



**TOWARDS EQUALITY OF SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR EVERYONE AND EVERYWHERE IN SERBIA  
THROUGH GROWING INTO SUSTAINABILITY**

## Foreword by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia

By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 a historical consensus has been achieved within the UN. This ambitious development agenda is a vision of key significance in order to create the prerequisites for better and more prosperous, but also safer and more stable, world. We perceive partnerships and cooperation of the whole international community, at different levels, particularly regional and sub-regional, as a pre-requirement for a full implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development in all its dimensions - economic, social and environmental. It is primarily about our responsibility to the most deprived and most vulnerable, to the environment and a fuller concept of human life including the respect of human rights of all.

It is a challenge to keep this vision strongly linked to reality, where every specific activity is linked to creating sustainable and resilient societies. The Voluntary National Review which is before you presents the concrete activities that we were engaged with in considering the progress, emphasising the achievements, but equally the challenges, and identifying further steps in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. The Review is a result of a positive momentum and participation of a broad spectrum of actors in the society and creating partnerships at all levels, between the government and the non-government sectors.

We are convinced that the 2030 Agenda is an essential component of global efforts towards positive transformation of the contemporary world. We participated actively in the process of defining the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in the process of adopting the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on their financing. We are undertaking intense efforts at national level in order to ensure adequate dynamics of their implementation. Eradication of extreme poverty, increasing employment, strengthening institutions and improving the economy, rule of law, greater inclusiveness and improving the quality of education and health care are the basis of our development strategy and, as such, they are focused on our citizens. No one should be left behind with respect to these Goals.

The first Voluntary National Review of Serbia also provides useful guidelines for the future implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its linking with the relevant chapters in the pre-accession negotiations with the EU, and harmonisation with national priorities. We see the road to EU membership, which is an aspiration that we share with other countries in the region, as a road to greater stability, economic progress and strengthening the legacy of democracy. It is our goal to build a prosperous society which shall, sharing the same values with other countries of Europe and the world, contribute to global stability and progress and, primarily, take care of the wellbeing of its citizens. Accession to the European Union is priority of Serbia, therefore the implementation of reforms aimed at fulfilling the EU accession criteria contributes significantly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and the other way around. Equally, fight against any form of extremism and instability, if not accompanied by strengthening the economic development and building links, will never be complete. At the same time, economic and social development cannot be achieved without decisively facing the security challenges of the modern world.

The Republic of Serbia has demonstrated its commitment to enhancing regional cooperation towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda by organising the Sub-Regional Conference on accelerating progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda in September 2018, as a unique forum for exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences aimed at accelerating the development progress of the countries in the region.

Although the road ahead of us is a long one, the results presented in this report indicate that we can succeed, provided that our efforts and activities are comprehensive, coherent and consistent.

Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia

Ana Brnabić





## Table of Content

<u>1. Foreword</u> .....	2
<u>2. Highlights</u> .....	8
<u>3. Introduction</u> .....	10
<u>a) Commitment of the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society of Serbia to values and principles of 2030 Agenda</u> .....	11
<u>b) Enhancing the policy architecture for integrated balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development</u> .....	11
<u>c) Permanent commitment to sustainable development</u> .....	12
<u>d) Integrated implementation of 2030 Agenda in the Republic of Serbia</u> .....	12
<u>4. Methodology and process for preparation of the review</u> .....	13
<u>5. Policy and enabling environment</u> .....	17
<u>a) Creating ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals</u> .....	17
<u>b) Incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals in national frameworks</u> .....	18
<u>c) Leaving No One Behind</u> .....	22
<u>d) Institutional mechanisms</u> .....	26
<u>6. Progress on Goals and targets</u> .....	29
<u>7. Means of implementation</u> .....	75
<u>8. Next steps</u> .....	85
<u>9. Conclusions</u> .....	86
<u>10. Annexes</u> .....	87



## List of Abbreviations

CEEC – Central and Eastern European Countries

GHG – Greenhouse Gasses

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

IOM – International Organization for Migrations

MAPS mission - Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support

MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MDPP – Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policy

RIA - Rapid Integrated Assessment

SILC – Survey on income and living conditions

SIPRU – Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNECE – UN Economic Commission for Europe

AP – Action Plan

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GFEC – Gross Final Energy Consumption

VNR – Voluntary National Review

SAI – State Audit Institution

EE – Energy Efficiency

EC – European Commission

ESRP – Employment and Social Reform Programme in the process of accession to the EU

EU – European Union

LSG – Units of Local Self-government

PPP – Public Private Partnership

MoCTI – Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure

MPALG – Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

MEI – Ministry of EU integrations

MoH – Ministry of Health

MEP – Ministry of Environmental Protection

MESTD – Ministry of Education, Science and technological Development

MAFWM – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management

MME – Ministry of Mining and Energy

IMWG – Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Implementation of 2030 Agenda in Serbia

SME – Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

MoLEVSP – Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Protection

MoI – Ministry of the Interior

NAD – National International Development Assistance Priorities for 2014-2017, with projections up to 2020 NPAA- National Programme for Adoption of the EU Acquis 2018-2021

RE – Renewable Energy

RS – Renewable Sources

RES – Renewable Energy Sources

SD – Sustainable Development

DPF – Development Partnership Framework between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the UN Country Team in Serbia

CSO – Civil Society Organization

SCC – Serbian Chamber of Commerce

NDA – National Development Agency of the Republic of Serbia

SORS – Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

PPS – Public Policy Secretariat of the Republic of Serbia

WHO – World Health Organization

SCTM – Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

## *Ramonda serbica* – The Symbol of Sustainable Development of the Republic of Serbia

There are only a few plants in the flora of Europe as interesting and mysterious as the *Ramonda serbica* - a slow-growing perennial with elongated, irregular, and serrated leaves. The flower has the form of a funnel, light-purple in colour, usually with five petals that do not overlap. It blooms in spring, from April to June.

It was first described in 1874 by the prominent Serbian doctor and botanist Josif Pancic who collected the samples on Rtanj mountain in Serbia.

Together with several of its relatives in Europe, *Ramonda serbica* is a "living fossil" and a relic of the Tertiary period. In the distant past, when the climate of this region was more humid and warm, these plants were much more widespread than today.

At the beginning of the Ice Age, it is probable that *Ramonda serbica* moved to gorges and canyons found at the lower altitudes of the south to seek the new habitat where it could flourish. At the end of the cold period, they gradually began to expand so today, the Serbian *Ramonda* is most commonly found in the areas from North-western Greece to north-east Serbia, and Albania and Montenegro in the west to eastern Serbia and northwestern Bulgaria.

*Ramonda serbica* is a symbol of sustainable development of Serbia, not solely because it is a plant and plants are the base of life on Earth. The reason is its interesting ability to survive harsh conditions, such as the lack of water or temperature extremes, by entering into anabiosis – the physiological state of rest. In this state, the metabolism of the plant slows down, and the parts of the plant above ground dehydrate. When the favorable conditions of the habitat are reinstated, the plant reestablishes its normal metabolic activity and turns green within 48 hours to a few days. For the reasons above, the plant is also known under the name “resurrecting plant” or “phoenix plant”.

Nowadays, the survival of the Serbian *Ramonda* on the Balkan Peninsula is threatened by: the disturbance of the habitat due to climate change or human activities; low number and isolation of certain plant populations; construction of dams in cliffs and canyons; and collection of plants for scientific and horticultural purposes.

The plant populations, however, are still stable because a large number of individual plants are located in remote and inaccessible places and in areas that are under various levels of protection. *Ramonda serbica* is listed as one of the strictly protected species in Serbia by the Bern Convention on the Protection of European Wild Species and Natural Habitats and the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species.

*Ramonda serbica* with its unusual ability to survive unfavorable conditions is, indeed, the “phoenix plant”. However, it is not almighty and its limited distribution backs up these claims. In addition to its full protection, human actions are needed to prevent and mitigate climate change to encourage the survival of the phoenix plant - *Ramonda serbica*.

## 2. Highlights

The first Voluntary National Review by the Republic of Serbia is a cornerstone of inclusive, tangibly productive and action-oriented process of review of the ambitious cooperation of the whole of the Government and the whole society in concerted progress towards making the national vision of growing into sustainable by creating equal sustainable opportunities accessible to all and across Serbia. Through responsibly strict assessment of implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the progress made so far in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within this process of joint review through joint consultations between the Government and all stakeholders, factors have been identified that have contributed to the achievements, both those that contributed to successes and those which caused weaknesses. At the same time, the oversight, monitoring and evaluation identified opportunities for calibrating the national development compass for coherent policy management aimed at full attainment of sustainable development for which the 2030 Agenda serves as the global plan of action.

The national vision of sustainable development of the Republic of Serbia is strengthened by facing the so far unsustainable policies and practices in managing social and economic development and protecting and enhancing the environment. The conducted comprehensive reforms have created the prerequisites for achieving a balance between the three factors of sustainable development. The new strength of the development vision is also supported by the process of accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union and Serbia's multiple multilateral and regional cooperation processes dedicated to the renaissance of the democratization of the global development governance. The renewed aspirations for creating equal development opportunities for all and everywhere across Serbia, firstly for the young and along with them in all local communities, particularly those who are lagging behind in sustainability set the focus of this report on what has been achieved for them within the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and their expectations and recommendations on how to improve implementation, so that already the next voluntary review would be a review of sustainable Serbia in which there are no privileged people at the expense of the environment, privileges for some at the expense of others, privileges of one gender at the detriment of the other, nor privileges of any generation at the expense of another.

### Lessons learned

1. Economic and financial sustainability, balanced budget, people thinking creatively and with the ambition that we can achieve better lives is a guarantee for achieving sustainability. This is a lesson learned that we will not give up on.
2. After the challenging times which are behind us, sustainable development offers hope for creating the requirements for equality of sustainable opportunities for all across Serbia.

### Challenges

- How to achieve the guaranteed income in line with the financial capacity of the country which would guarantee economic and financial sustainability?
- Empowering people at local level to plan and develop strategic investment projects.
- How to ensure for all children healthy patterns for growing up, acquisition of adequate habits and sustainable life styles, particularly with respect to those who are most remote from opportunities provided by the family and the environment in which they grow up?
- Developing a culture and knowledge based on digital literacy contributing to creating an entrepreneurial society and linking the state with everyone.
- Identifying models that will ensure development opportunities and utilization of potentials of all generations, particularly the senior citizens who make up 20.2% of the total population, so that no one is left behind.
- How to empower people and ensure inclusiveness and equality?

## **Areas of assistance needed**

In growing into sustainability, Serbia needs assistance through an increased scope of investments, knowledge and skills, technologies and special partnerships for development of a generically sustainable, carbon-neutral circular agriculture and industry of sustainable materials, technological processes, products and services, including services in the financial sector, especially encouraging individual entrepreneurship and multiplication of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in these two fundamental productive sectors of the future for which opportunities have already been created through digitalization of the necessary activities and strengthened connectivity of the country through the rehabilitated transport, energy, and communications infrastructure.



### 3. Introduction

The Republic of Serbia is committed to sustainable development. Thus, the Provision 9 of Article 97 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia* prescribes that the Republic of Serbia regulates and ensures:

„sustainable development; the system of protection and enhancement of the environment; protection and enhancement of flora and fauna; production, trade and transport of armaments, poisonous, flammable, explosive, radioactive and other hazardous substances“.

According to the Constitution the Republic of Serbia is also obliged to ensure balanced development as stated in its Article 94:

„The Republic of Serbia shall ensure balanced and sustainable regional development, in accordance with the law.“

Reforms implemented in the Republic of Serbia so far have initiated its growing into sustainability that was led by the commitment to bring to life equality of sustainable opportunities for all in all parts of Serbia. Significant new possibilities have been opened for accessible sustainable opportunities for better life choices for all and a balanced encouragement of abilities of all to enjoy the benefits of increasing social inclusion and solidarity, greater social and economic equity and for spreading pre-requisites for decent work and effective participation in community decision-making.

That is why the European Commission (EC), which leads the ambitions and actions of EU member states to achieve on their own and jointly with others the 2030 Agenda by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and the cross-cutting issues of the *European Union's Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy* and the general goal of the *New European Consensus on Development*, is certain that the Republic of Serbia is a reliable and predictable partner. Assessing the contribution of Serbia to all the joint efforts of a thorough transformation of our world as is envisaged in the sustainable development vision of the Agenda 2030, and which was jointly determined to be desirable and achievable, the Commission in 2018 stated that Serbia:

"is fully committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the accompanying Sustainable Development Goals. Their customization to the circumstances in the country is under way. Serbian and the United Nations initiated in 2017 the Development Partnership framework for the period 2016 to 2020. The Development Partnership Framework is fully integrated within the national development priorities, as well as with the process of the accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union and the Sustainable Development Agenda by 2030."

## a) Commitment of the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society of Serbia to values and principles of 2030 Agenda

This reporting process has confirmed and reiterated the commitment of the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society as a whole to the key principles of the 2030 Agenda:

- **universality** in terms of its scope and applicability to all countries, in every context and at any moment;
- **leaving no one behind** by ensuring that benefits reach all, particularly those most deprived, by removing in the best possible manner the difficulties and vulnerabilities to which they are exposed and discrimination by which they are affected;
- **integration and indivisibility** rooted in the 17 interlinked and indivisible SDGs, meaning that no one responsible for their achievement is selecting none of them, nor some of them, but rather is implementing all of them, whichever may be the priorities set (holistic approach);
- **inclusiveness** covering the inclusion of every individual irrespective of race, sex, ethnic background or identity, and every segment of society to contribute to its achievement;
- **partnerships** among different stakeholders to achieve the SDGs by establishing in each country the supporting partnerships to initiate, collect and share knowledge and expertise and acquiring technologies and sources of funds.

## b) Enhancing the policy architecture for integrated balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development

In facing the reality all the challenges of almost two decades of difficulty transitions, including the challenge of reaching the level of development which it had back in 1989, the authorities and the citizens of Serbia have acknowledged the unpleasant realities and decided to transform them by opting for sustainability.

Serbia's EU integration process, initiated by the stabilization and association negotiations, sustainable development was coherently mainstreamed in 2006 in the *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*. Additionally, the strategic overarching document of integrated management of all sectoral policies in order to achieve sustainable development was adopted on 9 May 2008. This *National Strategy of Sustainable Development for the period 2009 - 2017*, along with the accompanying Action Plan for its implementation adopted in 2009, clearly set out that sustainable development is a „general direction and commitment of the Republic of Serbia and is an aspiration to create better living conditions by adjusting the social and economic factors with the environmental factors“.

The goal of the Strategy, for which there was a reporting obligation, was to achieve a balance:

„between the three ‘pillars’ of sustainable development which include: knowledge-based economy, socio-economic development and the protection of the environment and natural resources. The Strategy set out the following national priorities:

- membership in the European Union (EU);
- developing competitive market economy and balanced economic growth;
- developing human resources and increasing the rate of employment;
- developing infrastructure and balanced regional development; and
- protection and enhancement of the environment and improving the utilization of natural resources.”

By adopting the 2030 Agenda, the Republic of Serbia, together with other UN member states, changed the traditional understanding of sustainable development. Balanced social inclusion, economic growth and environmental protection – the three key factors of the sustainable development concept – has been further enriched by the Agenda. Firstly, by adding *peace* to their full and indivisible integration, as a necessary pre-requisite, and secondly by adding *partnerships*, as a decisive form of relations. Thus, true sustainability at present is understood as a result of intersecting the outcomes of all three integrated and balanced factors of sustainable development for all *people* in making progress towards *prosperity* by achieving the limits of the *planet* through *partnerships* and *peace* – the five key dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, known as its 5P.

### c) Permanent commitment to sustainable development

At the beginning of this decade Serbia's coherent efforts to achieve its development vision stated in the *National Sustainable Development Strategy* was boosted by, among other things, the national reporting on progress achieved in its implementation presented at the *UN Sustainable Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (Rio+20)*.

Although the turbulences of the world economic crisis challenged the feasibility of the outcomes of this Strategy, there was no giving up on the commitment to its implementation. The achievement of sustainable development was strengthened by the new trajectory of possibilities initiated by the preparation of advanced contractual relations with the European Union. The opening of the process of Serbia's accession to the Union, the strategically directed implementation of the *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis of the EU 2013-2016 (NPAA)*, whose adoption and implementation were financially supported by the EU Instruments of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) – initially for the period from 2007 to 2013 (IPA I), and subsequently for the period 2014 to 2020 (IPA II) – result in sustainable development and achievement of sustainable development of the Republic of Serbia in coherence with the achievement of sustainable development in the European Union.

Citizens of Serbia wanted and asked for this type of track. They presented their aspirations and expectations during the national consultations on the new post-2015 global development agenda, which started on 24 October 2012, in line with the document of outcomes of the above stated Rio+20 Process *The Future We Want*. In the course of these consultations until mid-2013, the citizens clearly stated that the Serbia which they want must have peace and freedom of life choices and democracy, social justice and gender equality, inter-generation justice, a country which respects and cherishes diversity in which every citizen is entitled to the benefits and prosperity and personal enjoyment of dignity and the choice of life opportunities.

Following these choices of citizens harmonized with all the strategic decisions and commitments for sustainable development as a whole in national and international actions, the representatives of Serbia were actively engaged in the Open Working Group (OWG), which was tasked by the UN General Assembly to develop a draft of Sustainable Development Goals as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. The representative of the Republic of Serbia actively contributed to the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of Financing for Sustainable Development tasked to prepare the proposal for effective strategy to finance sustainable development, as an important input for the new conference on financing for development, which was achieved by adopting the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*.

Already on 30 December 2015 the Government of the Republic of Serbia established its hub of institutionally integrated network mechanism for national implementation of the 2030 Agenda in order to be ready by 1 January 2016 to initiate a comprehensive integration of the 17 SDGs within the process of transforming Serbia towards sustainability initiated by the process of Serbia's accession to the European Union and making this its transition towards sustainability.

### d) Integrated implementation of 2030 Agenda in the Republic of Serbia

Overall in Serbia so far, the practices and relations related to the implementation of 2030 Agenda are empowering creativity and innovative capacities of all generations.

Change nourishes change; it changes the mindset, it changes the way of acting; it empowers the courage for even greater change. The courageous and entrepreneurial, inventive Serbia committed to the future of sustainable opportunities. The achievement of the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda raises awareness and critical knowledge for social practices of innovative change.

The encouraged hopes for joint change are coming together. Everyone starting from themselves to grow into sustainability. All citizens truly want to have a modern and sustainable Serbia. The reforms needed to achieve that are demanding and most often socially disruptive, yet they increasingly empower people. They are aware that everyone is personally capable and responsible to jointly and in solidarity with others create a society and state equitable for all.

The success of such concerted action towards responsible implementation of 2030 Agenda and achievement of its 17 SDGs in cohesion with their achievement in the EU additionally contributes to the sustainable development of Serbia, its Government and the society as a whole. This power has been maintained despite the challenges of difficult transitions during the preceding decades. It is now time, instead of defying difficulties, to be courageous, fearless and by ambitious action to move towards sustainability through everyone joining forces around a new chapter of sustainable development.

## 4. Methodology and process for preparation of the review

The Government of the Republic of Serbia has indivisible and undivided responsibility for the national achievement of 2030 Agenda and the achievement of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). That is why the national review process which resulted in this report was coordinated by the *Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Implementation of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda* (IMWG). The Government established this governmental hub of institutional network of integrated implementation mechanism by its Decision of 30 December 2015.

According to the Government guidelines, the IMWG planned and conducted through the established national monitoring, review and reporting mechanism, the reporting process which resulted in this first Voluntary National Review report to be presented at the High Level Political Forum. The reporting process consistently applied all the review and assessment principles relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly those specifically stated in Article 74. Perceiving it as another opportunity of the Government being accountable to the whole society, the IMWG decided in its reporting to focus equally on assessing both the legislative and the strategic framework, and policies in place, and the means of implementation, particularly the structure of the financial system and mobilization of sources of funding along with the Agenda as a whole and specifically the SDGs which have priority for Serbia. This required the assessment of outcomes by covering the existing legislative framework, the planning and strategic milestones and their implementation, as well as the costs of implementation so far and the resources provided from different sources, including the national SDG budgeting.

Essentially, such a self-assessment of the results of the whole of the Government – all ministries, services, and agencies – including also provincial, municipal and city governments required starting from reliably identified successes, challenges and emerging problems to identify accurately both potential policy measures and programme activities. In order to effectively identify the weaknesses and bottlenecks it was necessary to take stock of past experiences, identifying best practices, and accurately identifying areas where advice and support is needed, particularly in terms of improving means of implementation. This set the direction of the plan of actions and the next steps to accelerate the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Several methodology tools were used in the reporting process to collect the necessary information. The reporting questionnaire with open questions was used to collect information from all government actors in order to conduct a valid data analysis. Through orientation interviews perceptions were collected of all identified national independent oversight actors overseeing the work of the Government, which make up the *independent oversight hub* of the institutionalized integrated network mechanism for national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This report also incorporates all the recommendations received from the Ombudsman and the Commissioner of the Protection of Equality on necessary institutional action and improvements of national ownership of this process and the desired next steps to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs. In this respect assessments and recommendations were particularly sought from the legislative body of the Republic of Serbia, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, and the legislative body of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, through organized public hearings on the final draft of the VNR, also incorporated in this report.

Inputs for reporting from the *standing parliamentary hub*, the institutionalized network of the integrated mechanism for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the *Focus Group of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for development of control mechanisms for the process of implementation and oversight of implementation of the SDGs* (Focus Group), and from the local community-led hub, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), were collected through the guiding document for self-assessment of one's activities. Separately collected assessment of own activities of the SCTM were included in the part on progress in achieving the targets of the 2030 Agenda in order to ensure that the first next steps will include the strengthening of capacities of local self-governments to implement sustainable cohesive policies.

As the strong dedication of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for sustainable development and acceleration in achievement of SDGs is certainly not enough, because the 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for each government, country and individual, the Government invested efforts to additionally sensitize all segments and groups of the society for the reporting process, in order that no one be left behind. That is why the review and the assessment started from those belonging to the cohort of children and youth, as a generation which is one of the pillars for future guiding of the growth into sustainability so that never again any generation would be left behind.

That is why the Chair of the IMWG asked UNICEF to conduct in the Republic of Serbia a consultative process with the youth on SDGs, from March to April 2019.



The consultations included youth panels with the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Equality, and a Public Call through social networks addressed to the youth, civil society organizations and schools, to express their views in a specifically designed online survey. The youth used the opportunity to provide their views on SDGs and the progress made in their achievement. They presented their expectations and what they would like to see as further actions that will enable them to fully utilize their human potential. They provided their opinions through participation in the UNICEF digital platform U-Report, a segment of which in the Republic of Serbia is the Your Voice Matters, and which was the key instrument for collecting inputs from the youth and children for the youth/children-focused Voluntary National Review (VNR). This survey collected the positions on relevant aspects of the SDGs from 550 boys and 1,587 girls. Also, the consultative workshop on SDGs reporting, organized by UNICEF, collected positions of 100 young men and women who participated. Additionally, positions were collected from children in conflict with the law and young Roma women in eastern Serbia, through two separately conducted focus groups. The findings resulting from the collected positions by the youth make up the youth and children focused VNR. The processed collected positions of young people (individuals aged from 14 to 29) put emphasis on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 16, whose actual achievement by targets was determined based on official statistical indicators and desegregated statistics for children (aged 0 to 17) and youth (aged 15 to 24). The processed positions of the youth on the said SDGs, contained in the separate contribution by UNICEF titled Sustainable development for and by children and youth - Contribution to the Voluntary National review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, are included in Part 6 of the present report on progress made towards goals and targets. Aspiring to be exceptionally successful, in line with the responsibility which it took upon itself, the IMWG in this specific context of reporting, not shying away from facing any public criticism regarding its coordination of the national achievement of the 2030 Agenda, similarly to the Government which wishes that its management of the overall sustainable development policy be adequately assessed, the IMWG on 8 April 2019 published a Public Call to civil society organizations to provide their contribution to creating the VNR. The methodological instrument used for collection and processing of contributions of civil society organizations was the survey questionnaire with open questions. The questions mostly referred to practices used and problems that the country is currently facing in implementing the SDGs. The Public Call stated that "civil society organizations which in their work apply the SDG principles or in some manner contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda" will provide assistance to the Government through their knowledge and experience to identify the best practices and key problems in national implementation, which are to be integrated in the VNR. The Government achieved this integration by including in the present report the evaluation of the NGO sector, considering that it is a valuable contribution in order to enhance its activities in implementing the 2030 Agenda in coherence with how they are implemented in the EU, which is its obligation under the national vision of sustainable development and the key development strategic priorities for the EU accession. The Government included the most inventive collected proposals for the improvement of programmes and measures for implementation of the SDGs in the section on planned next steps. An overview of all collected contributions by civil society organizations is attached to this VNR. The above-mentioned public call for the contribution of the civil society was limited only to a number of organizations, associations and networks of CSOs, but not all individual interested citizens. Although since the beginning of national implementation of the 2030 Agenda numerous public actions were conducted (separately presented in the next section of the report), it proved that efforts to reach all interested members of civil society, the private sector and the general public, were yet insufficient to enable full reporting and inclusion in achieving the SDGs and monitoring their achievement. That is why, in order to have increased engagement in advocacy and raising the public visibility of the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there are plans for the first next steps by the IMWG and the Government. It was concluded that conducting a comprehensive campaign of raising public awareness on the key findings of this report and the planned next steps would be an action in the right direction in order to raise visibility of the 2030 Agenda and the accompanying SDGs for everyone and everywhere across Serbia. The Government also sent a call to businesses sector organizations and private and public companies in Serbia to provide information by filling in the guiding questionnaire for self-assessment of such business activities through which they contributed to achieving the SDGs and the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Responses to this call were received in the most complete overview of activities undertaken from the Serbian Chamber of Commerce (SCC), the Serbian Development Agency (SDA) and certain members of the UN Global Compact in Serbia. Thanks to the public availability of regularly published voluntary reports by members of the UN Global Compact in Serbia it was possible to get an insight of the urgent need for the Government, in order to achieve a concerted achievement of SDGs, to establish a compact platform on organizing the pledges by the business sector, not limited only to members of the Global Compact, but also private and public enterprises, particularly small and medium enterprises.



Apart from the above mentioned contribution by UNICEF including the children and youth focused VNR, two more specialized UN agencies provided additional contribution based in the Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the UN Country Team in Serbia for the period 2016 - 2020. In cooperation with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, the UNHCR participated in the development of relevant national indicators on the position of asylum-seekers and persons granted asylum, and in cooperation with the IOM a report was developed on integration of indicators for targets specific to migrations within the Sustainable Development Goals (especially the target 10.7.) for the document *Migration Profile of the Republic of Serbia* and the instrument *Centre Profiling*. These indicators are made along the dimension development/migrations in the national context of achieving the principle of *leaving no one behind* in order to consistently implement the Agenda 2030. Also, UNDP provided the overview of the project *Circular Economy Platform for Sustainable Development in Serbia*.

Since the beginning of implementation of the Agenda 2030 until the compilation of this report, the UN Country Team, European Union and the World Bank in the Republic of Serbia cooperated with the Government and the IMWG providing support "in policy planning, monitoring and evaluation". This report incorporates the findings of the assessment of the degree of harmonization of national and subnational plans / strategies with the SDGs and the accompanying targets which was conducted with the assistance of the UN Country Team to Serbia as a preparatory step for the MAPS Mission to Serbia (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support). The Rapid Integrated Policy Assessment (RIA) was the tool used to identify the existing links between the SDGs and areas of potential multi-sectoral coordination.

The key obligation taken over by the UN Country Team to Serbia under the above mentioned agreement to support the Government of the Republic of Serbia in "policy planning, monitoring and evaluation" for Agenda 2030 was delivered by the actions of the UN Country Team in Serbia on planning, preparation and organizing the implementation and reporting under the MAPS Mission (3-7 September 2018). The Mission consisted of 21 international experts from UN agencies, funds and programmes (UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNECE, UNFPA, ILO, OHCHR, UNHCR, WHO), and regional offices, including also the Delegation of the EU to Serbia and the World Bank Office in the Republic of Serbia. The experts were organized in 5 technical groups: Sustainable economic development (prosperity), Means of implementation (innovation, financing and accession to the EU), Sustainability and risk (Planet), Social policy and inclusion (People) and Data and analysis (Cross-section). A total of 30 meetings were held with Government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other relevant actors, in order to collect material and documents for processing the findings, which were included in the final report National Development and the 2030 Agenda: support to policy to promote progress in achieving the SDGs in Serbia "promoting inclusive and sustainable growth "Leaving No One Behind".

During the current reporting period, which resulted in this first VNR of Serbia, the Progress Report of the EC for Serbia in 2019 was considered to be the key findings of the national achievement of SDGs, which are integrated not only in the two fundamental policy documents of the RS, specifically the NPAA and NAD, but also in the political priorities of the Government Programme, coherently integrating the SDGs in the EC documents. In addition to the EC Annual Report, another important source for the review and assessment of implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the achievement of SDGs, particularly in terms of means of implementation, was the modified Indicative Strategy Paper for Serbia for the period 2014-2020, adopted on 10 August 2018. Since the EU is the most significant bilateral development partner and the biggest provider of financial support to the Republic of Serbia. This document sets out the goals and priorities for the use of funds allocated from the Instruments of Pre-Accession Assistance 2014-2020 (IPA II) as support to fulfilling the requirements in adopting the EU Acquis in the course of Serbia's accession to the Union, whereby the EU by implementing the Agenda 2030 also contributes to the Republic of Serbia by determining:

"IPA II will additionally contribute to the Agenda 2030, particularly in fulfilling the promise of "Leaving No One Behind", the applied rights-based approach (1), legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights, (2) participation, (3) non-discrimination, (4) accountability, and (5) transparency in every step of programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its support."

Among the many bilateral development partners who provided relevant support to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 is the German Development Cooperation. In the course of 2017 GIZ financially supported the development of the report by the Republic Public Policy Secretariat titled *Serbia and the 2030 Agenda*, which is a result of mapping the SDGs relative to the national strategic framework and thematic areas of negotiating chapters in the process of Serbia's accession to the EU. GIZ also, within its project activities of supporting the public finance management, substantially contributed to the development of this first Voluntary National Review. Through the support which GIZ provided to the Futuristic Institute in Belgrade data were collected from line ministries, government offices, agencies and independent oversight bodies, civil society organizations, businesses, international organizations and the initial analysis was conducted in order to create the VNR.

Inputs from international development partners were also used for the purposes of the VNR of Serbia to be presented at the 2019 HLPF in the same manner as analyzed by the UN MAPS Mission and presented in its report *National Development and 2030 Agenda: Policy Support for Advancing SDG Progress in Serbia – Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Growth "Leaving no-one Behind"*.

## 5. Policy and enabling environment

The 2030 Agenda in the Republic of Serbia is presented as a framework of co-designing and co-creating policy open for the participation of all stakeholders in proposing and adopting strategic, planning and policy decisions on sustainable development interventions. Sustainable development is an inalienable right of every citizen of Serbia. Managing sustainable development is set in a way to take into consideration social and economic consequences and environmental consequences generated by all sectoral policies and measures, all inter-sectoral programmes and action plans.

Regretfully, it is still necessary to make conscious choices of achieving sustainability of a certain factor at the expense of other factors. Also, with the recovered balance of one factor it is necessary to undertake all measures to improve the balance of the other two. This is a way in which it is attempted to accelerate the recovery of the disturbed balance and the resulting lack of proportionality. Co-designing and co-creating of development intervention policies within this context is exceptionally holistically dynamic. It requires that policy decision-makers ensure also the development, existence and implementation of all development interventions through relevant partnerships and ensured necessary means of implementation. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are of integrated nature and require coherent thinking and acting in approaching problems always based on timely raising the relevant questions.

In changing the outdated understanding in viewing the problems of the present times the Republic of Serbia is now viewing these challenges through the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals. Each of these goals is focused through its development interventions along the six development directions on growing sustainability by achieving first those SDGs which will enable and facilitate the achievement of other SDGs, thanks to all the SDGs being interrelated. Also, with this Serbia is reiterating that it does not see the Agenda 2030 purely as the SDGs, because the goals do not fully represent it and are not a summary of it, but are rather a very much needed direction in the jointly undertaken endeavour of transforming our world.

Although knowing that the SDGs are not perfect, just like no result of any global negotiations is perfect, Serbia accepted to consistently achieve them. The reason for this is that they are the expression of all the values and principles which intertwine the Agenda 2030. And these values and principles truly inspire the hearts and minds of citizens of Serbia. For them this Agenda is an additional guarantee of inclusion in the most direct shaping of the process of achieving the SDGs and exercising oversight of progress towards them in a measurable manner. Thus everyone and everywhere across Serbia in solidarity exercises his/her right to sustainable development needed for all, in order to achieve benefits for all within the limits of the Planet, and not to the detriment of the need for sustainable development of future generations which have the same entitlement to it.

### a) Creating ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals

This is the fourth year of growing into sustainability for all and everywhere in the Republic of Serbia by implementing the Agenda 2030 and achieving the SDGs in coherence with its implementation in the EU. There has been enough time to learn the hardest lessons, to face the most serious challenges, to identify all bottlenecks and to additionally conclude that improving the consistency of the national development policy through full consolidation of all three factors of sustainable development in carefully nourished peace and relentlessly cherished partnerships significantly promotes the direct links between the Agenda 2030 and the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, the *Paris Agreement* on fighting climate change, and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-2030*.

The coherently planned and organized process of national reporting is presented in the methodological part of this report. It provides a full picture of the efforts taken with respect to all stakeholders at all levels of government, particularly the national association of local governments - the SCTM, the legislative bodies – national and provincial, the civil society, the businesses in the public and private sector, the general public and multilateral and bilateral development partners so that they are informed and included at the best level possible in developing a full insight in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and an overview of the achievements, especially with respect to the goals and targets. This reporting was focused on achieving the national ownership of SDGs by improved actions for and by the youth, based on the integrated assessments and recommendations of the youth of both genders, and the local communities, based on the included needs assessments and recommendations by the association of local governments where the SDGs are directly being achieved resulting in their achievement at the national level.

The RIA tool determined that the existing strategies/plans are mostly supporting the simultaneous achievement of several SDGs, while the key national strategic planning policy document, the *National Plan for Adoption of the EU Acquis from 2014 to 2018* (NPAA), enables integrated achievement of SDG targets by ensuring effective, efficient, transparent and consistent sustainable development policy at national level which is coherent with the sustainable development policy at the level of the EU. Additionally, it has been determined that the *National Priorities for International Development Assistance from 2014 to 2017, with projections up to 2020* (NAD) are fully harmonized with the sectoral policy plans, programmes and measures in the NPAA. The RIA assessment identified also full harmonization between these two strategic policy documents with the *Development Partnership Framework* (DPF) for the period 2016 - 2020.

Implementing the Agenda 2030 through achieving the SDGs in Serbia is indivisible from the process of Serbia's accession to the EU. This process in Serbia is strategically set out in the *National Plan for Adoption of the EU Acquis from 2018 to 2021* (NPAA) and the special attention paid to harmonization with the EU Acquis, international standards, and implementation of agreements which are in place in the areas of: "1. Agriculture and Rural Development, 2. Environmental Protection and Climate Change, 3. Energy, 4. Cohesion Policy, 5. Industry, 6. Transport". This model of achieving the national ownership of the SDGs is completed by the means of implementation with a particular axis for measurement of earmarked funds from IPA for achieving national ownership of the SDGs.

The process of Serbia's accession to the EU is covered by the General EU Position in accession negotiations with Serbia and its new vision of enlargement strategy A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans and stronger engagement of the EU. The need of implementing this strategy was integrated in the EC strategic document of financial support of the Union to the Republic of Serbia, as this document emphasizes "in accordance with the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals".

## **b) Incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals in national frameworks**

One of the model examples of incorporating the SDGs into national framework through sectoral policies and also through cross-cutting policies, such as culture, is of special significance for growing into sustainability by creating new patterns of cultural life styles, and life values of sustainability and sustainable development. The practice of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia shows how to incorporate the SDGs into the culture policy by means of focused programmes and measures for achievement of targets.

**4.7 Education for Cultural Diversity and Peace** – the Ministry of Culture and Information encourages participation of artists and professionals in the field of culture in workshops, seminars and conferences organized by international organizations, and it also organizes programmes in cooperation with international organizations.

**8.3 Policies for Decent Jobs and Entrepreneurship** – Creative industries in Serbia are developing faster than the rest of the economy. Government incentives for the development of creative industries as a sector of economy are resulting in increased share of the creative sector in the gross domestic product. Serbia particularly develops cooperation within the mechanism China CEEC 16+1 creating a basis for the development of permanent exchange between China and these countries.

**8.9 Sustainable Tourism and Employment** – the Ministry of Culture and Information supports and funds projects of reconstruction and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in the territory of Serbia as a function of developing sustainable cultural tourism.

**10.a Preferential Treatment for Developing Countries** – the Ministry of Culture and Information invites public competitions for mobility of artists and professionals in the field of culture from Serbia.

**11.4 Safeguarding Cultural and Natural Heritage** - the Ministry of Culture and Information is in charge of implementing the UNESCO conventions in the field of cultural heritage:

- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (the Hague, 1954);
- Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972);
- Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 2003);

as well as the Law on Cultural Assets as a systemic law regulating movable and immovable cultural assets in Serbia.

**13.1 Resilience to Climate-related Disasters** – the Ministry of Culture and Information has recognized the need to build capacities in the area of managing disaster risks in the field of cultural heritage. This objective is being implemented through the participation with UNESCO since 2016 in the programme Disaster Risk Management in the field of Cultural heritage.

**16.a Prevention of Violence, Terrorism and Crime and 16.4 Recovery and Return of Stolen Assets** - the Ministry of Culture and Information is in charge of implementation of the UNESCO Conventions on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris, 1970).

**16.10 Protecting Fundamental Freedoms** - the Ministry of Culture and Information is in charge of implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression (Paris, 2005) along with the Institute for the Study of Cultural Development. Serbia is also implementing the UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Artists of 1980.

**17.9 Capacity-building for SDGS in National Planning** - the Ministry of Culture and Information encourages the enhancement of knowledge and skills of professionals in the field of culture through participation in national and international gatherings and seminars and also through support to projects aimed at building technical capacities.

**17.14 Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development** - the Ministry of Culture and Information is engaged in implementing the harmonization of regulations with the EU Acquis in the field of culture.

**17.16 Multi-stakeholder partnerships; 17.17 Public, Public-private and Civil Society Partnerships** - the Ministry of Culture and Information directly supports the cooperation between the public and private sector through public competitions and it participates as a partner in projects of national significance for Serbia such as the project "Novi Sad 2021 - the European Capital of Culture" and "Novi Sad - the Youth Capital of Culture 2019".



Among the best achieved results of the Ministry of Culture and Information comes from the cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Culture in Europe, through the project titled „Culture for Development Indicators“- CDIS. The objective is scientific proof through specific indicators that culture contributes to social and economic development. The project is aimed in its final stage to contribute to global reporting on the effects of culture on development within the Agenda 2030.

Although the sector of culture has been recognized earlier as significant for sustainable development, it was difficult to come up with accurate data and indicators of the specific scope of such impact or contribution to overall development. The seven dimensions and 22 indicators of CDIS can be links with 9 SDGs and 36 targets, which can be better achieved with the use of CDIS at national level.

Evidence demonstrates that, even with the high level of national production, with a significant share of cultural activities in the gross domestic product (3.90% of the total GDP) and a relatively high share of employment in institutions of culture (5.3% of the total employed population), the share of culture (80.1%) should be additionally supported in order to increase the consumption of cultural goods in households (2.59% of the total household consumption), in order to facilitate higher market potential of cultural industries.

Good results in the protection and valuation of cultural heritage, through the established multidimensional framework for protection, preservation and improvement of heritage sustainability (0.89/1), can be further enhanced through greater investments in youth education (4.0%), which would raise awareness among the youth and the whole local community of the significance of preserving their heritage, and would in the longterm contribute to developing this sector, increasing employment and enjoyment of cultural contents, as well as through the reforms of the legislative framework for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in order to modernize the overall system of heritage protection in Serbia, which would thereby result in better implementation of UNESCO conventions in this area.

### **The exemplary incorporation of SDGs in the national framework for youth policy**

An example of policy which has fully incorporated SDGs and is achieving the SDGs in an integrated manner through harmonization with the *Youth 2030*, the first strategy for the young of the UN Secretary General, is youth policy which aspires to empower the young people to ensure solid foundations to achieve equality of sustainable opportunities for everyone and everywhere in Serbia. The management of this policy is strategically led by the *National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2025*, in order to ensure coherent improvements of conditions for the progress for the future generations of modern and sustainable Serbia.

That is why the youth was given the opportunity to have a voice in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in Serbia, particularly in the achievement of the SDGs, which voice is presented in the first Voluntary National Review. Here is how youth delegates of Serbia to the UN see the management of youth policy led by the achievement of the SDGs.

"The United Nations programme for youth delegates in Serbia started three years ago and is based on one year mandates. An important aspect of this mandate was to promote the SDGs among the youth and raise awareness of what we need to do in order to live in a sustainable world. As a Serbian youth delegate to the United Nations, it is our honour, duty and greatest wish to emphasize the significance of the Agenda 2030 and its relevance for the young people. However, it is also necessary to emphasize that young people have the power to implement this Agenda. The 2030 Agenda lies at the very heart of our mandate. As youth delegates, we participated at the General Assembly in New York in October, at the Council for Human Rights in Geneva in November, and at the Committee for Social Development in New York in February. However, before we delivered our statements at some of the highest institutions of the world, in charge of world peace and sustainability, we had the opportunity to talk with the young people in Serbia, and raise awareness of the significance of implementing the SDGs. In order to do that, the road trip across the country was very important since we talked to young people across the country to help them better understand the Agenda 2030, and help ourselves to shape young leaders who will be in charge of its implementation. It is today important to note that young people are facing new challenges which essentially are quite different than the ones which our parents experienced. Climate change, terrorism, violent extremism, and the deepening inequalities among people. We have a huge responsibility to respond to these issues, but for the first time not only for the sake of the future generations, but also for our generation and our times. The 2030 Agenda is our opportunity to find the right solutions for these problems.

As we said, our objective was to promote the SDGs in different situations and opportunities. One of these opportunities was the participation at the BIMUNConference with the topic „Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Strategy for the Youth“, organized by the UN in Serbia, where we discussed with the young people in Serbia these goals. It is however also key to hear their voices and their ideas. Additionally, we would like to emphasize the importance of the Summit organized by UNA Serbia held in Serbia in December 2018, during which UN youth delegates from different European countries gathered to discuss the role of the young people with respect to the Agenda 2030 and its principles in our countries. These meetings shape a good dialogue among the youth and their readiness to act. Another best practice in Serbia related to the implementation of the SDGs is the creation of the SDG network organized by the UN Association in Serbia, with the key idea to promote, along with other NGOs, the better and sustainable world among the young people. Additionally, the project *Dialogue Cafe*, to which Serbia is also participating, organizes sessions at which young people worldwide present their opinions, ideas and concerns regarding the Agenda. The network of “Dialogue Cafes” organized a special cycle „SDGs and the Youth“ with the participation of young people from Belgrade, Lisbon, Evora, Rio de Janeiro, Seoul, and other cities. Through this projects we worked hard and in close cooperation with our ministries in charge of youth and foreign affairs to make this idea visible for the young people. What is more, our work is far from finished. Once the mandate of youth delegates in over, our work is not over. We have been educated about the goals, we permanently talk about the solutions, and are implementing them. But it is key for us not to stop. It is always important to participate in youth councils, meetings and talk with the young people on these issues, which we will continue to do through mentoring the new coming delegates. During our mandate we have had the opportunity to see the idea of the Agenda 2030 grow and become more clear to us and finally we were able to understand why we need to act in line with that and be actors in its implementation. The future is in our hands, and we see the Sustainable Development Goals as the only way that our Planet needs to undertake in order to prosper; gender education, equality, dignified work, peace, justice and strong institutions are just some of the goals that the young people worldwide and in Serbia want to achieve and are willing to learn, participate, advocate and protest for them. When we act we try to act for the sake of these reasons and for the greater good because it is the only Planet that we have, there is no plan B or Planet B, it is up to us to save it.”

### c) Leaving No One Behind

The principle of Leaving No One Behind in Serbia is more important than any other principle. Although all principles of the Agenda 2030 are important, and integrated, the social culture of Serbia relies on attaching great value to justice as the foundation of personal dignity and dignity of the society in which mutual solidarity is a prerequisite of social equality. That is why being committed to the principle of leaving no one behind is the best test of any intention pretending to aspire to sustainable opportunities. Certainly, in the context where it is still necessary to do a lot on strengthening the social and environmental aspects, because they suffered due to the need to first achieve economic sustainability, many social groups identified that they must not be excluded. Numerous measures are being undertaken to sharpen sectoral policies and extend and deepen programmes to achieve the cross-cutting issues in order to reach all groups and individuals across Serbia that were not included, because without it the society will not be empowered and equality of sustainable opportunities will not be possible.

Already in her inauguration address the present Prime Minister, Ana Brnabić, publicly stated that the Government which she was to lead as of 28 June 2017, will be committed to making inviolable the social foundations of human rights and rights of members of national minorities, by further improving the position of national minorities and the position of all social groups that were not included in development, which are vulnerable and are not yet free from discrimination. In line with the undertaken responsibility, this report is also an overview and an assessment of the so far demonstrated consistency of the current Government with the principle of leaving no one behind to which it committed itself at the beginning of its mandate, particularly by the following keynote address of the then Prime Minister designate Ana Brnabić:

**"The Government of Serbia will continue to be deeply dedicated to the issue of human and minority rights.** We not only committed ourselves and thereby undertook the responsibility to improve the framework for protection of rights in the process of accession to the European Union, but it also obliges us to consistently implement the constitutional provisions and a whole set of reform laws whereby we protect and improve human and minority rights. The areas of national interest, defined within negotiation chapter 23 (reform of the judiciary and fundamental rights) and 24 (justice, freedom and security), are the foundations for building a reformed, democratic and solidary Serbian society in which there is rule of law and laws of fundamental freedoms. These issues are ranking very high among the priorities of the future Government.

**I wish to clearly emphasize before the Assembly and before all the citizens that I am very proud of how much we have achieved in legislative, strategic and institutional terms related to the protection of the rights of national minorities.** There are over 20 ethnic or national groups living in Serbia, more than anywhere else in Europe. Almost 61,400 children are educated in 15 different languages at all levels of education. In 42 towns and municipalities and as many as 11 languages are in official use; **in 8 towns and municipalities 6 different languages have this status. More than 18,000 hours of radio and TV programme is broadcast every month in languages of national minorities, and 117 printed media are published in minority languages.**

The previous Government of the Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić started intensive work with the National Council of National minorities, which brings together 21 national council. The Council is a place of dialogue and cooperation with representatives of national minorities for the benefit of minority communities. With respect to implementing the Action Plan for the rights of national minorities within the Chapter 23, I expect very clear and productive cooperation of the national and provincial Government and units of local self-government with the wider academic community and civil society organizations in order to promote inclusion and multiculturalism, as one of the greatest values of the Serbian democratic society.

We must stimulate **solidarity** with those who live under difficult living conditions. The development that we aspire to must be based on the fundamental principles of protection and promotion of human and minority rights – all that we will be doing will take into consideration the Constitution and other regulations on guaranteed rights of all citizens of our society. We need to pay special attention, as has been the case also until now, to improving the position of the **most vulnerable groups**, those who are excluded, poor

and those to whom services have not always been accessible, like the Roma, persons with disabilities, the LGBT persons, children and adults with development impairments, migrants, the poor senior citizens, the rural population, persons living with HIV/Aids, and all others who need state support.“

**Gender responsive budgeting (GRB)** was introduced to public finance in 2015, obliging all budget beneficiaries to implement by the end of 2020 the principles of GRB (53 budget beneficiaries at national level, 25 at provincial level, and all beneficiaries at local level). GRB has become an integral part of the Budget System Law, and institutions at national, provincial and local levels are subject to its implementation. The GRB is defined by the Budget System Law which states that it implies ‘the introduction of the gender equality principles in the budgeting process, which requires a gender analysis and restructuring of revenues and expenditures in order to improve gender equality;’ (Article 2, 58c). This means gradual introduction which is to be finalized by the end of 2020 in the budgets of all budget beneficiaries at all levels. Gradual introduction of this new practice into the preparation, funding, execution and monitoring of public policies are supported by gender equality mechanisms at national, provincial and local level. In 2016, GRB was included as one of the specific objectives for the achievement of the strategic objective 3 of the *National Strategy of Gender Equality for the period 2016-2020*, requiring the systemic mainstreaming of the gender equality principles in the process of policy adoption, implementation and monitoring. The introduction of gender responsive budgeting is also an important step toward improving the Serbian budget system, which has been recognized also by the UN training centre, because Serbia was selected as an example of best practice for the case study from which others worldwide will learn about GRB.

Serbia is the only country outside the EU to launch, for the second time, the **Gender Equality Index**, which is the result of the Government of Serbia’s efforts to continuously monitor the status of gender equality by using this international instrument. Between the two reporting periods, Serbia has made the progress of 3.4 points in three years, and today the Index for Serbia stands at 55.8 points. The aim is to provide reliable and quality data that would be used to create public policies and monitor the effects of their implementation in order to improve the status of gender equality.

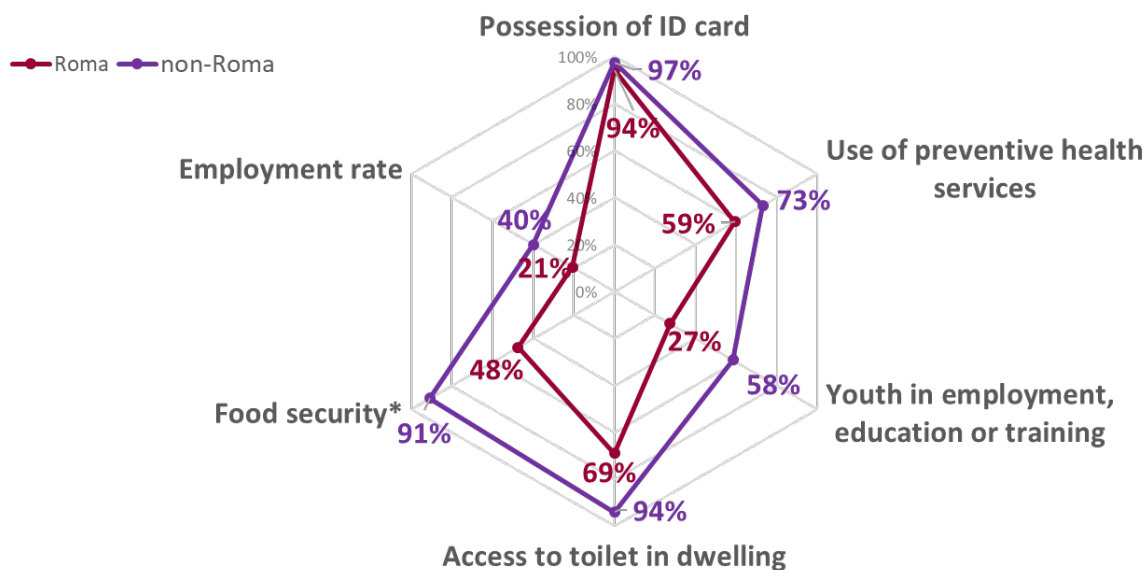
**In Serbia, the successful engagement and empowerment of vulnerable groups, women and young people, has the potential to significantly contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030, as well as to the EU accession process.** In relation to the fundamental approaches to human rights issues, the Government of Serbia has ratified eight of the total of nine key international instruments in the field of human rights<sup>1</sup> and has been displaying positive practice in reporting and monitoring by contracting authorities for monitoring under the contracts and within the Universal Periodic Review.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In terms of ratifying the only non-ratified treaty (the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families), judging by the comments of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, within the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, in January 2018 in Geneva, the Government was given the recommendation to consider the possibility of adopting the aforementioned Convention, and this recommendation was not accepted. The Office for Human and Minority Rights commented that Serbia will not ratify this Convention. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “it should be understood that the national legislation provides the adequate framework for the protection of migrant workers, guaranteeing them the same rights as for workers with Serbian citizenship”.

<sup>2</sup> Serbia went through three cycles of Universal Periodic Review, in 2008, 2013, and 2018.



**National reporting and monitoring mechanism (Council for Monitoring the Implementation of the Recommendations of the United Nations Mechanism)** is one of the most effective in the region and represent an example of good cooperation both with the civil society and the United Nations. This mechanism could take the leading role in ensuring that international recommendations and guidelines are translated into national legislation, policies, strategies and action plans. For example, at the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council, Serbia was proactive and one of the countries that supported the resolution<sup>3</sup> on guidelines for effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs.<sup>4</sup> Several recommendations relating to participation, as well as the examples of concrete measures that can be taken, have been elaborated within the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, under the supervision of contracting authorities and the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>5</sup> Fundamental rights are the precondition for meaningful participation, and that includes the freedom of expression, which is also one of the priority sectors for the EU IPA II instrument for funding social inclusion, which ensures the access to resources for the implementation of measures in this area for the Republic of Serbia. Serbia is a State Party to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and thus accepts the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. Serbia has also ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), and in July 2018, Serbia submitted the first *National Report on Implementing the Istanbul Convention* to the Group of Experts GREVIO – the international body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.



### Box 1: socio-economic conditions for the Roma

In Serbia, the Roma are one of the groups that is consistently identified as vulnerable or marginalized,<sup>6</sup> a group facing limited access to opportunities in virtually every aspect of human development, such as fundamental rights, health, education, housing, employment, and living standard. There is a wide gap between the marginalized Roma and their non-Roma neighbours in terms of human capabilities and material well-being.

Human capabilities and material well-being in Serbia, 2017 (Source: WB and UNDP estimates based on 2017 UNDP-WB-EC Regional Roma Survey data).

\*Food security refers to people living in households where no household member has gone to sleep hungry due to the lack of money for food in the past month.

3 A/HRC/39/L.14/Rev.1, 26 September 2018

4 A/HRC/39/28, 20 July 2018

5 Relevant recommendations can be downloaded from <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/search/basic>

6 The term “Roma” is used here to encompass several different groups (e.g. Roma, Sinti, Kale, Cigan, Romani, Boyash, Ashkali, Balkan Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom, Abdal) and includes travellers, without determining the specific characteristics of these groups. All of these groups are encompassed with the broader term “Roma” in line with the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies. The term “marginalized” Roma refers to Roma populations living in areas with a higher density (or concentration) of the Roma population than the national average. The term “non-Roma” refers to the non-Roma population living near the marginalized Roma, which is not representative of the general population in the country.



Draft *National Anti-Discrimination Strategy 2019-2025* represents an important opportunity to improve the policy coherence in several sectors and to put emphasis in policy making on ensuring that groups that may be at risk of being left out are not left out. Alongside this strategy, accelerating the work on the strategy relating to persons with disabilities, which has been in the pipeline for several years, would be of significant assistance in promoting and achieving a more equitable access to relevant services for marginalized and vulnerable groups. Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women for 2019 and 2020 is also being prepared. These strategic documents would, among other things, provide a roadmap for achieving a greater degree of coherence between the various strategic frameworks for identifying and resolving the gap in policies across multiple sectors. The attention Serbia pays to specific Conventions, and which is relevant to this debate, includes the following:

- In 2000, Serbia ratified the **Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (no. 111)**, which is one of the fundamental international standards in the field of labour. The national reporting and monitoring mechanism, as an established and generally recognized body and one of the most efficient ones in the region, could be given the task of capacity building and monitoring of the strategy, as well as the task of establishing links between human rights, gender equality and the Agenda 2030 at the national level and finding out how their implementation can support the main national goals of the EU accession process.
- There is also the potential to achieve better progress in several sectors by working on the national strategy for people with disabilities, which expired in 2016. Both the European Commission Progress Report for 2018 and the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>7</sup> highlight this example. It is planned to adopt a new Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia for the period until 2024. In 2000, Serbia ratified the Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983 (no. 159), which is currently in force in the country. According to a UNESCO report<sup>8</sup>, “...many complex factors affect the likelihood of children not being enrolled in education, but their exclusion from the education process is higher among members of ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, children from poor families, and children affected by gender discrimination. When children belong to several of these specific groups at the same, the risk of their exclusion increases and it additionally grows when they belong to more than two of these groups”.

Serbia also deals with resolving its undertaken commitments towards special groups of vulnerable persons. Over the years, Serbia has received around 500,000 refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as over 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. At any point in time during 2018, there were around 3,500-4,000 new refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Serbia, out of which more than 90% were accommodated in the state-provided asylum and reception centres.

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Interior, along with other line ministries and authorities at the local level, regularly collect and update the relevant data on internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and their status. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, in cooperation with UNHCR, regularly monitors the position and needs of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons in the Republic of Serbia. According to the analysis of the situation and needs, from May 2018, there were 16,644 internally displaced households (68,514 persons) who are in urgent need to improve their living conditions<sup>9</sup>.

The determination of the Republic of Serbia to provide adequate living conditions and to find durable solutions for internally displaced persons, expressed in the *Law on Migration Management, National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and the Internally Displaced Persons 2015–2020*, as well as in the *Chapter 23 Action Plan*, will be strengthened by monitoring the position of this category of forcibly displaced persons, which is the most numerous in Serbia, within the SDG indicator 1.2. of the Agenda 2030.

7 Document CRPD/C/SRB/CO/1

8 The Intersection of Gender Equality and Education in South East Europe p. 32

9 SCRM, *Situation and Needs of Internally Displaced Persons, May 2018*.

In this way, the Government of the Republic of Serbia wants to provide support and cooperation in order to adequately address the needs of these persons.

Regarding the asylum and migration system, the state asylum centres and reception centres cover the basic needs of asylum seekers and migrants. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration is also responsible to enable the local integration of persons with recognized refugee status or subsidiary protection. According to the requirements defined in negotiation *Chapter 24*, in 2018 Serbia adopted the new *Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection*, whose implementation will ensure better guarantees for asylum seekers, as their cases will be decided on the basis of just and effective asylum seeking procedures. In March 2018, the new *Law on Foreigners* was also adopted, and it provides the necessary legal basis for solving the issue of prolonged stay of migrants in Serbia in terms of their legal status.

Despite significant achievements in identifying, reducing and preventing statelessness in Serbia, there is still a need for additional measures, including the improvement of by-laws to ensure that children whose parents do not possess personal documents are registered in the birth register when they are born in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that children born as stateless in the country have immediate access to citizenship (in connection with SDG 16.9).<sup>10</sup>

#### d) Institutional mechanisms

The overall process of the national implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the achievement of its SDGs by creating and implementing coherent Government policies is coordinated by the *Inter-Ministerial Working Group on the Implementation of the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030* (IMWG) as the *governmental hub* of the institutional network-integrated mechanism for national implementation. It was established by the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted on 30 December 2015<sup>11</sup>. The work of the IMWG, in its current composition, is chaired and coordinated by the minister without portfolio responsible for demography and population policy<sup>12</sup>, and it consists of specially appointed representatives of 26 relevant line ministries, government offices and agencies for monitoring and coordinating activities. The IMWG tasks are determined by the decision on its establishment and are the following:

- monitoring the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in cooperation with the competent ministries;
- coordinating and consolidating the positions and activities of all competent ministries regarding the Agenda 2030;
- proposing the process of adopting the national strategy for sustainable development and the manner of its financing, which would unify all individual strategies and harmonize the achievement of the goals of the Agenda 2030 with the conditions that the Republic of Serbia needs to meet in order to fulfil its other international obligations and successfully finalize the accession negotiations with the European Union;
- proposing the foundations for statistical monitoring of goals and targets;
- preparing periodic reports on implementation of Agenda 2030; as well as
- continuous provision of information to the United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Serbia and the United Nations system on the results of the Working Group and the implementation of the goals and targets of the Agenda 2030, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

10 Information submitted by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM) as the contribution to writing the VNR.

11 Government of the Republic of Serbia, Decision on establishing the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on the Implementation of the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030, 05 number: 02-13949/2015, available at: <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SIGlasnikPortal/arhslgl/SGAR-HSTARO/numberOverview?numberId=21506&login=true> (accessed on 9 April 2019).

12 Putting the special focus on implementing the Agenda 2030 and achieving its SDGs in EU accession process, in line with the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and achievement of its SDGs in the Union, the Government of the Republic of Serbia strengthened its hub for this area of action, the IMWG, with a decision adopted on 7 July 2017 on appointing new people, including the representatives of the line ministry and education to help the chairperson in the work, by operating as the Core Unit. This unit is composed of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of European Integration, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Public Policy Secretariat of the Republic of Serbia and Cabinet of the Minister in charge of chairing the IMWG.

*The independent oversight hub* of the institutional network-integrated mechanism for national implementation consists of the Protector of Citizens/Ombudsman of Serbia, Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection and State Audit Institution.

*Parliamentary hub* of the institutional network-integrated mechanism for national implementation of the Agenda 2030 is the *Focus Group of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for development of control mechanisms for the SDG implementation process and implementation oversight* (Focus Group), while the implementer of activities of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is its Permanent Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Actively working in this field, the National Assembly Speaker and Head of the Permanent Delegation, Maja Gojković, initiated organizing the ***Regional Seminar on SDGs for Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia***, in Belgrade, on 24-25 May 2018, in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This occasion was used to encourage the development of mechanisms for monitoring the SDG implementation in the National Assembly, and a special body in charge of studying this issue was established.

Focus Group of the National Assembly, as one of the informal forms of the focused interest of MPs, was established on 25 September 2017. It was initiated by 13 MPs from various parliamentary groups and working bodies, Deputy Speakers of the National Assembly, chairpersons of committees, Secretary General of the National Assembly and Secretary of the IPU Delegation. Their networked activity arose from the interest in developing the control mechanisms for the process of implementation of SDGs in the Republic of Serbia. One should not overlook the fact that the establishment of the Focus Group has its foundations in previous activities in the National Assembly.

- The Foreign Affairs Committee, which reviewed the information on the Post-2015 Global Development Agenda, 2 June 2015;
- Consultations with numerous representatives of state institutions and international organizations in terms of obtaining support for the development of the parliamentary mechanism;
- Translation and dissemination of the parliamentary publication “Parliaments and the Sustainable Development” (published by the IPU with UNDP’s support)
- Preparation of informative materials on SDGs for individual committees of the National Assembly.

Immediately after the Focus Group was established, its representatives were included in the work of the IMWG, and then the Focus Group organized the ***first public hearing on SDGs*** in cooperation with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly on 7 November 2018. It gathered representatives of state institutions / members of the IMWG on Agenda 2030, representatives of international organizations, civil society organizations and representatives of the business sector and social partners.

The activism of the Focus Group, also facilitated by the existence of the “Green Chair” mechanism, has revived the commitment of the relevant National Assembly committees, 12 of which have had particularly important legislative initiatives and contributed to the reach of the Agenda 2030 advocacy. Particularly noteworthy in the work of the parliamentary oversight mechanism for monitoring its implementation was the presentation of the work of the National Assembly at the panel on the Sustainable Development Goals during the meeting of the Standing Committee for the United Nations of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at the 138<sup>th</sup> session of the IPU in Geneva, on 24-28 March 2018. The biggest reach of the National Assembly’s advocacy for active contribution of the parliament in implementing the vision of the Agenda 2030 was achieved by organizing the ***Regional Seminar on SDGs for Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia***, in Belgrade, on 24-25 May 2018.

The steps that the National Assembly planned to take in order to contribute to the national implementation of the Agenda 2030 are visits to local communities and discussions between MPs and young people, the media, representatives of local self-governments and associations on Sustainable Development Goals, which were organized in 2018, and evaluating the self-assessment of the development of control mechanisms for SDG implementation, scheduled for November 2019.

The main goals that the National Assembly has set for its activities on implementation of the Agenda 2030 are:

- oversight and support to the implementation of SDGs in Serbia;
- control of the work and activities of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for implementation of SDGs;
- adoption of laws governing the implementation of the Agenda 2030;
- providing additional funds for implementation of the SDGs through the procedure for adopting the Budget Law;
- raising awareness of the significance of the Agenda 2030 among the MPs of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly will evaluate its own success in achieving the previous set goals if it succeeds in achieving:

- developed permanent control mechanisms for SDG implementation (by using the existing control mechanisms introduced with the Law on the National Assembly and the Rules of Procedure, where the Focus Group would direct the process in coordination with the Speaker of the National Assembly);
- support to national and local authorities, companies, civil society organizations and citizens to be fully included and committed to the implementation of the Agenda 2030;
- permanent dialogue with young people, representatives of local authorities, local media and NGOs on the goals and needs of the Agenda 2030 implementation.

The *local community-led hub* of the institutional network-integrated mechanism for national implementation of the Agenda 2030 is in the process of being established. The initiation of its establishment was prompted precisely by the review and assessment carried out in this reporting process of producing the first Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Serbia. The core of this process of establishing the local community-led hub in the overall national institutional mechanism for achieving the Agenda 2030 was provided by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM)<sup>13</sup>, which is why its contribution to the review and assessment of the current achievement of the SDGs at the local level in Serbia is included in the next part of the VNR, creating the starting point of the next planned step of measurable improvement of the national achievement of sustainable development through local achievement of SDGs, especially directed towards the implementation of the national cohesion policy, the legal framework for which is currently being established.



## 6. Progress on Goals and targets

In line with the European Union's growing into sustainability, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has established six strategic paths of growing into sustainability for everyone and everywhere:

- ***Connectivity, partnership and integration of Serbia with Europe and the world***, which involves cooperation with multiple stakeholders in order for public policies to reach everyone and touch all lives. This is achieved through the well advanced EU integration process, in cohesion with the implementation of the Agenda 2030, but also through partnerships with international stakeholders the state has agreements with on investment loans and development policy loans, as well as through the support to the reform priorities.
- ***Achieving a faster, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, based on the economic, scientific and innovative potential*** that puts sustainable sources at the centre, particularly the export of information technologies and investments, development of knowledge and innovation-based entrepreneurship, and encourages the development of youth, women's and social entrepreneurship. Efforts on other reform paths (education, infrastructure, digitalization and public administration reform) will contribute to the state's vision and have direct impact on the improvement of the investment potential, employment growth and more balanced regional development.
- ***Efficient and effective provision of public services***, primarily through improving the capacity of the public administration to become a service for citizens, as well as through activities that will enable the realization of the right to a healthy environment, better social protection, modern and functional healthcare. Reform of the salary system in the public sector will contribute to achieving a very important result – reaching equal pay for equal work.
- ***Improving human rights and security***, where Serbia seeks to reduce unequal opportunities, eradicate poverty, have greater inclusiveness, and achieve full gender equality. Commitment to human and minority rights, together with other reforms in this area, will contribute to achieving the principles of social justice and to building social cohesion, with the ultimate goal of integrating the right of every individual to sustainable development into the concept of sustainable development.
- ***Education for the 21st century***, with the emphasis on creating an education system tailored to the needs of the society and the desirable future, with increasing accessibility to all who need education.
- ***Transformative digitalization***, which is recognized as the most powerful driver of innovation, competitiveness and growth, and which drives all reform processes, making the core of the entire society's development.

According to the Agenda 2030, effective monitoring, oversight, review and evaluation and reporting on the achievement of the SDGs, thus being based on a reliable and accurate factual basis for the management of the problems of inequality and discrimination, depend on high quality, timely and reliable data. In the Report of the MAPS mission in Serbia it is said<sup>14</sup>:

“Target 17.18 calls for data to be disaggregated by income, gender, age (including the ability to identify young people), race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other relevant characteristics. Internationally prohibited grounds of discrimination<sup>15</sup> offer valuable suggestions for further lines of data disaggregation, if relevant in the country context<sup>16</sup>.”

Indicators are the backbone of the process of monitoring the local, national, regional and global achievement of the SDGs. The institution in charge of official statistics in the Republic of Serbia is the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia<sup>17</sup>. The process of identifying institutions to work on the production of the framework for national indicators for monitoring the achievement of SDGs, which can, in addition to the state and local government institutions also include academic institutions, public and private sector companies, civil society organizations, will be the first step taken that this Voluntary National Review report has accelerated.

In late 2017, the SORS established a working group for SDG indicators for the Republic of Serbia. Initial mapping included indicators whose source was mostly the SORS and DevInfo database<sup>18</sup>, which contains data from other producers of official statistics. Teams have been established to be specifically in charge of each of the 17 goals with corresponding targets, and they are also in charge of connecting with other institutions to work on the data.

The IMWG and the UN Country Team in Serbia helped in 2018 with organizing the necessary workshops for mapping the sources of SDG indicators (by using the 5 Ps schematic for their outcomes). Workshops gathered all relevant data producers.

14 UN MAPS Mission, National Development and Agenda 2030: Policy Support for Advancing SDG Progress in Serbia – Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Growth “Leaving no-one Behind”, op. cit., p. 61.

15 These grounds are: race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2) The inclusion of “other status” indicates that this list is not exhaustive and other grounds may be incorporated in this category. Ibidem p. 61.

16 Further guidance to data collection and disaggregation at <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf>, ibidem p. 61.

17 SORS-Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia as the key national statistical institution performs the following most important tasks in the area of SDG statistics: coordinating statistics keeping, particularly in cooperation with the IMWG of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for implementing the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030 for identifying and providing national SDG indicators, providing data for global SDG indicators, ensuring data flow, increasing data visibility, verification of the quality of production and dissemination of data

18 SORS-Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, [http://devinfo.stat.gov.rs/republika\\_srbija](http://devinfo.stat.gov.rs/republika_srbija).



1. **People,**
2. **Prosperity,**
3. **Peace,**
4. **Partnership,**
5. **Planet.**



The SORS translated into Serbian the document of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) *Road Map on Statistics for SDGs*<sup>19</sup>, which made this important document for SDG statistics available in the fourth language, in addition to its editions in English, Russian and Spanish.

According to the European Commission's assessment in its report for 2019 on Serbia's progress in the process of accession to the European Union, Serbia is assessed as moderately prepared in the area of statistics<sup>20</sup>. Opening of the negotiation process Chapter 18 Statistics in December 2018 enables intensification of improvement of the national statistics on SDGs. The SORS provided data for this report, for trends visibility, from 2010 wherever it was possible, or for years for which the data are available. To provide data for global and/or national indicators, it monitors all EU and UN recommendations on conducting regular and ad hoc statistical annual and multi-year studies, communicating and working closely with other producers of official statistics that are potential sources of SDG indicators.

During 2019 and 2020, the SORS will conduct several ad hoc statistical surveys on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, which will be a source of data for the SDG indicators, such as: MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) a survey conducted in households and a source for more than 40% of the indicators provided by household surveys; then EHIS (European Health Interview Survey) as one of the key data sources for health indicators; then GBV (Gender based violence), crucial EU victimization survey; and TUS (Time-use survey) as the main source of data disaggregated by sex on the individual time-use, the activities of individuals and the time spent in those activities.

19 [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2017/ECECESS\\_AT20172.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2017/ECECESS_AT20172.pdf)

20 European Commission, Serbia 2019 Report, op. cit., In areas such as... statistics... Serbia is moderately prepared", p. 5.

In 2018, the SORS launched a new website ([www.stat.gov.rs](http://www.stat.gov.rs)), which also has a link to the SDG portal on its home page <http://sdg.indikatori.rs/>.

The SDG portal has a section Documents which contains the appropriate SDG document in Serbian or English, one of which is the SDG profile

The SDG profile contains basic information on the available data for SDG indicators for the Republic of Serbia and is available in Serbian, both in Cyrillic and Latin script, as well as in English on the following links:

[http://sdg.indikatori.rs/media/1499/sdg\\_srbija\\_cir.pdf](http://sdg.indikatori.rs/media/1499/sdg_srbija_cir.pdf)

[http://sdg.indikatori.rs/media/1500/sdg\\_srbija\\_lat.pdf](http://sdg.indikatori.rs/media/1500/sdg_srbija_lat.pdf)

[http://sdg.indikatori.rs/media/1501/sdg\\_serbia.pdf](http://sdg.indikatori.rs/media/1501/sdg_serbia.pdf).

The Republic of Serbia recognizes the significance of the Agenda 2030 vision for both present and future generations. For this reason, the focus in this report is on children and young people, because they are the ones who will be the pillars of society and agents of social changes by 2030.

Achievement of the SDGs in Serbia relies on the advantages of the local self-government units, who can identify the needs of the local population the best and find the best way to meet those needs, *leaving no one behind*. No government policy, however developed, can respond to all the needs and expectations of the population, nor can it take into account all the specificities of life in one environment. For this reason, local self-government units should complement the global agenda with specific measures, with the aim of strengthening their own capacities for achieving the SDGs.

Along with self-assessments of government bodies about achieving SDGs through guiding sectoral policies and mutual harmonization of the work on cross-cutting issues (SDG multisectoral dimension), the detailed report on the progress in achieving SDGs also used the findings of the UN MAPS mission, inputs from young people for children and youth focused VNR from the study conducted by UNICEF, information about self-assessment of activities by the SCTM and relevant inputs from UNDP.



## END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

### Youth perspective on SDG 1

Children and young people in Serbia face a higher risk of poverty than the adult population. The at-risk-of-poverty rate for 2017 was 30.5% for children and 29.7% for young people, higher than 25.7% for the total population. During recent years (2014-2017) the risk of poverty decreased for young people (18-24) but the risk for children (0-18) remains the same. Young women face significantly higher risks of financial poverty than young men (32.3% vs. 27.3%). The at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion rate was also higher among children (38.5%) and youth (39.8%) than in the general population (36.7%)<sup>21</sup> According to the National Organization of the Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOO- IS), two thirds of families with children with disabilities report the lack of income to provide adequate care and support to their children. In 24% of families, one of the parents had to leave the employment in order to provide care for the child.<sup>22</sup>

Young people that participated in consultations are aware of the significance of addressing poverty and social exclusion among children and young people. They recognize their peers from the Roma population as the group of young people most vulnerable to poverty. Solutions they see as the most needed are expanded coverage of young people under risk of poverty with social benefits, education and support to employment. The same opinion is shared by young people included in the program for support to youth in conflict with law. From their perspective, access to employment is the key leverage point to uplift youth from poverty, and the support to young people to get better access to the labour market is seen as something the government should prioritize.

#### Existing gaps and challenges / desirable solutions

**“Roma communities are the most vulnerable in Serbia. Although our state provides them with some social assistance, this is not enough. Single parents are also in a terrible situation. We need to provide them with basic means of living, which they currently lack. But these are just temporary solutions that will use them for a short period of time.”**

**“The poorest groups are people in villages and the Roma. What can be done on this issue is to encourage work and education and to provide them with financial and other resources needed to work on themselves – full support while on the way.”**

**Participants in the youth consultations.**

21 Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data, SDG monitoring data bas  
22 NOOIS (2017) Situation analysis: Position of children with disabilities in the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade.

## *Areas requiring advice and support (policy responses)*

“The draft of the new National Strategy for Social Protection 2019-2025 is still in the adoption process. The Strategy notes that social financial assistance for children (child allowance) is low (between 20 and 30 EUR) and significantly lower than the EU average (0.29% of GDP in 2016 compared to 1.1% of GDP in EU).

The Republic of Serbia has the National Strategy for Youth that recognizes the importance of poverty reduction and social inclusion of young people. The Law on Youth considers persons 15-29 years of age as young people. Therefore, children until the age of 14 are not targeted by this policy and its measures. Serbia does not have an integrated anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy that would address the issue of child and youth poverty and social exclusion in a comprehensive manner.”<sup>23</sup>

## **Local self-government perspective on SDG 1**

The SCTM supports the development of socially responsible and inclusive local self-government and development and improvement of the strategic and legal framework through active participation of local self-governments in the processes of implementing new public policies and regulations in this area. The SCTM find particularly important the goals that the Government of the Republic of Serbia has elaborated and adopted in the “Employment and Social Reform Programme” (ESRP), which also contains activities related to local self-government. The main social development challenges in Serbia are unemployment and social exclusion, demographic devastation, mortality and disease rates from preventive diseases, and unfavourable educational structure of the population. The main elements of social exclusion (poverty, unemployment and lack of social contacts) exclude individuals and even entire communities from the developmental flows of the society, especially in rural areas of Serbia. Therefore, the SCTM supports local authorities in implementing inter-sectoral public policies and works on strengthening their capacity to implement quality, accessible, inclusive, and efficient measures in the areas of social and health care, education, employment, sports, culture and youth.

In line the with the strategic direction of the Republic of Serbia, with the focus on the processes of decentralization and deinstitutionalization of social protection, in the future, special attention will be focused on the development of social protection services at the local level. Having in mind the existing situation, the SCTM supports municipalities and cities in developing planning and other documents in the field of social protection, standardizing the implementation of competences in child and social protection programmes and improving the capacity of employees. The SCTM is committed to further developing local inclusive policies for all individuals from vulnerable and marginalized groups. Accordingly, the local administration is presented with the request of a holistic approach in the field of social protection, along with the need for intensive capacities development in the local administration to respond to the needs of citizens – beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of local social welfare services.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF, *Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*.

<sup>24</sup> Information submitted by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM) as the contribution to writing the VNR.

**2** ZERO HUNGER



## **END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

As a country of high human development (Human Development Index was 0.787 in 2017), Serbia is facing the problem of the obesity among children more than the problem of malnutrition. Data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)<sup>25</sup> show that 1.8% of children in Serbia are underweight, 6% of them have stunted growth (low height-per-age), 4% have wasted growth and 13.9% of them are overweight. However, for young children coming from Roma settlements, a more undesirable picture emerges: 9.5% of them are underweight, stunting prevalence is 18.5%, and 5.1% are overweight. One in ten children in Roma settlements is underweight compared to one in 55 children in general population. As a recent study on positive deviance in nutrition in Roma settlements demonstrated<sup>26</sup>, malnutrition is mainly related to the poor economic situation of families living in Roma settlements, but there is also significant influence of nutrition practices that are the consequence of the lack of knowledge, and specific norms related to nutrition and caring, preferences and nutritive values attributed to certain foods.

### **Youth perspective on SDG 2**

As one of the main means for improvement of nutrition among children, young people participating in VNR consultations see the healthy meals organized within formal education institutions, as this is the place where they spend a large part of their time. They also emphasized the need to organize distribution of food to the poor, following the models of food banks or food warehouses. All companies that produce or trade food should contribute to that task.

#### **Existing gaps and challenges / desirable solutions**

**“Cafeterias with healthy food (hot meals) throughout our education (from pre-schools to faculties). Subsidised meals. Places around town – public cafeterias.”**

**“The state and more affluent people could pay more attention and invest into soup kitchens.”**

**“Bakeries, restaurants and other companies should send what they usually throw away to some organisation that would give it to those who need it most. A law is needed!”**

**“Restaurants should be prohibited from throwing away food, they should give it to others, donate it, etc.”**

<sup>25</sup> Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and UNICEF (2014). Serbia – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 and Serbia – Roma settlements – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 – Monitoring the status and position of women and children, Final Report. Belgrade, Serbia: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and UNICEF.

<sup>26</sup> UNICEF (2018) *Qualitative Research on Malnutrition in Children under Five Years of Age in Poor Roma Settlements in Serbia using Positive Deviance in Nutrition Approach*.

## *Areas requiring advice and support (policy responses)*

“The Strategy of the Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 sets the objective to increase the adequate nutrition and physical activity among adult and population under 18 by 10%. In line with measures defined by this Strategy, it is planned to adopt, in the following period, specific strategies and programmes that will focus on nutrition and health, such as: Strategy for the improvement of nutrition and physical activity, national programmes for food accessibility, food security and for the prevention of obesity among children and adult population. In 2018, the Government of Serbia adopted the National Programme for breastfeeding support, family and developmental care of newborns. The National Program represents a unique platform to implement practices that promote, protect and support breastfeeding, as optimal nutrition, especially during the first 1000 days of life, which is one of the foundations enabling children to survive and develop to their full potential.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Local self-government perspective on SDG 2**

The role of the local self-government in agriculture and rural development is defined by a number of strategic and legal documents, bearing in mind the fact that the territory of 130 local self-government units (LSGs) is considered rural. Agricultural policy and rural development policy are determined, inter alia, at the local level, and LSGs can determine measures for implementing agricultural policy in their area. Since 2007, cities and municipalities have been developing and implementing annual programmes for protection, regulation and use of agricultural land, which has a significant impact on the improvement of the quality of agricultural land management, which is one of the most important preconditions for the development of rural areas. As the most important challenge in rural areas, representatives of LSGs point out poor infrastructure (transport, communal, etc.), low competitiveness of agricultural producers and the lack of diversification of economic activities in the rural areas. Human resources are also a challenge for a more significant role of LSGs in rural development, more precisely the number, structure and characteristics of employees dealing with this topic. In short, the local level still lacks the human capacities, and better organizational and strategic management in this area is needed.

The SCTM supports LSGs in implementing the relevant laws, with the aim of a more efficient management of agricultural land and more effective support in the field of agriculture and rural development.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF, *Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*.

<sup>28</sup> Information submitted by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM) as the contribution to writing the VNR.

<http://sdg.indikatori.rs/sr-cyrl/area/good-health-and-well-being/?subarea=SDGUN030201&indicator=03020102IND01>





## ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Children in Serbia are facing decreasing risks of mortality in the earliest stages of their lives. Since 1990, the under-five mortality rate has dropped from 18 deaths per 1000 children in 1990 to 5.8 per 1000 children in 2017. However, children living in Roma settlements have lower chances of early survival, as indicated by the mortality rate of 14.4 per 1000 of children in 2014.<sup>29</sup> Health related issues that require a higher policy response are the recent trends of decreased immunization of children and consequent increase in the prevalence of measles cases.

Important health concerns are also related to the sexual and reproductive health of young people. Although Serbia does not face the problem of adolescent pregnancies and births at the rate as high as some developed North-Western countries of Europe and North America, it is still an issue that requires high policy attention. Adolescent birth rate (girls, 15-19) has significantly dropped from 44.5 per 1000 women of that age in 1990 to 15.1 per 1000 women in 2017.<sup>30</sup> The prevalence of adolescent child birth is higher among girls living in Roma settlements: 23.8% of girls aged 15-19 had a live birth, 9% were pregnant with first child, 32.8% have begun childbearing and 3.7% had a live birth before the age of 15<sup>31</sup>.

Consumption of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis is prevalent among young people, increasing health risks. More than a third of young people (15-29) smoke. In certain age groups smoking is highly prevalent – i.e. among persons aged 22-25, 40% smoke.<sup>32</sup> Young people participating in VNR consultations have emphasized that consumption of tobacco products is the choice of individuals, but at the same time they pointed out that it is important to educate young people about harmful consequences of this habit. The minority of young people (28% of female and 21% male) never drinks alcohol, while 25% of young women and 31% of young men drink alcohol regularly during weekends or several times per week. Consumption of cannabis is reported by 7% of young people.<sup>33</sup>

Research about mental health of adolescents (aged 16-17)<sup>34</sup> carried out in 2014 indicates that almost one half of respondents has experienced at least one stressful life event (most often the loss of a family member or the family member's loss of a job). Further, 33% of adolescents stated problems with increased hostility and social adjustment problems. Around 10% have experienced high anxiety, like panic, unrest or distress; more than 20% of adolescents complained about relatively frequently present conditions of negative mood and sadness. Around 45% of adolescents had a feeling of constant worry, 12% of them felt worthless and 7% had suicidal ideations. Based on the increased intensity of mental discomfort, about 16% of those adolescents can be identified as vulnerable in terms of mental health, which means they would need psychosocial help and support.

29 <http://sdg.indikatori.rs/en-us/area/good-health-and-well-being/?subarea=SDGUN030702&indicator=03070201IND01>

30 UNICEF, Serbia – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and Serbia – Roma settlements – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014: 102.

31 Popadić, D., Pavlović, Z., Mihailović, S. (2019) Young People in Serbia 2018-2019, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-20190411.pdf>

32 Ibidem.

33 Ministry of Youth and Sports project “Support to mental health of youth in Serbia”, 2014, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/test/Men-talno%20zdravlje%20mladih.pdf>

34 UNICEF, *Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*.

## Youth perspective on SDG 3

Young people emphasized the importance of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education. They think that they are not well informed about sexual and reproductive health and they suggested to significantly improve SRH education in schools at all levels. Workshop participants emphasized the importance of mental health that is often neglected according to their opinion. They think that mental health and mental hygiene is a great problem in the situation like it is today and that stigmatization of people with mental health problems is still very high. The initial step should be made by educating young people within schools about the importance of mental health.

### Existing gaps and challenges / desirable solutions

*“I think that the sexuality, especially in our age, is very important. No, we are not sufficiently educated in that sphere, and yes, that is a big problem. We need the subjects in the schools that would improve knowledge and information on this topic. It is important to know about sexually transmitted diseases and their consequences. It is important to raise awareness about this topic, it is necessary.”*

*“Mental health should be introduced in a system of regular health examinations of children and young people. A conversation with a psychologist should be a part of systematic health checks. Prior to that maybe the psychological test should be introduced in order to assess who needs this kind of support.”*

*“Greater awareness of mental health and mental hygiene is a matter that must become a priority in informing both the young and older generations as, unlike many diseases, the final outcome of uncontrolled depression is always suicide.”*

*Participants in the youth consultations*

### Areas requiring advice and support (policy responses)

“The National Strategy for Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 sets among its priority objectives the prevention and elimination of smoking and exposure to the tobacco smoke, abuse of alcohol and drugs, with the target of reducing the number of young people consuming such products by 10%. The objective should be achieved through a set of measures, including a set of specific policies (such as the Strategy for tobacco control with Action Plan), support to mechanisms for tobacco control, adoption of new regulation in line with WHO Convention on tobacco control and EU laws, monitoring of the implementation of the National programme for prevention of alcohol abuse, drug abuse, etc. Support to the implementation of activities focused on early development is among the strategic measures aimed at the improvement of the population health. There are also measures aimed at the improvement of health education in preschool, primary and secondary schools. The Programme “Healthy Kindergarten” is planned to be expanded to 45% of preschool institutions, while the programme ‘Healthy School’ is planned to be implemented in at least 30% of primary and 20% of secondary schools. The National Programme for protection and promotion of sexual and reproductive health of the citizens of Republic of Serbia, adopted in 2017, contains sets of measures aimed at increasing the use of modern contraception in family planning, reduction of risky sexual behaviour

among youth, early childbearing, particularly among young Roma women, better access to sexual and reproductive health services for young women with disabilities, etc. The Strategy for Youth sets as one of the main objectives the improvement of health of the young population, reduction of risk factors and main health problems and development of the health care system adjusted to the young population. It also incorporates specific objectives related to the health care of young people from vulnerable groups and their higher participation in programmes for health promotion. An important set of measures is aimed at better protection from sexually transmitted diseases and protection of sexual and reproductive health. The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 also includes measures related to the improvement of sexual and reproductive health among young women and men.”<sup>35</sup>

### Local self-government perspective on SDG3

Main challenges of LSGs in this area are the following: (1) insufficient level of cooperation and communication with competent institutions and other stakeholders; (2) regulations not being harmonized; (3) insufficient budget allocation for health care at the local level (around 1% on average); (4) insufficient capacities for dealing with health (negligible number of employees in the local administration working in this field); (5) insufficiently active local health councils; (6) inadequate fulfilment of legal obligations of LSGs regarding public health planning (around 20 LSGs have adopted public health plans, although the national strategy was adopted last year, so it can be said that this process is in the initial stage), regular monitoring of the health status of the population, adoption of programmes in the field of public health and capacity building and (7) insufficient protection of patients’ rights (according to the SCTM findings, this institute is not fully functional in around 30% of LSGs).

The SCTM, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and public health institutes, is supporting the development of the health care responsibility in the local self-government. The priority is the support for development of public health plans, risk assessment for public health and plans for preservation of health in emergencies. The SCTM supports municipalities and cities in providing a functional system of patient rights protection at the local level and guaranteed rights for all, with emphasis on marginalized groups, through strengthening the visibility of patient rights, building the local self-government capacity to implement these responsibilities and networking all stakeholders. The SCTM builds capacities of employees in social activities and local health councils. The SCTM advocates for and supports the right to affordable, efficient and high quality primary health care for all, with the emphasis on integrating social and health care services (assisted living caregiver, palliative care of the terminally ill, etc.). Integrated services at the local level are not sufficiently developed and constant, so the support for their development will be a part of the SCTM activities, especially for the exchange of experiences and good examples among LSGs.

One of the localization mechanisms of this SDG are also the Health Councils - advisory, compulsory bodies at the local level, whose establishment and operation are governed by the Law on Patients’ Rights and the Law on Public Health. Through continuous capacity building of the LSGs and Health Councils, around 100 LSGs with their Health Councils are actively participating in the work of the SCTM Health Network. In 2018, 60 LSGs went through the cycle of support for the development of public health plans. So far, 25 cities and municipalities have adopted the plans in their local assemblies. The process of supporting the development of public health plans and capacity building of health councils continues, and the SCTM supports it in cooperation with the network of public health institutes.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Information submitted by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM) as the contribution to writing the VNR.

<sup>36</sup> Information submitted by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM) as the contribution to writing the VNR.

Since April 2016, parents of newborns (babies) can do everything needed to enter the child into the birth register, register his or her place of residence and register for his or her health insurance in 15 minutes, while still in the maternity ward, in one place, free of charge and without having to fill in any forms. Bearing in mind that the Office for IT and e-Government is constantly working to improve its information systems and services, in the beginning of 2018 this system was improved as well, and now, in addition to the procedures above, parents can also apply for parental allowance (state-level benefit) and for local financial benefits which are currently available in the City of Belgrade.

### **Good practice example: Project “Baby, Welcome to the World”**

With the aim of making the public administration an efficient service for the citizens, the Government of the Republic of Serbia launched the project “Baby, Welcome to the World” in order to simplify the procedures related to the birth of a child. This allowed parents to spend their precious time with their new family member instead of having to go to various public administration bodies. The procedures above are initiated by the authorized person of the health care institution within the information system “Baby, Welcome to the World”, with parent's consent, and all documents, such as birth certificate, health insurance card and decision on eligibility to parental allowance or local financial benefit, are delivered to people's homes. Please note that it is not mandatory for parents to initiate these procedures in the maternity ward and that they can still initiate all the procedures above in the standard way, by going to the appropriate institution. So far, more than 165,000 babies have been registered electronically, with over 148,000 of them registered through initiating the procedures enabled by this project. Such statistics speak in favour of the Government of the Republic of Serbia having excellently recognized and satisfied the needs of the citizens, because 90% of parents decide to initiate the mentioned procedures already in the maternity ward. The project was jointly implemented by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Health Insurance Fund, Central Registry of Compulsory Social Insurance and numerous other authorities, and with the technical and organisational support of the Office for IT and eGovernment and coordination of the Office of the Prime Minister. The project “Baby, Welcome to the World” is the first step in the reform of the public administration towards it being an efficient service for the citizens, eliminating bureaucratic barriers and introducing common sense in administrative procedures that will be further simplified. This modern electronic service puts Serbia among the rare European countries that provide electronic services at such a high level.



## **ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

Education enables children to realize their full human potential, to escape or avoid poverty, to increase chances for social inclusion and quality life. For the country, educating children is a precondition for development based on improved human resources, knowledge and potential for innovation. Among children aged 36-59 months, 95% were on track in health, learning and psychological well-being in 2014. The difference in early childhood development is notable between urban and rural areas (97% and 92% respectively)<sup>37</sup>. Early childhood education and care coverage of children (aged 3 to 5) in the country is 50%, which means that half of children are missing out on the opportunity to develop to their full potential. Inequality in access to high-quality early childhood education services is notable particularly for poor and marginalized children (only 9% of poorest children and 6% of Roma children attend pre-school), which can further exacerbate life-long inequity<sup>38</sup>.

During the last decade, there have been significant achievements in better preparation of children for school through the preparatory preschool programme – attendance increased from 87.2% in 2009 to 98.2% in 2017. Boys and girls of primary school age participate equally in the primary education, while the gender parity index of 1.08 at the level of secondary education indicates a slight advantage on behalf of girls.<sup>39</sup> However, Roma children’s attendance remains unequal both for primary (85% versus 98% in the general population) and particularly for secondary education (21% versus 89% in the general population)<sup>40</sup>. Secondary vocational education (VET) covers just over 70% of students and it is viewed as a part of the education system that has the potential to improve the transition from education to the labour market. Dual college/ workplace education is being introduced in VET, with the focus more on the current labour market demands than anticipating skills that will be sought after in the future. VET is still the most frequent choice of students from vulnerable groups, and the majority of Roma students are in technical schools – transportation, mechanical engineering, technological, textile processing and design, leather processing and hairdressing (Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team, 2016).

High usage of ICT is registered among young women and men (97% and 95% respectively<sup>41</sup>), and participation of young people in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 12 months has been stable during the last five years (around 65%), with more young women than men attending some form of education<sup>42</sup>. Although inclusive education is a strategic approach to education of children with disabilities in Serbia, there are still two parallel systems: inclusive education in the regular system and special schools. The government system has made significant efforts towards inclusiveness of formal education for refugee and migrant children. Despite significant efforts, physical conditions are not adequate in all schools. There are still schools, particularly in less developed and remote areas, that do not have the access to drinking water, toilets or hand-washing facilities. This poses risks for the health security of children attending these schools.

37 UNICEF, Serbia – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and Serbia – Roma settlements – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014.

38 Ibid.

39 <http://sdg.indikatori.rs/en-us/area/quality-education/?subarea=SDGUN040501&indicator=04050101IND01>

40 UNICEF, Serbia – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and Serbia – Roma settlements – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014.

41 SORS, ICT usage in Serbia 2018,

<http://sdg.indikatori.rs/en-us/area/quality-education/?subarea=SDGUN040201&indicator=04020101IND02>

42 Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, SILC data, SDG monitoring data base



## Youth perspective on SDG4

When asked about the most important aspects of education that should be improved, young people participating through U-Report indicated: the teaching methods used for different subjects and lack of interactivity, stimulation of creativity of students, improvement of physical infrastructure, and stimulation of critical thinking.<sup>43</sup> In relation to university education, 42% of participants in the poll pointed to the need to provide more scholarships for students, 27% pointed to the need for improvement of the lectures which lack interactivity and critical thinking. One in ten respondents indicated the need to improve physical infrastructure in the faculties.



What would you like to improve in your school?

- Physical infrastructure
- Interesting classes and teaching methods
- Stimulation of creativity
- Stimulation of critical thinking
- Other

Innovative techniques should encourage young people to study more, gain more knowledge and better skills. They noted that educational programmes should include, in a more systematic way, topics related to all 17 SDGs.

Young people participating in the workshop with children in conflict with the law welcomed dual education. In their opinion, this is a good step forward in the reform of the education system, but it requires good preparation. They expect that this will improve their chances for employment.

Source: U-Report Serbia

## Existing gaps and challenges / desirable solutions

*“Young people are not involved in designing educational programmes. They should express their needs, and their voice should be heard and appreciated.”*

*“The education system limits learning opportunities for young people too much and expects them to be uniform. It would be necessary to encourage the creativity and individuality of students and logical thinking. This might be easier in smaller groups, but also with overcoming the traditional way of learning and the use of higher technologies.”*

*Participants in the youth consultations*

### *Areas requiring advice and support (policy responses)*

The Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia until 2020 shapes the reform of the education system at all levels. Objectives and measures correspond with SDG targets, such as increased participation, better quality of education, improved infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, improved services related to inclusive education.

The Strategy for Youth also envisages development of an open, effective, efficient and equitable system of formal and informal education, available to all young people and in line with international trends in education. Specific objectives include an increase of participation of young people in formal and informal education, their higher influence on decision making related to education, quality assurance and establishment of standards in formal and informal education, measures for increased efficiency in education, better adjustment of education to the labour market needs.”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF, Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## Local self-government perspective on SDG4

Inclusive approach requires ensuring the conditions for all children to exercise their rights, i.e. to provide support to those children who need it for various reasons, in order for them to exercise their rights and be included in all aspects of the community life, particularly in education. Hard work is still necessary for finding and strengthening mechanisms that promote the position of children who need additional support. Intersectoral committees for the assessment of needs for providing additional educational, health care or social support to children are one (if not crucial) of these mechanisms, with foundations in the adoption of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System, and they operate at the local level.

The SCTM in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development works to improve educational, health care and social support to children, students and adults, and in particular to analyze the existing roles and responsibilities in this area, map challenges and propose possible solutions, define common goals and future activities. Thus, after the adoption of the new Rulebook on additional educational, health care and social support to the child, student and adult, the SCTM in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development prepared a package of model documents and organized a series of trainings and round tables, with the aim of supporting local self-governments in implementation of this responsibility.

Another competence of the local self-government, related to the availability of education, is the quality of the network of schools and pre-school institutions for children and students in the local community. In accordance with the new Regulation on the criteria for establishing the network of preschool institutions and primary schools, LSGs have the task of adopting the decision on the network of preschool institutions and primary schools in their territory. In order to support this process and help local self-governments adopt an act on school networks that takes into account the demographic picture, the territorial distribution of institutions, as well as the socio-economic criteria, the SCTM has developed models of developmental plans, their simulations and decision models on the network of public preschool institutions and primary schools in the territory of the local self-government unit.

In the previous period, the SCTM has actively worked on adapting the secondary school enrolment policies, so that they are in line with modern trends and requirements of the local market. In cooperation with representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, the SCTM has developed models of a new enrollment policy plan, according to which the stakeholders from education are not the only ones participating in developing this plan, but they are joined by representatives from the commerce and local self-government.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Information submitted by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (SCTM) as the contribution to writing the VNR.



## ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Gender equality is rooted in one's childhood. Gender roles and norms are adopted through socialization since the earliest age. Young women still encounter gender-based discrimination. According to a youth research undertaken in Serbia, 31% of young women (15-29) have experienced gender-based discrimination<sup>46</sup>.

Early marriage has low prevalence in the general population, yet is still widespread within the population living in Roma settlements, which seriously undermines the chances of Roma girls to complete their education. Among the women 20-49 years old, 17.3% got married before they turned 15, while 57% of them married before they turned 18.<sup>47</sup>

Responsibilities of young women for the household and family are disproportionately great. On average, they spend four hours more daily carrying out chores and taking care of others than young men. The difference in the time spent doing chores and caring for others is especially pronounced in rural areas, where men, on average, spend 6 hours less everyday performing such tasks.

### Youth Perspective on SDG 5

It is obvious that young men and women have different perspectives on the situation in gender equality. Among the participants of the U-Report, 56% young women said that girls and young women do not have equal rights as boys and young men, while the majority of male respondents (63%) claimed that girls do have equal rights. Violence against girls and young women was recognized (by both groups, i.e. women and men) as the area of gender equality which should have the highest priority in public policies.<sup>48</sup>

The young women which participated in the consultations, emphasized the importance of eliminating gender inequality on the labour market. They believe it to be unfair that women work on inferior positions in companies and their work is less paid. Another major issue that concerns them is partner violence experienced by women. Their opinion is that this is harmful and that it is damaging in the long run for women's self-respect and self-esteem. They appealed for the provision of stronger support to girls and young women in order to raise awareness when it comes to recognizing violence, but also for girls and women to be additionally empowered to resist it.

The youth which participated in the U-Report have recognized the need of better protection of girls against violence. When asked what needed to be improved in order for young people to be safer, almost one third of the respondents mentioned the protection of girls from violence.<sup>49</sup>

46 Popadić, D., Pavlović, Z., Mihailović, S. (2019) *Mladi u Srbiji 2018-2019 (Youth in Serbia 2018-2019)*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Belgrade  
<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-20190411.pdf>

47 UNICEF, MICS 2014, p: 218.

48 <https://serbia.ureport.in/poll/1022/>

49 <https://serbia.ureport.in/poll/1047/>

### Present setbacks and challenges / desirable solutions

*“Women should understand that they are equal to men. And they should be equally paid when performing same jobs.”*

*“They should respect themselves and do not accept less than they deserve. They should realise their own worth and leave violent relationships in due time.”*

*“What needs to be done is to prevent violence in partner relations, to raise awareness of girls when it comes to recognising violence, as well as their rights.”*

*Participants in youth consultations*

### *The Areas which require counselling and support (strategic response)*

The Law on Youth (2011) prohibits discrimination of youth on the grounds of race, gender, nationality, religious belief, language, social background, financial standing, affiliation with political, trade union or other organizations, mental or physical disability, health, physical appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other actual or assumed personal trait. National Gender Equality Strategy for 2016-2020<sup>50</sup> represents a comprehensive strategic framework which defines the goals in line with the targets of SDG 5, including those concerning youth population. Among its goals, the Strategy quotes support to young mothers in continuing their education, as well as raising awareness pertaining to the damaging consequences of early marriage, especially among the groups at risk. Medium-term evaluation of the Strategy highlighted uneven effectiveness of the Strategy implementation, with better results in protecting women from gender-based violence, and exceptionally low effectiveness when it comes to sharing responsibilities in domestic work, or recognition of the value of unpaid work and taking care of the family in the household. New Action Plan for the remaining duration of the Strategy's implementation (2019-2020) is currently pending adoption.

The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women<sup>51</sup> has defined measures to prevent early and forced marriages of Roma girls, as well as support for continuing schooling and employment of those young women who got married before finishing their education.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> As its priority aims, the Strategy defines elimination of gender stereotypes which fuel discrimination, protection from gender-based violence, equal participation of women and men in parenting and care economy.



## LSG Perspective on SDG 5

Gender equality framework is established in national legislation, as well as in strategic documents in the field of gender equality. It involves obligations by local self-governments arising from legislative and strategic documents, as well as the crucial problems present in local communities, including their authorities and competences. In this respect, European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life represents a politically obliging document, but also a practical tool which helps LSGs to integrate the principles of gender equality and human rights into their policies. Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities has actively worked on the promotion of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, and it has by now been adopted in 67 municipalities, while local action plans for its implementation have been adopted in 48 municipalities. New Law on Gender Equality is being prepared and should be adopted soon. The Law will introduce new steps and improve gender equality on the local level, and it is expected that it will significantly improve access to rights, as well as the position and capacities of gender equality mechanisms.

According to the state regulatory framework, LSGs have obligations of establishing mechanisms of gender equality and securing participation of women of at least 30% in the authorities. National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2020) states that participation of women in LSGs' assemblies has increased from 7% in 2000, to 29% in 2014.

In the political and public life of Serbia, women are insufficiently represented, even though there are major steps forward, especially at the republic level. However, the situation is largely different when it comes to regional and local government levels, where women are underrepresented at the positions which would enable them to exert greater influence on creating policies relevant for entire communities. The greatest difference between participation of men and that of women is when it comes to the highest position in municipalities/towns, that of mayor. Namely, in the total of 169 local self-government units, there are only 12 women mayors, or 7.1%, which indicates gender inequality when electing persons to occupy the highest managerial position in LSGs. Furthermore, there are only 14% women among those occupying the position of president (speaker) of their respective municipal assembly/town council.

Providing that budget is the most important and most comprehensive reflection of the local policy, which reflect end results of other processes, special attention will be directed towards supporting towns and municipalities in gender-sensitive budgeting. In order to bring about such reform in public policy and finance management, it is necessary to develop local gender equality mechanisms, as well as to have a high level of coordination and gender-sensitivity in all sectors of local self-government, so the SCTM will work extensively to address these issues. The SCTM will additionally support communication and exchange of good practice examples between the towns and municipalities, and secure counselling support to local authorities to enable them to implement gender-sensitive measures and gender equality principle, as well as to integrate the principles of human rights and gender equality into all public policies.<sup>53</sup>

51 Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women define separate goals of improved employment of Roma women, improved health, inter alia through wider availability of healthcare services concerning sexual and reproductive health, and better social protection.

52 UNICEF, Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

53 The data provided by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – Alliance of Towns and Municipalities in Serbia (SCTM) as their contribution to developing this VNR.



## **INSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL**

### **LSG Perspective on SDG 6**

Within the process of EU accession, the SCTM is involved in negotiating Chapter 27, which reviews the capacities of, inter alia, LSGs in providing high-quality drinking water and wastewater treatment (sanitation). Fulfilling the EU standards in this also contributes to the attainment of the UN goals. Bearing in mind insufficient capacities of LSGs to prepare and realize demanding infrastructural projects necessary to put in place missing infrastructure (wastewater treatment facilities, water plants, etc.), the SCTM activities in the field are primarily aimed at capacity building for LSG employees, in order to enable them to fulfil their obligations arising from newly adopted legislation, and especially, for them to be ready for the EU directives and available IPA and structural funds.<sup>54</sup>



## **ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL**

### **LSG Perspective on SDG 7**

Communal energy supply is an issue with a major importance for towns and municipalities, in the sense of creating conditions for and regulating the market of thermal energy, as well as when it comes to energy consumption in public services. Legal regulation of energy management system, obligation of introducing payment based on actual consumption in district heating systems and fuel changes in district heating, as well as establishment of the legal framework within which LSGs can directly influence energetic efficiency in privately-owned buildings, are among the results of the transposition of the EU legislative framework which may prove to introduce the most serious challenges for LSGs in the field of energy efficiency.

The SCTM's strategic commitment is to support towns and municipalities in rational resource management, by improving energetic efficiency (EE) and utilizing renewable energy resources. In order to do this, the SCTM will support its members in the process of defining local policies in the field of energy, as well as in introducing the system of energetics management, and will accordingly promote use of renewable resources and improvements in energetic efficiency in public and private sectors. The SCTM also provides support in joining the European initiative Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, which obliges parties thereto to undertake activities to decrease by 40% the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030, and to adopt an integrative approach to alleviating the consequences of and adjusting to climate change.

The policy of energetic efficiency in the EU and accompanying instruments are in full agreement with the development goals of LSGs in Serbia. Potential lack of capacities for their implementation represents one of the main developmental problems and should not be an obstacle to a whole-hearted adoption and support to the EU policies in the field of energetic efficiency. Estimates show that up to 10% of LSGs' budget is dedicated to energy costs. Regardless of this fact, this activity still lacks a befitting treatment on the local level.

One of the main mechanisms of the SCTM for supporting the members in this field is the Network of Energy Managers and Commissioners for Energetic Efficiency, which gathers LSG representatives with the aim to provide support, exchange experiences and build capacities. Pilot initiatives participated in by the SCTM, like the one concerning the establishment of the first bioenergetics village in Serbia, stimulate the development of the sector of bioenergy through the promoted role of the locally produced biomass as the main source of energy on the local level, taking into account the possibility of the increased presence on the market, or enlargement of the market for the local farmers, wood producers and small and medium businesses.<sup>55</sup>

### **UNDP Perspective on SDG 7 on the Level of LSG**

In October 2005, the European Community, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and UNMIK signed the agreement on the establishment of the Energy Community (ECom). Moldavia became a full member thereof in 2010, while Ukraine officially became a member of the ECom in 2011. Agreement on the Energy Community was ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in 2006. *Acquis Communautaire* (Chapter 15) envisaged the creation of the unique energy market and mechanisms for functioning of power network market. Institutions of the ECom were also established, while decision-making process was defined. A stable investing environment was thus established, based on the rule of law, and state parties were linked to the EU. The Ministry of Mining and Energy represents Serbia within the ECom and is responsible for execution for the decisions made by the Board of Ministers which makes key policy decisions and adopts ECom rules and procedures.

The aims of ECom policy include promoted competitiveness, security of energy supply and environmental protection. Energy *Acquis* consist of rules and policies, especially when it comes to competition and state support (including the coal sector), inner energy market (opening of the market of electrical energy and gas, the so-called "Third Energy Package") and promotion of renewable energy resources, energy efficiency, nuclear energy and nuclear safety. Key priorities of the energy sector development in Serbia include: providing energetic security, development of the energy market and comprehensive transition towards sustainability (Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period by 2025 with projections by 2030).

Full transposition of the "Third Energy Package" and Directive on Renewable Energy was completed through the adoption of the new Law on Energy and accompanying bylaws. Energetic efficiency *Acquis* are transposed through the Law on Efficient Use of Energy, Law on Planning and Construction and accompanying bylaws. Achievement of SDG 7 is of the greatest importance for the energy sector in Serbia. EU accession programmes largely correspond to the targets of SDG 7 presented in the table below.

Targets	Indicators	Achievement	Corresponding EU accession chapter
7.1 By the end of 2030, secure universal access to cheap, reliable and modern energy services.	7.1.1 Share of the population with the access to electrical energy	7.1.1 99%	
	7.1.2 Share of the population that primarily uses clean fuels and technologies	7.1.2 Mostly	
7.2 By the end of 2030, increase sustainability of the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.	7.2.1 Share of renewable energy in the total consumption of final energy	Moderately satisfactory  However, considerable investments in renewable energy facilities are underway	The increase of renewable energy share in gross final consumption of energy to 27% by 2020, bearing in mind the earlier share of 21.2% in 2009.  Achieved: 22.73% (2014)  Report on the Progress in Implementation of the National Action Plan for Renewable Energy in the Republic of Serbia.
7.3 By the end of 2030 to double the global rate improvement in energy efficiency development.	7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in the context of primary energy and GDP	Moderately satisfactory  0.37 toe/1000 2010 USD (source IEA) 0.17 toe/1000 2010 USD taking into account purchasing power parity (source IEA)	Serbia has been committed to the national indicated energy savings of no less than 9% of the final domestic energy consumption, between 2010 and 2018 (1% per year on average), meaning that the country is to secure energy savings in 2018 amounting to 0.7524 Mtoe (8750.4 GWh).  Achieved: 4.43% (2015)



## **PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL**

Achievement of this SDG for children and youth means protection from harmful child labour on the one hand, and good socialization of labour, timely transition to labour market and decent employment on the other.

Young people are facing serious obstacles in finding employment.

The unemployment rate for young man and women is twice as high as the unemployment rate of working age population (32% for young women and 28% for young men, as opposed to 13% for working age population).

Young women are facing more serious obstacles in finding employment than young men.

Difficulties in the transition from education to labour market are also evident, as a significant number of young people do not engage in education, while they are also unemployed.

Even though it is on the decrease (from 20.4% in 2014, to 16.5% in 2018<sup>56</sup>), the rate of those not in the process of education while also unemployed is still significant.

In 2014, 9.5% of children 5-17 years of age were involved in child labour, with a greater number of boys (12.2%) than of girls (6.6%) being involved in some form of child labour.

Child labour is mainly present in rural areas (16.2%) and is connected to agricultural work on family farms.

The largest prevalence of child labour has been identified in young children (5-11), as opposed to younger (12-14) and older (15-17) adolescents (12% to 5.8% and 7.5%).

57 Children from the poorest families are more often involved in child labour (14.6%), just like children whose mothers are uneducated, or have finished only primary school (17.2%).

56 <http://sdg.indikatori.rs/sr-cyrl/area/decent-work-and-economic-growth/?subarea=SDGUN080502&indicator=24000200IND01>



## Youth Perspective on SDG 8

The young people who participated in the consultations believe that the main reason for the low employment rate among youth lies in the lack of preparation for self-employment and entrepreneurship. They emphasized the need of better support to young people in developing their own career plans having finished formal education. They pointed to gender inequality on the labour market and expressed their concerns pertaining to ineffective elimination of discrimination against young women during the employment process.

### Present setbacks and challenges / desirable solutions

*“Better career planning counselling is needed for young people after they have finished their education.”*

*“More efforts should be invested in eliminating child labour. Those who abuse the labour of children should be sanctioned.”*

*“Men and women should be equal during employment, as well as when they chose their professions. Women should not be discriminated against on the basis of gender and choice of profession.”*

*Participants in Youth Consultations*

### *The Areas which require counselling and support (strategic response)*

Better employment opportunities and better working conditions for young people are among the aims included in the National Employment Strategy for 2011-2020, and when it comes to young women in the Strategy for Gender Equality for 2016-2020 and the National Youth Strategy for 2015-2025. National Action Plan for Employment for 2019 define the package of services for young people which includes the assessment of person's employability, defining individual employment plans with the most suitable measures for activation, and mediation in employment. Specific measures which are aimed at increasing employment for young people include additional trainings, subsidies for employing young people, support for self-employment, etc. National Strategy for Gender Equality contains measures which address promotion of employment of young women, through better information on employment issues, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, as well as specific support measures in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Roadmap for elimination of child labour has been developed, and it defines sets of measures and responsibilities of different actors in comprehensive efforts to eliminate child labour.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> <http://sdg.indikatori.rs/sr-cyrl/area/decent-work-and-economic-growth/?subarea=SDGUN080701&indicator=08070101IND03>

<sup>58</sup> UNICEF, Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## LSG Perspective on SDG 8

Economy growth in a LSG largely depends on adaptability of businesses operating within it to the changes in the environment, and on their ability to take on and apply new knowledge and develop new products and business models. This can be significantly contributed to by the activities of the very LSGs, where their organizational local economic development and investments support units (LEDISU) are crucial for cooperation and communication with potential domestic and foreign investors.

The law recognizes LEDISU as one of the measures in promoting competitiveness of LSGs. In 2015, the total of 108 towns and municipalities were recorded, which have some kind of organizational unit for implementing LED related tasks. In the majority of cases, the position of and role of the local economic development office (LEDO) depends on the local political situation, manner of organization, number of the employees, scope and type of the tasks. Employees in LEDO are mostly engaged on preparation and realization of projects, development of strategic plans, development of local business infrastructure and direct investments. Investors currently have the largest number of LSG support programmes, regardless of the fact that a large number of the LSGs is already receiving some support from the national level. On the other hand, the existing business entities are involved in LSG business counsels, with the purpose of business environment planning.

The SCTM prioritizes support to LSGs in improving LED management and building their capacities in the field of planning and implementation of local development policies (LED programme, attracting and realization of investments, etc.). In the following period, the SCTM will continue to prioritize activities of decreasing administrative obstacles and simplification of the procedures and conditions for operation of the local economy (through efficient administrative procedures, one-stop services, availability of relevant information for the local businessmen and other types of reform of the operation and organization of work of LSG). The SCTM promotes, but also actively provides direct technical support to a number of LSGs in improving business climate and creating better conditions for cooperation of public and private sectors (primarily through business advice and public-private partnerships). In order to facilitate local economic development, it is also important to improve other types of support by local authorities to local economy, such as: information concerning available EU programmes, or support to their associations in developing and implementing projects.



## **BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION**

Promotion of research and innovation, increase in small innovative entrepreneurship and access to new technologies are crucial for economic development. Young people are those bringing new ideas, they are more open to doing things in new ways and using new technologies. Among young people in Serbia (16-24) the use of computers is quite high. In 2018, 96.7% of young women (16-24) and 95.1% young men had used computers within the three months preceding the poll<sup>60</sup>. All the students who participated in the poll had used computers during the same period. The rate of using the internet is also really high – 100% of young women and 96.1% of young men used the internet during that period,<sup>61</sup> while in 68% of the cases young people often used the internet for educational purposes<sup>62</sup>. Access to funds is one of the main bottlenecks for young entrepreneurs. The funds available for financing start-ups, or for business development, are exceptionally scarce, as they do not fulfil the demands of the financial market (i.e. lack of experience, mortgages, or records of previous success).<sup>63</sup>

### **Youth Perspective on SDG 9**

Majority of young people (74%) quoted development of entrepreneurship as one of the issues that need to be prioritized by the Government.<sup>64</sup> Among the youth who participated in the U-Report (929 respondents), 99% of women and 98% of men have accounts on at least one social network. They mostly use Instagram (69%), and other networks significantly less. Contents which attracts them varies depending on their age. Younger respondents (15-19) are attracted the most to entertainment, while those older than 20 are more interested in news. The young people who participated in the UNICEF workshop also emphasized the importance of improved infrastructure. Apart from improving infrastructure such as roads and communications, energy sources and faster internet, they specifically emphasized that improving infrastructure also implies removal of barriers which prevent access to public transport, communal areas and other resources to persons with disabilities, as well as to elderly.

60 SORS, Uпотреba IKT u Srbiji (Use of ICT in Serbia), 2018, <http://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2018/Pdf/G201816013.pdf>

61 Ibid

62 Popadić, D., Pavlović, Z., Mihailović, S. (2019) Mladi u Srbiji 2018-2019 (Youth in Serbia 2018-2019), Fondacija Fridrih Ebert, Belgrade, p. 17, [http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-201904\\_1.pdf](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-201904_1.pdf)

63 Bobić, D. (2017) Preduzetništvo mladih u Srbiji: Mapiranje prepreka za preduzetništvo mladih (Youth Entrepreneurship i Serbia: Mapping obstacles for youth entrepreneurship), Ceves, Belgrade, <http://odskoledoposla.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Mapiranje-prepreka-za-preduzetni%C5%A1t-vo-mladih.pdf>

64 Popadić, D., Pavlović, Z., Mihailović, S. (2019) Mladi u Srbiji 2018-2019 (Youth in Serbia 2018-2019), Fondacija Fridrih Ebert, Belgrade, p. 71, [http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-201904\\_1.pdf](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-201904_1.pdf)

### *The Areas which require counselling and support (strategic response)*

“National Youth Strategy defines different measures and activities relevant for the achievement of this SDG when it comes to young population: support to all forms of employment and entrepreneurship of young people, improvement of youth’s digital literacy, access to ICT, improvement of infrastructure especially roads, in order to improve young people’s safety, development, recognition and valuation of young people’s achievements in science, art, sport, innovation, improved services in the field of recreation and culture in rural areas. National Employment Strategy for 2011-2020 recognizes young people as a specific group of population which requires support through measures of active employment, due to their unfavourable position on the labour market. Strategy for the Support of Development of small businesses names promotion of youth entrepreneurship as one of its six strategic goals. Strategy for the Development of Information Society in the Republic of Serbia by the year 2020 has the aim of achieving the average EU level when it comes to the state of development of information society. Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia recognizes the importance of education for entrepreneurship and stipulates the introduction of that subject as an extracurricular subject in Serbian schools. Under the programme “Digital School”, most of the schools in Serbia have been equipped with computers, thus enabling for informatics to become obligatory subject in primary and secondary schools. However, some rural and remote areas are still underequipped and thus cannot provide high-quality informatics classes to their students. Serbia has a programme of scholarships for young and talented people and their scientific research, which is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. A thousand of young researchers and PhD students received governmental support for their research in 2018. The Minister’s Cabinet for Innovations and Technological Development realizes different programmes that may contribute to the achievement of this SDG, such as the Programme of Support to the Establishment of Regional Innovation Start-up Centres, Programme for the Promotion and Popularization of Innovations and Innovative Entrepreneurship and Programme for Supporting the Development and Promoting Women’s Innovative Entrepreneurship. The Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications implements projects for the development of digital technologies and their utilization in different fields, including digitalization of education, media, establishment of the Academic Network of the Republic of Serbia (AMRES) for the development and management of ICT network in Serbia.”<sup>65</sup>

## Government's Perspective on SDG 9: from the point of view of the Office for Information Technology and e-Government (ITE)<sup>66</sup>

When it comes to infrastructure of e-Government, Serbia implements a project aimed at the development of the *National Cloud and Disaster Recovery Data Centre*, which will enable faster and even development of electronic government. This will lower the costs of procurement and maintenance of ICT infrastructure, currently purchased by each individual authority for their own needs. This will enable interoperability and exchange of information within the government system and utilization of the state-of-the-art technologies. The establishment of the Secondary State Data Centre would facilitate further development of the State Cloud and improvement of the level of services, while simultaneously decreasing development and maintenance costs of the ICT system for the entire public administration. The establishment of the State Data Centre would enable the provision of integrated services to all state administration authorities (mail, e-Registry, e-Archive, DMS, etc.). The Secondary State Data Centre would provide a safe location for the backup of data and applications with the primary location in the Data Centre in Belgrade, which would secure safety and continuity of offering electronic services and enable centralized development of individual and shared electronic services of public administration authorities.

Open data are so-called “new oil” and public good. According to the definition provided in the Law on Electronic Government, these are the “data available for reuse, together with metadata, in machine-readable and open-source form.” Opening the data owned by public administration positively influences economic profit, generation of new jobs and better services. Economic potential of the open data in Serbia in 2017 ranged from USD 414 to 829 million, i.e. 1-2% of the GDP. Institutional framework for the opening of data has been made with the establishment of the Office for Information Technology and e-Government which coordinates realization of the project “Open Data Open Possibilities”. This project deals with the support to public administration authorities in opening their data and publishing them on an open data portal. Simultaneously, it stimulates utilization of open data by civil sector and companies. The project resulted in the opening of over 160 sets of data by 34 institutions on the portal. Applications and visualizations have also been developed to enable citizens, among other things, to check the cleanliness of air in their vicinity, concentration of pollen, strength of electro-magnetic radiation. The data concerning public transport in certain cities (Niš) have also been opened. Now one could receive information concerning the duration and path when driving one’s own car, or using public transport to reach the desired destination. Serbia has also begun the project of smart cities, based on open data, aiming at better organization and functioning of the cities and development of the citizens’ quality of life.

## EU Perspective on SDG 9 – Assessments by the European Commission

In the following year, Serbia should specifically improve road safety by undertaking measures for decreasing the number of fatalities and serious injuries; → the focus is on implementation of railway reform, including opening of the market, network statement, infrastructure management and market monitoring, as well as building capacities of the railway regulatory body; → implementing connection reform measures, especially progress in intelligent transport systems (definition of the policy framework, adoption of the laws and building capacities for their implementation, as well as the implementation thereof); improvement of road and railway infrastructure maintenance in line with trustworthy expenditure plans; and facilitating the procedures of border crossing for rail and road traffic

65 UNICEF, Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

66 Full name Office for Information Technology and eGovernment – ITE.



In 2018, Serbia achieved a high degree of harmonization with the EU *Acquis Communautaire* concerning responsibilities by public services in the area of railway transport, while this is still to be achieved when it comes to road transport. The methodology for calculation of compensation and awarding of contracts for public services needs to be updated. Amendments to the *Law on Accident Investigation in Air, Railway and Water Transport* made in October 2018 envisage harmonization with EU legislation when it comes to railway safety. Administrative capacities for all types of transport need to be additionally strengthened. When it comes to road transport, Serbia has achieved a satisfactory level of harmonization. In 2018, Serbia additionally harmonized its legislation when it comes to transport of hazardous matter, training of professional drivers, certificate of professional training, drivers' qualification cards and working hours for crews of the vehicles engaged in road traffic as well as pertaining to tachographs. The legislation on road cargo and passenger traffic is well harmonized with the EU legislation. At the beginning of 2019, Serbia made additional harmonization when it comes to the access to the market of goods, passengers and establishing prices, by adopting new legislation in the field of cargo road traffic and in relation to the market of road traffic rates of transport of goods, and the criteria for the access to the professions of international and domestic operators of road traffic. Previously upward trend when it comes to fatal traffic accidents has been reversed, as the number of such accidents has been falling since 2016. However, the number of car accidents with injuries increased in 2017, before it fell once again in 2018. Further efforts are required to improve records concerning the traffic safety in Serbia by implementing the legislation pertaining to vehicle safety and behaviour of traffic participants, proper construction and maintenance of roads, including removal of accident blackspots, education and awareness raising.

The number of road controls lowered insignificantly in 2018. Strengthening of the capacities for implementation of the inspection and implementation of the fine for violations of the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) is still a priority. In May 2018, Serbia adopted provisions within the framework for implementation of intelligent transport systems. A comprehensive strategy concerning this issue is yet to be adopted and capacities need to be strengthened. Simplifying border crossing procedures and improvements in the system of road maintenance are still priorities, including the adoption of a multiannual plan for the maintenance of the basic network.

Serbia continues with good progress in opening of the railway services' market for five privately owned cargo companies, and these companies have been operating on the market since the beginning of 2019. In May 2018, Serbia adopted new laws on railway, railway safety and interoperability, thus achieving a high degree of harmonization with the EU legislation concerning the establishment of the unique European railway zone.

When it comes to the transport via domestic navigable waterways, Serbia has a high degree of harmonization. The system of river information services is operative and highly interoperable with the systems of EU members. It has been upgraded with the installation of a system to help navigation along the Danube. Serbia still participates in the EU strategy for the development of the Danube region. Serbia is well harmonized with the *Acquis* in the field of air transport. When it comes to transport networks, Serbia has continued to be an active participant in the agenda of connecting with Western Balkans 6, and has further progressed in implementation of the measures of connection reforms. Serbia continues to harmonize its legislation on interoperability.

Future infrastructure investments must fully conform to the EU standards on public procurement, state support and estimate of environmental impact. Projects need to be coordinated through the single project plan, confirming strategic orientation towards trans-European networks. In 2018, Serbia continued to improve its infrastructure for waterway sail, also using European funds for connecting.



## REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Young people in Serbia have a less favourable position than older population, in different areas of social life. As it has already been demonstrated, they are exposed to a higher risk of poverty and they face tougher challenges in their access to employment. However, young people are not a homogeneous group. There are differences among them which reveal especially vulnerable position by certain groups of young people, such as those living in rural and secluded areas, children with disabilities, children living in deprived Roma settlements, or extremely destitute households, children living in foster care, or social care institutions, or those living or/and working in the street, victims of the worst forms of child labour, or trafficking in children. Young women also have fewer opportunities for employment and gaining adequate income. Young people from rural areas lead different lives due to the lack of social services in rural areas, which are important for the development of skills and employment, but also those crucial for the quality of life, such as cultural and recreational services. Their access to the active employment measures provided by the national employment services is more restricted.<sup>67</sup> Despite the improvements introduced by the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, research shows that the position of young people with disabilities on the labour market is significantly less favourable, even in urban environments characterized by more employment opportunities than the rest of the country.<sup>68</sup> Inequalities and unfavourable position of young people lead to the pronounced tendency to emigrate. In 2011, almost a half of young people (46.8%) expressed their wish to emigrate from the country.<sup>69</sup>

### Youth Perspective on SDG 10

The young people participating in the consultations within the VNR believe that the lack of empathy towards and solidarity within the population exposed to poverty represents one of the biggest developmental challenges for Serbia. In their opinion, raising awareness concerning the problems faced with by poor persons and promoted solidarity are preconditions in fighting poverty and inequality. This could be achieved by letting young people spend more time with their peers from poor families and less developed areas. Young people believe that the employment of the youth exposed to poverty is the crucial means in their liberation from poverty.

### Present setbacks and challenges / desirable solutions

**“I think that young people are not in contact with their peers from poor families, because social networks are available to us, but not to them. Solidarity could be promoted via social networks.”**

67 Bogdanov i dr., *Pristup žena i dece uslugama u ruralnim oblastima Srbije i predlog mera za unapređenje stanja (Women's and children's access to services in rural Serbia and the measures proposed to improve the situation)*, SeConS, Belgrade, 2011, available on: <http://www.secons.net/files/publications/45-Pristup%20%C5%BEena%20i%20dece%20uslugama%20u%20ruralnim%20oblastima%20Srbije%20i%20predlog%20mera%20za%20unapre%C4%91enje%20stanja.pdf>.

68 Cvejić, S, Stefanović, S., *Položaj mladih sa invaliditetom na tržištu rada u Gradu Beogradu (Position of young people with disabilities on Belgrade's labour market)*, Forum mladih sa invaliditetom, Belgrade, 2016.

69 Stanojević, D., *Obeležja društvenog položaja mladih (Characteristics of young people's social status)*, in Tomanović et al., *Mladi – naša sadašnjost (Youth – Our Future)*, ISIFF, Belgrade, 2013.

## Emerging issues

An integral strategy of social inclusion does not exist in Serbia, but there are different policies which address the issues of improved social inclusion among vulnerable segments of population. The Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for the Improved Position of Persons with Disabilities includes measures aimed at employing young people with disabilities, especially young women, continuous education of young persons with disabilities and other measures connected to the improvement of their social inclusion, especially for those living in rural areas, and those who left school early, without acquiring basic skills. National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women provides a comprehensive framework for the social inclusion of young people in this population, pertaining to all crucial aspects, including: education, employment, housing, social protection. The Strategy recognizes the problem of dropping out of school among Roma girls caused by early marriage, and involves the measures of raising awareness among Roma families about the importance of education. Strategy of Rural Development is based on the vision of promoting natural resources and cultural heritage management in rural areas, in line with the principles of sustainable development, with the aim of creating rural areas which are attractive to the youth and other populations living there. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management has implemented special measures of support to young agricultural producers. National Youth Strategy recognizes the importance of addressing the issue of inequality among young people and proposes measures specifically adjusted to vulnerable groups of young people.<sup>70</sup>

## LSG Perspective on SDG 10

Strengthening economic and social cohesion by reducing disparities between the richest and poorest areas of Serbia represents one of the core priority aims of the Serbian Government. The poorest LSGs are multiply stricken by unsustainability of securing equal and sustainable opportunities to all their citizens, especially to those who are most deprived and vulnerable to disruptive changes. The poorest LSGs are often the first to be left by their population in search of a better life, so they are the least capable of providing them with necessary living conditions upon their return in line with the Agreement on Readmission. These LSGs are also obliged to grapple with limited opportunities of securing that refugees and internally dispersed persons realize equal rights to healthcare, education and labour as general population of Serbia, finance out of regular budgetary funds. Providing accommodation to refugees and internally displaced persons is the greatest challenge for the poorest and most underdeveloped local communities and local self-government units. Continuous implementation of these obligations is financially covered by the budget and donors' funds.

Building capacities in securing comprehensive enjoyment of rights to refugees and internally displaced persons, who are farthest out of the progress' way, many LSGs have undertaken individual activities to engage with and solve their existential issues and problems. Specifically developed local action plans, additional dedicated budget funding, as well as Migration Councils, are among the models to improve the success of the attempts to reinforce the rights of the most deprived. Disproportion and inequality among territorial units became particularly evident when the most deprived among them had the greatest inflow of migrants. Securing funding for their accommodation in order to permanently solve the problem of this population's housing, has long been the greatest challenge faced with by these LSGs, bearing in mind their limited financial resources. Today, this is no longer the greatest problem of the poorest local self-government units, since permanent accommodation and housing have mostly been secured. Presently, the greatest challenges, conditioned by uneven local development, involve creation of the conditions locally to allow every refugee or internally displaced person to enjoy their right to education, healthcare and availability of decent jobs.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> UNICEF, Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>71</sup> The data provided by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – Alliance of Towns and Municipalities in Serbia (SCTM) as their contribution to developing this VNR.



## **MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE**

### **SDG 11 from the perspective of local self-governments**

The field of urban development and environmental protection covers numerous and significant tasks performed by units of local self-government. Urban planning, utility services, transformation of local economy to carbon neutral and environment friendly production and new services are among the competences of units of local self-government. Apart from protection and enhancement of the environment, the increasingly frequent weather conditions are having increasing effects, therefore emergency management and natural and other disasters risk reduction are becoming increasingly a priority among the tasks of local communities, as well as the need for them to focus on increasing local resilience to natural and man-made disasters in line with the national legal framework, particularly the laws (the Law on Disaster Risk reduction and Emergencies Management, the Law on Disaster Recovery) and other regulations. Certain units of local self-government have for many consecutive years been affected by different natural disasters and accidents and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in responding to this huge challenge is continually dedicated not only to finding palliative solutions but is also working in an accelerated manner on developing a system of structured mechanisms for prevention, adjustment and increasing local resilience to climate change.

Authorities of towns and municipalities in Serbia are intensively adjusting the management of local infrastructure, especially housing and construction, utility, energy and achievement of energy efficiency, and decarbonized local mobility with the targets of SDG 11 in order to achieve sustainability. The challenges to preservation of the environment, human urban development and sustainable provision of utility services which the towns and municipalities in Serbia recognize are common to all of them and are also faced by local communities worldwide. The SCTM will continue to invest efforts so that the guidelines from globally recognized conventions and international mandatory documents be integrated in public policies at both national and local level.

Through all the activities in the field of urban planning, housing and construction which it is implementing the SCTM is investing efforts to assist its members, towns and municipalities, to create in their territories conditions for a better quality of life for their citizens, be it in the field of (1) developing and adopting quality urban plans, (2) more efficient issuing of building permits and construction, or (3) support to developing sustainable housing. The SCTM is advocating the mainstreaming of the principles of sustainability, resilience and inclusiveness into urban plans developed by units of local self-government. The SCTM is promoting the introduction of modern concepts of „smart cities“, implying the use of ICT in service provision and process management in towns. ICT is used for increasing efficiency of city systems, improving the quality of services, inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes, solving environmental problems and managing disaster risks. In addition to transport, energy and the ICT sector, modern urban planning trends impose the need for innovative approaches also in urban planning, design and management.

A possible mechanism for achieving greater sustainability of towns and municipalities is local green councils consisting of representatives of units of LSG and advisory bodies assisting decision-makers in units of LSG with respect to local acts affecting environmental protection. By providing support to the establishment and operation of green councils in towns and municipalities, the SCTM is promoting the participation of the general public and all stakeholders in the planning and decision-making related to environmental protection at local level. For towns and municipalities to adequately and timely respond to the challenges and tasks in the field of risk management and emergencies, the SCTM is supporting a series of long-term measures and solutions, such as: strengthening the capacities of employees, building a civil protection system at local level, identifying tasks in this field and their introduction in proposed staffing plans of local governments and inclusion of this field in local strategic documents and plans.<sup>72</sup>

## **SDG 11 from the perspective of the Government of the Republic of Serbia – the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure – „Legalize Serbia“<sup>73</sup>**

- The Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure (MCTI) will enable all municipalities in Serbia to engage on temporary basis a total of 1, 046 people to work on tasks of legalization. Based on the analysis conducted by the Ministry this number would be sufficient for the legalization in Serbia to be finalized by the end of the term in office of this Government.
- The number of new employees working on the legalization tasks depends on the number of illegally built structures in the territory of individual towns and municipalities. Most people will be engaged in Belgrade - 100, in Novi Sad 58, in Kragujevac 36, in Niš 30, in Požarevac 37.
- Each municipality in Serbia will receive from the total number of employees engaged on legalization tasks a quota of daily and monthly legalization decisions which they must make in order to finalize this effort by the end of the mandate of this Government.
- The Ministry will once every three months control the work of all local self-governments and by means of press conferences and the official website of the Ministry inform the public about their performance in legalization tasks.
- The priority in the legalization process will be to cover family houses and apartments because the Law on legalization was adopted in order to assist citizens to more easily legalize their illegal properties and to leave to their heirs legalized homes.

<sup>72</sup> Information provided by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – the national association of towns and municipalities in Serbia (SCTM) as a contribution to the VNR.

<sup>73</sup> Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Government of the Republic of Serbia is the actor in charge of the programme of legalization measures for illegally built structures in the Republic of Serbia, aimed at achieving by the end of the Government’s mandate the situation in which not a single illegal building is constructed.



The economic analysis of legalization:

- With legalization of their property citizens increase the value of their property which, if they wish, they can also sell. Legalized apartments have a much higher market value than those which are not registered in the relevant property registers.
- Units of local self-government will be able, if they complete the work within the stated deadline, to count on taxes collected just from legalization of at least RSD 8,437,500,000 (about EUR 70 million). The total expenditures for newly engaged employees for the tasks of legalization would be about RSD 1,318,000,000 which best illustrates how cost-effective legalization is.
- Revenues to be collected by local self-government units after legalization as property tax will amount to hundreds of millions of RSD annually.

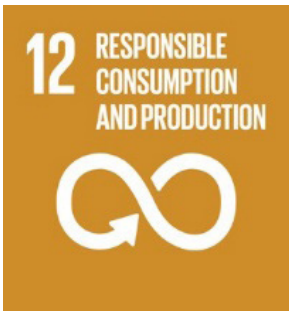
Legalization during the first year in numbers:

- Since the adoption of the Law on Legalization on 20 November 2015 until today a total of 364,400 illegal properties has been identified in Serbia.
- All units of local self-government in the first year of the adoption of the Law on Legalization issued 37,850 legalization decisions. This is more than during the first year of all preceding five legalization laws together.

### **SDG 11 from the perspective of the European Union - evaluation by the European Commission**

Regional policy is the key instrument of the EU for investment into sustainable and inclusive economic growth, socially equitable and territorially balanced. EU member states are accountable for its implementation, which requires adequate administrative capacities and a solid financial project management and implementation.

Serbia is moderately prepared for regional policy and coordination of structural instruments. Certain progress has been achieved in implementation of last year's recommendations by the adoption of the action plan for fulfilment of requirements of EU cohesion policy. During the next year, Serbia should implement the recommendations of 2018, particularly: → Start implementation of the adopted action plan to fulfil the requirements of the EU cohesion policy; → Ensure adequate capacities for the implementation of indirect management programmes within the EU Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance and guarantee that key posts in structures will be filled on permanent basis.
--



## ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

### SDG 12 from the perspective of UNDP

UNDP has initiated the project *Circular Economy Platform for Sustainable Development in Serbia* in 2018, in order to support the transformation to circular economy in Serbia and thus contribute to reducing the pressure on the environment, increasing the security of supply of raw materials, increasing competitiveness, innovation in growth and creation of jobs. Circular economy has an important role in supporting the implementation of SDGs, particularly SDGs 9, 11, 12, 13, and 17.

Within this project, the UNDP is focused on building partnerships with the Government of the republic of Serbia, the private sector, the academic community, creative industries and civil society organizations, in order to introduce the concept of circular economy, supporting transformative dialogue for moving from linear to circular production and consumption, focusing on sectors of single-use plastics, textile and furniture, and food waste. Additionally, UNDP has supported the Ministry of Environmental Protection in identifying key actors and organizing the first joint session in December 2018 with the Working Group consisting of the key actors for improving the circular economy programme in Serbia. Also, in order to start building a circular culture, among the younger generation, a series of learning sessions and creative workshops is being organized with pupils. Pupils are encouraged to think about reducing waste in their daily lives and think of creative ways of using waste which is still being generated to make new products or works of art.

The overall goal of all these activities is to support sustainable growth in Serbia, which will encourage innovation and competitiveness, protect the environment and health, at the same time ensuring that *no one is left behind*.



## TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

The majority of young people in Serbia (80%) believes that environmental protection should be among the key Government priorities. Surveys indicate that the youth in Serbia is environmentally more active than the older generations.<sup>74</sup> Almost one fourth of the young people (aged 18-34) participated in public meetings related to environmental issues, almost one third of them have signed petitions, 17% took part in environmental protests, 11% have financed organizations for environmental protection, and 6% has been in contact with politicians in order to advocate responsible environmental policy.

### Perspective of the youth on SDG 13

The youth which participate in consultations within the VNR expressed great interest for raising awareness on climate change. They believe that climate change is an important issue, which is not getting sufficient political or public attention. They think that more education is needed on climate change and environmental protection within the formal education system. In their opinion, ecology should be introduced as a mandatory school subject in primary and secondary education. Other school subjects should also to a greater extent include lessons on climate change and environmental protection.

#### *Emerging issues*

"The Youth Strategy includes as one of its specific objectives the strengthening of capacities of young people to engage in environmental initiatives and participate actively in decision-making related to climate change and environmental protection. The Strategy of Education Development in Serbia recognizes the importance of environmental education and plans to have this subject introduced as an extra-curricular activity within formal education at different levels. The National Environmental Protection Programme was the key policy framework until 2019, and currently the draft new National Environmental Protection Programme is in the adoption process for the period from 2019 to 2025."<sup>75</sup>

### SDG 13 from the perspective of local self-government

The SCTM recognized the relevance of fighting climate change at local level and is providing support to towns in order to find ways of adjustment to and mitigation of negative effects of climate change in their regions. By publishing the manual for planning of adaptation to climate change in local communities in Serbia in 2018, the SCTM has created a single methodological framework for this field in our country, based on global best practice. The first such plan of adaptation to climate change was developed with the support of the SCTM in the municipality Bečej and as such it will serve other towns and municipalities as an example of best practice. The SCTM also promotes among its members the principle of sustainable urban mobility, as a way to simultaneously reduce the negative effects on the environment from motorized transport in towns.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Vukelić, J, Stanojević, D. (2012) Ekološki aktivizam mladih u Srbiji, Sociologija (Environmental Activism of Youth in Serbia, Sociology) Vol. 54, No. 2: 387-399.

<sup>75</sup> UNICEF, Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>76</sup> Information provided by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – the national association of towns and municipalities in Serbia (SCTM) as a contribution to the VNR.



## **CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

There used to be a dilemma that monitoring progress in achieving SDG 14 and the relevant targets does not apply to the Republic of Serbia, as a landlocked country. In the course of the reporting process and consultations along with serious analysis of what to include and how in the VNR it became clear to the Government if not the whole society that we have to take care of the achievement of target 14.1. – By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution. Targets 14.3 compared to 14.1 is no less relevant for the Republic of Serbia, especially since its achievement requires better and wider scientific cooperation at all levels. Target 14.4. is also mandatory for us because we are a part of the single practice of sustainable fishery and preservation of the fish fund in Europe, and also because fishing requires that there are no gaps in scientifically based management plans.

The very open consideration of all the positive and negative factors of possible skipping the monitoring of achievement of SDG 14 and, along with the other mentioned targets, also target 14.c – ensure the full implementation of international law, as reflect in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for States parties thereto, including, where applicable, existing regional and international regimes for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by the parties – resulted in the reasonable decision that Agenda 2030 is a plan of action for everyone and everywhere, and particularly for a country, like Serbia, which wishes to walk on high-heels of the principles of international law.



## **PROTECT, RESTORE, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS**

### **SDG 15 from the perspective of the Government of the Republic of Serbia Ministry of Environmental Protection**

By consistently fulfillin its commitments under international, global and regional environmental conventions, Serbia has long been striving to integrate environmental protection and conservation objectives into a number of sectoral policies. Finally, in 2017, it became necessary to establish, coherently with the SDGs, the accountability of a special ministry for the consistent achievement of a number of goals and targets, through plans and programmes, measures and activities that enable measurable improvement of the application of high standards and ever-increasing demands for a healthy environment. It would be hard to single out the most important one among the SDGs related to environmental protection, but for Serbia, it would be the preservation of biodiversity, as an obligation towards the present, and even more towards future generations.

A balanced, indivisible triangle of energy, the environment and transport, ensures social and economic advancement within the limits of the planet's endurance, through adequate responses to the question of what the nature intended to be here. Also, balancing the indivisible triangle of government, people and needs, in the management of health on the planet, is the only way to ensure that no one be deprived of health, because they live in an environment of restricted possibilities. Therefore, in striving to achieve the SDG 15, access must be provided to the most disadvantaged members of society to everything they are deprived of when this goal is disrupted.

Biodiversity is a precious asset for every country that preserves it carefully. The new era of the SDGs requires a change in the way of thinking and the understanding that every cent invested in environmental protection today is a capital investment. Sustainability, whether economic or social, cannot be achieved if there is no vegetation where it is needed, and where the soil is barren. The priceless resources, such as medicinal herbs, will heal no one if contaminated by all sorts of products, from controversial production to heating and cooking utilizing not only low-quality coal, but also biomass that releases high levels of greenhouse gases.

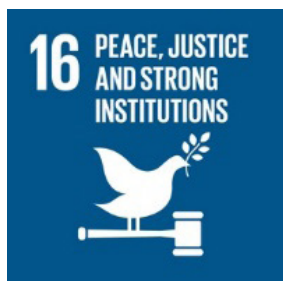
Since 2013, Serbia has a National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform, in accordance with UN recommendations. In accordance with the Law on Emergency Situations, the National Platform is an operational and professional body designed to coordinate protection activities, as well as direct policies aimed at disaster risk reduction. In 2018, the Platform became the Law on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management. The Law on Soil Protection (2015) regulates the protection of soil, systematic monitoring of the condition and quality of soil, measures for remediation and re-cultivation, inspection oversight and other related issues of importance for the protection and preservation of the soil as a natural resource of national interest. The provisions of this law apply to the soil as a natural resource, regardless of the form of ownership, its purpose and use.

The NNKD recognizes agriculture, hydrology, forestry, health and biodiversity as the sectors most affected by climate change. According to the NNKD, some of the scenarios show variations of up to 50% in crop yield by 2100, provided the current trend in irrigation continues. Serbia is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 9.8% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

The impact of natural disasters is intensified in cases where natural disasters such as storms, floods, fires or earthquakes cause large industrial accidents. Such technological disasters, triggered by natural hazards, also known as Natech events, create simultaneous emergency situations that push the already overloaded capacities in many countries to the brink. This is a serious problem, bearing in mind the expected frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, as seen during the floods of 2014, 2016 and 2019. When extreme weather conditions affect industrial plants, this can lead to the accidental release of chemicals with severe consequences within as well as across state borders. The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (2009) provides a legal and intergovernmental framework designed to support its signatory states, including Serbia, in reducing the risk of technological disasters due to climate change and natural disasters.

Plans for the period to 2020 envisage the preservation of freshwater ecosystems, management of all types of forests and combating desertification. In this period, the plan is also to introduce measures to prevent and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems, alongside activities to integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning for the needs of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and reporting. These activities are related to the ten-year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production in which all countries will participate, depending on the level of development and capacities of each country. By the end of 2030, it would be necessary to ensure the preservation of mountain ecosystems, their biodiversity, with the aim of improving their capacities so that they provide benefits essential for sustainable development.





## PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

Peaceful and inclusive societies provide the best environment for a child's development. Conflicts, violence, and exclusion from the decision-making processes that concern the society and its future disenfranchise children and youth, undermining their human potential. Violent disciplining is harmful for the child's development. Although its incidence has been in decline, it still has a strong presence in child-raising practices. Almost half of children aged 1 - 14 years have experienced some form of corporal punishment or psychological violence by parents or other caregivers in the month preceding MICS survey in 2014<sup>77</sup>.

Young people are discriminated against on different grounds: age (29%), financial status (28%), sex (24%), political views (18%), religion (18%), ethnicity (10%), language (8%) or sexual orientation (5%). In total 50% of young people reported some experience of discrimination.<sup>78</sup> The situation is alarming among children with disabilities. Almost all (96%) parents of children with disabilities reported at least some form of discrimination their child faced in access to services due to barriers, inadequate equipment, services that are not accommodated for children with disabilities and delays.<sup>79</sup>

According to a survey on youth in Serbia more than one third (37%) are dissatisfied with democracy, 12% are satisfied while the majority do not have an opinion or do not know how to assess this phenomenon (26% and 25%). Slightly less than one quarter claimed that they would accept some political function, while the majority of almost three quarters would refuse such a function. Discrimination is most often experienced in access to education and health care. The highest prevalence of discriminative experiences was found among children with physical, intellectual and mental disabilities.

### Youth perspective on SDG 16

One third of the youth who participated in the U-Report platform emphasized the need to improve the safety of youth in their own environment, while 16% pointed to the need for a safer internet, and 7% for better security in schools.<sup>80</sup> Most youth (67%) who participated in the survey of the U-Report platform on violence against children assessed that they were well-informed about forms of violence and available support for cases of violence. Most stated that they would report violence if they witnessed it (82%), but most of them would report it to parents (34%), while a smaller share stated they would report it to the authorities, such as the police (17%), the school (16%), and an even smaller percentage to other institutions and organizations. Those who are not ready to report a case of violence, state fear of further victimization or bigger problems as a reason for not reporting.<sup>81</sup> Youth participating in consultations emphasize the need to raise awareness about violence among children and better protection of children against violence in different settings.

77 UNICEF, ECARO, data from the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS), table with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators for children

78 Popadic, D., Pavlovic, Z., Mihailovic, S. (2019) Young People in Serbia 2018-2019, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, p: 25, [http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-201904\\_1.pdf](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/15295-201904_1.pdf)

79 NOOIS (2017) Situation analysis: the position of children with developmental impairments and disabilities in Serbia, Belgrade.

80 <https://serbia.ureport.in/poll/1047/>

81 <https://serbia.ureport.in/poll/900/>

## Present setbacks and challenges / desirable solutions

*“Support of psychologists in the school is needed, without stigmatizing and covering up violence.”*

*“We should work with parents and teachers to familiarize them with the principles of psychotherapy and proper education of children.”*

*“The influence of youth on policies should be enabled in different ways, not only through political parties.”*

*Participants in the youth consultations*

### *Areas that require advice and support (policy response)*

The Anti-Discrimination Law, the Strategy for the prevention of and protection from discrimination and the Law on Youth prohibit discrimination of youth in general. Specifically, discrimination is prohibited on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, political affiliation and other identity characteristics or aspects. The measures defined in the Gender Equality Strategy for the period from 2016 to 2020 focus on tackling the problem of gender-based violence. The draft new strategy for the prevention of violence against children (2018–2022) focuses on the improvement of prevention and systematic efforts to change attitudes, values and behaviour with regard to violence against children, to improve interventions and normative, institutional and organizational mechanisms, including a strong mechanism for supervising implementation. Serbia is encouraged to ensure the full protection of children victims of domestic violence, and explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in the family. Moreover, as stated in the Action Plan for Negotiation Chapter 23, the adoption of a new strategy for the prevention of violence against children, should be followed by a review and the mandatory application of the operating procedures for the protection of children against violence, while the health sector’s Special operating procedures for the protection of children against violence has already been revised.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> UNICEF, Sustainable development for and by children and youth – Contribution to Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The National Youth Strategy underlines the importance of improving the safety of youth and increasing their participation in society. New steps were taken to increase the level of security of youth, first and foremost with the adoption of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, which entered into force in June 2017, as well as with the provisions of the Criminal Code on rape and related non-consensual sexual intercourse, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage and genital mutilation. The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted amendments to the Criminal Code on 21 May 2019 introducing a life sentence to replace the maximum term of imprisonment from 30 to 40 years. In line with the initiative of the Tijana Jurić Foundation, a life sentence was introduced for the criminal offence of rape (Art. 178(4) of the Criminal Code), rape of an incapacitated person (Art. 179(3) of the Criminal Code), statutory rape of a minor (Art. 180(3) of the Criminal Code) and exploitation of public office to commit rape (Art. 181(5) of the Criminal Code). Thus, a life sentence is prescribed for the foregoing offences when they resulted in the death of the victim or were perpetrated against a child.

## **Local self-government perspectiv on SDG 16**

The Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia is committed to active inclusion policies to enable persons with disabilities to participate in public life actively and on an equal footing. The Law on Social Protection created the legal framework to enable organizations of persons with disabilities to become social protection service providers and partners to local governments in the implementation of active policies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the local communities. The local government units financially support social protection services for persons with disabilities, such as: day care services for children and youth with developmental impairments and disabilities, day care services for adults with disabilities, personal assistance services, supported living services for persons with disabilities, and respite care services.

Local governments are responsible for the protection and promotion of the security and welfare of children, youth, women and other vulnerable groups in cooperation with the civil sector and private sectors. One of the answers to this issue is the signing of the Pact of cities and regions to stop sexual violence against children. The SCTM member towns and municipalities are parties to this Pact and long-term participants in the One in Five campaign for the prevention of sexual violence against children. Also, as regards the application of different national level instruments, local agreement / operating procedures were adopted on cross-sectoral cooperation in the prevention and protection from violence. Most operating procedures primarily concern the protection of women victims of gender-based or domestic violence and cross-sector cooperation in protecting all victims of domestic violence as well as children victims of violence.

The normative and institutional framework for the protection of the rights of national minorities differs depending on the town and municipality. LSGs have different responsibilities with respect to the protection mechanisms. There are different mechanisms for ensuring that national minorities enjoy the right to the official use of their language and alphabet. Setbacks in the achievement of this right are caused by lack of capacities of local governments, and typical problems include the lack of funds for the functioning of this mechanisms, for the translation and printing of documents and forms in several languages, road signs for designations and topographical indications, for setting up special services and/or for the employment of translators, for setting up e-Government services in several languages, and the impossibility to ensure adequate representation of national minorities in local government staff and staff members who speak the language of national minorities and the majority population.

As regards the engagement of Roma coordinators, the practice differs from one local government to another. To date, 47 Roma coordinators were engaged in towns, municipalities, and urban municipalities of Serbia under different contracts.

Through the development and implementation of Local Action Plans (LAP) for Roma Inclusion, the local governments are directly improving the activity and coordination of local Roma inclusion mechanisms. Local action plans contribute to the improvement of cooperation among institutions engaged in different aspects of socioeconomic inclusion of Roma, both men and women. Also, strategic and action planning, as well as sustainable budgeting of inclusive measures at local level, the correlation with the national strategic framework and participatory approach are crucial for the improvement of the socioeconomic position of Roma. Currently, the number of local governments who have a LAP for Roma inclusion in 2019 stands at 39, and, according to plans, 20 more LAPs will be adopted under the IPA 2016 Programme this year. The current situation is such that local governments need help in updating and/or developing local action plans. Bearing this in mind, the role of Roma coordinators is very important in terms of initiating, creating and implementing/monitoring local policies for the improvement of the position of Roma at local level.

Also, in 2018, 10 local government established units Local Multisectoral Coordination Bodies (LMCB) as working bodies of the Municipality Council for managing the Roma inclusion policy and improving the position of Roma. This new mechanism in the form of a political body composed of the highest representatives of key institutions in the local community additionally guarantees the sustainability of Roma inclusion at local level.

Despite the existence of a legal and institutional frame, significant challenges remain for the implementation of the principle of accountability, especially anti-corruption as one of its key elements. According to a recommendation in the Screening Report for Chapter 23, anti-corruption measures at the government level should be further developed, implemented and their impact assessed, as the local government was identified as one of the high-risk areas of corruption. Anti-Corruption Agency analyses point to numerous risks of corruption in the activity of the local government, of which a significant share is local government-specific. A set of measures has been envisaged for the prevention of corruption in the local government, among which the most important ones are the adoption of local anti-corruption plans (LACP) and the establishment of permanent working bodies of the local town council for supervising their implementation, enabling budget transparency and strengthening mechanisms for the participation of both general public and stakeholders in the adoption of local regulations. Bearing in mind the planned reforms, the local government faces significant challenges in the implementation of the envisaged anti-corruption measures.

In early 2017, the Anti-Corruption Agency and SCTM jointly developed the LACP Model, a detailed instructional document designed to help the local governments develop their own bodies for monitoring implementation, which was printed and distributed to all SCTM members.

The SCTM is implementing a project for the Improvement of Good Governance at Local Level under the support programme funded by the Swiss government for the improvement of good governance and social inclusion at local government level (SwissPRO) – implemented by UNOPS in the period from 2018 to 2021. This project provides support to local government for building the capacities for the implementation of the good governance principle in their work.

Aside from that, the strategic orientation of SCTMs is to establish a centre of excellence and expertise in good governance, as a driver and catalyst of development in Serbia. Curbing corruption is an important issue of the concept of good governance as a whole, and therefore also an important part of the SCTM's approach in this area. The SCTM developed a good governance index to assess local governments, which was implemented on a sample of 60 local governments.

## SDG 16 from the perspective of the Human and Minority Rights Office of the Government of Serbia

The Government of Serbia is continuously monitoring the application of the recommendations provided by the UN human rights mechanisms (Treaty Bodies and the Human Rights Council), through the activity of the Council for monitoring compliance with the recommendations of the UN human rights mechanisms. The Office for Human and Minority Rights is providing expert and administrative-technical support to the activity of the Council.

Serbia is the only country in the region and one of the few countries globally that has a structural system in place for monitoring all UN recommendations. These efforts have been recognized and positively assessed by the UN treaty bodies and the UN Human Rights Council as well as the European Commission in its annual Serbia progress report for 2018.

The Council developed a plan for monitoring the recommendations thus enabling, for the first time, a clear overview of all recommendations received by Serbia, as well as the status of their compliance. The plan currently has 392 recommendations. For every recommendation, the plan designates the institutions responsible for its implementation, a timeframe and status. To enable the efficient monitoring of compliance with the recommendations, the Office for Human and Minority Rights, in cooperation with civil society, independent state bodies and the Parliament, and with the support of the UN Office in Serbia and the OSCE mission in Serbia, developed indicators for the monitoring of compliance with recommendations, and measureable outputs of the departments. Our plan in the forthcoming period is to link every recommendation of the UN mechanisms to Sustainable Development Goals set in the UN 2030 Agenda, and to measures from the Action Plan for Negotiations Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights in Serbia's EU accession process.

This type of monitoring has enabled better coordination in the process of implementation of recommendations and improved the procedure of reporting to UN mechanisms.

Recognizing the role of civil society and their contribution to the promoting human rights and rule of law in the Republic of Serbia, the Council for monitoring the application of the UN human rights mechanisms involved civil society organizations in its activities by creating and signing a Memorandum on Cooperation with all interested civil society organizations and networks of organizations (14), pointing once again to the common interest of all stakeholders in the process of improving human rights in the Republic of Serbia.

To ensure the efficient monitoring and implementation of recommendations, with the support of the OSCE mission in Serbia and the UN Human Rights Team in Serbia, a Platform of organizations was created for cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms, consisting of 18 civil society organizations. This platform should contribute to better understanding and implementing the commitments Serbia undertook by ratifying UN conventions and providing access to data at local level.

Also, in November 2018 in Belgrade, the Council established a dialogue with the countries in the region for the purpose of exchanging good practices in the process of application of recommendations received from UN treaty bodies. In addition to members of the Government of Serbia Council for monitoring compliance with UN recommendations, MPs, independent bodies, international and civil society organization, the conference was also attended by representatives from four countries in the region: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia.

The Council is continuously working on strengthening the capacities of its members and their deputies for monitoring compliance with recommendations. To that effect, a set of trainings was organized for representatives of civil society organizations, as well as independent state authorities, by the Office for Human and Minority Rights, with the support of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Serbia and the OSCE mission in Serbia.

With the support of the UNCT in Serbia, the Office for Minority and Human Rights developed a website of the Council for monitoring compliance with the UN human rights mechanisms' recommendations.<sup>83</sup>

Having in mind the foregoing considerations, the Office for Human and Minority Rights integrated all of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into its sectoral policies through its activities aimed at supporting this governmental body.

83 Office for Human and Minority Rights, <http://vladinsavetun.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/>.





## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

For Serbia, SDG 17 is a way of promoting its own vision of sustainable development, without causing harm to anyone, whilst actually achieving all of the Sustainable Development Agenda set by the 2030 Agenda, without neglecting or bypassing any of its principles. The value of partnership for this goal and to reach this goal for the entire Government and society at large is reaffirmed despite all the challenges. Obstacles to preserving old partnerships and establishing new ones have not discouraged anyone in Serbia who has chosen a sustainably developed Serbia, in a sustainably developed EU, as their vision of the future of this country. Improving the coherence of policies to become sustainable is achieved through global partnerships for this goal and partnerships within countries and across borders, mobilizing and exchanging knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources (SDG targets 17.14 and 17.16).

Serbia attaches the utmost importance to partnerships, and will continue to foster them, by providing mutual assistance and support, in particular by fostering infrastructural, economic and cultural ties. Serbia gives special consideration to improving relations in the region, deepening and concretizing them to exchange experiences in seeking practical and applicable solutions in achieving SDGs. The Government of the Republic of Serbia, with the support of the UN Country Team in Serbia and GIZ, organized a *Sub-regional Conference on Promoting Progress in Implementing the 2030 Agenda* in September 2018. The conference confirmed that common goals are reached through sound partnership and cooperation – creating a prosperous society, contributing to global stability and progress and, above all, the well-being of its citizens.

Serbia is receiving assistance from numerous partners, including the UN agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors. Making a comparative assessment of the support received is not easy, because support is provided in different forms, for different purposes, and is reported on in different ways. The Government of Serbia and the World Bank estimate that the country receives between USD 0.5 and 1 billion each year from development partners. It would be useful if Serbia (and other receiving countries) could better map the support provided in relation to SDG criteria and aspirations, as this would help ensure that the aid supports sustainability goals. Therefore, the figure in the text below serves only as an illustration, and they cannot be used as a basis for estimating future support and assistance budgets. However, donors have made it clear that delivery of support is often delayed due to poor implementation and lack of capacities of those on the receiving end.

## Bilateral grants<sup>84</sup>

Table: Support by development partners in millions of dollars; SDG 1-17 Source: UN assessment and estimate.

Note: The table combines subsidies and loans, and there have been difficulties in collecting data, as elsewhere.

Figure: Estimated contribution to SDGs by development partners

It should be noted that SDG 1 and SDG 10, which are very important for combating inequality, poverty and social exclusion, receive very little funding from development partners. Serbia greatly values and wishes to foster partnerships with everyone. Having in mind Serbia's commitment to progress, it is expected that, in the future, Serbia will also be a provider of various forms of development assistance.

Contribution to the achievement of SDGs by some international financial institutions (IFIs):

- **GIZ:** total grants awarded to Serbia reached USD 234 million, and can be linked to many SDGs, including SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), SDG 13 (Climate changes) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the goals).
- **USAID:** USAID's budget portfolio in Serbia is USD 64 million. One third is related to SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).
- **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC):** the current SDC subsidy portfolio in Serbia stands at USD 10 million, and is mainly linked to SDGs 16, 17, 1 and 8.<sup>85</sup>
- **Swedish International Development Assistance:** A USD 56 million portfolio is linked to SDG 16, or SDG 17, as well as SDGs 5, 6, 8 and 12.
- **ADA:** the portfolio amounts to USD 27.5 million and all projects related to various SDGs. They can be linked to SDGs 2, 8, 10, 12 and 13.
- **DFID (Department for International Development):** funds worth USD 26.2 million, through projects, half of this amount is linked to SDG 16, and the other half to SDG 17. An additional project addresses SDG 10.
- **NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation):** the total amount of NORAD's portfolio in Serbia is \$10 million. The portfolio can be linked to SDGs 16, 8, 1 and 17.

<sup>84</sup> Information received from bilateral donors is based on multi-year programmes that can be linked with particular SDGs. Information is not available on an annual basis and may not be exhaustive and comprehensive.

<sup>85</sup> The given values represent cumulative data on SDC results within ongoing programmes, that ended by August 2018, (within the Swiss budget (SDC and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs – SECO) of USD 24 million). Additional funds of USD 105 million have been earmarked under the 2018-2020 Strategy.

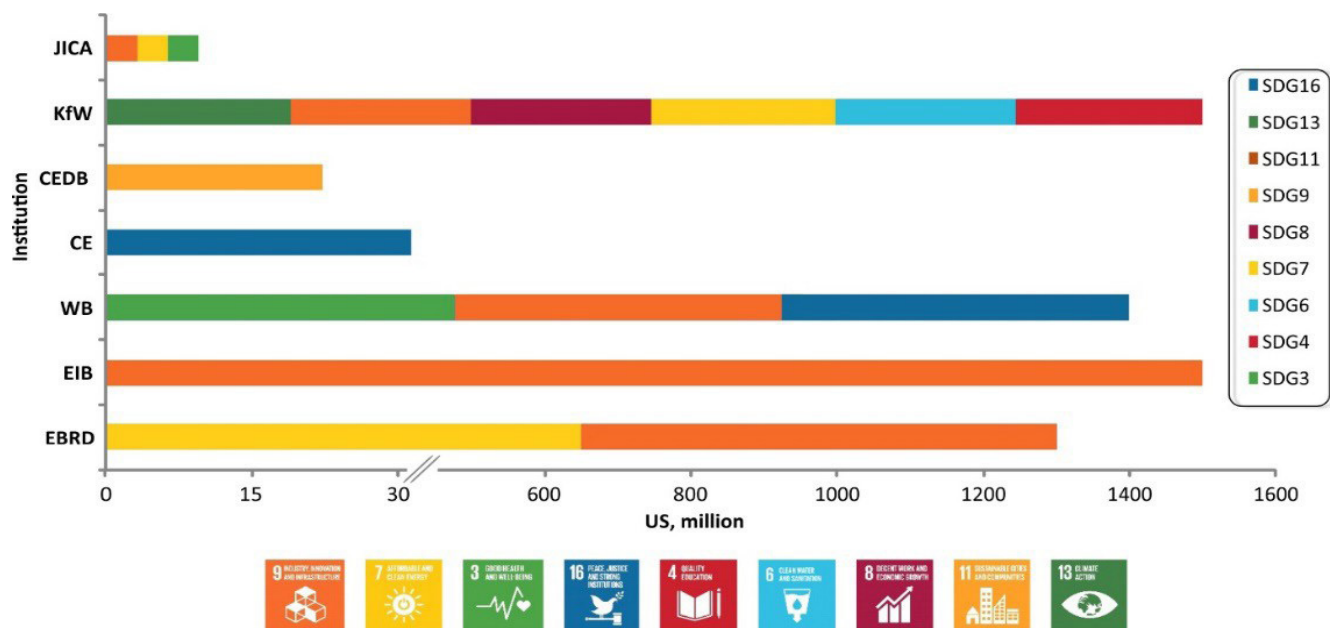


Figure: Contribution to the achievement of SDGs by international financial institutions<sup>86</sup>

Serbia believes that the principle of *leaving no one behind* is the underlying foundation of SDG 17 and that each country is obliged to help all other countries in achieving all SDGs and the 2030 Agenda overall vision of a changed world and is responsible for making sure that its efforts to achieve sustainable development do not negatively affect the development of any other country. Therefore, Serbia treasures partnerships and will continue to do so, by providing mutual assistance and support, in particular by building infrastructural, economic and cultural ties. That is why Serbia devotes special attention to improving regional relations, deepening and concretizing them for the purpose of exchanging experiences to find practical and applicable solutions in achieving SDGs. In September 2018, a *Sub-regional Conference* was organized by the IMWG on Promoting Progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda, with the support of the UN Country Team in Serbia and GIZ.

The conference was opened by the Prime Minister of Serbia, Ana Brnabić, and representatives of government institutions, academia, civil society organizations, business entities from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, North Macedonia, Germany, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Serbia, as well as representatives of the UN, took active participation. The conference work was conducted in five sessions: high-level opening ceremony; high-level panel on synergies between the EU accession and the 2030 Agenda; the importance of the Voluntary National Review and reporting data on the 2030 Agenda for EU Member States and candidate countries for EU membership; the principle “Leave no one behind” and funding sustainable development. *The Sub-regional Conference on Promoting Progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda* confirms that a common goal can be reached through a well-developed partnership and cooperation – creating a prosperous society, which contributes to global stability and progress and, above all, the well-being of its citizens. Over 150 participants actively contributed to the success of the conference, and the countries proved ready to work on achieving the SDGs by continually investing their efforts and resources. A special contribution to the discussion on the practical aspect of the Agenda 2030 implementation, through examples of good practice, was provided through the participation of business representatives gathered under the Global Compact in Serbia, as well as the civil society organizations. The participants assessed the conference as extremely successful and expressed their hope that good foundations were set for continuing regional cooperation on achieving the SDGs.

<sup>86</sup> UN MAPS Mission, *National Development and Agenda 2030: Policy Support for Advancing SDG Progress in Serbia – Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Growth „Leaving no-one Behind“*, UN MAPS Inter-agency Team Report, Final Report, 15 May 2019, pp. 79-80.

## 7. Means of implementation

In addition to the fact that the achievement of each SDG is pursued within one or more sectoral policies, albeit in an integrated and coherent way incorporated into Serbia's coherent sustainable development policy as part of the country's EU accession process, and in line with the transition to sustainability of the European Union as a global leader in this process, and is funded from the budget, financing for SDGs has explicitly received its own first-ever line in the 2019 national budget. It is now part of the budget allocation to the Office of the Minister without portfolio responsible for demography and population policy. These funds, in the amount of RSD 20 million, according to the Republic of Serbia Budget Law for 2019 are the seed of the national SDG budgeting.

The bulk of financial resources for SDG implementation in Serbia is provided through the use of the EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). The Ministry of European Integration coordinates national IPA and the Minister of European Integration, in her capacity as the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC), is the European Commission's key counterpart for the overall process: strategic planning, coordination of programming, monitoring of implementation, evaluation and reporting on IPA II assistance.

The NIPAC performs her functions with support of the Technical Secretariat, or the Sector for the Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU funds and Development Aid within the European Integration Ministry. In addition, a separate Sector is responsible for Cross-Border and Territorial Cooperation Programmes, as well as for Macro-Regional Strategies (Danube Strategy and Adriatic-Ionian Strategy). Since two out of the four Ministry sectors deal with EU funds, one of the Ministry's key responsibilities concerns the coordination of development aid to the Republic of Serbia and in this scope, primarily the EU's support.

\* Recognizing the importance of EU funds for the development of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of European Integration for the first time created the Group for the Establishment and Development of the System for the Management of the European Union Structural and Cohesion Funds, as well as the Group for Cooperation with the Bodies and Organizations at the Regional and Local Level, in order to make the use of EU funds more efficient. This allows for the systematic preparations for future EU pre-accession funds, which are expected to contribute not only to the overall development of the Republic of Serbia, but also to overcoming significant regional and local disparities.

According to the European Commission Indicative Strategy Paper for Serbia for the period 2014-2020, EUR 1.5 billion have been indicatively allocated for support to the Republic of Serbia through annual action programmes. Out of this amount, some 36% of the funds are planned for reforms in the areas of rule of law, democracy and public administration, 50% for enhancing socio-economic development and investment into human resources and 14% for agriculture and rural development.

Five programming cycles have been successfully completed to date, and the programming for IPA 2019 and 2020 is underway. The so-far approved EU support amounts to slightly over EUR 1 billion.

## **A good practice example:**

### **Progress in growing into sustainability by increasing the success rate in using IPA II funds for implementation of development interventions**

#### **1.1. Programming of IPA2014-2018**

According to the European Commission's Indicative Strategy Paper for Serbia for the period 2014-2020, EUR 1.56 billion have been indicatively allocated for support to the Republic of Serbia through annual action programmes. Of that sum, about 36% of the funds are planned for reforms in the areas of rule of law, democracy and public administration, 50 % for enhancing socio-economic development and investing in human resources and 14% for agriculture and rural development.

Five programming cycles have been successfully completed to date and the programming of IPA 2019 and 2020 is underway. The so-far approved EU support amounts to slightly over EUR 1 billion.

#### **IPA 2014**

The total value of the EU contribution to the IPA2014 Programme is EUR 179.1 million which, together with the EUR 10 million approved from regional IPA for flood recovery, amounts to EUR 189.1 million.

The Programme covers interventions under the following sectors: public administration reform, home affairs, energy, competitiveness and human resources and social development. In addition, the support also includes project and technical document preparation, support to EU integrations and co-financing of the costs of participation in EU Programmes.

As an illustration – out of the above allocation, EUR 72 million was committed for the implementation of rehabilitation measures related to the consequences of floods that affected the Republic of Serbia in 2014 and for future flood prevention.

#### **IPA 2015**

The total value of the EU contribution to the IPA 2015 Programme is EUR 196.6 million. The value of the overall IPA II allocation for Serbia for 2015, including IPARD and support to civil society organizations amounts to EUR 216.1 million\*.

The Programme covers interventions in the following sectors: public administration reform, justice, home affairs and transport. The Programme also includes actions related to the process of European integrations and approximation to the EU *acquis communautaire*, as well as the co-financing of the costs arising from participation in EU Programmes.

As an illustration, it is worth mentioning the EUR 80 million granted for the co-financing of the implementation of priority interventions foreseen by the Action Plan for the implementation of Public Administration Reform Strategy (sectoral budget support). In addition, considerable support under the Programme is dedicated to investment in transport infrastructure (sectoral budget support). Priority projects for support in the area of transport include the modernization and reconstruction of the railway Niš - Brestovac and construction of an intermodal terminal in Belgrade, in the total amount of EUR 55 million.

\* Although the indicative amount of support to Serbia in 2015, according to the Commission's Decision, was EUR 201.4 million, given the maturity and readiness of the proposed actions, the European Commission approved a Programme which, together with the allocations for IPARD and Support to Civil Society Organizations, exceeds this amount by EUR 15 million.

#### **IPA 2016**

The total value of the EU contribution to the IPA 2016 Programme is EUR 166.4 million. The overall IPA II allocation for Serbia for 2016, including IPARD and Support to Civil Society Organizations, amounts to EUR 189.4 million\*.

The Programme covers interventions in the following sectors: justice, competitiveness, human resources and social development and home affairs. It includes a standalone action, whose aim is to boost local development in 99 towns and municipalities in Serbia (EU PRO), as well as the activities related to support to European



integrations, approximation to the EU *Acquis Communautaire* and co-financing of the costs of participation in EU Programmes.

The EU will also considerably support the education system reform through sectoral budget assistance in the amount of EUR 27.4 million, in order to increase its quality, relevance and inclusiveness and to create synergies between employment policies and inclusion. The reform of the integrated border management sector is also supported with a total amount of EUR 28 million.

\* The total amount of funds is lower than the amount of EUR 207.9 million foreseen in the Indicative Strategy Paper for Serbia, since the European Commission adopted a decision on reducing annual allocation for all IPA beneficiaries by 10%, in order to direct these funds to resolving the migration crisis.

## **IPA 2017**

The total value of the EU contribution to the IPA 2017 Programme is EUR 138.2 million. The overall IPA II allocation for Serbia for 2017, including IPARD, Regional Housing Programme and Support to Civil Society Organizations amounts EUR 186.7 million\*.

The programme covers actions in the following sectors: environment, energy and rule of law. The Programme also includes interventions related to the European integration process, as well as the co-financing of costs arising from participation in EU Programmes.

As an illustration, the environment sector will be supported with a total amount of EUR 28.6 million. The implementation of two important infrastructure projects is in the pipeline: the construction of the waste water management system in Brus and Blace and of the waste water treatment system in Kraljevo. Also, the EU will commit EUR 49.6 million for the energy sector, namely for the construction of a Two-Way Gas Interconnection for transmission of natural gas between Serbia and Bulgaria.

\*The total amount of funds is lower than the amount of EUR 215.4 million foreseen in the Indicative Strategy Paper for Serbia 2014-2020, because the European Commission adopted a decision on reducing annual allocations for all IPA beneficiaries by 10%, in order to direct the funds to resolving the migration crisis.

## **IPA 2018**

The total value of the EU contribution to the IPA 2018 Programme is EUR 179.1 million. The overall IPA II allocation for Serbia for 2018, including IPARD, Regional Housing Programme and Support to Civil Society Organizations amounts to EUR 239.6 million\*.

The Programme covers actions in the following sectors: environment, competitiveness and human resource development and social development. The programme also includes interventions related to support to statistics, European integration process and approximation with the EU *Acquis Communautaire*, as well as co-financing of the costs arising from participation in EU Programmes. As an illustration—the environment and climate change sector will be supported with a total amount of nearly EUR 62 million. Support to this sector is reflected in the implementation of a large infrastructure project— construction of the waste water purification system in Niš, as well as the rehabilitation of public buildings in Belgrade, in the context of improving energy efficiency. Nearly EUR 40 million are allocated to the competitiveness sector for the purpose of development of innovations, technological development and development of the tourism industry.

IPA Action Programme was adopted by the European Commission in December 2018. The signing of the Financing Agreements that will enable the implementation of the planned support measures is anticipated for 2019.

\* Within the “performance award“ mechanism, first introduced in IPA II, a decision was taken to allocate additional funds to the Republic of Serbia, in the total amount of EUR 34 million. These funds have become part of the EU contribution to the IPA 2018 Programme which, instead of EUR 145 million, now amounts to EUR 179.1 million.

## **Good practice examples of national ownership of the 2030 Agenda for a cohesive European**

### **Union: A participatory process for the National Strategic Planning and Programming of Inclusive Sustainable Development Interventions**

#### **IPA 2019 and 2020 National Strategic Planning and Programming**

The IPA 2019 and 2020 programming started in October 2018 with the organization of the first programme mission between Serbia and the European Commission.

In the preparatory phase, the MEI conducted preliminary consultations with national institutions to identify possible interventions. The key principle in the consultations process were the results of the discussions that the National IPA coordinator had with other line ministers and decision makers from the European Commission, and the priorities that the institutions identified in the context of development of the new planning document that will define national priorities for development assistance in the period 2019-2025 (NAD 2019- 2025).

The programming process will include the identification of priorities and actions for two budget allocations – 2019 and 2020 (“double programming”). Although the programming will be conducted concurrently for both years, there will be two separate annual action programmes (for IPA2019 and IPA2020), as well as separate financial agreements. In terms of allocation, the revised Indicative Strategic Document for Serbia envisages a total allocation for Serbia amounting to EUR 466.3 million. After deduction of the funds reserved for IPARD support to civil society organizations it is expected that the funds for Serbia under the annual action programmes will amount to around EUR 330 million. If the second performance award will be allocated, expectations are that it will be awarded in 2020, consequently we can expect increased allocations for IPA2020.

In the discussions and the overall prioritization process, the following key sectors / areas were identified for support in the forthcoming two years:

- Environmental protection and climate changes with special focus on continuation of investments in infrastructure for processing waste waters as the most demanding and most expensive environmental protection area, as well as investments in the reconstruction and modernization of public facilities as part of the efforts to improve energy efficiency.
- Support for increasing competitiveness aims to reduce the administrative burden on SMEs, provide grants to SMEs for the procurement of equipment (support to the existing state scheme), accelerate the growth of SMEs, a grant scheme for increasing the innovation capacity of SMEs and support for the Science Fund.
- Human resources and social development - focused support for the improvement of employment policies and reduction the unemployment rate, concrete support to increasing the employability and employment of youth, women and persons with disabilities, support to non-formal education of youth and the older population with the aim of increasing their competences and labour market activation, social inclusion of the most marginalized groups in the local community (Roma, the elderly, children or persons with mental disabilities), to enable them to live independently.
- Rule of law through two flexible support instruments in cooperation with EU Member States in areas covered by the Action Plans for Chapter 23 and 24. It is important to note that the sector budget support is the most likely instrument for the implementation of support to the judiciary. Discussions are underway concerning the capacities and strategic relevance, bearing in mind that the existing judiciary strategy has expired while the new one is in preparation. In this respect, support for this sector could only be envisaged through IPA2020.

In addition, consultations with the national institutions resulted in the preparation of two special interventions, of which the first one is a follow up of the previous/current local development programme and similar programmes funded by other development partners under the Integrated Regional Development Programme and is intended to pave the way for the use of EU funds in the post-accession period through an integrated regional development mechanism which is applied in the EU Member States. It will support the integrated development of towns and municipalities in Serbia in accordance with EU cohesion policy practices. As part of strengthening the capacities for disaster prevention and emergency response, an independent action is in the pipeline for increasing resilience to disaster risk and supporting civil protection

mechanisms. In addition, as every year, support is expected for the EU accession negotiations process with special focus on interventions in internal affairs and public administration reform, as well as a reimbursement of the contribution for participation in EU programmes. Finally, it is important to mention that a special measure is planned in the area of migration under the IPA2019 allocation due to the absence of support from the MADAD fund. The action plan has been prepared and submitted to the European Commission.

SECTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Environment			3.500.000	28.600.000	61.915.000	94.015.000
Transport		64.810.000	2.500.000		1.834.592	69.144.592
Human Resources	19.040.000	7.500.000	36.900.000		23.000.000	86.440.000
Competitiveness	5.000.000		52.300.000	1.500.000	39.800.000	98.600.000
Energy	12.650.000	1.000.000	2.500.000	49.600.000	2.500.000	68.250.000
Agriculture		18.000.000	21.500.000	25.000.000	33.790.000	98.290.000
Public administration reform	19.950.000	84.100.000	14.900.000	8.000.000	27.000.000	153.950.000
Justice		12.100.000	5.000.000	26.652.470		43.752.470
Internal Affairs	27.512.000	8.500.000	32.000.000	3.000.000		71.012.000
Unallocated funding	22.874.160	3.500.000	4.400.000	9.611.643	7.666.733	48.052.536
EU Programmes	8.063.840	12.090.000	10.900.000	11.235.886	11.593.675	53.883.401
Civil Society	2.000.000	4.500.000	3.000.000	3.500.000	5.000.000	18.000.000
Post-flood recovery	72.000.000					72.000.000
Housing for refugees				20.000.000	25.500.000	45.500.000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>189.090.000,00</b>	<b>216.100.000,00</b>	<b>189.400.000</b>	<b>186.699.999,19</b>	<b>239.599.999,78</b>	

### A good practice example:

#### Overcoming issues related to the implementation of IPA-funded projects (“bottleneck” projects)

The lack of a prompt response in eliminating bottlenecks in the implementation of projects can lead to multiple negative consequences that differ depending on the volume of the problem and the project status: delays in project implementation, cancellation of projects and absence of expected results (the deadlines for project implementation are strict and any estimate that they may not be complied with can lead to the cancellation of the project), loss of earmarked funding, jeopardizing the IPA programming process in the forthcoming years in the sectors that had bottleneck projects. In the process of monitoring the implementation of IPA-funded projects, the Ministry for European Integration regularly meets with the line ministries and other project beneficiaries to review activities designed to eliminate identified problems.

\* In the previous period, the List of Bottleneck Projects was downsized from 24 projects in October 2012, worth EUR 132.67 million in total, to 4 problematic projects in the environmental protection and water management area worth around EUR 37 million in total.

Most of the identified problems concern large infrastructural projects in the area of environmental protection and water management and are a consequence of the lack of readiness (preparation/quality planning and design - technical documents) of these projects for implementation and lack of sustainability of project results. Currently, a plan is being implemented to identify responsible institutions at central and local level, funding sources and set timeframes for the implementation of planned activities, along with adequate monitoring mechanisms, all for the purpose of solving the problems inherited from the past and ensure the sustainable functioning of the constructed facilities for the production of potable water and processing of waste waters. As a result of this approach to solving past problems, after several years of absence of IPA II funding for projects in the environmental protection sector, significant funds were allocated under the IPA 2017 Action Programme for financing priorities in this sector.

\* To avoid similar problems in the future, the Government has defined and adopted a “Methodology for the selection and prioritization of infrastructural projects” for the purpose of establishing standardized and objective identification mechanisms, strategic assessment, selection and prioritization of infrastructural projects to be funded. The methodology resulted in a unique overview (list) of priority infrastructural projects ready for funding, which will contribute to avoiding the mistakes that were made in the past.

Other identified structural problems in the implementation of IPA concern the lack of administrative capacities for implementing IPA-funded projects, implemented by Serbia in line with the indirect management rules. The increased fluctuation of employees in the IPA system is evident, and is partially also as a consequence of the lack of personnel retention policies which the Ministry for European Integration is in the process of formulating, in cooperation with the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government.

### **Good practice example: Sustainable Development and revitalization of the Western Balkans Sustainability Charter through regional partnership with the support of funds from the Western Balkans investment framework (WBIF)**

The Western Balkans Investment Framework is considered a key regional instrument for providing support to the preparation and implementation of strategic projects in the field of transport, energy, environmental protecting and social infrastructure in countries that are in the process of EU accession.

Since 2009, Serbia received 79 grants for the preparation and co-funding of 54 projects, including the regional projects in which it participated.

In the period from 1 May 2012 to 31 August 2014 ten grants worth EUR 39,146,000 were either implemented or are in the process of implementation. Seven of these grants are intended for the preparation of technical project documents for priority projects and support for project implementation, of a value of EUR 12,496,000. A significant share of funds has been allocated for the regional energy efficiency programme of a total value of EUR 23,350,000, while EUR 3,300,000 was allocated in support of entrepreneurship development.

In the period from 31 August 2014, the implementation of 36 grants started, worth a total of EUR 113,006,000. This amount includes a EUR 44 million investment grant for the Reconstruction and Modernization of the Niš - Dimitrovgrad railway (for construction works on the Sićevo - Staničenje and Staničenje-Dimitrovgrad sections) and a EUR 28 million grant approved in December 2017 for the second phase of modernization of the Niš - Dimitrovgrad rail (electrification of the Niš -Dimitrovgrad railway). The aforementioned amount also includes a EUR 6.6 million investment grant for the construction of the Trans-Balkan Electricity Corridor, Kragujevac – Kraljevo section, as well as a EUR 3 million grant approved for a project in the environmental protection sector, specifically, the construction of Makiš facilities for processing waste waters. Two regional programmes for the improvement of energy efficiency worth EUR 24,300,000 and EUR 5,100,000 are also included in the aforesaid amount.



Two projects proposals were submitted in the third round for Investment Grants in December 2017, however, the Ministry of Mining and Energy in cooperation with the Serbian national transmission operator Elektromreža Srbije A.D. subsequently notified the Ministry of European Integration about the need to withdraw the project proposal for the Trans-Balkan Corridor phase I, section III Obrenovac – Bajina Bašta and IV Bajina Bašta – Višegrad – Pljevlja. The other proposed project is the construction of highway E-80 Niš - Merdare, worth a total of EUR 40,600,000. As part of the 20th round of technical assistance, Serbia proposed four projects in the area of transport and energy.

At the Steering Board meeting held in December 2018, funding was approved for the following project:

1. Niš (Merošina) – Pločnik (Beloljin), total value EUR 40.6 million;
2. Construction of the new Belgrade harbour – Preliminary Feasibility Study and Concept Design, of a total value of EUR 800,000;
3. Belgrade – Šid – state border, Stara Pazova – Golubnici – Šid and Inđija - Golubnici sections: feasibility study, concept design and strategic environmental impact assessment worth EUR 3 million in total.

In this way, Serbia's traffic sector received an additional EUR 44.4 million, i.e. EUR 3.8 million, in support of the preparation of technical documents and EUR 40.6 million for the implementation of the investment.

In December 2018, Serbia submitted two applications for investment grants in the energy and transport sectors in the amount of EUR 48.3 million and in March 2019, seven applications for technical assistance in the field of transport, energy, environmental protection (floods) and digital infrastructure of a total value of almost EUR 9 million.

Since February 2014, Serbia received 23 grants under the WBIF technical assistance programme in the amount of EUR 35,206,000. In addition, five WBIF investment grants were approved in the same period in the amount of EUR 122,200 for co-funding infrastructural projects worth EUR 538,000,000.

- In addition to the already approved grants, in March 2019 Serbia submitted 7 applications in response to the XXI WBIF call for grant proposals for technical assistance in the energy, traffic, environmental protection and digital infrastructure sectors. Serbia also applied for participation in one Regional Programme.

Proposal for technical assistance:

Traffic

1.Reconstruction of the existing and construction of the second track on the bypass railway (Belgrade marshalling yards) Ostružnica – Batajnica

Requested grant: EUR 520,000

Lead IFI: EIB

Energy

2. TA for the South East Europe Regional Safety Coordination Initiative (SEE-RSCI), phase II Requested grant: EUR 2,150,000

Lead IFI: EBRD

3. North CSE Corridor project: Transformer station (TS) 400 / 110 kV West Belgrade, 2 x 300 MVA construction DV 400 kV TS West Belgrade - VE Čibuk 1 and improvement of existing DV 400 kV Serbia (HE Đerdap 1) – Rumania (Đerdap Canyon) to double-system DV

Requested grant: EUR 1.200.000

Lead IFI: KfW

4. Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme in Central Governmen Buildings –EERP - CGB Requested grant: EUR 2.300.000

Lead IFI: CEB

Environmental protection – flood protection

5. The Struganik Dam on the Ribnica River for the Mionice territory Requested grant: EUR 800,000

Lead IFI: EBRD

6. Flood risk management programme for Central Serbia Requested grant: EUR 1,300,000

Lead IFI: EBRD

Digital infrastructure

7. Regional development of smart city infrastrture Requested grant: EUR 700,000

Lead IFI: EBRD

Regional project – digital infrastructure

1. Energy 4.0 – Digital improvement of integrated energy systems in the Western Balkans as the key driver of the new age

Requested grant: EUR 3.500.000

Lead IFI: KfW

In December 2018, Serbia also submitted two requests for investment grants:

Energy sector:

1. WB-IG04-SRB-ENE-01 Trans-Balkan Corridor for the transmission of electricity: double-circuit 400 kV overhead power line Obrenovac – Bajina Bašta,

Requested grant: EUR

13,154,000 Lead IFI: KfW

Transport sector

2. WB-IG04-SRB-TRA-01 Orient-Eastern Mediterranean Corridor: rail interconnection Serbia – Bulgaria CXc, Niš – Dimitrovgrad – border with Bulgaria, Requested grant: EUR 35,098,465 Lead IFI: EIB

The proposed projects are currently in the evaluation phase, to be performed by the WBIF Secretariat under the leadership of the IFI.

## **An example of good practice of a partnership embodying the principle that none should be left behind by first ensuring access to rights by those who are furthest behind: Regional housing programme for refugees and IDPs**

The purpose of this Programme is to provide permanent housing for 26,898 of the most vulnerable refugee families in the region (74,000 persons): 5,400 families in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 3,541 families in the Republic of Croatia; 1,177 families in Montenegro, and 16,780 families in Serbia.

The Programme is implemented based on the Framework Agreement concluded on 25 October 2013 between the Republic of Serbia and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). The Agreement regulates the main postulates of the Programme, the implementation mechanism, the obligations of the programme participants, and the amounts of funds to be deployed.

The entire Programme is in the purview of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia which is the leading institution and is responsible for the prioritization of needs, the development of the requirements for new subprojects, communication with the Council of Europe Development Bank, the implementation timelines, supervision of the physical and financial implementation of the Programme, and other issues relating to the implementation of the Programme. Calls for tenders, stipulation of contracts within the subprojects, supervision of their execution, and accounting matters within the Programme are carried out by the Public Sector Projects Implementation Unit Ltd. Belgrade.

The Programme is managed by the Council of Europe Development Bank that administrates the multi-donor fund established for the purposes of implementing the Programme. UNHCR/OSCE have a monitoring role in the beneficiary selection process and to contribute to the sustainability of the project. The largest donor to this fund is the EU that provides most of the funds through the IPA multi-country and country programmes. The total announced contribution of the European Union is EUR 232 million out of which approximately EUR 153 million will be allocated from different sources by the end of 2017. Other donors are the USA, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Norway, Turkey, Cyprus, Hungary, etc.

The donation agreement for the first subproject in the value of EUR 2,212,500 was signed on 14 March 2014. This subproject envisages the construction of 70 prefabricated houses and the award of 125 construction material packages. From April 2014, another 8 donation agreements will follow as well as five amendments in the total value of EUR 165,870,851 (out of which EUR 134,338,887 are donations from the Fund), which were signed by the Minister for European Integration and the National IPA Coordinator. These agreements aggregately envisage the delivery of a total of 7,350 housing solutions.

The supervisory monitoring, review, and evaluation of the coordination by the Ministry of European Integration and the latter's supervisory monitoring of NPAA and NAD implementation is also carried out by the National Convention on the European Union, as a conglomerate of CSOs in Serbia, and the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. Further, the outputs of MEI's coordination, monitoring, review, and evaluation processes, its regular quarterly reports, reviews, and evaluations of the fulfilment of planned assignments by line ministries, agencies, and services, are to be discussed and adopted by the appropriate committees of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia within the national framework for monitoring and supervision of the implementation of a coherent development policy; and are a benchmark in the continuous reporting to the EC about Serbia's progress in the EU accession process, as well as in the comprehensive supervisory monitoring of the coherence of international and bilateral development assistance and the implementation of *National priorities for international assistance (NAD) 2014-2017 with projections until 2020 (NAD)*<sup>87</sup> coordinated by MEI.

Moreover, the funds for the implementation of Agenda 2030 also include funds regulated and envisaged under the *Development Partnership Framework 2016-2020 of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and United Nations Country Team in Serbia*<sup>88</sup>.

87 Government of Serbia, *National priorities for international assistance (NAD) 2014-2017 with projections until 2020*, January 28, 2014, available at: [http://www.evropa.gov.rs/Documents/Home/DACU/12/74/NAD%202014-2017%20with%20projections%20until%202020%20\(english\).pdf](http://www.evropa.gov.rs/Documents/Home/DACU/12/74/NAD%202014-2017%20with%20projections%20until%202020%20(english).pdf) (retrieved 18/04/2019).

88 Government of Serbia, United Nations, *Development Partnership Framework 2016-2020 of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and United Nations Country Team in Serbia*, May 2017, available at: [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/serbia/docs/Publications/DPF\\_ENG\\_30\\_May\\_2017\\_FINAL\\_SIGNED.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/serbia/docs/Publications/DPF_ENG_30_May_2017_FINAL_SIGNED.pdf) (retrieved 18/04/2019).

## 8. Next steps

- ✓ Effectively implemented critical self-evaluation of the performance of the entire Government – its every ministry, service, and agency – as well as that of the provincial, municipal, and city authorities, reviewed within this reporting process provides the evidential basis – consisting of reliably determined successes, challenges, and newly-occurring issues – to precisely define and calibrate possible policy measures and programme activities to promote the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Serbia and accelerated promotion of local and national achievement of SDGs.

Thanks to this most wide-ranging span of knowledge about the flaws and bottlenecks, the first step to follow involves the definition of effective actions to eliminate identified flaws using the experience of previous best practices and the advice received from all those interested in having them conveyed when this report is presented at the High-Level Political Forum.

- ✓ Even though a large number of public actions have been taken since the national implementation of Agenda 2030 started, the experience shows that insufficient effort has been made to reach all the stakeholders, every member of civil society, private sector, and the public, to ensure full awareness, and inclusion in the achievement of SDGs, as well as the monitoring of their implementation.

That is why, to ensure greater involvement in advocating and raising public visibility of the national implementation of Agenda 2030, the first next step of both the IMWG and the Government will be to undertake a comprehensive public campaign to inform the entire population about the main findings of this report and the next steps that are planned.

- ✓ The next step following the public campaign will be to start an organized public consultations process with all the stakeholders about the joint and individual activities that should be taken to accelerate the achievement of SDGs through the implementation of all their targets with a 2020 deadline.
- ✓ As the most pressing next step to ensure concentrated achievement of SDGs, the Government will establish a consensual platform to coordinate the allotted contributions of the business sector, not only of the parties to the Global Compact, but also private and public enterprises, particularly small and medium enterprises and their affiliations and partners within and beyond the borders of the Republic of Serbia.
- ✓ The establishment of the local community-led hub of the institutional network-integrated mechanism for the national implementation of Agenda 2030 whose formation is anchored in this reporting process will, thanks to the seed sown by the STCM through its contribution to reviewing the implementation of this Agenda and the achievement of SDGs, start soonest possible in a joint endeavour of the entire Government and the society at large, with a node in every local community in the Republic of Serbia.
- ✓ All of the next steps to be undertaken, among which also the creation of a special digital platform for Serbian SDGs, particularly together with youth businesses and based on the concepts created by Serbian youth, will underpin the establishment of a nationally inclusive, fully participative deliberation to thoroughly scrutinize and determine whether Serbia needs a new national sustainable development strategy to effectively accelerate its progress in the achievement of SDGs, or whether it would be more constructive to develop an implementing strategy for the national achievement of SDGs for the period 2020–2025 to show that sustainability can be best ensured by providing equal sustainable opportunities for everybody everywhere in the Republic of Serbia.

## 9. Conclusions

By means of the voluntary national review, the Government of the Serbia is conscientiously fulfilling its responsibilities towards its citizens and the citizens of the world. This gives further opportunity for everybody in this process to be empowered and to prove how much they are committed to creating new opportunities for enabling better sustainable life choices. In accordance with the motto of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: *Leave no one behind*, the Government of Serbia strives to create opportunities for all to enjoy the benefits of greater social inclusion and solidarity, increased social and economic equity, and a conducive environment for decent work and effective participation in the decisions of the community. The analysis of the findings outlined in this report conclusively proves that:

- the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society of Serbia are committed to the values and the principles of the 2030 Agenda;
- the improvement of the policy architecture for balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development is in progress;
- none of the obstacles discourage anyone in their steadfast commitment to sustainable development;
- networks have a powerful effect on Serbia's transition to sustainability through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Taken as a whole, so far, practices and relationships concerning the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are empowering creativity and innovative capacities of all generations. Changes feed changes; changing the way one thinks changes the way one acts; one is emboldened to implement even more extensive changes. Serbia has embarked on a long-term enterprise to eliminate its inherited weaknesses reflected in the habit of sticking to the old ways of doing things and preserving social privileges for the few at the expense of the majority – but really at the expense of all. Once again, we are witnessing the strong resurgence of a courageous, entrepreneurial and inventive Serbia, committed to a future of sustainable opportunities. The attainable aspirations of the 2030 Agenda contribute to raising awareness and critical knowledge for the social practices of inventive changes.

The success of this coordinated endeavour for the responsible implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of its 17 SDGs in cohesion with their achievement in the EU has a regenerating effect on the Serbia's sustainable development potential that has been preserved despite all the challenges imposed by the difficulty transition process in the past decades. Now is the time for fearless, ambitious action, in the face of adversity, for transitioning to sustainability, and rallying everyone's capacities to begin a new chapter in sustainable development. From here to sustainability!



# 10. Annexes

# Annex 1 : Statistical Review - Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

## Sustainable Development Goals, Republic of Serbia, April 2019

Indicator	Unit	Subgroup	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Source		
<b>Goal 01. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>														
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions														
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Total				24.5	25	26.7	25.9	25.7		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS	Moderate progress	The at-risk-of-poverty rate in Serbia was 25.7% in 2017. Compared to the previous year, the at-risk-of-poverty rate decreased by 0.2 of a percentage point.
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Female				24.1	24.4	26	25.5	26		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Male				24.9	25.6	27.5	26.3	25.4		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Total 0-17 yr				29.7	29.3	31.1	30.2	30.5		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	0-17 yr Female				29.2	29.2	30.9	30.3	30		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	0-17 yr Male				29.4	29.4	31.2	30.1	31		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Total 18-24 yr				27	27.8	31.3	32.6	29.7		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	18-24 yr Female				26.4	26.8	31	32.5	32.3		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	18-24 yr Male				27.7	28.8	31.5	32.6	27.3		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Total 18-64 yr				24.4	25.1	27.3	26.3	25.7		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	18-64 yr Female				23.3	23.8	25.7	24.9	25.3		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	18-64 yr Male				25.5	26.4	28.8	27.7	26		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Total 25-54 yr				24.8	25.1	27	25.4	24.9		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	25-54 yr Female				24.6	24.5	26.2	24.6	25.1		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	25-54 yr Male				25	25.7	27.9	26.2	24.6		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Total 55-64 yr				21.8	23.4	25.7	25.4	25.8		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	55-64 yr Female				18.3	20.4	22	21.9	22.5		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	55-64 yr Male				25.8	26.6	29.8	29.1	29.3		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	Total 65+ yr				19.4	20.4	20.8	20.5	21.3		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	65+ yr Female				22.3	22.5	23	23.5	24.7		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.1 At risk of poverty rate by sex and age	Percent	65+ yr Male				15.5	17.7	17.7	16.5	16.9		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	0-15 yr Female				40.9	40.8	40.8	39	38.1		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	0-15 yr Male				42.9	41.4	41.4	37.9	38.8		Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	16-24 yr Female				46	45.3	44	40.7			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	16-24 yr Male				49.2	46.7	45.9	39			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	25-49 yr Female				40.5	39.4	36.1	35.4			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	25-49 yr Male				43.7	43.1	40.1	36.5			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	50-64 yr Female				46.2	44.3	40.8	38.7			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	50-64 yr Male				46.7	46.7	42.9	38.9			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	65+ yr Female				39.4	39.2	35.9	36			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	65+ yr Male				32.6	31.7	26.8	27.8			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Female				42.2	41.2	38.3	37.1			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Male				43.1	42.2	38.8	36.1			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Total				42.6	41.7	38.5	36.7			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Total 0-15 yr				42	41.1	38.4	38.5			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Total 16-24 yr				47.6	46	45	39.8			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Total 25-49 yr				42.1	41.2	38.1	35.9			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Total 50-64 yr				46.4	45.5	41.8	38.8			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
1.2.2 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex	Percent	Total 65+ yr				36.5	36	32	32.5			Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SORS		
<b>Goal 01. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>														
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable														
1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by age, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	Percent	Total		7.9	8.5	8.9	9.3	9.5	10	10.1		Republic Institute for Social Protection and Vital Statistics, SORS	Moderate movement	From 2011 the proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems slowly increases, what indicate the larger number of population whom is respect social protection.
<b>Goal 02. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>														
2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons														
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Total <5 yr	5.7				6					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	Moderate movement	Moderate increase in percentage of children under the age of 5 who are stunting in height.
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Total <5 yr (Roma settlements)	20				18.5					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	Moderate progress	Moderate decrease in the percentage of children under the age of 5 who are stunting in height.
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Female	6.5				5.1					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Male	4.9				6.8					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Urban	4.5				6.5					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Rural	7.3				5.2					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	<6 months	6.8				8.8					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	6-11 months	9.2				8.9					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	12-23 months	9.2				7.8					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	24-35 months	4.3				9.6					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	36-47 months	5.2				2.8					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	48-59 months	3.2				2.1					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	None/primary education										Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Primary education	6.4				13.4					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Secondary education	6.9				4.3					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Higher/high education	2.5				4.9					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Poorest	8.7				13.6					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Second	7.9				3.6					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Middle	5.2				7.2					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Fourth	5.6				3.3					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Richest	2.5				4.1					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Total <5 yr	15.6				13.9					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	Moderate progress	Moderate decrease in percentage of children under 5 years of age who are obese
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Total <5 yr (Roma settlements)	12.8				5.1					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	Moderate progress	Significant decrease in the percentage of children under 5 years old who are obese
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Female	14.7				12					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Male	16.6				15.6					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Urban	13.5				14.3					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Rural	18.2				13.2					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	<6 months	7.6				5.2					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	6-11 months	18.4				12.2					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	12-23 months	24.1				23.3					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	24-35 months	15				15.9					Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		

2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	36-47 months	15.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	48-59 months	10.9									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	None/primary education										Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Primary education	16.3									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Secondary education	17.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Higher/high education	10.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Poorest	15.5									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Second	16.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Middle	15.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Fourth	17.9									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2a Prevalence of overweight (moderate and severe)	Percent	Richest	12.1									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Total <5 yr	3.5									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Total <5 yr (Roma settlements)	5.2									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Female	4.2									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Male	2.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Urban	3.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Rural	3.1									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	<6 months	13									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	6-11 months	2.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	12-23 months	3.6									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	24-35 months	2.9									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	36-47 months	2.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	48-59 months	1.6									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	None/primary education										Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Primary education	2.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Secondary education	3.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Higher/high education	3.4									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Poorest	5.2									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Second	1.2									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Middle	2.9									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Fourth	3.2									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
2.2.2b Prevalence of wasting (moderate and severe)	Percent	Richest	4.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF			
<b>Goal 03. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>															
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes															
3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	Per 1000 women within particular age	Total	19.9	18.5	19.1	18.1	17.8	16.3	15.3	15.1		Vital statistics, SORS	Moderate progress	The decrease in total adolescent birth rate during the period 2010-2017 represents positive progress. The values of the adolescent birth rate in the Republic of Serbia are significantly higher than the adolescent birth rate values of most EU28 countries.	
<b>Goal 04. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>															
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy															
4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex-mathematics	Percent	Total			2006 - 42.7 2009 - 40.8 2012 - 38.9										
4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex-reading	Percent	Total			2007 - 51.7 2009 - 32.8 2012 - 33.1								Moderate progress	Data for the period from 2006 to 2012 show moderate progress for students' results in mathematics and reading, while the science outcome in 2012 is slightly lower than the results in 2009. The indicator is calculated based on the results of the PISA test conducted every three years. In Serbia, the test was conducted in 2006, 2009 and 2012. PISA testing in Serbia was not organized in 2015. The last PISA test was conducted in 2018, the results will be available in December of this year.	
4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex-science	Percent	Total			2006 - 38.5 2009 - 34.4 2012 - 35									Data for the period from 2006 to 2012 show moderate progress for students' results in mathematics and reading, while the science outcome in 2012 is slightly lower than the results in 2009. The assumption is that the progressive trend will continue in the results for 2018.	
<b>Goal 05. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b>															
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life															
5.5.1a Seats held by women in national parliament	Percent	Total			33.2					34			Elections of deputies for National Assembly, SORS	Moderate progress	The data for both indicators show a relatively stable and upward trend in the reaching of the eligible number of women in parliament and in local governments.
5.5.1b Proportion of seats held by women in local governments	Percent	Total			28.6					31.2			Elections of deputies for National Assembly, SORS	Moderate progress	
<b>Goal 06. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b>															
6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally															
6.3.1 Population connected to wastewater treatment with at least secondary treatment	Percent	Total	8.6	8.8	9	9.4	10	10.8	12.5	12.6		Environment statistics, SORS	Moderate progress	The percentage of the population that is connected to the least secondary treatment for wastewater treatment in 2017 has recorded a slight increase of 0.9% compared to the previous year.	
<b>Goal 06. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b>															
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity															
6.4.1 Change in water-use efficiency (WUE) over time	RSD/m3	Total						705.31	731.47	680.95		Environment statistics, SORS	Moderate movement		
<b>Goal 07. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</b>															
7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services															
7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity	Percent	Rural	99.6							99.6		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	No change	Relatively stable phenomenon during the time.	
7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity	Percent	Total	99.8							99.7		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	No change	Relatively stable	
7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity	Percent	Total (Roma settlements)	96.9							89.3		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	No change	Relatively stable	
7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity	Percent	Urban	99.9							99.8		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	No change	Relatively stable	
7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology for cooking	Percent	Rural	47.2							41.5		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	Moderate movement		
7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology for cooking	Percent	Total	68.3							65.7		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	No change	Relatively stable	
7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology for cooking	Percent	Total (Roma settlements)	24.3							17.7		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	Moderate movement		
7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology for cooking	Percent	Urban	85.6							82.3		Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	Moderate movement		
<b>Goal 07. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</b>															
7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency															
7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP	MJ/USD	Total	7.07	7.22	6.56	6.55	5.94	6.56	6.6			Energy statistics, SORS		Indicator 7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP is very complex because it depends on the movement of the two components: Total energy supply and Total GDP (measured in constant terms of purchasing power parity). The assessment of its movement and the analysis of this assessment require special expert opinions. For this reason, the Statistical Office is not able to give an opinion.	

<b>Goal 08. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>																
8.05 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value																
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	Total										364.42	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS	* Data are from the four-yearly Structure of Earnings Survey and available only for 2014. Survey for referent 2018 are ongoing and data will be available in the second half of the 2020.	
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	Female										346.81	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	Male										379.96	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	15-29 yr										293.31	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	15-29 yr Female										287.65	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	15-29 yr Male										297.61	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	30-39 yr										364.05	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	30-39 yr Female										345.55	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	30-39 yr Male										381.08	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	40-49 yr										371.67	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	40-49 yr Female										351.93	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	40-49 yr Male										391.54	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	50-59 yr										385.6	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	50-59 yr Female										365.4	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	50-59 yr Male										403.85	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	60+ yr										444.46	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	60+ yr Female										441.97	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1a	Average hourly earnings of employed female and male, by age	RSD	60+ yr Male										445.37	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Elementary occupations										243.35	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Elementary occupations Female										210.04	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Elementary occupations Male										277.33	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Plant and machine operators and assemblers										316.09	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Plant and machine operators and assemblers Female										262.01	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Plant and machine operators and assemblers Male										323.39	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Craft and related trades workers										294.62	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Craft and related trades workers Female										223.36	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Craft and related trades workers Male										321.94	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers										381.9	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers Female										262.02	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers Male										437.08	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Service and sales workers										247.44	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Service and sales workers Female										230.6	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Service and sales workers Male										266.15	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Clerical support workers										346.44	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Clerical support workers Female										342.33	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Clerical support workers Male										352.93	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Technicians and associate professionals										401.4	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Technicians and associate professionals Female										371.14	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Technicians and associate professionals Male										442.48	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Professionals										507.26	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Professionals Female										476.61	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Professionals Male										560.7	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Managers										658.85	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Managers Female										599.92	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.1b	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation	RSD	Managers Male										694.2	Statistics of Employment and Earnings, SORS		
8.5.2a	Unemployment rate (15-24 yrs)	Rate	Total	45.2	50.9	51.1	49.4	47.5	43.2	34.9	31.9			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
8.5.2a	Unemployment rate (15-24 yrs)	Rate	Female	47.5	57.1	57	57.5	50	48.2	39.5	36.3			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
8.5.2a	Unemployment rate (15-24 yrs)	Rate	Male	45.4	47.6	47.9	44.6	46.1	40.1	32.2	29.2			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
8.5.2b	Unemployment rate (15-64 yrs)	Rate	Total	20	23.6	24.6	23	19.9	18.2	15.9	14.1			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
8.5.2b	Unemployment rate (15-64 yrs)	Rate	Female	21	24.3	25.6	24.6	21	19.3	16.7	14.8			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
8.5.2b	Unemployment rate (15-64 yrs)	Rate	Male	19.2	23.1	23.9	21.7	19.1	17.4	15.3	13.5			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
<b>Goal 08. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>																
8.6 By 2030, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training																
8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	Percent	Total	20.9	21.3	21.5	19.5	20.4	19.9	17.7	17.2			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	Percent	Female	19	19.7	21.1	19.6	19.9	19.6	18.3	17.3			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	Percent	Male	22.7	22.8	21.8	19.5	21	20.2	17.2	17.1			Labour Force Survey, SORS		
<b>Goal 09. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</b>																
9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries																
9.2.1	Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita	Percent	Total	15.3	15.2	15.7	16.2	15.4	15.6	15.8	16.2			National Accounts, SORS	Moderate progress	
9.2.2	Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment	Percent	Total	16.8	17.2	17	17.1	15.9	16.1	16.5	17.1			Labour Force Survey, SORS	Moderate progress	
<b>Goal 09. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</b>																
9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending																
9.5.1	Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	Percent	Government Sector	0.27	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.19	0.24	0.24	0.25			Statistics of science, technology and innovations, SORS	Moderate progress	The share of investment in research and development in the State Sector relative to GDP has a slight growth trend.
9.5.1	Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	Percent	Higher Education Sector	0.38	0.41	0.42	0.39	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.34			Statistics of science, technology and innovations, SORS	Moderate progress	The share of investment in research and development in the Higher Education Sector in relation to GDP had a decline in the previous period. Mild progress was recorded in 2017 compared to the previous year.
9.5.1	Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	Percent	Business Sector	0.09	0.07	0.23	0.1	0.23	0.27	0.34	0.34			Statistics of science, technology and innovations, SORS	Moderate progress	The share of investment in R & D in the Business Sector relative to GDP in the research and development relative to the period and there are no significant changes.
9.5.1	Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	Percent	General Expenditure for Research and Development	0.74	0.72	0.91	0.73	0.77	0.87	0.9	0.93			Statistics of science, technology and innovations, SORS	Moderate progress	The share of total national investment in research and development relative to GDP has a growth trend.
9.5.1	Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	Percent	Private Non Profit sector	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			Statistics of science, technology and innovations, SORS	No change	The share of investment in research and development relative to GDP in the Private non profit sector is very low throughout the period and there are no significant changes.
9.5.2	Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants	Per 1,000,000 population	Total	1733	1881	1840	2043	2126	2303	2351	2311			Statistics of science, technology and innovations, SORS	Moderate movement	The total number of researchers (Head Count) has been increased, but their engagement has been reduced in terms of the full-time equivalence (FTE).
<b>Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries</b>																
10.1.1	Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40% of the population and the total population	Percent	the bottom 40% poorest of the population						-1.7	1.5				World Bank		
10.1.1	Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40% of the population and the total population	Percent	Total						-1.4	1.5				World Bank		
<b>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>																
11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management																
11.6.1a	Recycling rate of municipal waste	% of total waste generated	Total	0	0	0	1	0.7	0.8	0.3				Serbian Environmental Protection Agency	Significant movement	Serbian Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of revising their methodologies concerning this indicator. As such we did not receive data for 2017.
11.6.1b	Generation of waste excluding major mineral wastes by hazardousness	kg per capita	Total	1307	1372	1250	1293	1048	1301	1378	1673			Environment statistics, SORS	Moderate movement	
<b>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>																
12.2 By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources																
12.2.2a	Domestic material consumption (DMC)	thousands of tonnes	Total	10775.8353	111639.5775	100948.4212	109375.6227	103205.1856	109094.8429	119539.9402	112595.1548			Environment statistics, SORS	Moderate movement	In 2017, domestic material consumption amounted to 112 595 thousand tons, which is by 5.8% less compared to 2016.
12.2.2b	Resource productivity	RSD per kilogram	Total	27.709	27.88	30.5205	28.8951	30.0369	39.3904	37.2769	40.9925			Environment statistics, SORS	Moderate progress	Resource productivity is the ratio between Gross domestic product (GDP) and domestic material consumption and in 2017, it amounted to 41 RSD per kilogram, which is by 10% more than in 2016, meaning that decrease of material consumption was lower than GDP increase, when related to the previous year.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts											
Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development											
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss											
15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements											
15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area	Percent	Total	31				31.1		Food and Agriculture Organization	Moderate progress	One of the possible reasons of moderate increase of forest area is the non-use of agricultural land, especially in mountainous areas
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels											
16.01 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere											
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	18-29 yr							10.2	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	30-39 yr							9.6	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	40-49 yr							11.9	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	50-59 yr							13.2	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	60-74 yr							8.2	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	A minority in terms of disability							23.4	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	A refugee/displaced person							23.2	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	An ethnic minority							18.3	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed: No							8.9	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed: Yes							24.3	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Did not have enough money to provide adequate shelter or housing for you and your family: No							9.7	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Did not have enough money to provide adequate shelter or housing for you and your family: Yes							30.1	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Income deprivation level: Coping on present income							9.4	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Income deprivation level: Finding it difficult on present income							18.2	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Income deprivation level: Finding it very difficult on present income							22.5	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Income deprivation level: Living comfortably on present income							6.3	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.1.3 Proportion of women aged 18-74 years subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Percent	Total							10.4	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.02 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children											
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	Percent	Fourth	66			41				Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	Percent	Middle	67.9			43.2				Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	Percent	Poorest	72			47.6				Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	Percent	Richest	63.6			40.2				Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	Percent	Second	66.9			44.8				Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	Percent	Total	67.1			43.1				Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	
16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	Percent	Total (only Roma in Roma settlements)	86.1			65.9				Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF	
16.03 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all											
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	18-29 yr							40.5	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	60-74 yr							21.1	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	A refugee/displaced person							34.3	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	Did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed: No							29.4	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	Did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed: Yes							19.4	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	Did not have enough money to provide adequate shelter or housing for you and your family: No							24.3	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	Income deprivation level: Coping on present income							29.6	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	Income deprivation level: Finding it difficult on present income							21.1	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	Percent	Total							26.3	Well-being and safety of women survey, OSCE	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	14-16 yr Female				0	0	0		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	14-16 yr Male				100	20	16.2		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	16-18 yr Female				0	0	0		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	16-18 yr Male				84.2	20	13.3		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	18-21 yr Female				1	28.6	0		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	18-21 yr Male				53.9	29.4	22.1		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	21-25 yr Female				4.3	16.7	16.7		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	21-25 yr Male				18.9	17.4	13.3		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	25-30 yr Female				11	25.4	17.8		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	25-30 yr Male				17.8	12.4	17.0		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	30-40 yr Female				30.1	17	20.5		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	30-40 yr Male				13.4	14.3	13.9		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	40-50 yr Female				15.6	18.4	11.5		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	40-50 yr Male				12	19.2	15.5		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	50-60 yr Female				17.3	17.6	20.7		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	50-60 yr Male				16.2	17.8	13.7		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	60-70 yr Female				20	21.1	17.6		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	60-70 yr Male				13.2	21.1	12.1		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	70-80 yr Female				11.1	0	0		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	70-80 yr Male				13.3	18.9	9.4		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	80 yr or more Female				0	0	0		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	80 yr or more Male				0	19.2	4.2		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	Female				11.6	18.6	16.9		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	Male				15.5	16.1	14.9		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Percent	Total				15.3	16.2	15		Ministry of Justice - Administration for the Enforcement of Penal Sanctions	
16.05 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms											
16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months	Percent	Female	8.5							Corruption in Serbia: bribery as experienced by the population, SORS and UNODC	
16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months	Percent	Male	10							Corruption in Serbia: bribery as experienced by the population, SORS and UNODC	
16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months	Percent	Total	9.3							Corruption in Serbia: bribery as experienced by the population, SORS and UNODC	



16.09 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration														
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	0-11 months	97.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	48-59 months	98.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	Higher/high education	99.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	None/primary education	97.1									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	Poorest	96.7									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	Richest	99.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	Total	98.9									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Percent	Total (only Roma in Roma settlements)	98.8									Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, SORS and UNICEF		
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development														
17.0c Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress														
17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services	Percent	Total	5.4	5.6	9	12.4	11.8	9.3	9	12.2		National Bank of Serbia - Balance of Payments Statistics Division	Significant progress	In the period 2010-2017, Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services varies annually from -3.1pp in 2010 to 3.2pp in 2017. Significant growth of debt service from Tpe, was recorded in the period 2010-2013, year, but in the period 2014-2017, when it decreased by 0.5pp. The debt service in the past five years has stabilized at an average of 11%, which means that from 2013 exports of goods and services start to increase significantly in the part of debt service.

#### Footnotes

- 1 Revised data
- 2 Data is based on 25-49 unweighted cases
- 3 Break in time series
- 4 3 = High; 2 = Moderate; 1 = Low; 0 = Not available
- 5 10 = Clearly defined; 5 = Not clearly defined; 0 = Not availab
- 6 Revised data based on gross domestic product
- 7 less accurate estimation
- 8 Estimated based on individual income data. Growth rates for the period 2012-2014.

## Annex 2 : UNICEF

### Key messages of youth

*We want to have more of a say in what our future will look like.*

*We are worried about our future and whether we will later be able to do what we were schooled for.*

*We want an education that harnesses creativity and critical thinking.*

*We would like to feel more secure in our neighbourhood, school, on the internet.*

*We would like more equal opportunities for every one of us.*

*We need firmer prevention of gender-based violence and greater awareness on gender equity.*

*Stop the brain drain of young people!*

*More attention should be given to our mental health, including psychosocial counselling to those who need it.*

*We need to be better informed about sexual and reproductive health.*

### Recommendations from young people



### End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- The policy response to poverty and social exclusion needs to be improved by more systematic child and youth focused approach.
- Better coverage of children and youth with social benefits (extended coverage and more adequate level of benefits) is required to provide effective leverage for lifting children and young people from poverty. Particularly benefits related to disability are needed to be improved in order to enable appropriate care and support for these children to be socially included.
- Stronger support to the activation of young people with tailor specific measures for different groups of most vulnerable children and youth: from remote rural areas, living with disability, Roma minority, children in conflict with law, children without proper parental care, children living in poor families, children with single parents.



## End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of measures defined by the Strategy for the Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 would be required, particularly the effectiveness in achieving the objective to increase adequate nutrition and physical activity among population younger than 18 years by 10%.
- The introduction of healthy meals in all preschools and primary schools.
- The introduction of programmes for healthy meals supply by food retailers in the closest proximity of schools.
- Promotion of healthy diets among children and youth, using popular personalities, digital technology, specialized applications and internet.
- Systematic promotion of healthy nutrition practices among Roma mothers and other caregivers, using the resource of Roma health mediators.



## Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

- Increased access to quality health care services for children living in Roma settlements is needed in order to decrease still high child mortality.
- Decisive action regarding vaccination should be taken, raising awareness among parents of the importance and providing safe vaccines for their children.
- Education on sexual and reproductive health should be included in formal education, with more time dedicated and age-adjusted content at all levels of formal education.
- Counselling services for contraception, family planning and sexual and reproductive health should be tailored more in line with young people's needs and be more accessible (through digital technology, online, phone, etc.).
- Remote counselling (via ICT) should be made available particularly for children and youth living in remote areas or areas without such specialized services.
- Information about sexual and reproductive health services should be made available through schools.
- Mental health check-ups should be introduced as a part of compulsory systematic health check-ups of children and young people that are organized through schools.



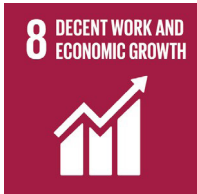
## Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- Inequalities in access to education at all levels should be eliminated through more effective policies and measures.
- Inclusive education should be further improved and special schools and special classes for children with disabilities not used as an alternative to this improvement.
- Gender parity should be monitored more closely, and measures implemented to increase the participation of boys in secondary and university education.
- Gender segregation in education should be targeted by specific measures, and relevant national policies (for education, gender equality and employment) should prioritize this issue among their key objectives.
- Educational programmes should be further reformed as to include more contemporary topics and knowledge.
- Educational programmes and methods should be thoroughly reformed towards achieving outcomes that include creative and critical thinking and innovation skills.



## Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- Implementation of the laws and policies prohibiting discrimination should be more effective. Empowering independent mechanisms for the protection of equality, citizens' rights, but also civil society to report and raise the issue of cases of discrimination should be among the key priorities. A more effective response of the state and relevant institutions based on complaints and recommendations of independent mechanisms is the road to achieve higher motivation of young women and girls to report discrimination and to counter it.
- Preventing and combating violence against women and girls should be synchronized with measures aimed at empowering women in their different roles and aspects of life. In this respect it is good that violence against women and girls is an integral part of the overarching Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020. However, a comprehensive and specific programme for preventing and combating violence against women and girls is needed.
- More decisive and effective action for prevention of early marriages should be taken at national and local levels.
- Second chance in education and adjusted programmes that will enable return to schooling for young mothers is the key to their increased chances to compensate missing elements crucial for access to labour market and multidimensional social inclusion.
- Rebalancing responsibilities related to the family should be further enhanced through introducing non-transferable parental leave for fathers, but also through systematic campaigning promoting different gender roles in the family through education system and media.



## Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- Employment support measures for young people should be evaluated and modified with respect to their effectiveness. Gender specific effects of the measures should be evaluated and support to employment to young women should be tailored in line with specific obstacles to employment they face, whether they are related to the discrimination at employment, concentration in education profile that are less employable or other factors.
- Child labour should be addressed by measures designed in the Roadmap for the elimination of child labour. The effectiveness of the application of the roadmap in current policies and mechanisms should be evaluated and accordingly adjusted if needed to provide more effective intervention.



## Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

- Support to young researchers, scientists, innovators should be continued and improved with clearer focus on fields that contribute to sustainable development and that represent the comparative advantage of Serbia.
- Access to ICT technology should be further advanced among youth from vulnerable groups and rural remote areas.
- Development of skills important for access to employment should be better supported among young people in rural remote areas, through e-learning where possible or through more systematic recruitment for trainings related to active employment among young people in rural areas.
- Young farmers should be systematically supported in adoption of new knowledge, new technologies and access to markets.
- Young women in rural areas should be supported to develop autonomous, modern forms of production with support to new knowledge and technologies.
- Specific programmes and measures for support to entrepreneurship of young people should be implemented on a larger scale, including mentoring by successful entrepreneurs, better access to financial capital during the startup and nascent stage of business.





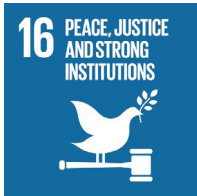
## Reduce inequality within and among countries

- A systematic approach to poverty reduction and social inclusion is needed to address the causes of poverty and social exclusion of different vulnerable groups. Measures should specifically include those aimed at young people. Targets should be precise and monitored regularly.
- Exchange and cooperation among young people should be improved. Different activities aimed at promotion of solidarity through everyday activities, sport, culture, among young people from different groups should be systematically supported and promoted.
- Young people from the majority population, should be stimulated to engage in different forms of voluntary actions to support children and young people from vulnerable groups. That could include daily care centres, supported learning activities, or other initiatives.
- Deinstitutionalization processes should advance further providing more adequate protection and support to children in social protection system.
- NGOs working with youth and children in vulnerable situation should be supported more by public budget at various levels (national, provincial, local) for providing important social services in order to increase their outreach, accessibility, and quality of services.
- Specific programmes for support to the most vulnerable groups of children and youth, such as those living and/or working on the street, victims of human trafficking should be more developed and integrated with prevention programmes.



## Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- Education on climate change and environmental protection should be given more space in formal education.
- Schools should organize actions that would mobilize young people around concrete events related to climate change and environmental protection.
- Environmental actions could be the proper framework to organize cooperation among young people from different areas and inclusion of young people from vulnerable groups.



## **Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

- Continuation of a large-scale campaign against violent disciplining methods and particularly corporal punishment.
- Youth organizations should be empowered to more systematically and effectively report cases of discrimination of children and young people based on different grounds and to support their access to different resources and services. Better cooperation between child-focused and youth organizations with independent mechanisms such as the Commissioner for the Protection of the Equality and Ombudsman should be developed.
- Political participation of young people should be stimulated, not only through political party membership but as active participation of citizens who propose, comment policies and laws and monitor their implementation.
- Security of young people should be improved through better protection from violence in national and local policies, through safer neighbourhood and safer cities policies.

## Annex 3 : Participating Civil Society Organizations

### Assessments and recommendations of the civil society organizations for the national implementation of the Agenda 2030 and reaching of sustainable development goals in the Republic of Serbia

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, whose representatives are members of the Interministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which is the institutional mechanism for coordinating the ministries, agencies and government services in the implementation of Agenda 2030 by integrating and achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), led by the national policy of sustainable development of cohesive implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the achievement of COR in the European Union, has sent a public call to civil society organizations (CSO) to contribute to the creation of the first Voluntary National Report of the Republic of Serbia (VNR), for the presentation at the High Level Political Forum in July 2019. With this call, it was pointed out that “civil society organizations that apply the principles of the SDGs in their functioning or in some way contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030” should give their assessments of the Government’s applied practices in the SDGs implementation, identify the problems of national application and outline recommendations for implementing improvements, share knowledge and experience, all which would be valuable help to the Government, by integrating these assessments in the VNR, and especially in the planning of the next steps of implementing the Agenda 2030 and reaching SDGs for the whole society. The methodological instrument used to obtain these contributions from civil society organizations was a questionnaire with open questions, as explained in part 4 of the Voluntary National Report text. The public call that lasted from April 8 to April 25, 2019 was answered by 21 civil society organizations: all are presented in the following review, also including the specific SDGs to who’s direct achievement or contribution to the achievement the organizations are dedicated, as well as the special focus of work on advocating and promoting the Agenda 2030 and its goals as a whole. The notes at the end of this annex contain basic information that each CSO provided about the profile of its operations.

Almost all CSOs that responded to the call were previously familiar with the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, both via the media and the Internet. They indicated that UN agencies, as well as partner organizations and donors, such as the Delegation of the European Union, played an important role in increasing the visibility of the Agenda 2030 as they integrated the objectives of the Agenda 2030 into their strategic goals and funding priorities.

Most CSOs have said that they have been cooperating with various stakeholders for many years, both national, local, regional and international partners, in the implementation of the SDGs, and that there are numerous examples of good practices.

Civil Society Organizations	The specific SDG to which the Civil Society Organization is dedicated																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Entire 2030 Agenda advocacy
Belgrade Food Bank <sup>1</sup>	✓	✓										✓						
Centre for European Policies <sup>2</sup>																✓		
Red Cross of Serbia <sup>3</sup>	✓	✓	✓															
Etno Forum Svrljig <sup>4</sup>																		✓
Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance(HCIT) <sup>5</sup>	✓		✓		✓											✓		
Institute for Creative entrepreneurship and Innovation <sup>6</sup>	✓			✓		✓										✓	✓	
The Umbrella youth organization of Serbia <sup>7</sup>																		✓
TakTIk Development Center <sup>8</sup>																		✓
Belgrade Center for Human Rights <sup>9</sup>				✓	✓					✓						✓		
Center for Peace and Tolerance– RAS Sjenica <sup>10</sup>																		✓
Association for helping mentally underdeveloped people – Aleksinac <sup>11</sup>																		✓
The Center for Democracy Foundation <sup>12</sup>	✓				✓			✓		✓						✓		
Center for Social Policy <sup>13</sup>	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓								
Pestalozzi Children Foundation <sup>14</sup>				✓														
Smart Collective <sup>15</sup>												✓						
Women's club Belo Blato <sup>16</sup>					✓													
Textbook publisher association <sup>17</sup>				✓														
United Nations Association of Serbia (UZUNS) <sup>18</sup>	✓		✓	✓	✓							✓	✓			✓	✓	
Association for Support of Persons with Disabilities "Our House" <sup>19</sup>	✓								✓			✓						
Praxis <sup>20</sup>																		✓
Serbian Association for Demolition, Decontamination and Recycling <sup>21</sup>																		✓

**Annotation:** the first column contains the full name of the organization, columns marked with 1 to 17 represent the specific SDG the organization are dedicated to, 2030 represents advocacy of the Agenda 2030, and not a specific SDG - in the next period, it will be actively followed and reported in detail.

## Endnotes

- 1 Bank of food Belgrade is a regional organization with an active status in Agenda 2030. In 2018 alone, it was able to buy and share 1,500 tons of food, mainly fruits and vegetables, which is very important in the diet of the socially endangered part of the population that cannot afford it. According to them, the main challenge is to involve as many stakeholders as possible from all sectors, to organize and coordinate appropriately (accordingly to SDGs) in order to comprehensively examine problems and priorities, to timely and adequately address, and, if necessary, to amend appropriate laws in binding with the implementation of SDGs.
- 2 Center for European Policies: a national organization that cooperates with international partners, is actively engaged in the Agenda 2030. The organization has implemented a number of projects in Serbia, mainly focused on SDG 16. The main problem they call attention to is the need to address the inadequate connection of stakeholders in the design and implementation of public politics.
- 3 Red Cross of Serbia: an international organization actively engaged in the Agenda 2030. From the very beginning through various activities, first in the Millennium Development Goals, and in 2013, after the Millennium Development Goals, the Red Cross of Serbia participated in the national process of consultations within the initiative "Serbia we want," including senior consultations. Subsequently, representatives of the Red Cross of Serbia participated in two Regional Forums dedicated to the Objectives of Sustainable Development in Geneva (2018 and 2019), as well as at the Sub-regional conference in Belgrade in 2018. The only way that results can be achieved in relation to the Agenda 2030 is through a partnership between the public, civil and private sectors, as well as active citizen participation. It is also emphasized that each stakeholder has an obligation, but also an interest in dealing with each of the objectives to a certain extent, because the achievement of all goals is in the interest of the citizens of Serbia
- 4 Etno Forum Svrlijig: is a local organization, advocating the Agenda 2030 in Svrlijig. It emphasized that the focus must be on all citizens, especially those most vulnerable.
- 5 Humanitarian Center for Integration and Tolerance: is a national organization, working closely with KIRS. Concentrated on work with migrants, IDPs and returnees, they advocate and promote Agenda 2030. Recommendations and problems stated are that systemic issues should be addressed in the issue of financing social protection services for unaccompanied minors; as well as the lack of accommodation capacities in local centers for social work for urgent care of unaccompanied minors and women with children. It also states that in practice there are major problems in providing health services to asylum seekers and other migrants, which largely result from insufficient knowledge of positive regulations governing the health protection of foreigners by members of the police, social and health workers, as well as in an inefficient mechanism for financing those services
- 6 Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship and Innovation: a national organization, started the Agenda 2030 edition in the creative sector where, through scientific research and professional work, it spreads knowledge about the relationship between the creative sector and the SDGs. They think that culture and creative industries are not sufficiently recognized as part of the SDGs, and that this topic is not given attention in an adequate, participatory and transparent way.
- 7 The Umbrella youth organization of Serbia: is a national organization, advocates Agenda 2030 among young people. They believe that the importance of involving representatives of youth or youth organizations in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 is not recognized. They also point out that implementation activities need to be coordinated, transparent and open to all recognized stakeholders interested in the SDGs. It is also stated that funds invested by various donors in promoting SDGs should be more practical.
- 8 TakTIk Development Center: This local organization advocates the Agenda 2030. The organization's work program for the current year includes the celebration of some days promoting the goals of the Agenda 2030, and so far have taken part in the Diversity and STEM campaign, the European STEM Alliance and marked the International Women's Day in Science (Goals 4 and 10), World Wildlife Day (Goal 14), World Water Day (Goal 6) and World Health Day (Goal 3). They recommended the improvement of the economic situation of the population, to leave the scope of the declarative work for the field of concrete application.
- 9 Belgrade Center for Human Rights: local organization actively involved in the implementation of the SDGs. Through its work, the Belgrade Center for Human Rights contributes mostly to the implementation of SDG 4. Quality education, 5. Gender equality, 10. Reduction of inequality and 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions. They recommend a greater focus on the challenges of human rights and the rule of law as a result of the failure to respect the rule of law in Serbia, the inefficiency of the judiciary, jeopardizing the independence of the judiciary by the executive, and the weak institutions in charge of the application and protection of human rights.
- 10 Center for Peace and Tolerance RAS - Sjenica: local organization, partially familiar with Agenda 2030. Since 2007, they have helped with the organization of marriages between young people from Serbia and Albania, and two schools have been opened in rural areas.
- 11 Association for helping mentally underdeveloped people - Aleksinac: is a local organization from Aleksinac, focused on inclusion, home help for people with disabilities from poor families and psychosocial support. They recommend better coordination between the civil sector of local self-government units, the private sector and the state.
- 12 The Center for Democracy Foundation is a national organization actively engaged in the Agenda 2030. Within its project "Dignified work for everyone", citizens are motivated to fight for their rights in the field of work and local support coalitions formed from relevant actors from public, civil and private sectors. 38 street actions throughout Serbia were held in three cycles, the themes of which were work in the black market, safety and health at work and mobbing. Over 5,000 citizens supported the requirements formulated in the Declaration of Decent Work with their signature. It was discussed with over 15,000 citizens and given close to 1,000 legal advices. The lack of social dialogue and the lack of support for the principles of inclusive development and the Agenda 2030 by the highest levels of government is a problem that must be overcome urgently.
- 13 Center for Social Policy: National Organization, active approach to the Agenda 2030. During the implementation of the study Prevention of Early Abandonment of Education, the CSP conducted a Peer Review developed by the EU. During the conferences / meetings held, various stakeholders from local self-government units and decision makers from the state administration exchanged experiences and knowledge in the field of education and applied the acquired knowledge for inclusion and education of students in vulnerable groups. They recommend more comprehensive informing of the population about goals, problems that arise if objectives are not achieved, as well as information on the progress of achieving goals.
- 14 Pestalozzi Children Foundation: is an international organization concentrated on working with children at the local level in Serbia, also actively engages and promotes Agenda 2030. They consider that it is necessary to allocate the necessary funds for education, improve the initial education of teachers, modernize the teaching process and train teachers, and that it is important to introduce compulsory secondary education as well as trainings related to SDGs for school management and teachers.



15 Smart Collective: Local organization, familiar with the SDGs. In co-operation with European partner organizations through training for trainers, they are trained to conduct workshops that are practically explaining the SDGs to participants. Most work on target 12.6 - Encourage companies, especially large and international companies, to adopt sustainable practices and integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle. They recommend inclusion of the business sector and of the target 4.7.

16 Association "Women's Club Belo Blato": Local organization, are actively engaged in Goal 5, which refers to Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In this regard, they implemented a number of projects that affirmed women's activism and economic empowerment of women in the countryside. They recommend greater visibility of women from villages through networking and inclusion in institutional communications.

17 Textbook Publisher Association: Local organization, dedicated to SDG 4, through integration of the Association's objectives of the provisions of normative acts. They recommend improving the rule of law, effective trustworthy and transparent institutions, combating corruption and better public access to information.

18 United Nations Association of Serbia (UZUNS): National organization, actively cooperates with the UN and participates in the implementation of the SDGs. Since 2015 they have organized various activities in the field of advocacy and promotion of the SDGs among young people in Serbia, as well as peer education and local activities related to the 17 goals. They realized a large number of projects and seminars. They recommend broader information to citizens, and especially young people about the significance of the Agenda 2030 and the contribution anyone can give to support it, especially through the media, as well as the elaboration of educational activities on this topic.

19 Association for Support of Persons with Disabilities "Our House": Local organization, also cooperates with international associations. They work on targets 1, 9 and 12. They consider that the introduction of standards and obligations of annual reporting on the SDGs, initially for large enterprises in the public and private sectors, would be of great importance in raising awareness about the Goals and their implementation. They recommend the abolition of deprivation of business capacity, the revision and reform of the process of assessing work ability, and the introduction of the concept of employment with the support of persons with disabilities.

20 Praxis: A local organization, works on public advocacy on a national and international level, alone or in cooperation with other CSO in Serbia or European organizations and networks, whose Praxis is a member. They are advocating for the eradication of child marriages and statelessness. They recommend the active participation of all stakeholders in the process of achieving sustainable development and recognizing the importance of the role of civil society in this process.

21 Serbian Association for Demolition, Decontamination and Recycling: Local organization, had so far not included the SDGs in its projects. They entered the EDA Industrial Report with activities in the areas they deal with, important for local governments and regions as a national product. They recommend the preparation of local self-government and economic factors to conduct their own affairs and realize the needs of their administrations.



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS