



# Financing Catalytic Action For SDG Transitions

*Market Ready Pipeline of Transformative Investments*

SEPTEMBER 2023

# Introduction

The 2030 Agenda is the result of the most inclusive and expansive deliberation in human history. Bold, sweeping and ambitious, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all world leaders as essential facets of the sustainable future we want; of a world transformed for the benefit of all humanity.

## *Transitions for Systemic Impact*

Scholarship on the SDGs has converged on transformative entry points - or key transitions - that can have catalytic and multiplier effects across the SDGs and an outsized determinant impact for achieving the Goals. These include: (1) climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; (2) food systems; (3) energy access and affordability; (4) jobs and social protection; (5) education; and (6) digital connectivity.

Rooted in the 17 Goals, these transitions are not a new agenda. Rather, the transitions represent a useful organising frame that can spotlight investment pathways to accelerate SDG progress within and across countries, with the prevailing country context determining the priority level accorded each area. This will help ensure a better convergence among the most impactful entry points to spearhead SDG acceleration, improving the alignment of significant work and investments already undertaken across these areas by countries, companies, cities and civil society.

Each of these key transitions requires a consideration of multiple policy levers spanning economic, social and environmental dimensions, i.e., actions that recognise the integrated nature of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

This helps ensure that collectively, efforts are multiplicative and that all policy actors amplify each other's work. Moreover, since the SDGs are interconnected, so too are these six transitions.

Critically, the metrics of success for these transitions lie primarily in the status of women, children, the marginalised and the most vulnerable. That is, these transitions must be just and equitable transitions, with human rights, gender equality and the principle of Leaving No One Behind comprising their fundamental design elements. For instance, food systems transition can only take place if it fully and measurably redresses the food insecurity that is disproportionately experienced by women and people living in rural areas. Universal health coverage must be a hallmark of the transition on jobs and social protection. Only when energy is routinely available to the most disadvantaged groups can it be considered fully accessible and affordable.

This means that transitions cannot be achieved without transformed legislative and policy frameworks as well as radical improvements to national public sector capacities to deliver and implement the same. The final critical element is a transformation of financing. The SDGs require a quantum leap in finance flows – from billions to trillions – with an estimated gap of some US\$ 4.2 trillion per year. The primary financing source for countries remains the national budget, necessitating a more systematic review and alignment of the budgeting system to sustainable development financing needs. Remaining gaps will need to be covered by better leveraging all financing flows – public and private, national and international – including from international financial institutions, private sector, official development assistance, philanthropic foundations, remittances, and others.

## *Catalysing Engine Room Actions by the UN Development System*

The reforms of the UN development system have transformed its ability to support countries with the implementation of the SDGs. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs), UN Country Teams (UNCTs) are now optimally positioned to propel progress on the six transitions.

To propel the key SDG transitions, the UN Joint SDG Fund will support UNCTs to deliver four 'engine room' actions at the country level, both building on and supporting regional and global efforts. The lens of the six transitions – and the critical mass of integrated policy expertise behind each – will enable RCs and UNCTs to deliver better together to help countries unlock the rapid and deep transformations needed to achieve the Goals by 2030. As neutral and trusted arbiters, RCs can harness the expertise and networks of the entire UN development system and convene governments and all stakeholders in concerted partnership. This means UNCTs are now uniquely able to connect the relevant entry points to national ambitions and priorities, ensuring that the UN's collective and entity-specific programming responses enable policy and financing partnerships to make these a reality. The new generation of the UN's "Common Country Analyses" and "Cooperation Frameworks" already reflects this revitalisation, with a reinvigorated ability to help countries address complex, interconnected SDG challenges.

Within each area, UNCTs will deliver four 'engine room' actions at the country level, supporting regional and global efforts. First, RCs and UNCTs will drive the shifts across policy and regulatory frameworks, going beyond the standard sectoral approaches. Second, RCs and UNCTs will facilitate the identification and development of pipelines of bankable and market-ready national projects with participation of both public and private sectors, including by providing access to world-class expertise.

Third, RCs and UNCTs will convene all relevant actors to attract the needed financing from all sources, including non-traditional actors such as capital markets, philanthropic foundations, and remittances, to help develop the 'deal room' – a financing mix with innovative instruments – for each of the transitions.



Fourth, RCs and UNCTs will commit to capacity-building at scale to support public institutions and civil society in this process, ensuring a steady increase in capacities over time to reinforce and sustain these investments.

At the global level, the UN Joint SDG Fund has been transformed to accompany these transitions, incubating and capitalising new windows to finance each; such catalytic support to UNCTs will be critical for results at the country level. Similarly, regional intergovernmental mechanisms and strengthened UN coordination platforms are enabling coherent policy dialogues around these key areas, enabling collaborative responses to the demand from RCs and UNCTs for country-specific implementation. The multilevel approach to these 'engine room' actions are additionally seen in the twelve "High-Impact Initiatives" (HIIs) which were showcased at the 2023 SDG Summit, as areas where real change triggered by the UN is happening, and around which partnerships can be built and expanded for further investments in the six transitions.

At the SDG Summit in September 2023, member states adopted a strong Political Declaration expressing a clear recommitment to the SDGs and calling for "bold, ambitious, accelerated, just and transformative actions, anchored in international solidarity and effective cooperation at all levels." The declaration outlines a clear path on finance, with member states pledging to deliver the SDG Stimulus, address debt challenges, reform Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and the global financial system.

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*Case Study features:*



Cape Verde



Micronesia



Uruguay



Guatemala



Mongolia



Argentina

# Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss & Pollution

Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – the triple planetary crisis – are deeply interlinked crises underpinned by unsustainable consumption and production. Effectively tackling them requires a profound transformation of existing socio-economic systems, to change how people live, consume and produce, and our collective relationship to the planet in our path to prosperity. At its core, this requires a decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation. Several multilateral environmental agreements provide clear, collective goals and targets to guide our efforts. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change sets an overarching goal to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. To limit global warming to 1.5°C, greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 at the latest and decline 43 percent by 2030. The Global Biodiversity Framework sets out four goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030 in service of its vision, that “by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.” A series of conventions and treaties controlling pollution and waste are currently in operation, and negotiations are underway for a major treaty on plastics pollution, to be concluded in 2024.

The Fund will support UNDS collective actions for a just green transition especially by promoting innovations in climate and green financing, supporting the development of sustainable blue economies to protect marine biodiversity and ecosystems, and position the Fund as a potential vehicle to help countries address and respond to losses and damages through an integrated approach.

## *Suriname*

The UN's support to Suriname's National Climate Agreement, a roadmap to address climate change and access climate financing, has included the UN Resident Coordinator convening critical stakeholders, including indigenous and tribal people. The roadmap includes a forest financing strategy and explores how the forest sector can accelerate the country's national climate targets.

## *Mexico*

In Mexico, a UN-led analysis detailing the impact of climate change on the banking sector was endorsed by Mexico's Central Bank for providing an opportunity for Mexican banks to assess and address their climate related

vulnerabilities. Stress testing these climate risk safeguards through identifying vulnerabilities in their portfolio can enable timely adjustment to minimise the financial losses and protect precious fiscal space for net-zero investments.

## *Fiji*

Coral degradation, driven by overfishing, coastal development, and climate change, threatens coral reefs, marine biodiversity and the communities that rely on corals. In Fiji, US\$10 million of public finance provided by the UN Joint SDG Fund and the Global Fund for Coral Reefs will leverage US\$50 million in investment capital to promote the financial sustainability of coral reef conservation and reef-positive livelihoods. The joint programme includes commercial investments in Locally Managed Marine Protected Areas featuring revenues from eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries, and blue carbon credits. With support from the UN Joint SDG Fund, a local conservation company, Beqa Adventure Divers, continues its operations to prevent poaching, monitor coral reefs, and preserve a locally managed marine protected area. The Fertile Factory Company received a US\$750,000 loan from the UN matched by an additional US\$400,000 from the company to produce a non-synthetic organic fertilizer for sugar cane production that will reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. The UN is also supporting the set-up of Fiji's second sanitary landfill which began its formal structuring phase after receiving an initial Government commitment of over US\$1 million. By 2030, the combined impact will result in at least 30 effectively managed marine protected areas, improved food security and income for over 6,000 community members reliant upon fishing and protection of over US\$1 billion in annual tourism revenue.

## *Philippines*

In one of the poorest regions in the Philippines, the UN supported the design of a multipurpose cash transfer social assistance programme consisting of shock-responsive social protection for vulnerable families. Funded jointly by the UN Joint SDG Fund and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the multipurpose cash transfer targeted over 7,000 farmer-headed households and families with young children and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Co-designed with the Ministry of Social Services and Development, the intervention strengthened the capacity of the local institutions to analyse and monitor both natural and human-induced risks, and to improve synergy and coordination between social protection programmes, climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness management. The pilot helped guide the roll-out of a national emergency cash transfer programme and resulted in the establishment of a national working group that leverages the expertise of ministries and regional structures on disaster risk management. This aims to develop anticipatory action protocols for various hazards, including climate, and early warning system monitoring processes.

## *Maldives*

In the Maldives, UN Joint SDG Fund support to the government's gender-responsive climate financing strategy is prioritising the transition to mandatory climate and disaster insurance for public assets and infrastructure, including development of a first of its kind nature-based insurance programme to insure against climate related losses and damages. The co-creation of sustainable lending products, credit guarantee schemes and tax incentives with private investors is critical to unleash new opportunities for green, blue and sustainability linked loans and other financing instruments.

## *Papua New Guinea*

In Papua New Guinea, a Blue Investment Strategy integrates blue economy principles into ocean management and is fostering a more conducive business environment for private investment. UN policy support, embedded within the national Blue Economy Enterprise Incubation Facility, will stimulate growth of viable blue economy business models financed by the national Biodiversity and Climate Fund. The facility provides technical assistance and early-stage finance to unearth, incubate and grow sustainable blue enterprise from cradle to exit with a focus on small and medium enterprises and women. Ocean businesses will gain access to credit lines that are de-risked with guarantees offered by domestic private investors.

# Case Study: Cape Verde

**Title:** *Connecting Blue Economy Actors in Cape Verde: Generating Employment, Supporting Livelihoods and Mobilising Resources*

**Region:** *Africa*



## US\$ 3.5m

*Cape Verde's first Blue Bond through Blue-X, in partnership with the International Investment Bank of Cape Verde, raised US\$3.5 million to supply affordable small-scale loans to microentrepreneurs and start-ups in coastal communities, while also investing in small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the maritime and fisheries sectors.*

With a focus on unleashing the potential of the blue economy, the UN Joint SDG Fund is supporting Cape Verde to create the enabling framework and financing solutions for key transformations in the country's sustainable finance landscape, to bridge financing gaps that slow down the implementation of SDGs, national plans and local strategies. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, with the tools provided by the Integrated National Financing Framework methodology, UNDP, ILO and the UN Office for Drugs and Crime supported the government in designing different financing options to optimize the potential of the country's blue economy and achieve its Ambition 2030 strategic vision.

## US\$ 26m

*Creation of a sustainable finance platform, Blue-X, that has raised over US\$26 million in partnership with the National Stock Exchange.*

In partnership with Cape Verde's Stock Exchange, a sustainable finance platform Blue-X, was created for listing and trading sustainable and inclusive financial instruments for the development of the country's blue, green and social economy. Blue-X has raised over US\$26 million in capital markets through the issuance of green, social, sustainability-linked and blue bonds. It aims to become a regional and international platform to support sustainable projects that can be financed by a vast universe of investors.

In 2023, the platform listed its first blue bond to raise US \$3.5 million, issued by the Cape Verde International Investment Bank, to supply affordable loans to microentrepreneurs and startups in coastal communities, investing in small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the maritime and fisheries sectors. As a small island development state, highly dependent on ocean environment and maritime spaces, the blue bond issuance will directly improve the livelihoods of the local communities.

The joint programme guided the Cape Verde International Investment Bank through the process of issuing the bond framework, following an external review process conducted by EY that ensures adherence to blue principles. The first group bond issuance in Cape Verde was also launched through the Blue-X platform in the format of a social bond in favour of 22 municipalities, with an interest rate close to the public bond rate.

The platform has allowed the coordination between relevant actors and the capital market regulatory agency creating the adequate conditions and legal framework for the issuance of the social bond.

The INFF has been key in guiding the country towards this solution to finance municipalities and the blue economy, as well as aligning investments and other funding sources with the SDGs. Cape Verde's Blue-X platform builds on three key lessons:

- Strategic context and political-economic institutions matter.
- Adequate institutional capacity is crucial to ensure local ownership and foster bottom-up actions that can catalyse private investments.
- Partnerships across sectors and an integrated local-global approach can help transcend the public private divide.

The programme supported the government to develop the National Strategy to Combat Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and the Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, with the objective of improving the country's business and investment environment and complying with international standards and best practices.



**The World Bank estimates that up to 130 million people could be pushed into poverty by 2030 because of rising temperatures. [...] Limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees is possible if the world takes a quantum leap in climate action, together.**



**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**  
*UN Secretary-General*  
 Remarks at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 2023

# Digital Divide, Connectivity & Transformation

Persistent digital divides among and within countries stand in the way of widespread SDG progress, at a time of exponential pace of digital transformation. Managing digital risks and digital harms and leveraging the potential of technologies requires investing in inclusive and accessible digital infrastructure to ensure meaningful connectivity for all. The lack of financial resources constitutes a tremendous barrier to countries in the developing world to invest in digitalisation efforts, hindering their ability to build relevant capacity, services and infrastructures. Our Common Agenda proposes a Global Digital Compact to be agreed at the Summit of the Future in September 2024 that would set out principles, objectives and actions to advance and open, free, secure and human-centred digital future, one that is anchored in universal human rights and enables the attainment of the SDGs.

The integration of digital in economies and societies has the potential to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. From service delivery to finance, human centric digital transformations are key to building more inclusive, effective, and transparent solutions across sectors. The digital economy can enable structural transformations toward a gender-equal, greener, inclusive, and resilient socio-economic growth. Digital connectivity and strong digital public infrastructure have increased countries' resilience to shocks and crises—especially for the COVID-19 response and recovery.

As digitalisation facilitates economic and social activities from a distance, e-commerce also surges with them, with potentially long-lasting effects. Wide gaps in digital readiness are emerging. These gaps sometimes exacerbate existing

inequalities for the most vulnerable. New challenges related to cybercrime, misinformation, discrimination and biases in algorithms, violations of data privacy and digital rights, and data misuse, to name just a few, continue to be worrying issues. At the same time, digital transformation is introducing new challenges to sovereignty, privacy, and other human rights.

The Fund recognises the potential for UN joint action in enhancing digital cooperation and catalysing digital transformations, especially in regions that have been left behind to address the digital divide. Going forward, the Fund will support the promotion of integrated joint programmes and

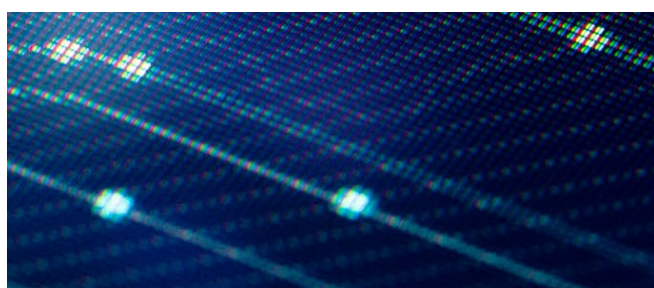


financing for digital transformations for the SDGs that drive systems change and leverages broader funding for key areas such as government services, digital connectivity, digital financing, e-trade, and digital for the planet.

It will also support cross-cutting initiatives to advance digital public goods, digital human rights and digital capacity building to create a safer and more equitable world, while unlocking the full potential of digital technologies for the SDGs.

## Chile

Steered by the UN Resident Coordinator in Chile, together with FAO, ILO, and UNDP, the largest and most comprehensive digital ecosystem for the elderly was adopted by national legislation and includes a community app to connect persons aged 60+ with public services; a digital national community for caregivers which is a support network for training and selfcare of caregivers of children and persons with disability; and free online courses and tools to train workers of public and private institutions that work with and assist older persons.



## Ecuador

Most joint programmes of the Fund include an element of digitalisation of processes that allow for a more efficient and less-error prone delivery of public services. In Ecuador, the UN Country Team, led by the UN Resident Coordinator, created a national digital platform to collect information on young people in informal labor and offer services to promote decent work and the extension of social protection. The platform's creation relied on the participation of young people partnered with academic institutions to implement training and vocational programs on soft, digital and entrepreneurship skills, as well as on STEM, care services and the Start Your Business Idea programme.

## Nigeria

Digitalisation of traditional cash transfer mechanisms in Nigeria are improving the confidentiality for those receiving benefits while facilitating social officers' tasks in handling complaints through a digitised Complaints Feedback Mechanism tool which drastically reduced paper to collect and process data.

## Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands & Tokelau

In Samoa, the UN supported Digital Data System Training for people living with disabilities to access and understand digital data systems. Such knowledge transfer has been instrumental to provide better targeted support to vulnerable populations in Niue, Cook Islands, and Tokelau.

## Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, tech solutions designed and implemented for women artisans and entrepreneurs living in poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability enabled a new e-commerce platform. While developing personal, business, and digital literacy skills, the platform enabled women to sell directly to consumers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic contributing directly to the empowerment and economic autonomy of women in vulnerable conditions.

# Case Study: Micronesia

**Title:** Accelerating SDG Achievement through Digital Transformation to strengthen community resilience in Micronesia

**Countries:** Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Palau, Nauru, and Kiribati

**Region:** Asia Pacific



The Fund recognises the potential for UN joint action in enhancing digital cooperation and catalysing digital transformations, especially in regions that have been left behind to address the digital divide. In Micronesia, The Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Nauru, and Kiribati, the Fund will support the promotion of integrated joint programmes and financing for digital transformations for the SDGs that drive systems

change and leverage broader funding for key areas such as government services, digital connectivity, digital financing, e-trade, and digital for the planet. It will also support cross-cutting initiatives to advance digital public goods, digital human rights and digital capacity building to create a safer and more equitable world, while unlocking the full potential of digital technologies for the SDGs.

Together with seven United Nations agencies joining efforts through the multi-country office of the Pacific, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau and Kiribati will embrace digital transformation across multiple sectors to respond the local needs and priorities. The programme will make use of digital solutions to enhance early childhood development policy and strategy frameworks, nutrition and food-based diets, decent employment created by digital transformation, shock responsive social protection and safety nets for children and vulnerable groups. One of the central expected outcomes will be improved coherence amongst digital policy, legislative and strategy frameworks supportive of cross-sectoral digital transformation. Digital access and literacy will be promoted in a safe and meaningful manner that improves the quality of life and livelihood.

A whole-of-government approach to investing in digital technologies and achieving the SDGs in Micronesian countries by strengthening community resilience will be accelerated. Through the Smart Islands approach, digital transformation at community level will enable access to a range of digitally enabled services, prioritised in consultation with the community, along with the required awareness and digital skills to harness its potential in a meaningful and safe way. The programme intervention is expected to meaningfully improve livelihoods; healthcare; enjoyment of human rights; skills in harnessing the digitally enabled services; education and job opportunities; food availability and nutrition; digital finance and information; respond to natural disasters; and maritime security, which are identified as priority areas among the target Pacific countries.

The process is led by the UN Resident Coordinator and implemented by ITU, FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNODC, who are joining hands to propose a coherent and unified programme proposal leveraging each agency's technical expertise accompanied by a strong coordination with government ministries and civil society organisations and other development actors in the country.

## Key Results

The Girls in ICT programme to provide training for girls on Child Online Protection and Cyber Safety awareness training in Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, and Nauru. Through a synergistic collaboration between UNICEF, UNESCO, UNODC and ITU, UN networks will be optimized to reach 1,000 children to participate.

Kiribati's Information and Communications Technology in Education Framework analysis is Integrating this updated framework into the broader education sector plan, a testament to the commitment to enhance education and learning opportunities in Kiribati through the effective use of technology.

Evidence-based nutritional practices and dietary guidelines have been presented to national policy makers and members of the health council in Federated States of Micronesia for their validation and approval.

The joint programme is conducting a comprehensive assessment of wage systems and wage-setting practices and a training needs analysis on digital entrepreneurship in Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands and Palau to ensure that possible job creation in the digital economy promotes decent jobs and strengthens policy coherence between policies fostering digital transformation and decent employment creation. Draft wage policy documents will be developed for government review in Kiribati and the Marshall Islands.

UNODC has conducted initial assessment visits to identify locations for Automatic Identification System (AIS) receiver installation of at least one Coastal AIS Receiver per country to strengthen maritime domain awareness to control illicit activity at sea.

Participation by a private telecommunications company in Nauru will provide power and bandwidth to the proposed Digital Inclusive Centre, which will cater to people living with disabilities.

# 1,000

Through a synergistic collaboration between UNICEF, UNESCO, UNODC and ITU, their networks will be optimized to reach 1,000 children to participate in such training.



Digital technologies sustain life, work, health and learning for billions of people. These challenging times have accelerated the transformation everywhere.



**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**  
UN Secretary-General  
Remarks for World  
Telecommunication and  
Information Science Day

# Transforming Energy Access & Affordability



Energy access and affordability remain core development challenges in large parts of the world. At the same time, the diversification of the energy matrix and its shift from fossil fuel-based energy to renewable energy is imperative for climate mitigation as energy accounts for over two-thirds of global greenhouse emissions. To remain aligned with the Paris climate target of 1.5°C, emissions must decrease by 14 percent by 2026 in spite of an adverse global context and increased energy insecurity that may slow-down energy transition incentives. Although access to electricity has increased, the pace needs to accelerate along with reliability and affordability to ensure universal access. Significant political and financial support is required for 2.7 billion people to have access to clean cooking methods by 2030. The clean energy transition will not only ensure we meet humanity's climate goals but will also bring more monetary revenues, for instance through the use of solar and wind power to replace coal resources, which could save up to US\$ 23 billion a year. The transition is expected to create 24–25 million new jobs, against the 6 to 7 million jobs that will be lost. The Secretary-General's Acceleration Agenda identifies immediate actions to advance the global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy with tailored support for developing economies to make the transition just and equitable. The updated Energy Compacts will outline the specific roadmaps to meet SDG 7 at an accelerated pace.

The Fund aims to promote integrated policy solutions and financing solutions for just and green energy transitions, focusing on renewable energy production, transmission and access especially for people that have been left behind. It will also facilitate the scale-up of inclusive, just, and green energy initiatives, including at the municipal levels, to enhance access and affordability of clean energy.

## *Zimbabwe*

In Zimbabwe, 2020 data estimates less than 45% of the population had access to electricity. Lack of electrification, especially in rural areas, impacts production across key economic sectors, including agriculture and tourism. While renewable energy has the potential to improve Zimbabwe's low electrification rates, inflation and currency risk had deterred the long term, low interest financing that renewable energy businesses need to grow. The UN Joint SDG Fund, through Zimbabwe's Renewable Energy Fund (REF), combines technical assistance with financing to leverage US\$30 million towards renewable energy businesses like solar plants and mini-grids. In partnership with Old Mutual, an African financial services group active across 14 countries, and the Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe, the REF invests debt and equity in public or private commercial renewable energy enterprises in rural or peri-urban areas focusing on women and youth. The REF fosters engagement between renewable energy project financiers and developers while contributing to the attainment of a number of key national priorities. By 2025, the REF will create 750 jobs in the renewable energy sector, and generate 180 GWhr renewable energy capacity for Zimbabwe.

## *North Macedonia*

In North Macedonia, more than 60% of electricity is generated by coal, with very limited use of renewable energy. A new Green Financing Facility, launched by the UN and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), is partnering with seven local banks to provide financing to households and small businesses transitioning to renewable energy and energy efficient technologies. The catalytic funding provided by the UN Joint SDG Fund is unlocking over US\$30 million in co-financing to local banks from EBRD, which will be used for on-lending to small businesses. Loans to 105 businesses and 650 households are expected, ultimately leading to 80,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions avoided, 86,000 MWh of energy saved and an increase of renewable energy generation by 10.7 MW that can light-up approximately 11,000 homes over four years.



# Case Study: Uruguay

**Title:** Renewable Energy Fund: Innovative Finance for Clean Tech Solutions in Uruguay

**Region:** Latin America

In Uruguay, the Fund's support to UNDS collective actions for a just green transition focuses on promoting innovations in climate financing, specifically, investments in the renewable energy sector that also nurture social inclusion, advance gender equality and generate new capabilities at the local level.

Although almost all of Uruguay's electricity is derived from renewable sources, the country's primary energy matrix is still 37% dependent on fossil fuel. Committed to reducing the country's greenhouse gas emissions, the Government of Uruguay aims to implement a second energy transition towards the use of innovative low carbon technologies to increase the efficiency of its national electricity system. The transformation of the transportation sector by transitioning from fossil fuels through the gradual substitution of non-renewable energy in the industrial, residential and commercial sectors are the two main strategies supporting this transition.

The UN Joint SDG Fund is supporting the design and set-up of the Renewable Energy Innovation Fund (REIF), whose purpose is to promote a new energy transition with investments that encourage competitiveness in the energy sector, nurture social inclusion, advance gender equality and generate new capabilities at the local level. The Renewable Energy Innovation Fund combines funds from local banks and the United Nations to provide loans with flexible terms and conditions to businesses, including SMEs, that are adapted to the challenges of carrying out

## US\$ 68m

*REIF is leveraging US\$68 million from the local banking sector.*

innovative and sustainable investments. Building on the expertise of UNIDO, UNDP and UN Women, the UN Resident Coordinator has played a pivotal role in convening the diverse network of partners to work jointly in creating an inspiring public-private partnership to accelerate Uruguay's inclusive climate agenda.

With a strong emphasis on gender, at least 45% of the REIF's investments are allocated to projects that have clear policies and actions to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment. The development and deployment of low carbon technologies supported by the REIF is leading the progressive decarbonization of the industry and transportation sectors in Uruguay.

The REIF focuses on activating large-scale financing accompanied by technical assistance for businesses, including SMEs, that support new and emerging green projects that drive the second energy transition around 4 main areas:

- **Electric Mobility:** Technologies and infrastructure for electric mobility including electric buses, light-duty electric vehicles, electric utility vehicles, electric passenger vehicles, as well as the development of charging facilities.
- **Energy storage and demand management:** Technologies aimed at improving imbalances between renewable energy supply and demand and improving system efficiency through new energy storage technologies.
- **Power to X:** Technologies aimed at transforming electrical energy into another type of energy with storage capacity such as electric boilers and technologies that use electricity for hydrogen generation.
- **Waste management and treatment:** Includes technologies for battery recycling and management, biogas and combustion of organic waste as boiler fuel.

With an initial capitalisation of US\$7 million, coupled with guarantees, investment subsidies, tax incentives and other public incentives, REIF is leveraging US\$68 million from the local banking sector. REIF is proof of concept for sustainable investing, forging a new pathway for cooperation between development actors, public sector and commercial banks. The Renewable Energy Innovation Fund loans that invest in the various energy transition projects range between US\$30,000 -100.000, unlocking great potential for exponential leverage, growth, job creation and poverty reduction.



Some of the poorest countries in the world are being forced into a choice between servicing their debt, or serving their people. They have virtually no fiscal space for essential investments in the Sustainable Development Goals or the transition to renewable energy.



**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**  
UN Secretary-General  
Remarks to the Press on the launch of the Report - "A World of Debt", 2023

# Food Systems Transformation

Food systems include all aspects of growing, harvesting, packaging, processing, transporting, marketing and consuming food. Prevailing global food systems are not ensuring food security for all, with hunger on the rise. Moreover, food systems are also not sustainable, contributing up to one-third of greenhouse gas emissions and up to 80 per cent of biodiversity loss, and using up to 70 per cent of freshwater. In addition, food systems are fragile: economic, climate and political shocks, together with climate, biodiversity and pollution stresses, negatively impact agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and aquaculture-related livelihood systems, which hinder efforts for people to realize their right to food and access the nutrition contained therein. A global transition is needed to realise food systems that: prevent, anticipate, absorb and adapt in multiple ways to continuing and colliding shocks and stresses; feed growing populations while contributing to human nutrition, health and well-being; restore and protect nature; become climate neutral; and provide decent jobs and inclusive and resilient economies.

The Fund aims to support countries steer national transitions towards sustainable, resilient, inclusive and healthy food systems, building on and maintaining the Food Systems Summit momentum throughout the Decade of Action on the Global Goals. In particular, it will support the network of more than 150 National Convenors, the more than 120 national food systems transformation pathways and the global ecosystem of support including Coalitions of Action and

multistakeholder networks, birthed by the Food Systems Summit and supported by the Food Systems Coordination Hub. Through the maintenance of strong political commitment to drive food system transformation for the SDGs, the consolidation of national food system governance mechanisms, effective closure of implementation gaps, reshaping of the national food finance framework, and proactive utilization of knowledge, lessons, and communication to enhance engagement, the Fund's thematic approach to food systems will actively propel the transition towards food systems that prioritise the well-being of people, the planet, and common prosperity.

## Georgia

In Georgia, the UN Resident Coordinator led UNDP, FAO, the UN Economic Commission for Europe and ILO in carrying out a multi-dimensional analysis of food and energy prices and their impact to vulnerable people and small businesses to support policy and decision-making in response to the crisis. A new analytical tool will now enable relevant state institutions within the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture to conduct a rapid assessment of impact of changes in key food and energy prices on the vulnerable.



The UN Joint SDG Fund's Window on Food Systems, being launched today, is our effort to tackle the support needed to address this lack of funding and turn the situation around. It will bring to life a Food Systems Investment Strategy, supported by the UN and the National Food Systems Convenors. This will catalyse the rapid and system-wide action needed for food system transformation under the UN Food Systems Hub.

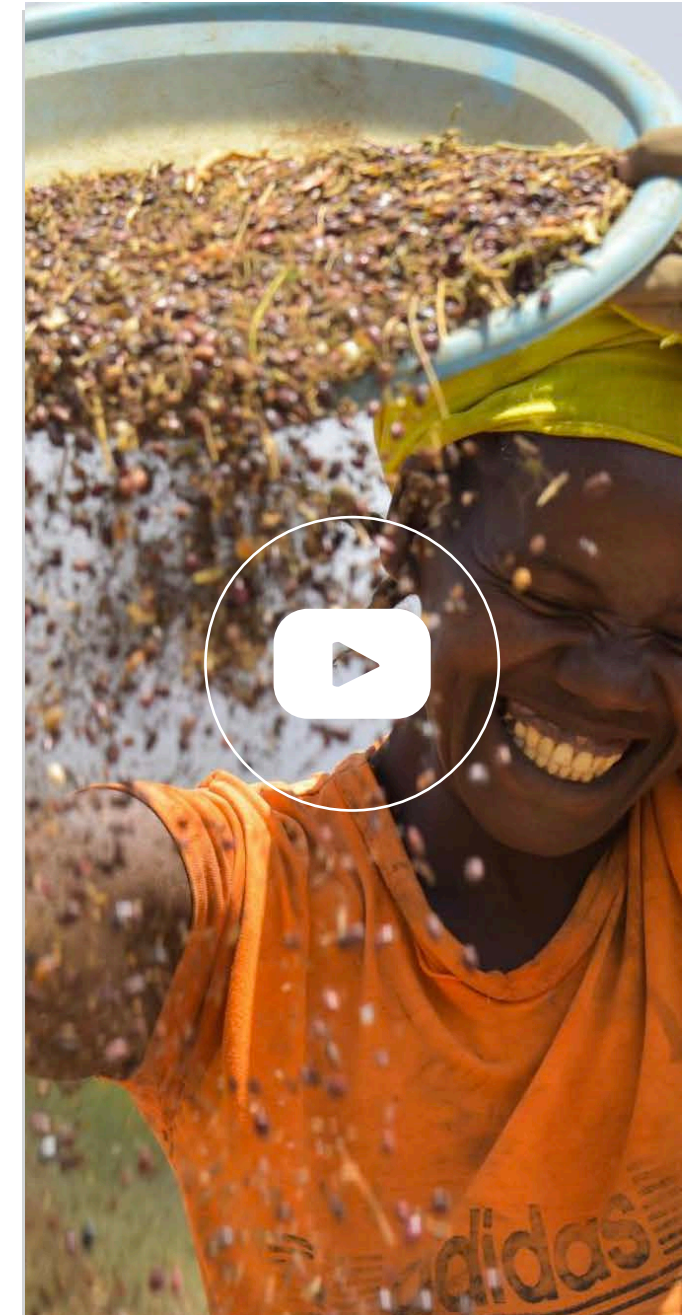



**AMINA MOHAMMED**  
UN Deputy Secretary-General  
UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment, 2023


The Fund offers an opportunity to forge new partnerships across the public and private sectors. Now more than ever, we need businesses on board to achieve lasting change in our food systems. They can help us develop the smart innovations and solutions required to build resilience and reduce hunger. We will never succeed without their investment and expertise.



**CINDY MCCAIN**  
Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme  
UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment, 2023



WATCH ON YOUTUBE 

WATCH UNFSS+2 EVENT 

3. [https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/un-secretary-general/unfss2-secretary-general-report.pdf?sfvrsn=560b6fa6\\_19&utm\\_source=Food+Systems+Hub+Contacts&utm\\_campaign=5f17fe8609-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_08\\_07\\_07\\_09&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_5f17fe8609-%5BLIST\\_EMAIL\\_ID%5D](https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/un-secretary-general/unfss2-secretary-general-report.pdf?sfvrsn=560b6fa6_19&utm_source=Food+Systems+Hub+Contacts&utm_campaign=5f17fe8609-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_08_07_07_09&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5f17fe8609-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D)

4. United Nations, "Secretary-General's Chair Summary and Statement of Action on the UN Food Systems Summit" (United Nations, September 23, 2021), <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/making-food-systems-work-people-planet-and-prosperity>.

5. Ibid. The number of people living in hunger has increased by 46 million in Africa, around 57 million in Asia, and about 14 million more in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) supported Government to build a robust monitoring system building on IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix and WFP's Hunger Map, to address information gaps on the impact of the global stressors to food and internal displacement. The analysis provided by IOM, WFP, and FAO facilitated Government decisions to provide better social services to vulnerable populations including IDPs suffering from rising food and energy prices.

## Malawi

A nation's food systems transition can only take place if it fully and measurably redresses the food insecurity that is disproportionately experienced by the most vulnerable. In Malawi, the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team contributed towards enhancement of Malawi's broader institutional capacity by enabling the government to elaborate its social protection strategy, including critical financing and budgetary inputs. WFP, UNICEF, and ILO supported the Government to leverage social protection services by integrating social cash transfers, school meals and village savings and loans. The UN's technical assistance enabled the Government to leverage the Social Protection system to reach heightened food needs over the 2020/2021 lean season, igniting linkages and coordination between humanitarian and Social Protection sectors and ensuring that future emergency food assistance is provided. The UN supported development of Standard Operating Procedures for expanding the social protection system, rolled-out a national Management Information System for Emergencies (e-MIS) as well as enabled e-payments in rural areas. Increased unconditional cash transfers ensured that over 6,400 shock-affected and vulnerable households could access emergency food assistance. Almost 90% of boys and girls in those households were able to remain in school throughout the lean season, potentially breaking intergenerational poverty and ensuring resilient livelihoods.

## Armenia

In Armenia, the UN provides analytical and capacity building support to contribute to the development of coherent financing frameworks for the allocation of adequate public and private resources in key areas, including food systems. The country's first comprehensive multi-year assessment of market functionality and supply chain dynamics as well as public expenditure reviews has unpacked financing gaps while exploring opportunities for national food security investments. A set of feasibility studies and policy analyses of food value chains presented a holistic review of the policy environment for food and agriculture investment, enabling Armenia's new National Food Security Strategy (2022-2025) and action plan to be developed and costed with targets aligned with the SDGs. It is estimated that implementation of the strategy requires US\$66.5 million from the state budget, international donor organisations and private sector. As the first strategy that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each involved government institution in ensuring Food Security, it offers Armenia the opportunity to not only enhance the effectiveness of service provision but align with private sector investors entering their market.

## Timor-Leste

In Timor-Leste, the UN Resident Coordinator supported Government decision making to allocate US\$80 million of government budgets to "Cesta Básica" (food basket programme) in continuation of a previous pilot. The programme offers essential food items worth up to US\$50 for key family needs while stimulating agricultural output as 75 percent of the products in the basket are locally produced. The UN Joint SDG Fund support also enabled completion of the country's first food systems assessment and integrated food security phase classification (IPC), which will help the Government design policy measures to implement the national roadmap to sustainable food systems. Based on the evidence and recommendations from the assessments, the government has committed to review and update the existing national food policies and strategies, to develop legal instruments such as a food act or food

standards, to ensure sufficient allocation of resources and fundamental infrastructures for food control, to develop an integrated plan to implement a food control system at the national level, as well as to design a comprehensive education programme for all food safety stakeholders.

Accessing and mobilising funds continues to be a persistent challenge for many countries and stakeholders engaged in food systems transformation. Securing adequate financial resources is vital for implementing transformative actions, supporting innovation, and scaling up initiatives that can drive sustainable changes within food systems. With the work on SDG Financing resourced by the UN Joint SDG Fund, seventeen programmes focused on developing financing strategies and solutions for increased food and agriculture investment. They aimed to repurpose finance to support more resilient food systems, reduce financial flows that are degrading food systems, optimize finance to mobilise investment and increase access to food, and scale up public and private finance flowing to better food and healthy diets.

## Suriname

In Suriname, the UN Resident Coordinator, with leadership of FAO, UNIDO, ILO and UNFPA, are setting-up the Pineapple Innovation Hub, to unlock financing for transforming pineapple cultivation into an organic, sustainable and competitive value-chain, drawing on indigenous knowledge. The Pineapple Innovation Hub attracts and de-risks SDG-compliant investments into the value chain through the provision of collateral capital while providing training on cultivation methods that boost productivity and increase income of smallholder farmers. The UN secured a partnership with the Islamic Development Bank to attract additional responsible investments across the pineapple value-chain. By 2026, at least US\$10 million a year in revenue is expected from increased fruit and pineapple products with 1,000 new jobs for rural communities. The project prioritises embedding know-how and capacity into Suriname's farmers focusing on managing soil quality. Building on in depth analysis provided by the UN, this capacity strengthening will enable stronger environmental protection and climate change action across the supply chain.



## Ecuador

Ecuador applied an Integrated National Financing Framework methodology to its Child Chronic Malnutrition (CCM) reduction policy. The UN Resident Coordinator and UNCT supported formulation of tools, methodologies and mechanisms institutionalised by government, including: a methodology to estimate financing gaps for its CCM reduction policy, a guide to increase efficiency in delivery of the prioritised package of goods and services to implement its CCM reduction strategy, and tools to mobilise and align both public and private resources to finance the CCM reduction strategy, at the national and local level.

Food systems continue to generate pollution while emitting more than one third of greenhouse gases.<sup>6</sup> Investing in improved and more sustainable food systems is inextricably linked to taking action to combat climate change and pollution.

6. [https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/un-secretary-general/unfss2-secretary-general-report.pdf?sfvrsn=560b6fa6\\_19&utm\\_source=Food+Systems+Hub+Contacts&utm\\_campaign=5f17fe8609-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_08\\_07\\_09&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_5f17fe8609-%5BLIST\\_EMAIL\\_ID%5D](https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/un-secretary-general/unfss2-secretary-general-report.pdf?sfvrsn=560b6fa6_19&utm_source=Food+Systems+Hub+Contacts&utm_campaign=5f17fe8609-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_08_07_09&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5f17fe8609-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D)  
Photo credit: World Bank\_Fresh pineapples at Bomart Farms

# Case Study: Guatemala

**Title:** *Strengthening the Financial Architecture for the Financing of the Great National Crusade for Nutrition of Guatemala*

**Region:** *Latin America*



Photo credit: UN Women/Ryan Brown\_Guatemala, Rural Women Diversify Incomes and Build Resilience

According to the Guatemalan National Maternal and Infant Health Survey 47 percent of children under five are classified as stunted because of their height and weight and 37 percent of the population is affected by food insecurity. A siloed approach to nutrition and lack of planned policy budgets or quantified implementation costs for interventions challenged the effectiveness of past programmes. Facing limited results against early childhood malnutrition for decades, the Guatemalan government has now adopted a systemic approach to address malnutrition in the frame of food systems.

UNICEF, UNDP, and WFP developed an innovative methodology to determine the cost of Great National Crusade for Nutrition (GCNN), including activities and interventions, by working collaboratively with line ministries and GCNN-prioritised local governments. This approach highlighted gaps in financial, human and material resources, which constituted important evidence for the Government and informed dialogues with different sectors (private, civil society, religious, etc.), facilitating the mobilisation of public and private sources of financing to address chronic malnutrition.

It was estimated that in order to achieve GCNN’s objectives, Guatemala needs to allocate 3.7 percent of its GDP compared to the current allocation of 0.5 percent. The costing methodology will facilitate the formulation of the public annual and multi-year budget allocation towards GCNN. In 2022, the Guatemalan Congress approved a budget allocation of US\$60 million, an increase of 6 percent.

Moreover, the mapping of institutional bottlenecks that hindered the implementation of the GCNN interventions identified immediate constraints that were preventing an efficient execution of GCNN’s interventions, developing a timeline with assigned responsibilities for relevant solutions.

The overall objective of the UN support was to improve the national public finances using the Integrated National Financing Framework’s (INFF) umbrella methodology. Specifically, the aim was to promote the medium-term sustainability of the national strategy to combat chronic

malnutrition. Reliant upon a systemic transformational approach, five lines of action to reduce malnutrition in children, girls, and women, and rural and indigenous populations in extreme poverty were identified, estimating costs and scaling-up interventions for each:

- Health and nutrition: health services, infrastructure, promotion of child development.
- Food availability: food production, provision of inputs, home gardens, food storage, healthy diets.
- Social protection: cash transfers, school meals, women’s empowerment.
- Safe water, sanitation, and hygiene: surveillance of water quality, supply systems, sanitation, waste control.
- Communication for a social and behavioural change: sensitive care actions, food production, adequate hygiene practices.

## US\$ 60m

*Quantified the costs of implementing the Great National Crusade for Nutrition (GCNN) interventions at the national and local level, which led to Guatemalan Congress budget allocation in quarter four, US\$60 million approximately, an increase of 6%, to strengthen the GCNN.*

## 114

*Calculated estimates of the funding gaps for 114 prioritised municipalities, defined the baseline for budget preparation and expenditure allocation for scale up and identified potential sources for domestic and international financing, as well as strategic partnerships to support implementation.*

# Decent Jobs & Universal Social Protection

Social protection and decent job creation create prosperity, help build trust in institutions and make societies more resilient against shocks. These require long-term, affordable financing and decent job opportunities, which are the goals of the UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, launched in 2021. The Global Accelerator aims to expand social protection to 4 billion people and create at least 400 million new, decent jobs by 2030.

Social protection possesses a remarkable multiplier effect that reverberates through societies and economies by ensuring income security throughout the lifecycle: childhood (birth and child and family grants), adulthood (maternity, sickness, unemployment cash benefits) and older age (old age pensions and access long-term care). Paired with universal access to health care, individuals and societies benefit from the cascade of positive outcomes that are amplified by inclusive and resilient social protection systems. Extending adequate access to these benefits requires long-term, affordable financing and needs to be supported by decent job opportunities.

The Fund aims to support the implementation of the Global Accelerator by catalysing integrated policies for employment and social protection, while promoting financing solutions to mobilise domestic and international resources for decent jobs and extending social protection.

In particular, the Fund aims to facilitate creation of decent jobs in the green, care and digital economies and increase the coverage, inclusion and level of benefits in social protection, while expanding the fiscal space for decent jobs and shock-responsive social protection systems.

## Malawi

In Malawi, the UN supported Government development of cash transfer targeting tools, processes, and guidelines to respond to the urban poor impacted by COVID-19. Adaptations to the existing social protection system, including a multisectoral participatory consultative process for a government-led review of the National Social Support Policy, are expected to provide coverage to an additional 8 million people in the labour force. In addition, critical work has paved the way for the adoption of an old age pensions scheme that is expected to support more than 600,000 people aged 65 and above.

## Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, the integrated national financing strategy builds on the national Development Strategy to improve the quality and coverage of social protection. The Integrated National Financing Framework is fostering better coordination and integration on the use of public and

private resources in social sectors considering the specific needs of women in healthcare and social protection, where the state fails to provide adequate services. A digitized single registry management information system has proven effective for administering social protection schemes to 1.6 million people.

## Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, the UN Resident Coordinator leveraged the comparative advantages of ILO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA to transform the national social protection system. By integrating social insurance and social assistance through a multi-tiered approach to align child, maternity and paternity benefits, pensions, and disability benefits, over 32 million people accessed emergency social protection benefits through rapid assistance for the global pandemic while new legislation guarantees 20 million children and one million people with disabilities access to reliable social protection benefits.

## Ecuador

Supporting access to decent work for young people and led by the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute and the Ministry of Labour, the UN Country Team in Ecuador supported the design of an innovative scheme to promote job formalisation and enrolment into the social security institute. Targeted to young and independent workers, and through state-subsidized reduced social security contribution rates, flexible payment plans and health coverage for insured partners, social security became more accessible. A national register for young people working informally was set up to better identify and target sensitization campaigns and capacity building workshops. Improvements were made to digital job search platforms and employment programs, as well as the creation of a best businesses practice certification for companies that hire young people. Programmes on training and vocational programs on soft, digital and entrepreneurship skills for the youth were incorporated as part of the permanent catalogue of a partner academic institution.



I ask that you give generously – through the UN Joint SDG Fund or other mechanisms – to help transform the Global Accelerator from promise to reality.



## ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

UN Secretary-General  
Remarks at the High-Level Event Implementation of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, 2022.

## Cambodia

Ensuring adaptive and responsive social protection systems in emergencies, the UN in Cambodia supported government design of cost-efficient delivery models of a Covid-19 Cash Transfer Programme, reaching three million poor persons and 108,000 households through a Lockdown Cash Transfer Programme. This quick cash delivery was enabled by an existing platform and identification/delivery mechanism developed for pregnant women, children and persons with disabilities. UN's capacity strengthening support to Government enabled digitalisation of processes and systems resulting in online registrations, e-payments and more efficient monitoring and evaluation.

## Mexico

In Mexico, the UN backstopped legislative processes and constitutional reform promoting the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and agricultural work through adoption of the National Care System Law, proposed to benefit 45 million people. This success built upon simplification of the social security national enrolment framework, extending coverage to 2.3 million domestic workers with over 35,000 women agricultural workers benefitting from salary increases.

# Case Study: Mongolia

**Title:** *Extending Social Protection to Herder families Exposed to Climate Shocks through Digital Tools and Increased Domestic Financing Space*

**Region:** *Asia*



Photo credit: UNICEF Mongolia

Herder families, accounting for a third of the total population in Mongolia, make up one of the most vulnerable groups in the country. They are at risk of losing pasture land, key to their livelihoods, due to severe land degradation caused by livestock overpopulation compounded by climate change. Less than 20 per cent of herders were enrolled in social insurance schemes, and only 40 per cent had health insurance. Despite a large number of measures in the national system for disaster prevention and management to reduce the risk of livestock death as a result of droughts and severe winters, there are no explicit provisions within the social protection system to protect the welfare of vulnerable households or children from the growing problem of climate-driven shocks.

The introduction of innovative social protection enrolment models for herders that protect loss of income and livestock due to climate shocks provides the much needed income security and prevents reduced food consumption, reduced expenditure for health and education, while enhancing herder families’ resilience to extreme cold periods and other adverse and extreme climate events.

Under the UN Resident Coordinator’s leadership, ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF and FAO, joined forces to propose a coherent and unified programme proposal leveraging each agency’s technical expertise accompanied by a strong coordination with government ministries and civil society organisations and other development actors in the country.

Through a “quick win” approach using the existing structures and social protection programmes, the joint programme began its efforts by introducing the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA-II) to mainstream the concept of resilience of pastoral communities into relevant reforms of national policies on shock-responsive social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk assessment. The RIMA tool aims to assist the Government’s effort to define the targeted population in need of shock-responsive assistance. In addition, the joint programme piloted and supported the herder cooperatives’ contingency fund as a shock-responsive and income generation tool. The joint programme tested new innovative approaches to extend

social protection among herder men and women introducing peer-to-peer awareness raising learning modalities, where herders, members of cooperatives, pastureland user groups, lifelong education centre trainers and trade union representatives worked together to advocate for the benefits of social and health insurance programmes among their peer herders. This led to the incorporation of the Herders’ Programme in the national training curriculum of the National Centre for Lifelong Education of Mongolia. Finally, the introduction of the cash transfer top-up to the existing Child Money Programme to provide income security in case of loss of livelihood due to climate shocks proved its efficacy in keeping vulnerable households out of poverty, and adopted as a Government policy after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, targeted herder communities received awareness raising workshops to avoid substance abuse and managing stress, increasing awareness of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and prevention of gender-based violence.

## 5,600

*A total of 5,600 herders (47% women) more enrolled into social insurance. Increased social and health insurance take-up by five per cent among herders at the national level, and by 10 per cent in the five target administrative districts “soums” in the Zavkhan province, reaching a total of 25%.*

## 1,218,445

*Reached 1,218,445 children monthly in 2021 with money top-ups to the Children’s Money Programme aimed to protect children and their families from negative coping strategies during the most harsh winters, such as reduced food consumption, reduced expenditure for health and education, and enhance their resilience to extreme cold periods.*

# Transforming Education & Skills



Let's move forward together, so that everyone can learn, thrive and dream throughout their lives. Let's make sure today's learners and future generations can access the education they need, to create a more sustainable, inclusive, just and peaceful world for all.



**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**  
UN Secretary-General  
*Remarks from the Transforming Education Summit, 2022*

Securing equitable access to quality and relevant education and lifelong learning for all is central to achieving progress across the SDGs. Today, however, progress towards the education-related targets of the 2030 Agenda is significantly off track; with the world going through profound and existential changes, education, as we know it, is not fit for purpose. The twin crises in education – one of equity and access and one of quality and relevance – compounded by a lack of adequate financing, are having dramatic consequences for learners worldwide, especially the most vulnerable. In the follow-up to the Transforming Education Summit (TES) held in September 2022 to tackle this crisis, every effort is being made to promote action on the commitments.

To support actions against these commitments, and in response to country demand and gaps in the overall education funding landscape, the Fund aims to support TES follow-up actions in five key areas: education system transformation; digital learning and education solutions; school-to-future-work transition; greening education; and financing education.

## Mali

The completion rate for primary education in Mali has declined between 2017 (48%) and 2020 (43%). The country also has a gender gap between the completion rate for boys (37%) which is higher than girls (33%). School wastage, dropping out, early marriage, rural exodus and insecurity are among the explanatory reasons of the decline. The percentage of repeaters increased from 15% (2017) to 18% (2020). The Education sector policy document set a goal to reduce the repeating rate to 5% by 2030 for the first six years of primary education. The UN Joint SDG Fund facilitated the Government to produce a budget brief on the education sector needs, especially in light of the school closures due to political insecurities. Public expenditure reviews on the education section in partnership with the World Bank aligned with the implementation of Mali's Integrated National Financing Framework. The assessments and reviews are anticipated to enhance advocacy and facilitate securing of additional budget allocation for the education sector to meet the SDGs.

## Indonesia

Under the Fund's catalytic investment portfolio, the UN is supporting the Indonesian government with a series of national and municipal SDG bond issuances. The first sovereign SDG bond issuance raised US\$584 million from the global capital market in 2021. The Government has used the proceeds to provide free routine vaccines to 30 million children and scholarships to over 11 million low-income students aged 6 to 21. The Government also supported the installation of internet infrastructure expanding access to wireless services in 6 rural provinces increasing the potential for digital access and education. Indonesia issued a second sovereign SDG bond for US\$210 million in local markets in 2022, with a third issuance planned in 2023.

## Brazil

In Brazil, the Government is scaling up the Happy Child Programme, an existing social protection scheme reaching families and caregivers, by now including home visits and additional support to ensure enhanced child cognitive, emotional, and social development. An example of innovative integrated policy development, the UN supported the investment case for early childhood development as one of the best ways to boost shared prosperity, expand equitable opportunity, end extreme poverty and accelerate SDG targets. The collation of scientific data and analysis for decision-makers enabled this initiative to be codified into state policy and legislation.

During the pandemic, families were faced with new challenges. The Ministry of Citizenship, with support from UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO and UN Women developed a multi-media campaign informing and empowering parents and caretakers on the importance of the early childhood education, "Love, Play and Care – the ABC for the Early Childhood". Every week media professionals received videos, podcasts, and informational brochures focused on family emotional health and parental care; childhood anxiety; maternal depression; domestic violence; and social rights for children and pregnant women. The programme provided support to thousands of pregnant women and children up to six years in almost 3,000 Brazilian municipalities reaching one million beneficiaries in two years.

# Case Study: Argentina

**Title:** *Early Childhood and Sustainable Development: Towards a Comprehensive Care System*

**Region:** *Latin America*

Before COVID-19, Argentina faced challenges regarding their lack of an early childhood care system. Access to quality care services was insufficient, with significant differences depending on where a child was born, the labour conditions of their parents, and their income level. The pandemic deepened these pre-existing social and economic inequalities and highlighted the care crisis.

Placing care policies at the centre of recovery plans was crucial to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty, ensuring the exercise of children's rights, improving the quality of life of society as a whole, and providing the State with more effective tools to bridge gender gaps.

The early childhood and sustainable development joint programme supported the Argentine Government in implementing its the National Early Childhood Strategy (ENPI in Spanish), focused on strengthening childcare services at national and subnational levels and reducing the inequality gaps among the 5.2 million children, of which 2.7 million live in vulnerable communities. The programme supported increasing the investment for the ENPI and identifying consolidated investment gaps at national and provincial levels.

The flexibility of the UN Resident Coordinator, with leadership of UNICEF, ECLAC, UNDP and ILO, has been instrumental in allowing the programme to adapt to changing needs amidst the pandemic, reorient resources and redesign activities while maintaining the original goal: to contribute to the design and implementation of comprehensive early childhood care policies with a gender perspective.

Almost 3,000 early childhood education and care services workers across four provinces were trained on the socio-emotional impact of COVID-19 and the impacts of social distancing and social confinement on children, giving them tools on how to comfort and nurture them. Comprehensive Early Childhood Strategies are in place and de facto improving service provision across day care centers across the country where the new curriculum focuses on child day care centres being a place of belonging, affection, and care.

At the same time, the UN's integrated policy support to Government enabled the scale-up of public policies to improve the living conditions of vulnerable women and mothers and their young children.

The UN generated timely evidence to improve early childhood public policy decision-making and funding. This included an integrated system of ECD-related indicators to monitor policies and the development of the Federal Care Map to count and track the current supply of care services for early childhood (public and private) with geo-referenced information. Gathering evidence on the specific impacts of the pandemic on early childhood and on women (predominantly female single-headed households) to inform public-policy responses is strengthening innovative responses for ECD policy aimed at indigenous children living in rural areas. At a broader outcome level, the improvement of child care services and working conditions are raising awareness of the importance of a fairer and more equitable organisation of care across all vulnerable groups.

## 5.2m

*Reducing the inequality gaps among the 5.2 million children (0-6 years old), of which 2.7 million live in vulnerable communities.*

## 3000

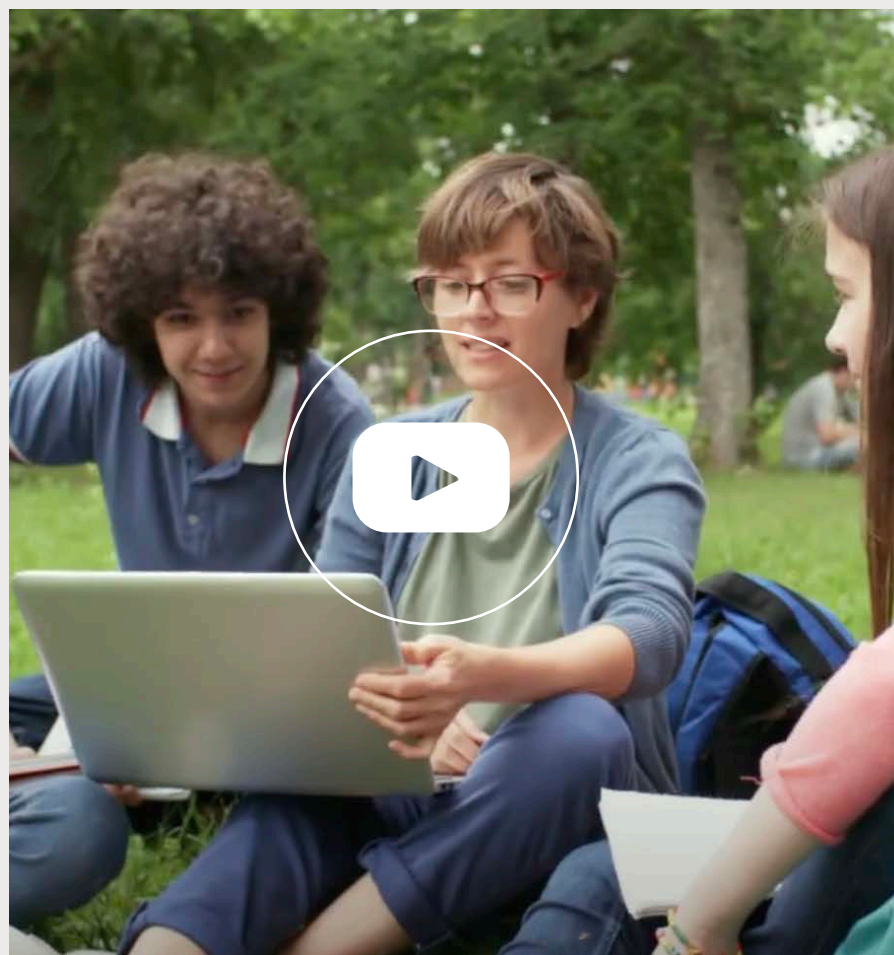
*Almost 3,000 early childhood education and care services workers across four provinces were trained*



WATCH ON YOUTUBE 



# Cross-Cutting Results on Human-Rights Mainstreaming, Gender Equality, Youth Empowerment & SDG Localisation



WATCH ON YOUTUBE



We commit to fully support the UN development system, including the RC system and the UN Joint SDG Fund, to deliver better in support of programme countries and their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs



**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**  
 UN Secretary-General  
 Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, 2023

The Fund will continue to mainstream human rights to ensure policy shifts and unlocking financing for SDG transitions to effectively address existing and emergent threats for human dignity, freedoms and equality. Funding allocations, programme design and implementation, leveraging broader funding and financing, and partnership strategies will have human rights, gender equality and youth empowerment as the backbone of the overall impact. A coherent and integrated approach to SDG transitions will holistically address the most critical systemic challenges aggravated by compounding crises, further scaling up the Fund’s impact. An essential component for meeting this level of ambition will be SDG localisation that ensures the transformative results are produced from the ‘bottom-up’.

Gender equality will be at the core of transformative theories of change of joint programmes to help prevent 340 million women remaining in poverty by 2030. All SDG transitions will coalesce around facilitating women’s leadership. The Fund builds on its previous success in prioritising women and girls by further upgrading its approach through the new UNSDG Gender Equality Marker. Investments of the Fund will ensure that economic growth and job creation lead to prosperity for women, with the special focus on front-line workers and caregivers, and women involved in digital, green, and renewable energy sectors. Women and girls will be the priority for transformation of education systems, improving energy access and affordability, and addressing climate, biodiversity, and pollution. On digital transformation, the Fund will prioritise gender-transformative innovation, addressing the growing digital divide, and helping eliminate technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

The profound human, health and economic crises will severely and disproportionately affect young people for years to come. The Fund will work closely with young leaders, innovators, and communicators across the SDG transitions to ensure that its catalytic funding supports and empowers over 1.8 billion youth globally. Special emphasis will be on investing in human capital and innovative solutions that ensure young people co-create a future that is sustainable, just and peaceful. The UN Youth2030 Strategy will serve as the guiding framework for all joint programmes of the Fund.

As recalled by the Secretary-General at the launch of the Advisory Board on Local and Regional governments in October 2023, the engagement, action and multi-level cooperation of these actors are vital to rescue the SDGs and contribute to SDG acceleration. The SDGs can only be fully implemented by translating and operationalising the 2030 Agenda at the local level, the space where policy and financing outcomes directly improve the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable. The Fund’s focus on SDG localisation as a means of implementation for the SDG transitions will ensure subnational approaches are embedded in all investments. Focus on the interaction between local and national development initiatives by scaling up local solutions nationally and ensuring implementation of national agendas in regions and municipalities will be sharpened. These efforts will be supported by the Local2030 Coalition to help mobilise the broader ecosystem, involving local and regional stakeholders, cross-fertilize efforts amongst countries, and help leverage larger funding and financing flows.

# UN Development System Champions



**Achim Steiner**  
*UNDP Administrator*  
 UN Joint SDG Fund Development Partners Retreat, 2022

The UN Joint SDG Fund has become an important instrument for UN Country Teams and UN Resident Coordinators to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. On behalf of UNDP, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to current and past donors for their invaluable support to the Fund.



**Natalia Kanem**  
*UNFPA Executive Director*  
 UN Joint SDG Fund Development Partners Retreat, 2022

UNFPA is a proud partner of the UN Joint SDG Fund. Through flexible financing that aligns with local needs and priorities, the Fund is making a difference on the ground where it counts.



**Catherine Russell**  
*UNICEF Executive Director*  
 UN Joint SDG Fund 2022 Annual Report, 2023

The UN Joint SDG Fund plays a critical role in mobilising the resources we need to achieve the 2030 goals. UNICEF is grateful for the Fund's contributions in support of our work to make the SDGs a reality for children and women around the world.



**Gilbert F. Hounbo**  
*ILO Director-General*  
 UN Joint SDG Fund 2022 Annual Report, 2023

The UN Joint SDG Fund represents a powerful instrument for harnessing the collective strengths and resources of the UN system to drive integrated policy support and accelerate progress on the SDGs.



**Cindy H. McCain**  
*WFP Executive Director*  
 UN Joint SDG Fund 2022 Annual Report, 2023

Delivering development and humanitarian results and building resilient food systems is central to the mission of the United Nations, and the UN Joint SDG Fund is an important tool for accomplishing this. With a global food crisis at hand, our collective work toward achieving zero hunger is more important than ever. Now is the time for increased and sustained investment to meet our collective target.



# JOINT SDG FUND

The United Nations Joint SDG Fund endeavours to turbocharge the 2030 Agenda by addressing the fragmentation of the UN's global response. The Fund assists countries in regaining lost ground by identifying and financing catalytic actions to accelerate sustainable development. The Fund leverages collective capacities, networks, and resources of the UN development system, brought together under the leadership of UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) to support Governments and local communities in priority areas based on their national needs as outlined in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (CFs).

To date, the UN Joint SDG Fund has made US\$258 million in financial commitments to 119 UN Country Teams and multi-country offices, with 31 UN entity partners. The Fund works in the areas of integrated social protection, SDG financing and investments, boosting resilience in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and supporting the UN collective response to the global cost-of-living crisis.

The Fund has made significant contributions to the SDGs. Since its launch, the Fund's portfolio has benefited at least 188 million people with enhanced social services including in areas of social protection, expanding vaccine coverage, awarding scholarships, and delivering other essential services. The Fund contributed to achieving tangible progress under Goal 17, where it has mobilised over US\$2.3 billion in additional resources through its promotion of innovative financial instruments as well as its policy demonstration and co-funding to joint programmes. Every US\$1 contributed by the Fund mobilised at least US\$9 of additional resources across the public and private sectors to support the SDGs. Additionally, the Fund has made significant advancements toward achieving Goal 5 by supporting over 38 countries to establish monitoring systems to track public allocations for gender equality and mainstreaming gender equality results throughout its portfolio.

Serving as the programmatic catalyst in empowering the RC system to enhance UN coherence, the Fund promotes integrated programming and reduces duplications and operational inefficiencies at the country level. The Fund is seen, together with the Peacebuilding Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund, as a critical pillar of the UN system, "to improve overall effectiveness on the ground and contribute to a longer-term effort to introduce more flexible pooled funding mechanisms" and is included as part of the Funding Compact to the UNDS reform. It is recognised for driving innovative joint action under RC leadership and bringing together diverse partners for SDG integrated policies and financing.