solid interventions in the future aiming at gender transformative results<sup>23</sup>.
- Combined interventions in development of norms and policy design, in building skills for understanding and applying those norms, in spreading knowledge of rights and remedies and in building supporting partnerships with men and boys are more likely to succeed not only in ensuring compliance of domestic laws with human rights conventions, but also in supporting a more sustained and transformative change. Therefore, working at multiple levels and in a holistic manner enhances the prospects of positive global impact.
- Election administration saw huge advancements on GE between elections, since international support focuses on election event investment. The UN will continue to emphasise preparatory support seeking to address structural weaknesses, through the biannual electoral cycle.
- So far violence against women has been tackled in the realm of the family as domestic violence. However, abuse and violence against women is becoming more and more present in the workplace and public spaces. Evidence is needed to address the issue and provide policy recommendations to decision-makers.

#### 4. Strategies and the proposed joint programme

UN programme aims to improve the status of women and girls as reflected in personal integrity, economic advancement and political representation. The specific objective of the Bridging

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<sup>23</sup> As defined by UNDP, *Gender transformative results* explicitly seek to redefine and transform gender norms and relationships to redress existing inequalities and discriminations in social, economic, and political structures, norms, institutions, and relations. The aim is to transform the systems and institutions where inequalities are created and maintained; this involves redistribution of power, control and resources.

Programme is to strengthen capacities, improve multi sectoral mechanisms, advance policies and improve the conditions for the implementation of the new National Strategy on Gender Equality (GE) and against Gender Based and Domestic Violence (GBV&DV) (2016-2020) and its National Action Plan (NAP).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a good framework for addressing the underlying societal and gender inequalities that are considered significant barriers to the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. The programme will support an integrated approach that addresses gender inequalities and SGBV and advances multiple SDGs – in particular, SDG 5 on Gender Equality and empowerment of all women and girls, SDG 1 on Poverty reduction, and SDG 10 on Inequality and SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies.

Pursuant of the newly signed PoC (2017-2021) the following are some key issues requiring longer term support and commitment for the consolidation of progress in the gender equality area:

**Outcome 1: State and civil society organisations perform effectively and with accountability for consolidated democracy in line with international norms and standards.**

Specific initiatives include:

1) [Inclusion of women in electoral process](#)

- ▶ In close collaboration with CSOs, youth communities in support to Central Elections Commission using innovative and broad outreach tools, UN will engage in educational awareness raising for increasing young girls as first voters and women participation in the parliamentary elections. Focus will be given to women freely exercising their right to vote during Parliamentary elections. Based on the findings of the ‘Freedom to Vote and Family Voting’ National Survey conducted during 2013 parliamentary elections the challenges and progress in enabling women participation in elections will be analysed. For the 2017 parliamentary elections, the UN will also support Elections Situation Room in gender sensitive reporting on electoral processes and monitoring of women participation.
- ▶ Following the 2017 parliamentary elections, UN will engage in supporting the establishment of the new Women Parliamentary Alliance, serving as the advocacy platform for gender mainstreaming in legislation and policy framework as well as in keeping the law enforcement agencies/independent equality bodies accountable for the adequate implementation of the domestic legislation and upholding gender equality standards using the experience and lessons learned from the work of the Women’s Parliamentary Alliance during the 2013-2016 legislature.

**Outcome 2: Women, men girls and boys, especially those from vulnerable groups, have access to inclusive, equitable and quality social services and benefit from increased investments for enhanced social cohesion in line with their rights.**

## 2 Strengthening the institutional response to gender based violence

Implementation and establishment of new and quality services at the local level, particularly by establishing emergency/crisis centres at municipal level as well as establishing new services for sexual abused victims;

- ▶ Support stronger institutional responses to violence against women and domestic violence in line with national and international commitments through scaling up of the institutionalized CCR mechanisms in 4 new amalgamated municipalities; the expansion will entail improved quality of services by introducing the Standard Operating Procedures for a better multi sectoral response to GBV;
- ▶ Support the expansion of the systematic use of the REVALB data collection system in new municipalities as well as consolidate in the exiting CCRs throughout the country.
- ▶ Support development of a nationwide online catalogue of coordinated response mechanisms at local level.
- ▶ Conduct scoping studies on safety of cities for women and girls and advocate with local governments to make investments and allocate resources towards safety in public spaces for women and girls;
- ▶ Development and adoption of standards of social care for reintegration process of victims of trafficking;
- ▶ Adoption and integration of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Multi-Sectoral Response to GBV;
- ▶ Conduct KAP (knowledge, attitude and practices) Survey on harmful practices, particularly child marriage; and on the perception of health response to GBV among marginalized young people, age 15-24.

Allocations from the Swedish contribution will be disbursed to the UN Coherence Fund in support to the implementation of the above mentioned gender initiatives and respective agencies as detailed in Annex 1. These initiatives will be incorporated into the 2017-2018 Joint Work Plans prepared and signed jointly by the responsible UN agencies and Government counterparts.

## Annex I

**Intended Outcome as stated in the UNDAF 2011-2016: *UNDAF outcome 1***; Human Rights and gender equality considerations guide interactions between citizens and institutions; ***UNDAF outcome 3***. The Albanian State executes major governance processes following internationally agreed democratic principles and practices, while upholding the rule of law and eliminating key factors of exclusion of women

**Intended Outcome as stated in the UNDAF 2017-2021: *UNDAF outcome 1***: State and civil society organization perform effectively and with accountability for consolidated democracy in line with international norms and standards; ***UNDAF outcome 2*** All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalized and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights; and more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion

**Outcome Indicator: 2.11** - % Women who have experienced physical violence during their lives

Baseline (2013): Target: 23.7% 21% (2018)

**Outcome indicators:1.1** - % MPs, municipal councillors, and senior positions in the public sector held by women

Baseline (2015): MPs: 21% ; Target: MPs 30%

Baseline: Municipal Councilors: 35% ; Target: Municipal Councilors 50%

Baseline: Public Sector 44.6%; Target: Public Sector; no less than 30%

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	Deliverables	UN Organization	Budget (USD)	Timeframe				Implementing Partner
				Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Output 1	1.1 Establish 4 new CCRs in four new expanded municipalities	UNDP	60,000	x	x	x	x	MSWY LGUs
PoC Output 1.3: Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against	National KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Perceptions) Survey on harmful practices (with particular reference to child marriage) conducted. (SDG 5)	UNFPA and UNICEF jointly	25,000 55,000	x	x	x	x	INSTAT, CSOs

<p>women and children) in society.</p> <p>PoC Output 2.5 Capacity of institutions and service providers to implement legislation and normative standards on Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) and other forms of discrimination is strengthened.</p>	Perception of health response to GBV among marginalized young people, age 15-24. (SDG 4)	UNFPA	15,000				x	INSTAT, CSOs
	1.2 Establishment of new and quality services such as emergency/crisis centers at municipal level	UNDP UN Women	50,000 20,000	x	x	x	x	LGUs
	1.3 Expansion of REVALB data collection system in new municipalities.	UNDP	30,000	x	x	X	X	MSWY LGUs
	1.4 Development of an online catalogue of responses mechanisms at local level, nationwide.	UNDP	20,000		x	X	X	MSWY LGUs
	1.5 Knowledge exchange among CCR practitioners (local study tour and open learning days).	UNDP	30,000	x	x	x	x	LGUs
	1.6 Conduct two scoping studies for safe cities for women and girls - advocacy with LGUs to making cities and neighbourhoods safe for women and girls	UN Women	45,000	x	x	x		LGUs
	1.7 Development Adoption and dissemination of SoPs for the Multi-Sectoral Response to GBV (adapted and available for all UN agencies working on GBV)	UNFPA UNDP UN Women	10,000 5,000 15,000	x	x	x	X	MSWY, Line Ministries, NGOs, service providers
	1.8 Support MoSWY to draft the standards of social care for reintegration process of victims of trafficking	IOM	50,000	x	x	x	X	MSWY, State Social Service, NCATS, CSOs, ONAC

<b>Output 2</b>  PoC Output 3.1: Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions  PoC Output 1.1 Constitutional, ministerial and independent mechanisms are reinforced to identify and report human rights violations and enable evidence based policy making and response.	2.1 Design innovative tools to increase women and girls' participation in free voting process	UNDP UN Women	40,000 80,000	x	x			CEC, CSOs, University students
	Support to Women's Alliance; All Party Group; Parliamentary Commission on Population and Health for capacity building on all areas related to ICPD based SDGs.	UNFPA	16,000	x	x	x	X	Parliament, CSOs
	2.2 Monitoring women's participation in elections Support Elections Situation Room in gender sensitive reporting on electoral processes	UN Women	25,000	x	x	x	X	CSOs
	2.3 Support establishment and functioning of women parliamentary alliance post general elections.	UN Women UNDP	25,000 20,000		x	x	x	UNDP Parliament CSOs network
	2.4 Conduct second freedom to vote and family voting survey	UN Women	20,000		x	x	X	CSOs, research institutions

## **Annex II: Visibility and communication plan**

The purpose of the Visibility and Communication Plan is to outline communications goals and approach and ensure effective and efficient communication about the “Bridging Support to Gender equality results” UN Programme (hereafter, Programme) results and objectives, to all the target groups, including beneficiaries, partners, key national, local stakeholders in targeted communities.

### **Objective**

The main objective of visibility activities is the communication of the “positive results of the partnership”. To this end, visibility activities will focus on outputs and the impact of the action’s results.

### **Specific communication objectives:**

In all actions communication activities will be properly planned.

Communication will focus on the achievements and impact of the action, not on administrative or procedural milestones. In order to maximise the impact of communication efforts:

- Activities need to be timely;
- Information used must be accurate;
- Activities will be co-ordinated closely with the Government of Sweden reps/Embassy of Sweden, Albania;
- The right audience(s) will be targeted;
- Messages will interest the target audience(s);
- Activities will be appropriate in terms of resources spent and expected impact;

However, there will also be room in any plan to seize a good opportunity. A good communication reflex and the ability to exploit unexpected opportunities to the benefit of the action will often be as important as more formal efforts and may often be free of cost. Where such opportunities arise, they will be exploited.

### **Target groups**

The main target groups are:

- Legislative body;
- Judiciary bodies at all levels of the domestic court system;
- Relevant government ministries and/or law enforcement agencies at all administrative/governance levels including local governmental bodies in Albania;
- CSO-s (NGO-s, CBO-s);
- General population, including men and boys, women and girls;
- Media (local, national media, newspapers, TV, electronic news portals etc);
- Academia;
- The wider public audience;
- Relevant practitioners, networks, similar projects and development organisations.

The Visibility and Communication Plan will ensure that key messages as well as role of all partners are clearly communicated to all target groups.

### **Key messages**

Messages will be differentiated depending on the target audience.

The key communications messages will be developed through close consultations with UN/UNDP Communication Specialist.

The United Nations Agencies will focus their communication and visibility plan on audiences in Albania, who are the ones for whom the impact of the action will be most apparent and most immediately relevant.

### **Communications approach**

Coherent and coordinated communication will be ensured by continuous coordination of all communications plans and advocacy component activities among all partner organizations

The media are recognized as most important communication channels throughout the country, which is why they will be used as primary channels of communication with targeted groups. However, the Programme will design specific communications tools that will focus on delivering the message in a most effective way to some of the target groups, whenever possible.

Particular attention will be dedicated to supporting partner institutions and organizations in improving their media outreach by ensuring continuous guidance in production and dissemination of all communication products.

The choice of an appropriate communication channel (or a combination of several channels) will depend on the profile of targeted audience and their preferred communication channels and tools.

### **Communication activities and tools:**

Tools to be used while establishing effective communication with the target groups will include:

- Social Media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr are extremely useful and cost effective platforms that could be utilized to communicate to masses. The UN Agencies have an active social media community and hence social media remains one of the most useful and effective options to disseminate information, key messages and results both in the form of text and visuals including photo, video and infographics.
- Media advisories, press releases, interviews, media opportunities that will provide media coverage of key events and success stories;
- Photo brochures and video stories;
- Posters, banners or billboards;
- Surveys or polling of staff or stakeholders to determine level of comprehension and awareness of change activities;
- Level of interest expressed by external stakeholders;
- Media hits and requests for information and interviews;
- Materials highlighting the progress and achievements of the programme will be posted on UN Agencies websites.

### **The Programme will set up the following main types of communication tools:**

*Press visits* to the Programme's sites/beneficiaries: together with the UN/UNDP Communication Specialist, will organise press visits to beneficiaries in order to increase awareness of the broader audience, local communities, participating local governments and policy-makers, as well as to reinforce the Programme's visibility. Editors and journalists of key online, electronic and print media will be invited to participate in such press visits in each event. Press visit demands careful preparation, since it represents an opportunity for media to get specific and concrete information about activities and results, as well as direct contact with beneficiaries. This also enables media to produce human



interest stories that can positively affect image of the Government of Sweden as the financial supporter to the Programme, key institutional partners and UN as implementing agency.

*Infographics and fact-sheets:* The Programme, with support of the UN/UNDP Communication Specialist, will design infographics and fact-sheets to illustrate and visualize its progress, results and achievements. Infographics and fact-sheets will also be utilized in online communications tools.

*Website presentation:* All relevant programme information and news updates will be shared through appropriate web sites, including the website of the UN Agencies and partner institutions.

*Videos:* Short videos will be produced to illustrate the impact of the activities on the ground capturing human interest stories. The expansion of online video websites like YouTube and advanced sharing capacities of social networks give a perfect opportunity to reach a growing new audience and communicate about the success stories and issues.

*Social media:* Recognising the reach and increasing impact of social media in daily communication, the Programme will regularly utilize Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels of the UN Agencies in Albania and abroad, as to share updates on news, achievements and as well as to promote informational materials, photos and video stories.

*Communication with stakeholders:* All relevant information regarding Programme activities and implementation dynamic will be shared on regular basis with institutional partners and key stakeholders through occasional meetings and information sessions.

### **Completion of communication objectives**

Monitoring and evaluation process is key instrument for successful implementation of the Visibility and Communication Plan. In order to successfully implement all proposed activities, it is essential to ensure continuous monitoring of the impact of the communication activities.

In order to monitor the impacts of the communication activities the Programme will:

- Organize joint monitoring site visits with the reps of the Government of Sweden in Albania and UN Agencies reps and communicate results and impact of the Programme's activities via respective visibility and communication channels;
- Monitor the website hits and social media in connection with certain events, after having sent out a press release;
- Use info graphs to illustrate project results through key facts and figures that can be used on social media, website, posters and publications;
- Keep track of who received the publications (distribution lists) and the number of publications disseminated;
- Keep track of journalists' list and contacts during media events;

### **Visual identity, use of logos and disclaimers:**

All communication, information and press-statements will be in line with the Visibility Guidelines for Government of Sweden and UN Agencies.

- Make use of logos of UN Agencies and Government of Sweden. Government of Sweden and UN Agencies logos logo will enjoy equal prominence in size.
- Logos of participating local governments. Logos of participating local governments can also be displayed on relevant locality-related activity, press-information, publication, banner, information boards, etc., so as to underline their engagement and ensure visibility.
- Information materials will include a following disclaimer: "This publication has been produced with the financial Support of Government of Sweden and implemented by UN Agencies (specifying the agency) and or partner/s. The contents of this publication are the sole

responsibility of and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Government of Sweden and or UN Agencies.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- A high level of awareness about the activities, impact and outcomes of the Programme is built among different groups of stakeholders.
- A positive image of the UN/Sweden as of the partners who closely and successfully work together on gender equality and fight against violence in the country is strengthened.
- A better coordination and information exchange on gender equality and GBV is being implemented in the country.
- Create evidence for well informed, evidence based future interventions including improvement of policy and practices.

### Annex 3: Risk Assessment Appendix

Relevant Output	Risk of not achieving output – provide brief description	Impact Rating	Likelihood rating	Mitigating actions to manage risk
Output 3.1: Parliament and electoral institutions have the capacity to perform core functions  Output 1.1 Constitutional, ministerial and independent mechanisms are reinforced to identify and report human rights violations and enable evidence based policy making and response.	Possible change of CEC leadership. The actual leadership is already very engaged and committed to gender equality.	3	3	Continue to strengthen engagement with CEC key staff. Results achieved provides a strong basis to establish working engagement with new leadership.
	2017 National Elections may lead to a shift in power between parties in government, potentially reducing women in parliament.  The limited number of exceptional women role models.	3	3	Support the networking and capacity development of women leaders to act as powerful role models.  Continued emphasis on promoting collaborative cross party engagement within the Alliance is needed.
	2017 National Elections may lead to a shift in power between parties in government, potentially reducing women in parliament.	3	3	Support the networking and capacity development of women leaders to act as powerful role models.  Continued emphasis on promoting collaborative cross party engagement within the Alliance is needed.
Output 1.3: Mandated line ministries and state institutions ensure that their practices and policies effectively prevent and address violence (against women and children) in society.	Lack of political engagement and insufficient technical capacity and resources to address EAW at national and local level.	2	3	Technical capacities will be strengthened at central and local level in cooperation with a number of actors. A package of proposed legislative amendments in line with Istanbul Convention has been prepared and will be used to advocate for their adoption. Advocacy to commit resources and establish needed services will be conducting using GRB processes at local level (using information from the DV costing and mapping study on services).
Output 2.5 Capacity of institutions and service providers to implement legislation and normative standards on Elimination of Violence against Women (EAW) and other forms of discrimination is strengthened.	A weak monitoring mechanism of all aspects of gender-based violence legislation, may prevent capacity building interventions from producing optimal results in practice and may impact the quality of multi-disciplinary response to cases	4	4	The UN will use its convening power to host debates among different agencies, mainly at the central level, in order to make problems with implementation of GBV legislation visible to those officials vested with monitoring and supervisory competences.  The UN will continue to invest in evidence collecting, recording and tracking systems and other data and statistics in order to aid the monitoring and accountability processes of various institutions.

				The UN will also support civil society in utilising UN complaint mechanisms with a view to give international visibility to failures of the system to preserve human life or to protect survivors
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