



1. IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2030



Our Top Priority: harnessing the Green Transformation and addressing the Triple Planetary crisis

With support from the RCO&FAO in Serbia, the Government of Serbia/Ministry of Agriculture issued the National Strategy for Sustainable Food Systems, which was submitted ahead of the FS Summit in September 2021. The RCO supported the Government in organizing [4 national dialogues](#) on Sustainable Food Systems through inclusive value chains – During the final high-level event with the Minister of Agriculture, the RC called for a new holistic approach integrated in the Green Agenda, food systems that protect the earth and keep the dignity of the human person at the center, while promoting decent work locally. [Full speech](#).



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COP26: Serbia's Climate Talks – RCO, UNDP and the Ministry of Environment co-facilitated national dialogues on climate through multiple events. The final high-level event hosted by UNDP featured the work of multiple UN agencies and government/Non-government partners. In her [speech](#), the RC reiterated messages on the opportunities to be created under the green transformation, the need to develop a holistic vision to harness the contribution of the whole society, and the necessity to work better together.

Advocating for the Green Agenda in Serbia: As part of a series of Thematic Updates prepared by the RCO, the Note on Legislative progress on Climate Change, Energy, Pollution and the Environment ([here](#)) was shared

with all UN Member States, key development partners and government counterparts. The aim of the update is to keep key stakeholders abreast of a fast-moving agenda. The Update highlights the multiple progresses reached in 2020/2021 on the drafting/approval of laws, national strategic plans, and the remaining gaps.

Validation and adoption of environmental SDG indicators by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia: data for 11 new environment-related SDG indicators are now being used by the Statistical Office as a result of joint RCO/UNEP advocacy and technical support. The indicator data will be used for the completion of Serbia's 2021 annual SDG report as well as the upcoming Voluntary National Review.

Building post COVID19 health infrastructure: Joint RC/WHO advocacy in the dialogue between the EU Convention of NGOs and the Prime Minister (co-chaired by the RC, with relevant line ministries) focused on the following: Health as an investment rather than a cost to society/economy, importance of vaccination in fighting Covid-19, prevention work in area of non-communicable & cardiovascular diseases, healthy lifestyle, importance of good coordination and working together towards the same goal.

Demographic transition / demographic resilience: A critical issue for Serbia / Western Balkans and Eastern Europe

The UN, led by UNFPA and UNDP, is advocating for a comprehensive approach to addressing challenging population dynamics, and focus on wellbeing of people, intergenerational solidarity, strengthening of skills, and dynamic mobility. The RC supported UNFPA at the Western Balkans in the organization of the High-Level Ministerial conference on demographic resilience in Sofia, Bulgaria. Jointly with RCs from Kosovo* and Moldova, the RC shared considerations for impact oriented actions with the visiting UNFPA Executive Director.

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).



Sustainable cities, Gender and Youth, Multi-lateralism / high level visits

Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif, UN-Habitat Executive Director, visited Belgrade in September 2021 to explore strategic opportunities to expand the UN's work on sustainable cities/urban agenda – including through the opening of a UN Habitat Office in Belgrade. As a result a new programme on public space has been developed between the UN Habitat and the Ministry of Construction, transport and infrastructure.



Mr Abdulla Shahid, UNGA President, visited Belgrade on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the first conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. The PGA met with high-level government officials, as well as with Serbian youth and representatives of women organizations closely linked to the core priorities of his mandate.

The Future of 2022 / Our common Agenda:

On 14 December – at the Annual Conference organized by The Economist Magazine, featuring Serbia President Vucic, government representatives, EU and non-EU ambassadors, the RC expressed joint determination of the UN system to focus 2022 on 5 key areas: 1) a strong preventive health strategy, 2) full realization of the decent work agenda, 3) building demographic resilience, 4) shaping and implementing of a strong vision on the green agenda, 5) strengthening governance systems and combatting hate speech and valuing the common good.

Internal processes

- The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (CF) was adopted by the Government of Serbia on 23rd December 2021. The official signing ceremony of the CF is announced for January 2022.
- **Three (3) Strategic Priorities:** i) *Green Transformation*; ii) *Social Protection/Demographic Resilience*; iii) *Rule of Law, Human Rights and Governance*
- The CF Funding Framework finalized outlining total required USD 344 million to achieve Serbia's CF goals until 2025. 50% of total budget is already available.
- 2021 Common Country Analysis (CCA) update with new statistical data from national accounts, other publicly available resources, and analytical work by UNCT finalized.
- UNCT Serbia CCA has been acknowledged as the promising global practice from the angle of human rights/LNOB mainstreaming at the global DCO/OHCHR workshop for RCO in Nov 2021.
- UNCT Serbia has been recognized as the best practice country globally for monitoring/tracking Gender Equality work through the Joint Work Plans by UN Women HQ. The experience will be shared with UNCT in Indonesia to facilitate cross-regional learning.
- UNCT has improved ratings under GE SWOP Scorecards, with 8 indicators exceeding the requirements and 7 indicators meeting the requirements.
- IMS 2021 Coordination Survey finalized.
- IMS 2021 Normative Survey: human rights, gender, disability, youth scorecards and PSEA finalized.

2. OPERATIONALIZING THE SG'S PREVENTION VISION, POST COVID19



UN Serbia joint reporting on human rights

UN Serbia confidential periodic report to the UN Committee against Torture (UN CAT): Progress has been captured by the report in areas such as living conditions of asylum seekers and asylum legal framework, scaling up maximum punishment for acts of torture, renovations to the prison facilities, adoption of new strategic documents on war crimes. The report lists critical remaining gaps including on the existing definition of torture, lack of prosecution and persisting impunity, inadequate processing of war crimes, prison overcrowding, absence of deinstitutionalization efforts or existing risks of ill-treatment in detention settings. The UNCT findings and recommendations have been successfully featured in the Concluding Observations issued to Serbia in December.

UN Serbia report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN CESCR) in December 2021. The joint analytical report points out progress in the normative areas of gender equality, anti-discrimination and prevention of domestic violence, as well as in the access to private life for the LGBTI community. Remaining gaps and challenges have been reported in practice as concerns some of the main groups in focus, such as the Roma or persons with disabilities. The UNCT joint reporting has had direct impact on the recommendations issued by UN Human Rights Mechanisms, and as a reliable source of data and analysis that serves further advocacy towards the country and improvement of the human rights situation on the ground.

Mainstreaming of the LNOB principles by the new Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, in all policy making with to a tool developed by the RCO and Human Rights Team. The tool offers a list of steps, including on exclusion and causal analysis and data collection, that guides each policy maker in addressing those social groups that are most left behind first. Expected start of implementation is in early 2022, in cooperation with the NGO Convention for the EU.

Gender

UNCT analytical report to the CEDAW committee, assessing the progress under 4 priority recommendations identified by the CEDAW committee following the review of forth periodic report of Serbia. The UNCT analytical report acknowledge the progress under normative area of anti-discrimination, along with elimination of discrimination against women in relation to property and inheritance, while it points out gaps in ensuring that women in prostitution are not criminalized by laws, including non-existing programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution, as well as limited progress in elimination of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by women from disadvantaged groups. The fifth periodic report of Serbia is due in March 2023.

Transitional Justice

Following the impact analysis on Transitional Justice done at regional level by a joint DPPA/OHCHR team (in the context of the Inter Agency Task Force for the Western Balkans), the RCO initiated the preparation of the action plan for a renewed focus on Transitional Justice in 2022 and beyond. The key challenges here are to 1) address issues of the past through a forward-looking approach that will harness the intents of multiple actors in the society; 2) engage youth that is either polarized or uninterested; 3) engage non-traditional stakeholders such as religious leaders, as well as critical representatives at local and national levels through the parliament and local institutions. The UN Serbia established an informal task force that has agreed on several immediate points of action, with the launch of the initiative scheduled on January 2022 with visitors from DPPA/OHCHR and Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide.

High-level visits

Alice Nderitu UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide visited Belgrade in November 2021, meeting senior ministers, religious representatives, NGOs, 20 UN Member States, youth representatives and the UNCT. In her address, the UN Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide, focused on concerns for the glorification of war criminals, recognition of the suffering of all victims, and hate speech. Her report will be available end of 2021. As an immediate next step, her team will revisit Belgrade in Q1 2022 to support the UNCT in developing a Hate Speech action plan, with the broader scope of transitional justice. The Special Adviser and the UN RC have issued a joint statement on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance of Victims of Genocide marked on 9 December. Full [press release](#).

Miroslav Jenča, DPPA Assistant Secretary-General for Europe and Central Asia visited Belgrade twice in September and October 2021, joined by DPPA Herve Lecocq. This was an occasion to review opportunities for closer collaboration between the RCO, the UNCT and UNOB (UNMIK representation in Belgrade) on topics such as Women, Peace and Security, and Transitional Justice.



3. STRATEGIC FINANCING AND PARTNERSHIPS



Strengthening the Civil society as a continuous endeavour from the RCO

- In a co-leadership of RC/UN Women representatives, **quarterly Open-Door meetings at the UN house with Women NGOs, around the topics of Women, Peace and Security / Gender Equality / Violence against women.** The Open-Door concept allows a free flow of information between UN agencies and NGOs, where NGO representatives can express all their opinion with Chatham house rules, in a safe house, and share areas of concern and proposition for actions.
- **RC co-chairing with the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights the high-level social dialogues with multiple stakeholders** on topics such as 1) Sustainable Development Goals – “World with-

out hunger, good health and quality education” 2) Improvement of the legislative framework for nature protection 3) The first meeting of the Special Working Group for the Drafting of the Strategy for Creating a Stimulating Environment for the Development of Civil Society. These dialogues are part of a series of 18 completed in 2021, as an attempt to consolidate inputs into core legislative changes and national strategic plans.

- **RC co-chairing with the Prime Minister and the Convention of NGOs for the EU of monthly national dialogs for development on topics such as the green transformation, post COVID19 health structure, social protection.** The dialogues are organized in view of the objective of the Prime Minister to engage with the Civil Society as strategic partners. The dialogs have proved to be a complex and tense platform of quasi political debates.

- The RC initiated and kept interface with the civil society and journalists' association representatives in order to be up to date with risks to which these groups have been reportedly exposed to and inform action in mitigation and advocacy by the UN in Serbia. The RC/O will continue to collect first-hand information from the ground and focus on the safety of civic and media space.

Initiating a wider dialogue with religious leaders

The visit of SA on Genocide Prevention was a much-awaited opportunity to strengthen the partnership with religious leaders, initiated earlier in 2021 around COVID advocacy. RCO is now developing a full engagement strategy based on the global strategy issued by the UNSG in 2019, and with an immediate target to organize a inter faith conference at regional level on topics related to transitional justice, trust building, fighting hate speech.

- **Conference on VAW organized with the Mufti of Belgrade and Grand Rabbi of Serbia:** in this event, attended by multiple ministries and chaired by Muslim and Jewish religious leaders and the RC, discussions focused on how faith-based congregations can address VAW, as a dark phenomenon in the society. This is the first of a structured advocacy engagement with religious leaders.

Enhanced partnership with the Private Sector & Global Compact Network in Serbia

In 2021, the core focus of advocacy with the private sector was on green transition and its business opportunities, the need to expand the coalition with the inclusion of a larger number of SMEs (with the GC), and the opportunity to work with a wider group of marginalised people (Romas, refugees, persons with disabilities) under the decent work framework.

- The RC, as ex-officio board member of the Global Compact Local Chapter for Serbia, delivered opening remarks at the launch of Hemofarm (Global Compact member) annual CSR report, **highlighting the role of the private sector in green transformation and decent work agenda**. The RC facilitated the networking of large companies within

the GC to adopt IDEA strategy to recruit refugees/asylum seekers registered in Serbia.

- RC engaged in the CSR Forum Towards Sustainability, at the panel on Green transition, acknowledging the pioneering steps by Serbian companies to invest in solar power plants and introduce innovative solutions for reducing the energy consumption; address food waste; and ensure equitable green transition.
- **The RC co-chaired the Global Compact Annual Assembly**, highlighting the UN's strategic priorities, challenges in achieving SDGs and objectives to foster the cooperation between companies and the UN.
- **Conference of the Serbian chamber of commerce:** the RC focused on the Future of Work, the digital common good and the need to accelerate the green transformation.
- **UNDESA&RCO finalised 2 studies on the contribution of FDI (from China and the EU) to the achievement of the SDGs in Serbia** – to further inform advocacy strategies towards EU Member States investing in Serbia.
- The RCO has identified opportunities to further cooperate with the private sector to ensure that the UNCT works cohesively to understand businesses' needs, and the challenges it faces to make sustainable development a part of its DNA. This thematic will be further developed in 2022.



Expanding the partnership with IFIs

The RCO has identified key partnership opportunities with the World Bank, EIB, EBRD in achieving core SDGs jointly, through a strategic involvement of UN technical agencies in the formulation of LNOB approaches in long term lending facilities/loan agreements. Current topics include gender mainstreaming, just energy transition for vulnerable populations, just transition for workers in the coal mines/power companies (annual working meeting with the World Bank & with EU).

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY



Communications actions around UN Observation Days

- **Youth Day** – [joint video campaign](#) with Belgrade Center for Human Rights on challenges of youth from the various segments of the society, reaching around 300,000 people.
- **International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies (7 September)** - the 5 day campaign featured RC's appearance on two national TV stations, social media campaign that reached more than 70,000 people, and joint UN press release published on 47 media outlets.
 
- **UN Day 2021** - [High-level event](#) coordinated by the RCO highlighting the urgency to act together for the people and the planet, reflecting upon the solutions needed to nurture diversity, inclusiveness, and solidarity, while overcoming the triple planetary crises – climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, as identified in the recently released Our Common Agenda report by the UNSG. In her [speech](#) at the event, RC reiterated the message on green transformation, renewed cooperation and SDGs. The event was co-hosted by the Serbian Minister of Foreign affairs and head of UNOB, in presence of other high-level government officials and members of diplomatic community. In addition, ahead of the event, RC appeared on national televisions and also delivered a [major interview](#) with for the CoRD (corps diplomatique) Magazine.
 

On 24 October, **Belgrade joined the Light it Up Blue campaign** – some of its most iconic landmarks were lit in blue on the occasion of the UN Day.



- On 24 November, ahead of the **International Day to end Violence against Women and 16 Days of activism** campaign, the UN joined forces with the first female Roma hip hop band *Pretty Loud*. A special [music video "Equally"](#) was created for the purposes of the campaign. The video reached more than 500,000 people on all channels (social media and regional broadcast) and was equally successful among other UN regional hubs (UN Geneva, UN Brussels, UNDP Euro-Asia, UN Women Europe, etc.). The video has been also endorsed by the Serbian Coordination Body for Gender Equality. Full [press release](#).

In addition, the UNCT launched the joint social media campaign on effects of Violence against Women on the most vulnerable categories of society. Together with the City of Belgrade, Coordination Body for Gender Equality, UN launches Orange the World Campaign, by turning Belgrade's iconic landmarks and monuments in orange for the duration of the campaign.

- **Human Rights Week** – from 3 to 10 December UN co-organized series of advocacy and awareness raising and media events targeting the rights of various right holders. The events included:
 - 6 Dec - Marking of the [International Day of Persons with disabilities](#) - highlighting accessibility of healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities.

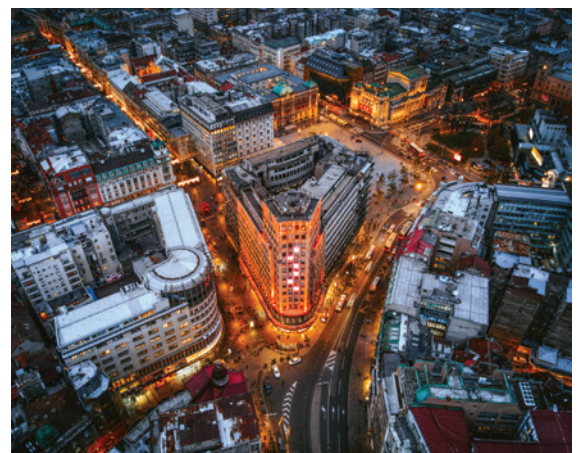


- 7 Dec - **Call for action - Youth Rights Talks conference** – with emphasis on the right to a healthy environment and the role of youth. RC delivered opening remarks calling for stronger youth engagement in environmental issues.
- 9 Dec - **International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime** – [Joint statement](#) by the UNSG Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide and UNRC.



- 10 Dec – **Human Rights Day** – UN RC joined the central government event with and delivered [opening remarks](#), focused on reducing inequalities, progress and gaps in Serbia, and the role of dialogue in modern democracies. The RC also published an OpEd on human rights challenges in the daily Danas.

16 Days of Activism in Serbia



Other key initiatives

- **Belgrade Pride Week** – Following the technical support provided early 2021 in the formulation of the law on Same sex partnership, HR Team/RCO coordinated joint two weeks campaign with 11 international organizations (OSCE/CoE) and diplomatic missions in Serbia. Ahead of Pride Week, RC published an [interview](#) with the Danas Daily in support of the draft law. RC also participated at the high-level opening of the Pride Week at the event Effective Inclusion of LGBTIQ Persons highlighting equality of rights and dignity for all in her [Statement](#).



In addition, the RCO/HR Team coordinated joint participation of the diplomatic community and UN Staff (over 120 participants) at the annual Pride Parade under joint slogan “Ljubav je zakon” (Love Rules). Twelve organizations issued [joint statement](#) in support for the human rights, freedoms and equality of LGBTIQ+ people as an essential part of society.



The advocacy and visibility activities included social media campaign and [video](#) with local influencers and celebrities. Total cumulative reach of the coordinated campaign is around 500.000 people on social media alone. Good coordination of the UN global Free & Equal Campaign has been featured as the best global practice on LGBTI equality at the global DCO/OHCHR workshop on human rights and LNOB best practices in November 2021.

RC's advocacy at the high-level events

- Following the successful global launch of the first Global Report on Ageism in March, WHO Europe, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office organized launch of the regional report on 27 September. In her [opening address](#), RC called for more inclusive, equitable and age-friendly societies that will be more resilient, sustainable, secure and fair.
- Strong advocacy and visibility intervention by the RC at the National Conference on Combating sexual violence against women on 27 October. The event was co-attended by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Minister of Justice and Minister of mining and energy in charge of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality.
- On 10 November RC joins UNEP and the Mayor of City of Belgrade on the occasion of the [launch of the study on attitudes towards food waste](#) in the city of Belgrade. Strong call for action from all state actors and citizens.
- On 16 November, RC participated in UNECE Hard Talks on Renewable Energy in Serbia. The goal of the Hard Talk is to identify the best methods for realizing the potential of renewable energy by identifying key barriers that block private sector investment and creating a well-functioning and stable system for the development of renewable energy. Messages on green transformation, reinvigorated multilateralism and just transition.
- On 1 December, RC's video message on decarbonization shared at the high level [conference on "how to win the Balkan air pollution dodgeball"](#), organized by RES Foundation.

5. BUSINESS INNOVATION & OPERATIONS



Piloting the CBO/LSSC in Serbia

RCO/DCO BOS team worked closely in the second half of 2021 to optimise the business case for the LSSC in Serbia. Main feedback from the RC perspective is as follows:

- The level of knowledge and interest among agencies at country and regional/global level, about the operational side of the reform, was close to zero;
- The adoption of a LSSC set up should be compulsory for all resident agencies (the current offer is extremely flexible by allowing agencies to opt in/opt out at any time and pick any number of services from 1 to 110).
- System efficiencies, calculated as % of cost savings, can happen with any size of country team budget, as long as there is a full adoption by all. Country level programme procurement should be included in the package of services (major finding from COVID emergency response).
- In the initial DCO modelling, the rationale for a good business case is based on cost saving and quality increase. In real life, agency representatives consider only cost savings vs transactional costs to restructure, and emotional costs to let go admin staff.
- The business case is developed by the OMT, composed of people who may be directly affected by reduction in admin/ops staff. It makes it difficult for them to be objective and project a restructuring of their local set up, without any incentive from their HQ.
- Staff reduction should be phased out over a period of 2 years and optimise retirements/horizontal shift/re-skilling, as well as direct secondment to an LSSC set up (to be considered at least).
- Competition between LSSC and GSSC need to be carefully reviewed.
- UN Member States need to be engaged at NYC and country level to ensure consistency of their support to this last stretch of the reform.
- Messaging from the DSG or SG to agencies leadership should be re-iterated.

Serbia Resident Coordinator was asked twice to brief the operations directors of 9 agencies in their retreats.

Next steps for Serbia: once the DSG has confirmed the intent to make CBO compulsory, OMT Serbia and DCO will complete the Business Case and start phasing its implementation.

UNCT Staff movement

- Fabio Scano, new WHO representative assuming his duties in December 2021.
- **Fioralba Shkodra, RCO new team leader to assume her duties in January 2022 (former TL Albania).**
- New RCO Administrative Assistant to join the team in first quarter of 2022.
- New RCO UN Youth Volunteer from China Chunli Deng joins the team from Oct 2021 to March 2022; two interns: Sara Pasic for communications and Andrea Karisik for data/partnerships joined the office in November for 6 months period.