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COVID-19
RESPONSE
VACCINES

2020 UN GUYANA ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT



UNITED NATIONS
GUYANA
.....

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Foreword

The year 2020 was a pivotal one for Guyana, characterised as it was by oil production, elections, and COVID-19.

The General and Regional Elections of 2 March unravelled into a five-month long electoral and political crisis that tested state institutions, ethnic relations and the Constitution to their limits, but fortunately ended with the legitimate swearing-in of a new President and Government on 2 August.

Amidst the electoral crisis, the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on 11 March and Guyana was not spared by the adverse health, social and economic impact of the pandemic.

The UN Country Team rapidly shifted its assistance to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, starting with the health emergency response to save and protect lives. The assistance quickly expanded to education as schools closed, and to social protection, social assistance, and livelihood support.

The UN worked with government departments and civil society organizations to reach out to vulnerable population groups such as children, women, persons living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous communities, LGBT+ persons, refugees and migrants from Venezuela and other countries. The UN's COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan envisages a response that enables a recovery path towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Post-elections, the UN Country Team engaged the new Government in resetting coopera-

tion priorities and assistance in line with the Government's policies. As the UN Caribbean Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework 2017-21 approaches its final year, in 2020 the UN Country Team embarked on the Common Country Analysis (CCA), in step with other English and Dutch speaking Caribbean countries, and initiated consultations with the Government on the CCA that would lead to the formulation of the 2022-2026 Cooperation Framework in 2021.

The UN Country Team joined global initiatives to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. In the virtual UN75 conversations, the UN listened to views from Guyanese youth, women, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons, LGBT+ persons, refugees and migrants on the future they want. They expressed their wish for an equal society where everyone can live in dignity without discrimination and conflict and called on the United Nations to help Guyana accomplish that.

Having overcome the multiple crises of 2020, the Government is well placed to pursue new opportunities opened up by its oil-producing nation status to move Guyana onto a low-carbon development pathway in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN Country Team will support the Government's efforts towards this ambitious agenda.

Mikiko Tanaka
United Nations Resident Coordinator

UN Country Team

The following United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes maintain a field office presence in Guyana:



ECLAC, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the following UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes conduct operations in Guyana from regional offices within the Latin America/Caribbean region.



Together, these organizations are called the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and they support Guyana's development.

Key Development Partners of the UN system in Guyana

The UN regularly convened meetings of international partners (Development Partners Group) for information exchange and coordination of development assistance in Guyana. In 2020, the meetings focused on COVID-19 and the health and socio-economic response. The members of the Development Partners Group are Argentina, Brazil, Canada (Global Affairs Canada), CARICOM, Chile, China, the European Union, the Guyana Development Initiative (backed by the Harvard Business School), India, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA);

the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the International Republican Institute (IRI); Mexico, the Organization of American States (OAS); Russia, the United Kingdom (FCDO); the United States of America (USAID, Peace Corps) and the World Bank.

Besides Guyana itself, the key donor partners for the UN System are Canada (GAC), the Global Environment Facility, Norway (the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund), India, the IDB, Japan, UK (FCDO), the United States (USAID, other) and the World Bank.



Chapter 1: Key Developments in the country and regional context

In March 2020, Guyanese citizens cast their votes in a hugely anticipated election held just months after the country began producing oil, in what was supposed to be the start of the country's economic transformation.

But instead of a celebration of democracy, what transpired were attempts to subvert the popular vote, plunging the country into its worst constitutional crisis for years. Just over a week after polling day, with the political crisis deepening, the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in Georgetown. The health and socio-economic shock already reverberating around the world suddenly arrived in Guyana.

In a year supposed to be full of promise, hundreds of thousands of men, women, girls and boys in Guyana suddenly found themselves facing great uncertainty with respect to their health, education, and livelihoods.

At precisely the time government and parliament was needed the most, the electoral crisis left the public administration in stasis.

The prolonged political crisis affected Guyana's development partners too, including the UN. Many of the planned activities of the Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF, 2017-2021) were paused.

So far, data indicates that the coronavirus incidence rate in Guyana has remained substantially lower than hard hit countries in Latin America. Even so, COVID-19 mortality rates have been comparable to global averages, meaning that

as of March 2021, more than 200 Guyanese had died of the virus.

The effects on the economy have been dramatic. Though overall GDP grew by about 25 percent in 2020 as a result of oil and gas operations, economic activity fell far short of pre-COVID-19 projections, which had anticipated economic expansion of more than 80 percent for the year. The non-oil economy, upon which the vast majority of Guyanese depend for their income, contracted by between 5 and 7 percent. Remittances have dropped, particularly between the capital and regions.

Food prices in domestic markets have risen, changing consumption habits for the worse, and people are having to spend more of their income on food. Low-income households have had to reduce their food intake. The average number of children attending school classes has halved as a consequence of classes not being available online, or because internet access is not universal.

Already marginalized or vulnerable groups, including women and children threatened by domestic and family violence, have faced heightened risks. Hard-won progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals has been immediately jeopardized.

Against this context, the UN in Guyana, supported by a range of partners, has significantly repurposed its emergency assistance and development offer. With the MSDF effectively paused, awaiting the legitimate swearing-in of

the newly elected government, available funds were re-purposed and new funds were mobilized for the COVID-19 response.

In Guyana, UN support has been mobilized around the three major blocs, namely (a) health emergency response, (b) socio-economic response and (c) humanitarian response (for Venezuelan migrants/refugees and host communities) (see Fig. 1, below).

This Annual Results Report describes how UN support and assistance has helped Guyana negotiate one of the most turbulent chapters in its recent history.

Chapter 2: UN support to the COVID-19 response

2.1: Overview of COVID-19 Response

Globally, the UN's response to COVID-19 has been implemented through three major channels, namely (i) health emergency, (ii) socio-economic response, and (iii) humanitarian.

In March 2020, the Secretary General directed the entire UN System to (a) tackle the immediate crisis, (b) focus on the social impact of and economic response to the pandemic, and (c) help countries recover better.

In Guyana, three specific instruments were used to respond to the Secretary General's direction:

1. **Health Emergency:** the UN worked with government authorities to implement a *Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP)* to

help the health system manage the direct pressures of COVID-19.

2. **Socio-economic:** additional efforts to aid Guyana in managing the wider effects of the pandemic were implemented through the UN's *Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan (SERRP)*.

3. **Humanitarian:** to provide assistance to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, and to the Guyanese host communities that accommodate them, the UN implemented the *Refugee and Migrants Response Plan (RMRP)*, a part of the broader *Response for Venezuelans (R4V)*.

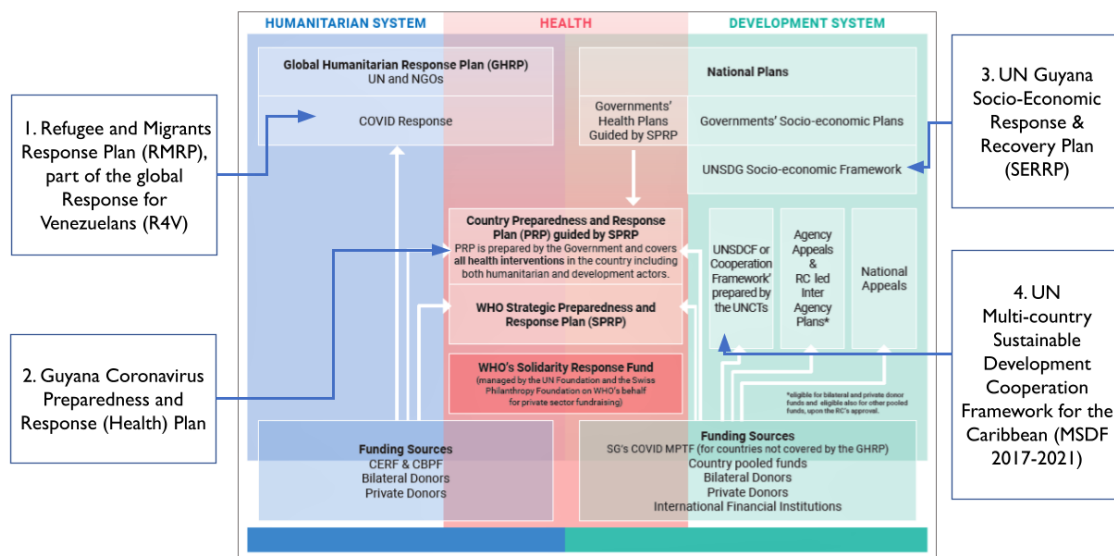


Figure 1: Ways in which the UN System supported Guyana in 2020

For simplicity, the results of all these efforts are reported principally using the SERRP framework, with some additional reference to the Spotlight Initiative and MSDF where appropriate.

2.2: COVID-19 Response Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs

Across the world, UN Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plans are built on the same five pillars. The pillars contain a common set of indicators, used as a guide to the reporting below. In addition to the standard indicators for SERRP Pillar 1 ('Health First'), 10 key components of Guyana's COVID-19 Country (Health) Preparedness & Response Plan (CPRP) have also been used to assess UN delivery in 2020.



I. HEALTH FIRST: Protecting health services and systems during the crisis

CPRP Objectives

- A. Country-level coordination, planning and monitoring
- B. Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)
- C. Surveillance, rapid response teams and case investigation
- D. Support to control passage at national points of entry
- E. Strengthening national testing laboratory capability
- F. Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)
- G. Case Management
- H. Operational Support & Logistics
- I. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
- J. Maintaining health services during an outbreak

SERRP 1-1: Guaranteeing access to essential (non-COVID-19-related) health services.

SERRP 1-2: Supporting health facilities to maintain essential immunization services.

SERRP 1-3: Protecting the core services of health systems.

SERRP 1-4: Aiding the work of community health workers.

Priority / Pillar 1: Health First: Protecting Health Services and Systems during the Crisis

Coordination, planning and monitoring

The extraordinarily rapid spread of COVID-19 to all corners of the globe has tested the managerial and coordination capacities of national governments to their limits. Health and other social service authorities have had to determine resource, equipment and treatment requirements in the face of an unfamiliar threat, without knowing how many citizens would contract the virus.

In Guyana, the UN (led by PAHO/WHO) moved immediately to apply WHO's global Strategic Preparedness & Response Plan framework, en-

abling Guyana's Ministry of Health to produce several iterations of its CPRP.

By running multiple epidemiological simulation exercises, PAHO/WHO and national health authorities were able to determine likely COVID-19

incidence rates. In turn, these enabled the planning of appropriate mitigation measures, including curfews, social distancing and case handling procedures. These exercises were complemented by assessments to establish initial levels of hospital and clinic preparedness.



Training of health-care workers on the correct use of personal protective equipment.
Photo credit: PAHO/WHO



Training of staff to conduct COVID-19 testing.
Photo credit: PAHO/WHO

Monitoring movement at national points of entry

An immediate priority was the identification of official and unofficial points of entry, with some of Guyana's neighbouring countries immediately experiencing high rates of coronavirus transmission. UNHCR supported preparedness assessments for border crossing posts, and equipped and trained immigration officials to use PPE, enabling them to resume COVID-19-secure biometric registration and screening at ports of entry.

Strengthening national testing laboratory capability / Surveillance, rapid response teams and case investigation

Globally, many countries have struggled with the challenge of testing, tracking and tracing cases of COVID-19, with few states having found effective solutions.

In Guyana, PAHO/WHO worked with national health authorities on the fundamentals of accurate testing, providing two sets of diagnostic equipment to the National Public Health Reference Laboratory and the Infectious Diseases Hospital. UNICEF also delivered PPE for health technicians.

Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that defence and mitigation measures only work if all citizens adhere to guidance and guidelines.

UNICEF worked with national health authorities on communications content for radio, television, internet and mobile phone, as well as conducting

a series of public awareness-raising symposia, all as part of a national communications plan.

Specially adapted campaigns (for young people and those with visual or hearing impairments) successfully reached more than 400,000 children and family members across Guyana with information on staying safe and preventive measures. Of these, some 5,000 were engaged in interactive online campaigns.

To ensure national authorities appreciated citizens' understanding of the gravity of the crisis, UNICEF conducted several national Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys. Two focused on general knowledge of the disease, and willingness to follow guidance, helping authorities tailor communications accordingly. A further two focused on the mental health and wellness of men, women and children (including adolescents). A fifth assessed attitudes towards newly available COVID-19 vaccines, enabling authorities to identify and address so-called 'vaccine hesitancy'.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

With Guyana's health professionals at a premium, keeping them as safe as possible has been crucial. In 2020, UNICEF helped Guyana access global PPE suppliers, and delivered PPE to 1,635 health workers within health facilities and communities.

Additionally, UNICEF collaborated with national authorities on a preparedness plan to ensure that schools will be 'safe spaces' as and when students return to the classroom. Some 300 Guyanese schools have been involved in 'safe space' preparations, and nationally, the UN system has supplied more than 35,000 face masks

(for students) and nearly 20,000 face shields (for teachers). This will help ensure that transmission in schools is limited.

In some locations, communities simply did not have adequate facilities for isolating or quarantining patients, particularly where those infected were migrants or refugees. In response, UNHCR delivered 125 prefabricated accommodation units. The units are a multi-purpose design, able to accommodate two COVID-19 patients each,

either for active treatment, or for short-term quarantine and isolation.

In 2020, IOM ensured that some of Guyana's highest-risk individuals, for example sex workers, or miners and loggers were also reached with COVID-19 outreach activities. IOM has distributed PPE to 906 female sex workers and 7,304 miners and loggers.



Staff from the Civil Defence Commission and UNHCR working together to set up the pre-fabricated housing units at the Mahaicony Hospital, Region 5 which serve as isolation-quarantine facilities.

Photo credit: UNHCR

Mental health and psychosocial support

COVID-19 has caused dramatic changes to the lives of billions of people around the world. Social activities once taken for granted have been scaled back or stopped altogether. Many people have found themselves socially isolated or limited for extended periods. For health workers and those responsible for managing the pandemic, the pressure has been immense. Overall, the full mental toll of living in the time of COVID-19 is still unknown.

In response to this alarming psychological burden, PAHO/WHO mounted a mental health awareness-raising campaign and helped boost national 'psychological first aid' capacity, including a counselling hotline to support frontline health care providers at risk of burnout.

UNICEF launched online mental health campaigns especially focusing on young populations and children. Targeted message boosting increased followers of the Expanded Programme for mental health Facebook page from 4,734 (48 percent women) to over 20,000 people (52 percent women). Social media was an important arena for COVID-19 crisis communication.

To build a credible evidence base on the psychological effects of COVID-19, UNICEF has conducted two surveys to assess the mental health of children, adolescents, and adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. One, conducted with Guyana's Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD), assessed the effects of COVID-19 on the mental health of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex plus (LGBTI+) people.

Maintaining other health services during an outbreak, and planning for the long term

The health implications of COVID-19 go far beyond its direct effects. When societies go into lockdown, and health centres mobilise to treat a specific disease, people living with a range of other illnesses and conditions can find themselves without access to critical services. As the availability and cost of goods in markets have shifted, so too have consumption habits, often for the worse.

In 2020, the UN worked with Guyanese authorities to ensure that a range of health services was maintained and that strategic planning to enable the widespread improvement of health outcomes in Guyana in the long-term was conducted.

Building on broader attempts to extend the provision of online or e-services, PAHO/WHO worked with the Ministry of Health on telemedicine systems to maintain the provision of maternal and child services at primary health care facilities.

UNICEF provided 50 vaccine carriers and innovative solar-powered hybrid vaccination refrigerators supporting the immunisation of 10,000 infants from a variety of infectious diseases in border host communities and hinterland areas to target migrant children.

Guyana's National AIDS Programme Secretariat (NAPS) partnered with the UN's Joint Programme on HIV-AIDS to try to ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic does not trigger significant reversals in the prevention, testing and treatment of HIV-AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

NAPS and PAHO/WHO distributed antiretroviral therapeutics to PLHIVs. Though research and evidence on the health implications of COVID-19 for PLHIV is still developing, as a precautionary measure, PAHO/WHO and NAPS worked with Guyana's Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) to offer additional nutritional support to those living with HIV.

For the longer-term, in 2020, a study to determine the future costs of treating *all* persons living with HIV in Guyana was completed. The study also sets out the necessary steps to ensure that there is treatment adherence among pregnant women, mothers and children, and requirements for ensuring that psychosocial services are offered to persons living with HIV in the time of COVID.

PAHO/WHO supported the Minister of Health to update the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and helped the Country Coordinating Mechanism to submit a funding application to the Global Fund from the Country Coordinating Mechanism. Activities in 2021 focused on the provision of prevention services and treatment to women, mothers, and children, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 crisis which threatened to reduce access to HIV services.

Within the wider field of sexual and reproductive health, an updated STI Strategic Plan was approved and re-issued, and an immunization campaign to protect Guyanese women from human papilloma virus (HPV), an infection that causes cervical cancer, was completed nationally. Hepatitis-B vaccines were delivered across the country, with an immunization campaign to follow.

In Region 5, FAO managed to strengthen and expand a school-based programme to help children make better choices about the food they eat (good diet being essential for good health) and engage schools with local food market supply chains.

With respect to strategic preparation of national health planning for the future, the year also saw the further development of a new Health Vision for 2030. PAHO/WHO combined efforts with health professionals to update treatment plans for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and was active in the battle to raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a trend that threatens to render antibiotics ineffective against mutating infections.

To bolster the governance framework for health, PAHO/WHO helped revise and update legislation, including the Public Health Ordinance, food and drug regulations, the Antibiotic Act, the Poison Ordinance and the Pharmacy Law. PAHO/WHO has worked directly with health authorities to apply gender- and sex-based analysis to a range of national health programmes, including initiatives designed to address non-communicable diseases (NCDs), sexual and reproductive health including HIV, and mental health.

Priority / Pillar 2: Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services

Critical water and sanitation supplies and hygiene provisions

Given the importance of regular, thorough hand-washing to prevent the spread of COVID-19, PAHO/WHO assistance for the provision of clean water and sanitation infrastructure services has remained vital, combined with the promotion of good hygiene practices in remote communities.

In 2020, PAHO/WHO helped more than 40,000 people in Guyana access basic WASH services and hygiene items, including the building of handwashing stations.

UNICEF provided a further 80,000 with Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) supplies, and expanded access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. Provisions were directed towards poorer families living in remote areas.

Children's education

The closure of schools represents major risks to the educational development of hundreds of millions of children around the world, as well as marginalizing children whose parents are unable to help them learn. In line with national priorities and to support the acceleration of SDG 4, since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education to ensure: continuity of learning for all children through education initiatives launched by the Ministries of Education; psychosocial support to children, teachers and parents, and the return to

2. PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social Protection and Basic Services

2-1: Provision of critical water and sanitation supplies and hygiene provisions.

2-2: Protecting children's education by supporting distance/home-based learning.

2-3: Nutritional assistance for primary school children.

2-4: Measures to address gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2-5: Making available social protection schemes and services.

school in safe, protective learning environments.

In 2020, UNICEF supported an ambitious programme to engage some 125,000 Guyanese children (52 percent female; 48 percent male) in distance learning (online and other forms of learning). Some 52,000 'learning packages' were provided to children in rural communities with unreliable or intermittent electricity provision and internet connectivity.

The initiative marks a further step in wider efforts to enhance the connectedness of all Guyanese regions: in 2020, working with the National Data Management Authority and the Office of the Prime Minister, UNDP provided equipment for the establishment of ICT community hubs, designed to help extend a range of public services online to an estimated 580,000 Guyanese.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the government drew on UNICEF's technical assistance to develop and launch a new Education Sector Plan, aimed at substantially boosting equity in learning outcomes for school children and reduce the number of children out of school.

The ESP will target improvements in literacy and numeracy among children by increasing the number of trained teachers, improving school learning environments, and directing special interventions to particularly disadvantaged groups. The launch of the ESP was reinforced by the roll out of an Education Management Information System (EMIS), which improves information management and identifies efficiencies in the operations of schools.

Addressing intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, and violence against children

In April 2020, the UN Secretary General called for a 'ceasefire in the home', recognizing that in restricting people's movements, the pandemic can leave women and children exposed to higher levels of violence.

The risk is particularly acute in Guyana, already recording high rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) and violence and sexual abuse perpetrated against children.

The multi-year EU-UN Spotlight Initiative aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, and was launched in Guyana in October 2020 (for more on the Spotlight Initiative, see Chapter 3, Partnerships and Financing).

In response to COVID-19, UN Agencies repurposed Spotlight Initiative activities to support civil society in emergency community assistance related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Referral pathways for women subjected to violence were strengthened. In collaboration with the Help & Shelter organization, UNFPA and UNHCR helped to extend the provision of GBV and psychosocial support services. This included higher call-handling capacity of toll-free and

bilingual (Spanish/English) GBV hotlines.

UNDP helped national authorities extend new features of Police Records Management Information System (PRMIS), improving capacity for secure data collection and analysis, including on SGBV and abuse of children.

Elsewhere, the Child Protection Agency, Blossom Inc. (the children's charity), the Guyana Police Force and UNICEF also joined forces to ensure six Child Advocacy Centres in Guyana continued to operate through the COVID-19 crisis.

With UN Women support, some 40 ministry staff were trained in providing specialist online psychosocial support to those affected by IPV.

In 2020, UNICEF and the Ministry of Human Services partnered with two mobile companies to launch the 914 hotlines service for reporting cases of violence.

Recognising that addressing SGBV is also about changing attitudes, perceptions and behaviours, in December 2020, UN Women engaged Youth Challenge Guyana (YCG) to promote values of gender equity work among 100 indigenous community leaders/village representatives in Region 1, with sessions covering women and girls' sexuality and reproduction, determinants of self-confidence and self-esteem, and the promotion of positive masculinities.

Led by Chancellor Yonette Cummings-Edwards and acting Chief Justice Roxane George-Wiltshire (SC), in 2020 Guyana worked with the UN to ensure that all five planned specialized courts (three specialized Sexual Offences Courts, one Children's Court, and one Family Court) were operational. As of November last year, 131 cases had been tried at the three Sexual Offences Courts, resulting in 61 convictions.

To tackle some of the root causes of vulnerability and dependence, Guyana took further steps to implement the four family-related conventions of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH).

These are designed to boost the independence and rights of women and children, particularly where they must flee violent family settings. Last year, UNICEF continued to advocate for additional reforms in birth registration to afford further protections to women and infants.

In the field, more than 1,500 people, many of them Venezuelan migrants and their Guyanese hosts, engaged with GBV prevention campaigns, with a further 1,879 individuals actually using a range of GBV prevention, mitigation, and response services.

UN Women also worked with CSOs to introduce community accountability scorecards and early warning systems to improve basic protections for women and children.



Placement of informational stickers with 914 GBV hotline number at supermarkets and pharmacies.
Photo credit: UN Guyana

Social protection services and nutritional assistance

The pandemic has demonstrated the high levels of precarity faced by many of the world's workers, in particular those involved in the informal economy.

Unemployment figures in Guyana for Q1 2020 (the most recent available) suggested though overall unemployment was slightly down, youth unemployment was already on the rise. With an estimated 5-7 percent contraction in the non-oil economy (all of it in the period *after* 11th March), it is likely that overall unemployment rates have risen.



Distribution of food and non-food items to families in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo credit: IOM Guyana.

Given delays in producing data on employment and livelihoods, WFP and FAO used survey instruments and screening tools in Guyana and right across the Caribbean region to track the effects of economic contraction on food security and livelihoods.

These showed that food prices were increasing, Guyanese were finding it harder to purchase healthy, nutritious foods, and were changing their eating habits for the worse.

In 2020, UNICEF was already working with national authorities to ensure social protection systems were more responsive to external shocks. In a cruel twist of irony, the pandemic highlighted the necessity of such systems.

Technical support and advocacy efforts initiated for the long-term suddenly resonated. The requirements for a robust and comprehensive social protection architecture were immediately better understood.

At the start of 2020, UNICEF had already completed a social worker mapping exercise to identify the full spectrum of public sector workers involved in extending social services to marginalized groups. Last year, UNICEF continued to work with national authorities on the Social Service Workforce initiative, designed to improve comprehensive, multi-agency service provision for vulnerable Guyanese.

Guyana's National Poverty Unit at the Bureau of Statistics (supported by UNICEF) moved to ensure that measures of multi-dimensional child poverty are systematically collected, helping identify multiple deprivations at the household and individual level in health, education, living standards.

Identification and targeting mechanisms to help national authorities identify which people are most marginalized also gained momentum in 2020, whilst new payment and distribution mechanisms were put in place to ensure that the most vulnerable Guyanese get the cash support and vouchers for which they are eligible.

In addition, a new, dedicated COVID-19 emergency assistance programme for women and children has reached more than 1,900 households with social safety net assistance including child grants for health and education.

WFP and the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security conducted a review of social protection systems and a series of findings and recommendations were published in the Shock Responsive Social Protection Case Study of Guyana. The case study is a part of a series of case study conducted across the Caribbean and has helped inform the discussion on the way forward to make social protection systems more responsive to shocks and improve their day-to-day functioning.

Priority / Pillar 3: Economic Response and Recovery: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers

Policies promoting economic recovery and decent work

By 2030, it is estimated that there will be two billion young people aged between 10 and 24 years old globally. The ambition and tenacity of these

3. ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY: Protecting jobs, small- and medium-sized enterprises, and informal sector workers

3-1: implementing employment policies and a regulatory environment conducive to economic recovery and decent work, especially in high-risk COVID sectors.

young people will get them only so far: they will require education and skills to find productive and decent jobs in tomorrow's labour markets. Their task has been made harder by the global economic contraction and prolonged school closures caused by COVID-19.

In 2020, ILO worked with Guyana's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council to enhance the skills of TVET instructors. The support established a skills/competency database for current and emerging occupations, helping instructors anticipate and match the TVET curriculum with the skills required in tomorrow's labour market.

Supported by UNICEF and UNDP, two groups of young entrepreneurs addressed the youth employment issues in Guyana by taking part in the Generation Unlimited (GenU) Youth Challenge.

The initiative, backed by the Guyanese government, youths and stakeholders to devise innovative social investments that combine civic engagement, employment and education. Government and UNDP mapped the landscape of key actors in this field, and left it to Guyanese youths to innovate.

After qualifying through a national competition, two Guyanese teams went on to represent Guyana at GenU's global forum in December 2020.

Delicia Fraser and Jasmine Clement were among the all-woman 'Youths with Purpose' team, who pitched their 'Gambit' mentoring, coaching and networking app to other international entrepreneurs. They were joined by Khadidja Yasmeen Ba's 'Green Creatives' team and their 'Green Thumb' platform, which offers to link ambitious Guyanese entrepreneurs with business training and funding opportunities.

To support one particularly marginalized group in the pandemic, UNHCR, the Civil Defence Commission, Guyana's Church of Latter-Day Saints and other local partners, offered 80 women a chance to supplement their incomes by producing protective face masks and *tibisiri* hammocks of indigenous design. To date, the group has been paid to produce 2,000 masks with a further 10,000 scheduled. The initiative provides vital short-term income for some of Guyana's most marginalized individuals: incomes help forced migrants to avoid the people-trafficking networks to which they are regularly exposed.

Priority / Pillar 4: Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration

Prior to the pandemic, the importance of ensuring that Guyana's future oil wealth be translated into broad-based, inclusive economic development was already well-recognised. Though Guyana could soon become one of the world's wealthier nations in pure GDP terms, structural inequalities mean that as of today, as much as 40 percent of the population lives on or below the World Bank's US\$5.50-per-day poverty line.

Understanding the way in which the COVID-19-

4. MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

4-1: Conducting socio-economic impact assessments of the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on vulnerable groups and at-risk populations.

4-2: Using socio-economic impact assessments to implementing policies that will mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and protect at-risk populations.

induced economic contraction may have affected this situation is critical. In 2020, ECLAC, the economic commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, produced a series of publications on the economic impact of the pandemic across the region, with a particular focus on economic recovery, economic opportunities for women, and the concept of 'building forward' to address fractures in the global economy that pre-dated COVID.

Whilst the UN was able to provide high level forecasting and economic projections, data at household level was more difficult to gather for much of 2020. Joint CARICOM, WFP and FAO Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Surveys partially filled the gap, demonstrating food price changes, shifts in consumption habits, and effects on incomes.

In January 2021, the findings of a full UNDP socio-economic impact assessment demonstrated that in the first six months of the pandemic, COVID-19 had hindered access to basic goods and services in Guyanese markets. Nearly 60 percent of the population worried about not having enough food during the pandemic, and the average number of children attending school had halved. Median household incomes had dropped by about a third, and 80 percent of household-op-

erated businesses had closed temporarily or reduced their operating hours. Meanwhile, of the 25 percent of households headed by women, three quarters reported needing additional income, food and hygiene products like sanitizer were all sources of concern.

Priority / Pillar 5: Social Cohesion and Community Resilience

There may be as many as 30,000 Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Guyana, many of them having left their home country owing to extreme economic hardship or as a result of insecurity arising from criminal gangs.

Persons entering Guyana under such circumstances are already living precarious lives. In some cases, because of their vulnerability, they may be pulled into networks for trafficking in persons (TIP).

Owing to the locales in which they arrive (for example mining or logging camps in remote areas) women may be more likely to rely upon sex work for their income, and exposed to a number of additional risks to their health. In addition, migrants entering Guyana via land borders typically find themselves far from large settlements, and hosted by communities that are themselves already marginalized or with only limited access to basic services.

COVID-19 has undoubtedly compounded the difficulties faced both by migrants from Venezuela (and elsewhere in the region), as well as their host communities. UNHCR and IOM are working

5. SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

5-1: Building institutional capacity building to help governments, employers' and workers' organizations work together to shape socio-economic policy responses.

5-2: Aiding community-based organisations to respond to and mitigate the pandemic, fight against COVID-19 related domestic violence, racism, xenophobia, stigma, and other forms of discrimination, and to prevent and remedy human rights abuses.

5-3: Protecting spaces for social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement.

closely with national authorities to provide the assistance these groups require.

Institutional capacity to help shape socio-economic responses

Staff at a range of government ministries, service providers and investigators all require specialist knowledge to assist persons entering Guyana in circumstances of hardship, or those living in particularly marginalized communities. The necessary skillsets vary depending on their role, but include investigations, managing child abuse, caring for survivors of abuse, pursuing people traffickers, responsibly processing juvenile offenders, and supporting those trying to recover from drug and substance abuse.

As part of its response in 2020, IOM worked directly to broaden the skillsets of officials at the Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking, and the Countering-Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) Unit at the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, in particular on TIP investigations.



Distribution of care packages, masks and condoms to women to reduce the health risks they face during the pandemic. Photo credit: UNHCR

A Spanish-language hotline was established for the reporting of TIP, and government staff were offered a short course in basic Spanish to enable them to better communicate with migrants from Spanish-speaking Latin America.

UNHCR also mobilized a joint group of government and civil society stakeholders invested in combatting trafficking, providing coaching on victim identification and referral.

In communities, UNHCR provided clean, dignified emergency shelter for 207 vulnerable persons. Counselling services were extended to 6,177 refugees, migrants, and to members of host communities. In addition, complementary to government relief efforts, IOM extended Direct Assistance Funds and Emergency Response

to Venezuelans and other migrants. The assistance includes relief hampers, vouchers, and livelihoods support, with priority going to those who have survived trafficking.

UNHCR ensured that specialist assistance is provided for registration and regularization of stay for Venezuelans, and for returning Guyanese, through the use of the PRIMES biometric registration system. PRIMES grants Household Registration Certificates to Venezuelans when they enter Guyana: in turn, this helps them access government services and a three-month renewable stay permit and includes a provision against forced return. In 2020, UNHCR helped 1,679 individuals to access government including healthcare provision and educational enrolment.

Chapter 3: Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework Results

3.1: Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

The coronavirus pandemic of 2020 required rapid and large-scale re-deployment of a substantial proportion of UN effort and resources. In step with direction from the Secretary General, the UN delivered urgent assistance to countries through humanitarian, health, and development system response plans.



Patricia, a beneficiary of FAO’s shadehouse farming solution, showcasing products from her farm. Photo credit: FAO Guyana

In Guyana, the majority of the UN’s work in 2020 was recorded against the five pillars of the Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan (SER- RP). Figure 2, below, demonstrates how outputs initially designed under three of the four strategic priorities of the UN Multi-country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the Caribbean required reconfiguration to deliver on the COVID-19 response.

Only in the case of MSDF Strategic Priority 4, ‘A Sustainable and Resilient Caribbean’, are results from 2020 recorded against the original MSDF Country Implementation Plan. These are detailed below.

In 2020, the UN System supported enhanced sustainability and resilience in the Caribbean through the direct provision of finance, technical assistance and skills enhancement for Guyanese farmers, enabling them to better prepare for future climate-related risks to food production and security. At the institutional level, the UN worked with Guyanese authorities to help them access major sources of international climate finance.

3.2: Cooperation Framework Priorities, Outcomes and Outputs

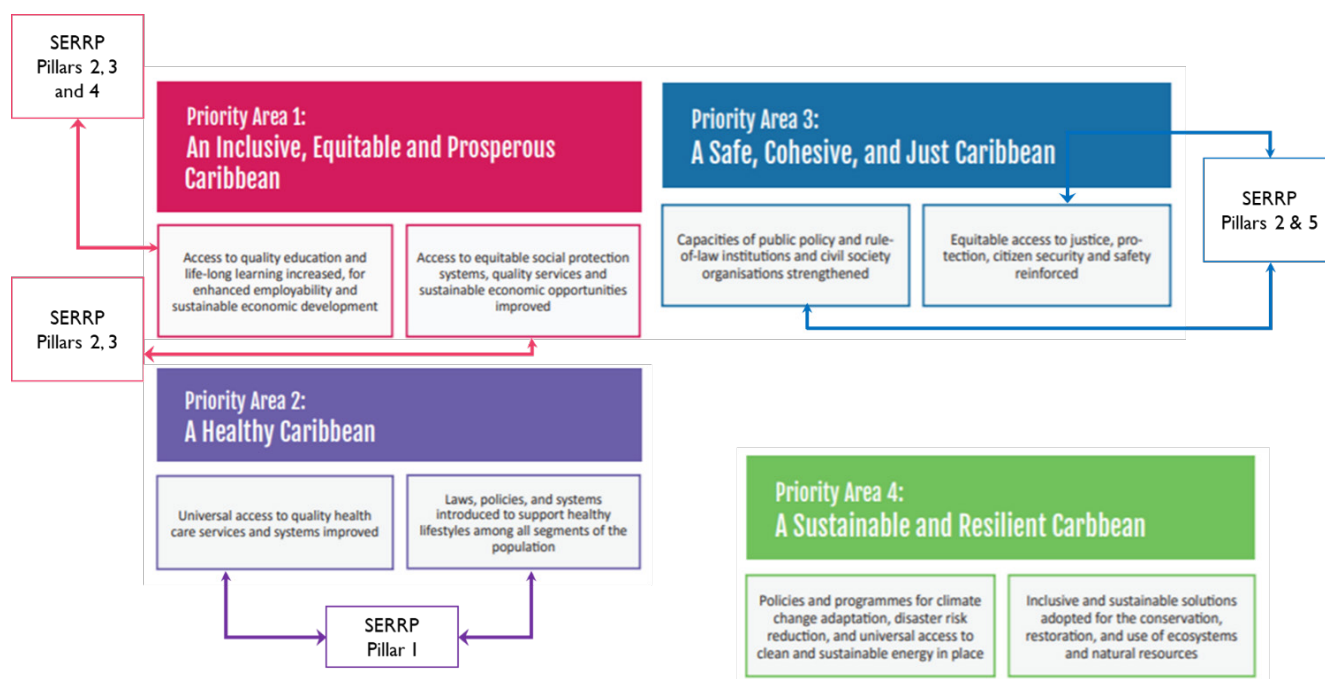


Figure 2: How 3x MSDF priorities, plus their associated outcomes and activities were adapted for the UN Guyana COVID-19 SERRP

3.2.1: Strategic Priority Four: A Sustainable and Resilient Guyana

The effects of global heating and climate change are already in evidence in Guyana. Even if international attempts to limit global temperature rise to less than 2.0°C are successful, over the next decade Guyanese citizens will still witness further rises in sea levels, and changes in rainfall patterns.

Without significant adaptation, Guyanese people are likely to find themselves subjected to more frequent and severe floods, and also to reductions in rainfall, with potentially large impacts on livelihoods and the economy.

In 2020, Guyana took on new responsibilities with respect to climate change, as it became the world's newest oil producing country.

Outcome 1: Policies and programmes for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and universal access to clean and sustainable energy in place

UNDP supported Guyana's flagship event as Chair of the G77 and China .on Climate and SDG Action in the COVID-19 Era, opened by Guyana's President HE Irfaan Ali, and the UN Secretary General.

Before oil and gas production, more than a quarter of Guyana's GDP was generated by the mining and agricultural sectors, and food production re-

mains a major employer and keystone of social and economic life right across the country.

Indeed it is farmers and agricultural extension officers that will find themselves at the front-line of handling the complex effects of climate change, and in 2020, FAO worked with them to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of the global climate crisis.

With the specific aim of making villages more resilient and food secure villages in the face of future climate-related events and potential effects on food production, FAO worked to introduce local adaptation measures. In Regions 3, 4 and 5, these included the use of raised sheep pens, shade house technologies and the mixture of greenhouse and poultry production as a hedge against extreme weather events.

In Regions 5, 6 and 9, FAO delivered a micro-grant scheme aimed to encourage women farmers to adopt more 'climate smart' farming practices.

Across the country, FAO helped to deploy a new integrated climate services tool for farmers (PIS-CA), helping them make better decisions about planting and harvesting with the use of enhanced climatic and weather-related forecasts.

Meanwhile, IFAD support included the US\$7.5 million 'Hinterland Environmentally Sustainable Agricultural Development' (HESAD) project in regions 1 and 9.

HESAD boosts smallholder access to a range of services, including financial services, enabling farmers to increase their productivity and reduce their vulnerability. The project, which runs from 2017 to 2023, builds human and social capital and strengthens self-reliance in rural communities faced with the challenges of sustainable development.

UNDP led the first of two components of the *Development of Guyana National Flood Early Warning System* initiative supported by the Hydrometeorological Service of the Ministry of Agriculture of Guyana, to improve the prediction of extreme weather events, enabling national authorities to implement mitigation measures. The Flood Forecasting System, under the project *Strengthening Women's Disaster Management Capacities in Guyana and Dominica* funded by the Government of Japan, was implemented by UNOSAT in close collaboration with CIMA Research Foundation.

Outcome 2: Inclusive and sustainable solutions adopted for the conservation, restoration, and use of ecosystems and natural resources.

With 2019 seeing the arrival of a first Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel and the production of 'first oil', Guyana became both the world's newest oil-producing nation, but also newly vulnerable to the effects of potentially damaging environmental degradation, including the risk of a catastrophic oil spill.

The rapid expansion of the oil sector in 2020 immediately required significant upskilling of Guyanese environmental and regulatory staff. This is vital if they are to ensure that oil majors adhere to agreed environmental targets and standards. Already, owing to a faulty gas compressor on the Liza Destiny FPSO, billions of cubic feet of natural gas were unnecessarily flared over the course of 2020 and early 2021.

To help boost government capabilities in a

highly complex economic sector, ILO has trained occupational safety and health officers in a programme enabling them to better assess and scrutinize the management systems that underpin the safe operation of FPSOs.

UNDP and Office of Climate Change have promoted low-emission energy technologies with the training of 25 technical staff and Instructors from key agencies within the energy sector and the technical institutes in two North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) courses on solar photovoltaics (PV). A Solar PV Installation, Maintenance and Repairs Curriculum is currently being developed for the Government Technical Institute to mainstream Low Emissions within the Technical Education System. This will increase the competitiveness and climate resilience of the national economy.

UNDP and UNEP in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility/CLME+ project focused on Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) approaches in the Wellington Park Mangrove Reserves. Consultations with key stakeholders and mapping exercises led to completion of a management plan and governance structure to restore, manage and conserve the mangrove area through an eco-tourism approach. A sec-

ond phase of the project is expected to begin in June 2021.

To conserve, restore and protect Guyana's ecosystems and natural resources, UNEP has helped national authorities implement provisions in international law that aim to fairly distribute the benefits of genetic and ecosystem resources. These provisions, also known as 'Access and Benefit Sharing', are rooted in the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity. When the Convention is left unimplemented countries can find themselves vulnerable to illegal bioprospecting.

Guyana is both hugely biodiverse, and also home to indigenous communities that have unparalleled understanding of the numerous qualities and properties of Guyana's natural resource stocks (plants, trees, soils etc.).

For these reasons, proper implementation of the 1992 Convention and its Nagoya Protocol is critical if the knowledge of Guyana's first peoples is to be respected and is to serve as an economic asset for the country. In 2020, UNEP supported specific efforts to tackle illegal bioprospecting in Guyana and the wider Caribbean region.

3.3: Support to partnerships and financing the 2030 Agenda

Established globally in 2017 with nearly US\$600 million in funding from the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative, a partnership between the EU and the UN is the largest global programme to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence. It is a hugely promising example of how partnerships and finance can be leveraged to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, in this case SDG 5 'Gender Equality'.

In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative was launched across the Caribbean. In Guyana, an initial funding tranche of US\$3.7 million out of a total of US\$5.4 million (€4.5 million) from the EU was approved for the first two years of the three-year program. This was complemented by US\$400,000 of UN Agencies' own contributions.

Over its three-year lifespan, Spotlight aims to reach 148,428 beneficiaries directly in Guyana (nearly a fifth of Guyana's entire population) and 519,498 indirectly (more than two thirds of Guyana's whole population).

The Spotlight Initiative works across six mutually reinforcing outcome areas (legal and policy framework, institutions, prevention and norm change, quality services, women's movements for social activism) and puts the safety and security of women and girls at the centre of its work.

The Initiative engages the full spectrum of partners positioned to introduce and expand on preventive measures, address legislative and policy



Signing of the Spotlight Initiative Country Programme Document. From left: Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud – Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Ms. Mikiko Tanaka – UN Resident Coordinator, Ambassador Fernando Ponz Cantó – Delegation of the European Union to Guyana.

Photo credit: Department of Public Information Guyana.

gaps, improve institutional capacities, augment service delivery systems especially in remote communities, enhance data collection and use, and build a stronger civil society response to ensure justice is delivered to women and girls experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and violence.

Partners include government and public administration, judiciary, law enforcement, civil society, community-based organisations and women's movements.

In October, the Spotlight Initiative was launched by HE President Irfaan Ali, UN Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohamed and EU Deputy Director-General for International Cooperation and Development Marjeta Jager, giving high level exposure to the fight against Guyana's high rates of gender-based violence. Spotlight recognizes the important role of civil society and a Civil Society

National Reference Group was established for advocacy, advice and social mobilization.

Both CSOs and national health service workers were engaged in training and case management activities, and wide-reaching advocacy and communications campaigns were launched on television, radio, internet, and mobile phone. In addition, a new Child Advocacy Centre was established in Region 6.

The crucial role of the Spotlight Initiative in putting the elimination of GBV right at the heart of Guyana's COVID-19 response is covered above (see SERRP Pillar 2).

Spotlight is also a vital driver of UN Reform, providing clear and direct incentives for multiple UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes to cooperate, share responsibilities, and deliver joint approaches to complex problems.

3.4: Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

Joint Programmes

Spotlight Initiative

The abovementioned EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is a global joint programme aligned with the UN Development System reform. Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and UNDP collaborate to coherently deliver the multi-dimensional programme that strives to catalyze fundamen-

tal changes to end gender-based violence. ILO, IOM, PAHO/WHO and UNAIDS are associated to provide expertise in specific aspects of the programme. UNFPA assumes the role of assuring technical coherence. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security is the coordinating ministry in the Government, ensuring coherence and cooperation across line ministries, state institutions and with civil society, private sector and communities. The European Union actively partners in advocacy in addition to their €4.5 million (US\$5.4 million) financial contribution over three years.

Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS

The UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS is coordinated by UNAIDS and includes PAHO/WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP. In 2020 it supported the Ministry of Health to update the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, and helped the Country Coordinating Mechanism to submit a funding application to the Global Fund from the Country Coordinating Mechanism. Activities in 2021 focused on the provision of prevention services and treatment to women, mothers and children, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 crisis which threatened to reduce access to HIV services.

EnGenDER

With financial backing from the Canadian and British governments, across nine Caribbean countries, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes including UNDP, WFP and UN Women have also joined forces with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) on the 'Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience' (EnGenDER) Project. EnGenDER has provided cash and food items for women, children, youth, persons living with disabilities and indigenous populations affected by the economic consequence of COVID-19. The project provides particular support for women and children in situations of family violence.



Masks produced by Ms. Sharon King, a seamstress, under the EnGenDER Programme.
Photo credit: Bureau of Gender Affairs.

COVID-19 Response

Providing a coherent response to COVID-19 further challenged the UN to demonstrate enhanced effectiveness. By May 2020, PAHO/WHO had helped the government to issue a Country Preparedness & Response (Health) Plan, and move swiftly to launch country-wide communications and awareness-raising campaigns to limit outbreaks of the virus. Other Agencies combined to offer high-level policy advice on the socio-economic response to Guyana's COVID-19 Task Force.

By August, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes were already working together to implement a series of COVID-19 activities subsequently captured in the SERRP.

Before the end of the year, PAHO/WHO was already working with government authorities to prepare for the eventual management of a coronavirus vaccination programme.

Responding to a call from indigenous communities to support radio broadcasts critical for COVID-19 communications, several Agencies jointly donated a set of replacement solar batteries enabling these community-based radio to continue operating.

Response for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V)

Since 2017, some 5.3 million Venezuelans have left their country in the face of extraordinary hardship caused by a collapsing economy and violent crime. By the end of 2020, as many as 30,000 had migrated to Guyana, equivalent to nearly 4 percent of Guyana's national population.

The UN's support to Venezuelan migrants and refugees is part of the global Humanitarian Response Plan, implemented through the regional Response for Venezuelans (R4V) coordination mechanism.

In Guyana, IOM and UNHCR lead the humanitarian response through a Refugee and Migrants Working Group, and by partnering with local and international NGOs and Guyanese state authorities.

Generation Unlimited (GenU)

UNDP and UNICEF partnered effectively with young Guyanese entrepreneurs on the Generation Unlimited (GenU) Youth Challenge.

Backed by the Guyanese government, the initiative dared youths and stakeholders to devise innovative social investments that combine civic engagement, employment and education. Government and the UN mapped the landscape of key actors in this field and left it to Guyanese youths to innovate.

After qualifying through a national competition, two Guyanese teams went on to represent Guyana at GenU's global forum in December 2020.

Delicia Fraser and Jasmine Clement were among the all-woman 'Youths with Purpose' team, who pitched their 'Gambit' mentoring, coaching and networking app to other international entrepreneurs. They were joined by Khadija Yasmeen Ba's 'Green Creatives' team and their 'Green Thumb' platform, which offers to link ambitious Guyanese entrepreneurs with business training and funding opportunities.

Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)

PAGE Guyana, a joint programme among five UN agencies, provided upstream policy support targeted to the agriculture sector for policies that promoted resource efficient operations and options for incentivizing the green, low carbon transition. It is expected to strengthen Guyana's global climate leadership by moving it to the next level of global action, and its resources leveraged to additional sources of green and sustainable development financing.

Business Operations Strategy and the UN's Efficiency Agenda

Identifying and implementing efficiency gains in the UN is a critical part of the 2030 Agenda, with the Secretary General having set a target of US\$310 million in savings or cost avoidance globally by the end of the decade.

In 2019, the Government of Guyana directly supported this initiative by providing the UN with a common premises and parking in Kingston, Georgetown: by the end of 2020, 10 of the 14 UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes with a presence in Guyana were based in (or had plans to relocate to) UN House on Duke St. UNICEF led efforts to reduce the UN's carbon footprint at UN House by introducing solar energy sources, and a range of energy saving measures. UNICEF now draws 92.5% of its electricity needs from a solar photovoltaic (PV) system.

In addition, the UN completed a common, multi-Agency Business Operations Strategy (BOS), which identifies a number of business services common to multiple Agencies: from 2021 onwards, several of these will now be jointly procured. If fully implemented, the BOS will secure at least US\$322,000 in cost avoidance over the next 5 years.

The BOS also positions the UN in Guyana for the next major phase of the Efficiency Agenda, namely the establishment of Common Back Offices, a reform that will be implemented in the next 3-5 years.

Communicating and advocating together for human rights



State House lit up in blue in support of children's rights for World Children's Day, November 20, 2020.
Photo credit: UNICEF Guyana-Suriname

To mark the Sixteen Days of Activism to End Gender Based Violence, the UN partnered with the High Commission of Canada to Guyana and Suriname and the Office of the First Lady to light up State House in orange, whilst UN House was also uplit in the same colour.

Marking its 75th anniversary in 2020, the UN Secretary-General initiated the largest-ever global conversation on 'building the future we want'. In Guyana, several UN Agencies joined in dialogues with youth groups, persons living with HIV/AIDS, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, persons with disabilities and survivors of gender-based

violence, to listen to their hopes and fears for the future and recommit to the UN's pledge to ensure that no one is left behind from the 2030 Agenda.

The UN75 dialogues proved an invaluable basis for two further 'Leave No-one Behind' focus groups, which directly informed the first UN Common Country Analysis for Guyana in almost a decade, a multi-Agency assessment of Guyana's present development trajectory, subsequently presented to the highest levels of the Guyanese government.

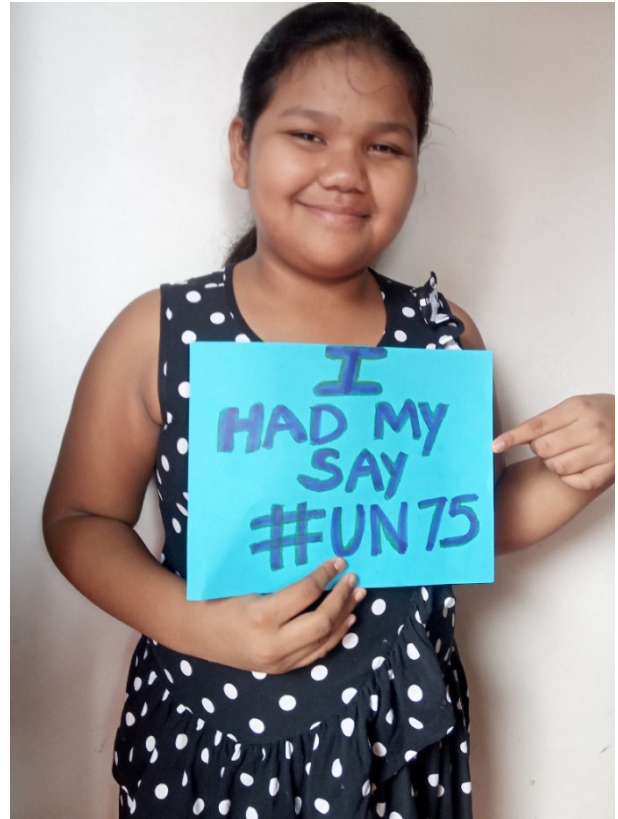
As part of the UN75 events, the UN in Guyana organised a video essay competition, which invited Guyanese children to outline their hopes for the next 25 years in global development and UN cooperation.

UNICEF's global six point plan for the protection of children was supported by the President of Guyana, during his address to the 31st Special Session of the UN General Assembly. This plan aims to ensure that children are protected and catered for in the global recovery effort from COVID 19.

Amplifying the UN75 dialogues and Leave No-one Behind focus groups, the UN System advocated strongly for the protection of human rights in the time of COVID-19 through a series of joint advocacy efforts. In 2020, the UN marked World AIDS Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, and the International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

The UN Resident Coordinator used World Human Rights Day to stress the necessity of 'building back better' after COVID-19 and recalling the responsibility of everyone to stand up for human rights and to respect the dignity of others.

The UN's communications were underpinned through the production of a range of digital, print, video, and audio content, disseminated through the UN's active social media and online presence.



First place winner of the UN75 video essay competition – children category.
Photo credit: Indranee Roopsind.

3.5: Evaluations and lessons learned

With the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF, 2017-21) for the Caribbean entering its final year, 2020 marked an important year for the establishment of a new regional development compact.

Common Country Analysis for Guyana

In all the countries of the Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean, the UN, led by the strengthened Resident Coordinator System, completed a series of national-level Common Country Analysis (CCAs).

Following a common format, CCAs assess states' progress towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and identified a series of binding constraints likely to slow economic, social and political development.

In Guyana, recognizing both the great opportunity and the serious risks presented by the new oil boom, the CCA identified nine key issues, spanning all five 'Ps' of the 2030 Agenda: Planet, People, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. The nine issues are:

- Planet I: climate emergency, in particular rising sea levels and changes in rainfall patterns
- Planet II: licit and illicit / unsustainable exploitation of natural resources in the Guyana Shield

- Prosperity I: 'Dutch Disease' and the distortionary effects of oil wealth on economic competitiveness
- Prosperity II: the adequacy of 'hard' infrastructure, like energy, ICT and transportation
- People I: characteristics and identity (sex, ethnicity, sexuality etc.) as determinants of inequality
- People II: learning outcomes and the need to integrate youth in tomorrow's labour force
- People III: ensuring health and nutrition enable Guyanese to live good, productive lives
- Governance I: the challenge of comprehensive public sector reform, including data literacy
- Governance II: ensuring respect for the spirit of the constitution and democracy.

In addition to national-level CCAs, and using a similar format, the UN has also commissioned a Common Multi-Country Analysis to identify common threats to the sustainable development of the Caribbean region.

MSDF Evaluation

2020 saw the initiation of a summative evaluation of the MSDF 1.0. Drawing on country results reports, existing programme evaluations and through a wide array of consultations with stakeholders across the Caribbean region, the MSDF Evaluation will outline what has worked, and what hasn't in the current Cooperation Framework.

It will also offer vital advice to the UN, governments and regional institutions to ensure the future MSDCF learns the lessons of the last four years.

Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey for Guyana

Like many Caribbean countries, Guyana continues to face challenges in having accurate, up-to-date research, evidence and data to guide its decision-making.

As part of its commitment to strengthening national statistical systems, UNICEF has helped

fill some of these gaps in Guyana through the production and implementation of a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (the first since 2014).

When released, the MICS is likely to underpin a series of development interventions in the coming years, particularly in health, education, social protection and livelihoods.

Gender Inequality and Cost of Inaction to Climate Change Study

Guyana was among the first countries to really grasp the true gravity of the global climate crisis, taking ambitious steps to guarantee the protection of the Guiana Shield.

A recent study by UN Women helped focus minds on the potential costs of climate change inaction, finding that Guyana had made improvements in its climate risk preparedness.

Even so, the report further highlighted the critical importance of major investments in climate adaptation, stressing both the gendered dimensions of climate vulnerability, and the transformative role that women in Guyana can play in tackling climate change.

3.6: Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

For 2021, the financial and resource mobilization data for the UN in Guyana will be provided via UN INFO, the UN’s multi-agency results and reporting tool.

For 2020, data is drawn from a range of sources, including the initial Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan (August 2020); from the latest expenditure figures of the Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan (March 2021); and from annual financial reporting matched to the MSDF.

The use of both the SERRP and MSDF to plan objectives, and deliver financial assistance means that there remain some residual risks of ‘double counting’: as such, the SERRP and MSDF graphics below should not be *totalled* to estimate overall UN expenditure. Figures should be considered provisional.

SERRP Financial Position (August 2020)

Financial estimates from the SERRP, as designed in August 2020 (see Fig 3, below), initially estimated that US\$15.1 million could be made available across all five SERRP pillars, with Pillar 2 (Protecting People), Pillar 3 (Economic Response & Recovery) and Pillar 1 (Health Emergency) projected to account for the vast majority of expenditure and programming.

Of these funds, an estimated US\$5.1 million were to be allocated from ‘repurposed’ funding, suggesting that US\$10 million in new funds had been mobilized. New funding for PAHO/WHO for the COVID-19 response included US\$1 million from the India-UN Partnership Fund and US\$1 million from the World Bank.

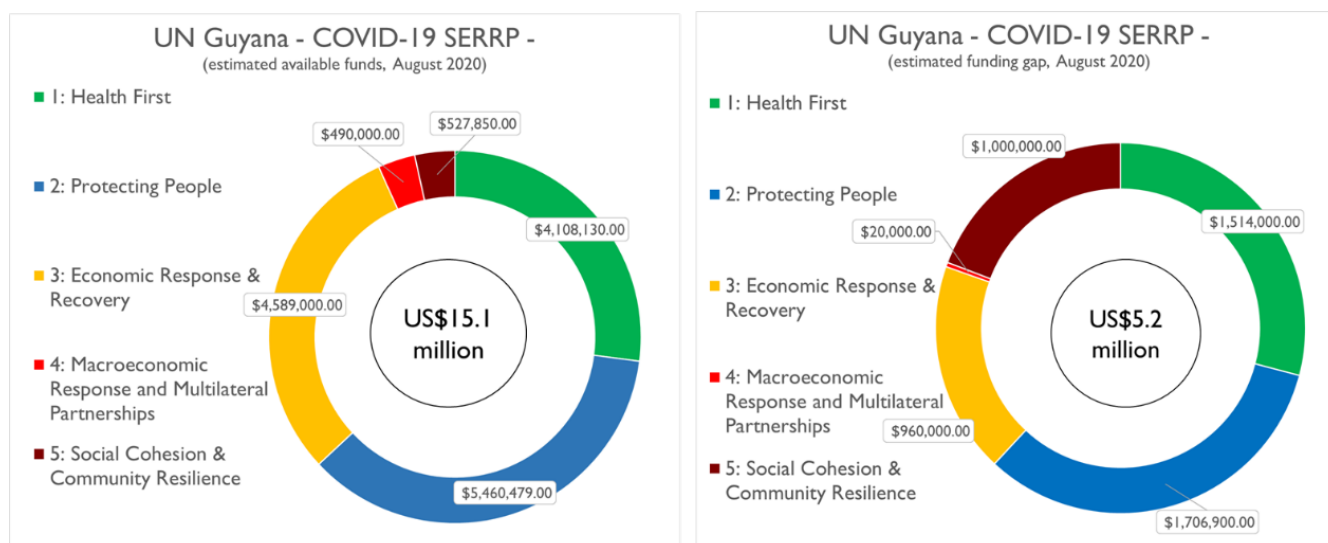


Figure 3: UN COVID-19 SERRP Financial Planning - August 2020

In August 2020, the UN System estimated that a further US\$5.2 million was required to imple-

ment the full SERRP, making the ratio of estimated funds available to funds required 3:1.

SERRP Financial Position (March 2021)

By the end of the reporting year, the financial situation looked somewhat different. SERRP Pillar 2, 'Protecting People', accounted for an even larger share of UN mobilized funds, whilst resources mobilized for Pillars 3 and 4 had increased in real terms, and as a proportion of total SERRP funds.

The most significant change was in the total planned resource envelope for the SERRP, which was revised downwards from more than US\$20 million to just over US\$ 8 million. Of this, some US\$6.03 million was successfully mobilized, leaving a SERRP funding gap for 2020 of US\$1.9 million (see Fig 4, below).

Though the total volume of funds mobilized was lower than initial projections, the overall *ratio* of estimated funds mobilized to funds required remained at 3:1.

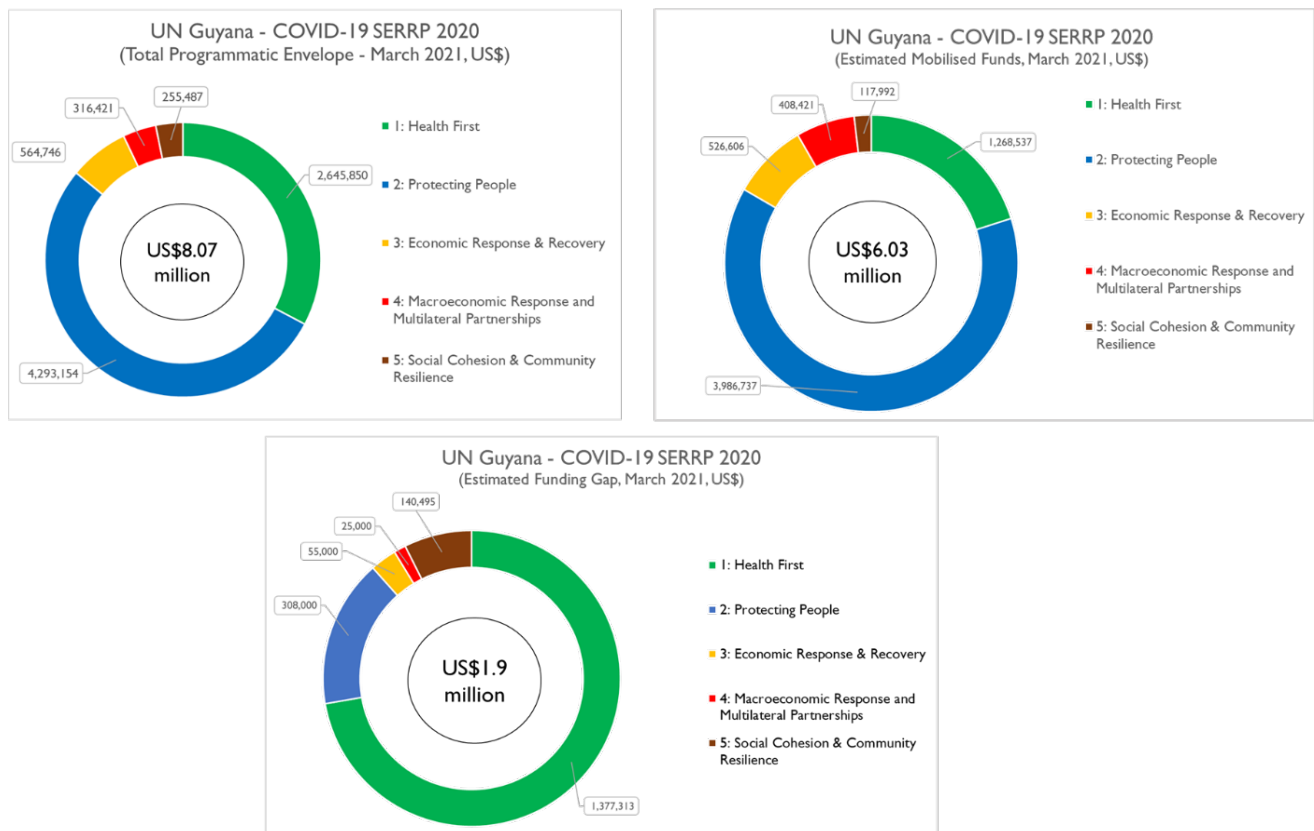


Figure 4: UN Guyana - COVID-19 SERRP 2020 - Planned, Mobilized and Gapped funding

When budgets executed by the UN System in Guyana in 2020 are matched to the four key priorities of the MSDF (see Fig 5, below) the data (provided by three Agencies, Funds and Programmes) suggests that the largest area of active programming was Priority 3, 'A safe, cohesive, and just Guyana.' For this pillar, more than 90 percent of available funding was executed, reflective of a strong year of implementation.

For Pillars 1, 2, and 4, the execution rates were 36 percent, 46 percent, and 36 percent respectively. These comparatively low rates are likely to reflect both the impact of the political crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic on delivering, but may also indicate the comparative success of the UN System in re-purposing significant volumes of funding for the purposes of COVID-19 response.

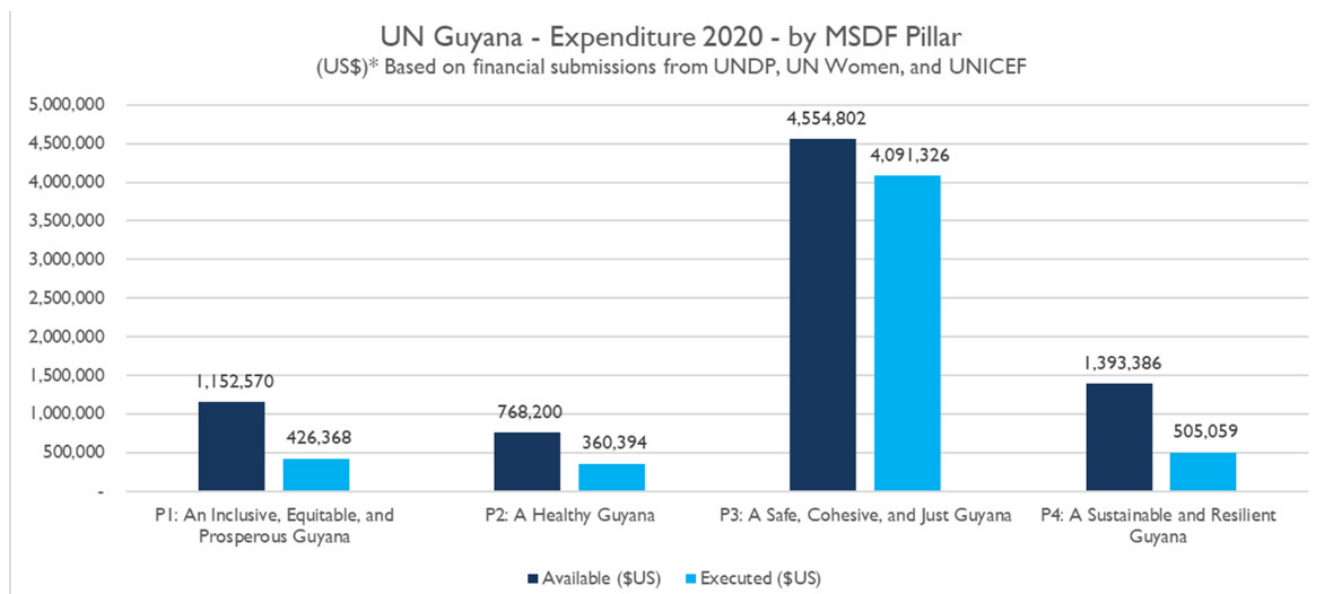


Figure 5: UN Guyana Budget Availability and Execution by MSDF Priority, 2020. [UNICEF, UNDP and UN Women only].

2020 also saw the UN System in Guyana and the wider Caribbean adopt smart approaches to mobilizing resources. The Spotlight Initiative has involved four 'Recipient UN Organisations' (RUNOs) in common programming and demonstrated how the application of pooled funds (more typical of humanitarian response operations) in the UN Development System can incentivize joint working and encourage Agencies, Funds and Programmes to regularly assess

their comparative advantage with respect to one another.

Elsewhere, in 2020 both UN Women and PAHO revised their resource mobilization strategies for Guyana, applying results-based management approaches to their own fundraising activities in order to assess performance and drive efficiencies.

Chapter 4: UNCT Key Focus for 2021

For the year 2021, the UN in Guyana will continue to help national government authorities respond to the huge difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the first tasks will be the management and roll out of an ambitious vaccination programme, the biggest enabler of social and economic recovery.

The UN will also retain its focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable people in Guyana who will struggle to overcome the socio-economic shocks for several years. The major pillars of the 2020 SERRP will continue to guide the UN's work.

In addition, Agencies, Funds and Programmes will strive to deliver on the outstanding work envisaged as part of the original 2017-21 MSDF, enabling the completion of a comprehensive national-level MSDF self-assessment at the end of the year, to complement the region-wide evaluation that has already begun.

Beyond the SERRP and MSDF 1.0, in 2021, the UN system in Guyana joins other national governments and regional institutions in developing a future Multi-country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSDCF) for the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

The MSDCF formulation process itself throws

down the gauntlet to the UN System. It dares Agencies, Funds and Programmes, as well as the UN's Regional Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) to discover development cooperation solutions and find innovations that will accelerate progress across multiple SDGs, and potentially benefit more than 40 million people across the Caribbean.

The future cooperation framework will require new approaches to resource mobilization if SDG financing is to be scaled up by orders of magnitude. The UN is already working with Guyana and a number of small island developing states on the development of a new Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index that could help inform future allocations of international climate and concessional financing.

In addition, from 2021 onwards, alternative mechanisms for country- and regional-level monitoring and reporting will be required to ensure that the next generation cooperation framework is sensitive to the demands of stakeholders, and agile enough to course-correct when progress stalls.

Overall, 2021 will be a year to show just how far and how fast the UN System has progressed to implement the three major pillars of the Secretary General's *United to Reform* agenda.

Acronyms

AMR	Anti-Microbial Resistance	EU	European Union
BOS	Business Operations Strategy	FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
CCA	Common Country Analysis	FPSO	Floating Production Storage and Offloading
CDC	Civil Defence Commission	GBV	Gender-Based Violence
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency	GCF	Green Climate Fund
CIMA	Centro Internazionale in Monitoraggio Ambientale	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CLME	Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem	GEF	Global Environment Facility
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019	GenU	Generation Unlimited
CPRP	Country Preparedness and Response (Health) Plan	HCCH	Hague Conference on Private and International Law
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations	HESAD	Hinterland Environmentally Sustainable Agricultural Development
C-TIP	Countering - Trafficking in Persons	HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
EMIS	Education Management Information System	IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
EnGenDER	Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience	ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ESP	Education Sector Plans		

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
ILO	International Labour Organization	PAHO/WHO	Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund	PISCA	Participatory Climate Services for Agriculture
IOM	International Organization for Migration	PLHIV	People Living with HIV
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control	PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence	PRIMES	Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem
IRI	International Republican Institute	PRMIS	Police Records Management Information System
ITC	International Trade Centre	R4V	Response for Venezuelans
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and others	RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
MDR-TB	Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis	RMRP	Refugee and Migrants Response Plan
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	RUNO	Recipient United Nations Organisations
MSDCF	Multi-country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework	SASOD	Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination
MSDF	Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework	SC	Senior Counsel
NABCEP	North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
NAPS	National AIDS Programme Secretariat	SERRP	Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan
NCD	Non-communicable Disease	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations	STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights		

TIP	Trafficking in Persons	UNLIREC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UK	United Kingdom	UNOSAT	UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme
UN	United Nations	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN75	United Nations 75th Anniversary	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
UNCT	United Nations Country Team	WFP	World Food Programme
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	YCG	Youth Challenge Guyana
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme		
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme		
UNESCO	United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture		
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund		
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees		
UNIC	United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean Area		
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund		
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research		

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