

# 2021 - 2025

## Communications & Advocacy Strategy

Aligned with the 2021 – 2025 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework



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March 2021

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**BACKGROUND**

# Background

## ■ Context Analysis for Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is an upper middle-income country of an estimated 3.5 million people.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to becoming a member of the European Union (EU) family, with EU accession, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs serving as mutually reinforcing and complimentary processes. However, with a complex governance system set up by the Dayton Peace Agreement, with 14 constitutions and more than 150 ministries, BiH remains at an early stage of EU accession.<sup>2</sup> A complex and fragmented governance system, resting on multi-level power-sharing arrangements, has constrained progress on administrative, judicial, legislative and economic reforms, with frequent institutional deadlocks, weak accountability mechanisms, and untransparent decision-processes fostering quasi-perpetual political instability.

BiH presented its application for membership of the European Union (EU) in February 2016. In its May 2019 opinion, the EU Commission described an array of structural and functional challenges that BiH would need to address on its path to Brussels, including in the development sector. Despite BiH's commitment to the 2030 Agenda, there is no national plan for sustainable development and no strategic national priorities

at this moment. However, a localized SDG Framework is finalized and expected to be adopted in first quarter 2021.

Overall, this has challenged BiH's ability to mitigate or manage a range of risks to sustainable development progress.

The population in BiH is shrinking and ageing, with out-migration as an urgent challenge, representing a loss of young people and skilled workers. While BiH lacks comprehensive population data, UNDESA data indicate that subsequent political and social instability fueled mass emigration, with 250,000 citizens having left BiH since the 2013 census, further exacerbating a demographic decline first triggered by forced wartime migration and subsequent low fertility rates. Together with fertility rate (1.244) that is far below the replacement level (2.1), this has caused a continuous drop in the population size. Although statistically not proven, many demographers in BiH believe that currently there are no more than 3 million people living in the country, while in addition approximately 2 million people are estimated to working or residing abroad — the highest share in the Western Balkans. The deteriorating demographic situation has numerous implications for the sustainability of social protection systems, education, and health care. BiH does not have a policy for migration

<sup>1</sup> All data presented here are as outlined in the 2019-2020 UN Common Country Assessment, which was based on sectoral UN assessments and available data: [https://bosniaherzegovina.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/2019\\_CCA%20BiH\\_UNCT\\_Final\\_Draft\\_12.03.2020.pdf](https://bosniaherzegovina.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/2019_CCA%20BiH_UNCT_Final_Draft_12.03.2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2020). 2020 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy: Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020 Report, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina\\_report\\_2020.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/bosnia_and_herzegovina_report_2020.pdf)

management, nor one for involving its vast diaspora in strategic development. The country is simultaneously struggling to adequately address new challenges brought on by an increase of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers since late 2017 and the onset of increased mixed-movement through BiH towards western Europe and the EU. This has tested both legislation (legal framework) and response capacity in the areas of migration and asylum.

While BiH's social protection system appears to be reasonably well-funded i.e. is comparable as a share of GDP to that of neighboring countries, it fails to reach those most in need, thus deepening inequalities and increasing the risk of people being left behind, including for larger groups such as women, rural populations, youth, and the elderly. Women are underrepresented in both political and economic decision-making, and re-traditionalization and war-trauma largely exacerbate tolerance to different forms of violence. 47.2% women experienced some form of violence during their lifetime. Even though women account for 51.5% working age population in 2017, they have lower employment (24.9%) and higher unemployment rates (23.1%) than men.

BiH's economy is marked by high carbon and energy intensity and the country routinely tops

the list of those with the highest air pollution levels in the world. Hydropower generation is vulnerable to hydrological extremes and, being located downstream on international rivers, it depends on transboundary cooperation. The country is at significant risk of natural and man-made hazards, with over 20% of its territory prone to flooding and more than 283,000 people exposed to very significant risk of flooding. In addition, the 2014 country-wide floods displaced scores of mapped landmines from the 1990s conflict, thus generating another layer of risk.

These challenges have been aggravated by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and threatens BiH's progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Like all countries in the region, the pandemic has caused major socio-economic disruptions, and exposed fractures in public health management and social protection in the highly decentralized governance system. Nonetheless, authorities in BiH, with support from international partners, have implemented measures to contain the spread of the disease and provided fiscal and monetary stimulus to counteract the supply, demand, and unemployment shocks that have accompanied social distancing, lockdowns, and reduced travel, trade, and commerce.

## ■ A fit-for-purpose UN system to deliver Agenda 2030

Sustainable development calls for a UN system that can set policy and operational standards which can be applied with flexibility in diverse national contexts, and provide a platform for discussion, design and solutions on the ground.

A "fit for purpose" UN development system, in this context, is expected to respond to the demands of a universal, transformative agenda; ground its work in cutting-edge analytics and strategies; and nurture open and common systems for the

production, sharing and use of high-quality data, knowledge and practices, both across the UN system and externally.<sup>3</sup>

Following the May 2018 GA resolution 72/279, a reinvigorated UN Resident Coordinator system was launched on 1 January 2019, with strengthened independence and authority over the activities of UN country teams (UNCTs), enhanced analytical capacities in their offices, and dedicated backstopping from new regional offices of DCO and a stand-alone global Development Coordination Office (DCO).

The reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System is aimed at supporting transformative action by UNCTs leveraging new tools for joint planning and programming, namely, the CCA and Cooperation Framework, developing greater operational efficiencies, through the Business Operations Strategy and Common Back Offices, and improve

aligned and joint Communication and Advocacy. At the global level, the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) serves as a high-level forum for joint policy formation and decision-making, guiding and supporting the coordination of development operations in all countries with UN presence.

- This reinvigorated system coordination, among other<sup>4</sup>: Reduces duplication, including through greater visibility over UN assets and capacities
- Reduces the burden on national governments of multiple UN entities seeking to assist them
- Reduces the burden on development partners, by offering a more coherent funding space
- Increases efficiencies by reducing overlaps, resources spent on them and separate admin processes

## ■ Composition of the UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The **United Nations Country Team** (UNCT) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is the main mechanism for inter-agency coordination and decision-making. It is led by the UN **Resident Coordinator** and composed of the representatives of the UN entities carrying out operational activities for development in BiH. The UNCT in BiH comprises thirteen resident UN entities (FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNV, UN Women, WHO), and three non-resident entities (UNIDO, IFAD, and IAEA).

The Office of the Resident Coordinator/ RCO leads on behalf of the RC and UNCT on the five key functions in support of the responsibilities of the RC and the UNCT: (1) strategic planning; (2) development economics; (3) partnerships and development finance; (4) data and results management and reporting; and (5) communications and advocacy.

3 UNDG Vision and Framework for Actions for UN Operational Activities in support of the post-2015 Agenda; at: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-Vision-and-Framework-for-Action-for-UN-Operational-Activities-in-....pdf>

4 2020 Report Of The Chair Of The United Nations Sustainable Development Group On The Development Coordination Office; at: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/2020-Report-of-the-Chair-of-UNSDG-on-DCO.pdf>

## ■ Comparative Advantages of the UN in BiH

The core of the comparative advantage of the UN team in Bosnia and Herzegovina stems from its convening power and strategic perception of being a neutral partner to all levels of authorities in BiH. Its expertise and the implementation capacities in the ground, make it a trusted partner within the international community.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the UN is seen as a strong advocacy partner on a range of issues for both international and national partners, including civil society and wide networks of activists.

The normative mandate combining peace, development and human rights, coupled with the knowledge expertise, capacity building and the “Delivering as One” principles, allows for a stronger joint outreach – as demonstrated in a number of currently running joint programmes. The key weakness perceived is the “UN identity” in the country, which is partly still plagued by the legacies of the UN’s role in ‘90ies. Strong joint outreach under UN BiH branding remains the priority.

As per the UNSDCF 2021-2025 consultations<sup>6</sup>, comparative strength of the UN in BiH – in

addition to the above - draws upon:

- The convening power of current and potential partners for SDG achievement in BiH, including the relevant authorities in BiH, civil society groups and community partners, the private sector, and regional and international partners, including IFIs;
- Application of cross-sector approaches and coordination for complex cross cutting issues such as efforts to address exclusion and vulnerability (‘no one left behind’), gender equality and women’s empowerment, climate change and rights-based approaches to development,
- Wider cross-border, regional, and thematic perspectives to respond to the sustainable development agenda and SDGs,
- Evidence-based policy advice and technical expertise, including advocacy for vulnerable groups in laws, policies, and national and sector programmes, and
- Support for the collection, analysis, and use of disaggregated data, including through household surveys, in line with international standards.

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<sup>5</sup> The 3rd wave public perception survey done for the 2019 UN Peace and Development Assessment states that the UN is the second most trusted member of the IC in BiH (56,4 % of the respondents), after the EU with a 0.1 margin. Same survey shows that citizens see the work of the UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina mostly through Education (28.7%), followed by Refugee Return (25.3%) and Health care (23.9%). Looking at what should be the main role of the UN, respondents believe it should be to ensure control over corruption (41.7%), and that people in B&H have a decent life (40.8%), followed by ensuring human rights monitoring (32%), that politicians abide by the law (28.5%) and the integration of returnees (27.3%).

<sup>6</sup> [https://bosniaherzegovina.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/2021-2025\\_BiH\\_CF%20-%20FINAL\\_DRAFT\\_15.05.2020.pdf](https://bosniaherzegovina.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/2021-2025_BiH_CF%20-%20FINAL_DRAFT_15.05.2020.pdf)



## ■ Breakdown SWOT Analysis by the UNCG

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering as One approach and increased team coherence</li> <li>• New generation of RC/RCO and UNCT capacities and reinvigorated analytical capacities</li> <li>• SDGs/ Agenda2030 as overarching policy advocacy tool</li> <li>• Use of joint programs, projects and campaigns in amplifying DaO and Communicating as One</li> <li>• Multisectoral expertise/knowledge recognized by national and international partners</li> <li>• Access to wide networks of stakeholders, including media</li> <li>• Access to authorities at all levels, and across entire country</li> <li>• Shared assets (rosters of consultants, translators, cameraman, designers...) and ability for fast implementation and reaction in the field – as recognized by national and international partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of general public perception of the collective – “the UN in BiH” - work and identity</li> <li>• Limited influence on shifting general public perception</li> <li>• Technical language used in the external communications</li> <li>• Stretched capacities and occasional inconsistency in thematic focus</li> <li>• Delayed reactions and responses due to lengthy internal procedures</li> <li>• Inconsistent information exchange and sharing of resources and best practices</li> <li>• Lack of incentives for joint action, weighed against competing priorities</li> <li>• Non-balanced articulation of individual agencies’ objectives vs. Delivering as One approach</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN seen as a trusted, unbiased partner (by donors and national and international partners)</li> <li>• SDGs as overarching umbrella for advocating policy change</li> <li>• UN is seen as one of the key partners in COVID-19 response and recovery; use of C19 programs for advocating “Recover Better Together” approach</li> <li>• UN’s enhanced communication via social media, personalized with RCs and HoAs accounts</li> <li>• UN mandate in human rights, peace and development and reinvigorated HQ/high-level engagement on BiH</li> <li>• Potential for establishing the UN as a Knowledge HUB in BiH – based on assessments approach developed during C19 response.</li> <li>• Strong connections of individual UN agencies with different stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN’s legacy of the ‘90ies (Srebrenica) and image seen through the political failings of the organization</li> <li>• Public misperception of the roles of agencies vs. role of the UNCT and the UN, occasionally amplified by uncoordinated actions</li> <li>• Lack of greater general public knowledge of SDGs</li> <li>• Public perceptions/negative mirroring of the UN roles and responsibilities in the mixed-movement situation management</li> <li>• Lack of general understanding of UNCT internal structures among stakeholders and partners which sometimes causes delays in joint actions with partners</li> <li>• Campaigns and narratives by other international agencies/actors which may affect effectiveness of UN’s outreach in same mandated areas</li> </ul>



2

**JOINT UN COMMUNICATIONS  
& ADVOCACY STRATEGY**

# JOINT UN COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY STRATEGY

A joint approach to UN communications in BiH is aimed strengthening the UN's position as a key national and international partner, leveraging each agency's specific comparative advantage and expertise without replacing or weakening their individual mandate or identity, while communicating joint results. With the

frameworks and priorities set, and the role of the UN Communication Group to work to increase awareness and visibility of CF results, the Joint UN Communications and Advocacy Strategy aims to do so by strengthening the Communicating as One approach.

## ■ Strategic Objectives

The Joint UN Communications & Advocacy Strategy 2021-2025 sets forth the following strategic objectives:

- i. ensure consistency in messaging and policy advocacy (internally and externally)
- ii. position the "UN in BiH" identity and strengthen outreach in communicating joint results as per the 2021-2025 UN SDCF,
- iii. ensure consistency with the global UN communication and messaging as relevant, and
- iv. avoid segmentation, duplication, competition and incoherence in communication.

In order to achieve this strategic path, a specific set of sub-objectives is proposed to be followed through, as:

- Foster a stronger public image and identity of the **collective efforts of the UN in BiH** contributing to the sustainable development

- of a more prosperous BiH;
- Firmly establish the UN in BiH as a **knowledge hub and expert convener**, with leading expertise and skills in the mandated areas of work;
- Enhance the **public outreach of the UN towards the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina**, expanding the scope beyond the key partners and stakeholders;
- Promote positive narratives and **local trailblazers, champions and leaders**, giving the UN work and the SDGs a more "human face" (e.g. local champions for SDGs)
- Influence **the public agenda** to talk and address key development, peace and human rights issues;
- Consistently **highlight progress** towards achievement of the **UNSDCF priorities**;
- Ensure consistent and coherent **joint advocacy for key policy issues** related to the UNSDCF priority areas and SDGs implementation;

- Ensure that the **voices of vulnerable groups** in BiH are heard; as well as positive stories on partners who are local leaders for the community development;
- Ensure that **gender-lens** are applied in communication; with gender parity and ensured visibility of women in communication efforts;
- Foster **information sharing among the UN staff** in BiH to keep everyone informed on joint actions and results;
- Move towards **simplified and public-friendly reporting** on results and actions taken, as per DCO Guidelines

The Strategy aims to increase impact of the UN advocacy efforts by ensuring consistency of messaging and strengthening inter-agency cooperation and coordination; with a specific set of objectives.

A full-fledged Communicating as One approach assists the UNCT to address following communication challenges:

- Ensuring consistent use of “UN in BiH” identity
- Amplifying individual and cross-agency messaging
- Ensuring consistent reporting on UNSDCF activities and results
- Improving formal and information sharing between UN agencies resulting in improved awareness about ongoing activities and agencies’ priorities; either via agency to RCO information flow, or agencies-to-agencies.
- Addressing gap in resources needed to run joint communications campaigns and activities;
- Ensuring harmonized use of social media in enhanced reporting of UNSDCF results

## ■ Target audiences

- Authorities at national, entity and cantonal levels: policy and decision- makers;
- The general public in BiH, with a particular focus on young people and women as agents of change
- Key influencers, leaders and champions in the policy setting and action, including CSOs, different non-governmental associations, academia, private sector and community leaders
- International partners, with focus on bilateral donors and specific focus on multilaterals
- Most vulnerable/marginalized categories of population;
- Media.

## ■ Joint Approach and Rules of Engagement

The UN Communications Group (UNCG) is responsible for the development of the **Joint Annual Work Plan** and **shared Calendar**, ideally at the end of each year.

Particular attention in planning is to be given to the **strategic use of social media** to strengthen the public outreach. With the UN BiH and UN RC (Ms. Ingrid Macdonald as of March 2020) Twitter accounts verified, and increased UN in BiH Facebook following, the UNCT can leverage the 2020 increased social media attention<sup>7</sup>. The **reinvigorated UN in BiH website** is an open space for joint outreach and storytelling, as recognized by the UN Sustainable Development Group on multiple occasions throughout 2020.<sup>8</sup>

Within the Annual Work Plan, the UNCG will propose **at least one joint campaign** for the given year (scope depending on the annual budget)<sup>9</sup>, as well as identify key milestones within ongoing joint programmes and projects for **joint communications & advocacy**. The UN in BiH has a longstanding successful experience with joint programmes, and a number of new ones are expected to be developed within the 2021 – 2025 UNSDCF. Each is managed as per UNCT endorsed guidelines for joint programming, and with a highlighted RC role. UNCG will propose most appropriate modality for each joint communication activity, campaign or action,

aiming to further positive image of UN and UN agencies and Communicating as One approach.

The **UN Day (24 October)** is used as an annual joint event with a shift towards “more public opening”. Based on 2020 event under UN75 umbrella, the UN Day marking serves as a space for bringing together partners and beneficiaries, giving a space for showcasing BiH contributions and actions towards (i) UN values and mandate, (ii) SDGs and 2030 Agenda in BiH as well as giving a space to the UN team to report/present key results of the year to the BiH public.

UN Day should be followed with the production of **“Year in Review” materials**, showing the key results of the UN team in BiH – per agency and thematically/per UNSDCF pillars.

The above described yearly joint approach should be based on the following **Rules of Engagement**:

- The joint approach is to be used where possible and appropriate, based on identified priorities (e.g. gender equality, climate action, peacebuilding and social cohesion – and specific ones as per UNSDCF) and any other emerging issues (e.g. such as crisis and risk communication on COVID-19 or mixed movement situation in BiH);

7 In line with the global Guidance on the use of Social Media, attached as Annex 3; following official verification of accounts for RC and UN BiH, it is suggested to attempt to ensure all agencies and official representatives have verified accounts.

8 Selection of UNSDG website stories featuring BiH in 2020:

<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/bosnia-and-herzegovina-resilience-and-impact-daily-work-amid-covid-19>  
<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/celebrating-75-years-un-75-country-teams-spearheading-digital-platforms>  
<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/9-ways-un-teams-around-world-are-fighting-covid-19>  
<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/their-greatest-challenge-yet-migrants-and-refugees-square-against-covid-19-bosnia>  
<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/building-brighter-future-women-and-girls-free-violence>  
<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/100-websites-look-how-country-teams-are-communicating-about-uns-work>  
<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/updates-field-34-un-teams-help-ensure-safety-and-dignity-those-most-need>

9 AWP endorsed at the beginning of each year should – if possible- identify the modality and theme of the joint campaign (large-scale or social media only, etc), as well as possible lead agency

- Strategic messages and advocacy approaches on these priorities and emerging issues/ areas of engagement are to be developed – primarily by the leading mandated agency, with support from the RCO; and in further cooperation within the UNCG for final screening.<sup>10</sup>
- All UNCT agencies, funds and programmes continue with the communication based on their mandates and programming, with the – where possible – alignment of their communication strategies with this core joint strategy.
- The UN Resident Coordinator is the primary spokesperson for the UN in BiH; with the increased presence on social media, joint statements are first to be posted on the UN in BiH channels, followed by the RC’s accounts where applicable and amplified by the agency and Heads of Agencies accounts.
- As the primary spokesperson for the UN in the country, the UN RC issues statements on behalf of the UN in BiH (not to be confused with “United Nations in BiH” signed statements) when and where agreed for maximum impact; taking into consideration specific topics.<sup>11</sup>
- The UNCG members are responsible for timely information-sharing, especially concerning the yearly identified priorities, as well as any critical or ad-hoc issues.
- Communication on the UN values and global mandates is continuous throughout, as is the use of the UN in BiH visual identity for joint communication and materials (development of any such new materials are subject to UNCG endorsement).

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10 With full understanding that this preparation involves programmatic colleagues as well, consideration on advocacy approaches and needs to be planned in advance.

11 Statements signed by the UN RC are recommended in cases they address particular crisis /emergency situations (as per SOPs for Crisis Communication – in Annex), human rights violations and/or issues, any politicly-related situational challenge; or if specifically agreed by the UNCT for a particular topic. Statements issued as “United Nations in BiH” are recommended for communication on relevant joint actions and programs (primarily those with a direct link to HQ), joint advocacy, translating or localizing HQ campaigns, and any additional messaging as agreed by the UNCT.\* Joint programmes which already have set-up communication procedures as per guidance on joint programming adhere to those.



3

**WHAT WE COMMUNICATE**

**Note:** Messages have to be periodically revisited to ensure they reflect an actual representation of the UNCT priorities. Common messages can be used by any UN agency in their individual public awareness efforts. Specific sets of thematic messages are to be developed in parallel – these would be context-

dependent, timely, and dependent on relevant programmatic inputs in close collaboration with the UNCT (e.g. initial set to be prepared is on mixed-movement situation, Climate Action, Gender Equality and COVID19 response).

## ■ Common set of UN messages

The UNCT will emphasize basic common messages complemented with the regularly received **HQ Communication**, including on COVID-19<sup>12</sup>.

This basic set of messages includes:

- The UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an unbiased, effective and reliable partner that assists Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing development and human rights challenges;
- The UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina supports authorities and the society to respond and recover from the COVID-19 crisis and further strengthen the country's resilience and development.
- The UN is engaging to enable coordinated-international and institutional - efforts in supporting the health system, the economy, educational system, and leaving no one behind as the country moves forward.
- Recovering towards the new normal and building back together is in focus to ensure societies are more resilient and better prepared to face pandemics, climate change and other global challenges.
- Unity of action and purpose among all key stakeholders, both national and international – but above all – among all citizens of BiH is vital for the work towards more sustainable BiH society. This effort will be most effective through joint, coordinated action and commitment. The well-being of ALL people and communities in BiH is paramount.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina invested great efforts towards a Framework for Agenda2030 before the COVID-19 pandemic. That work can and must be used now to recover well. For a sustainable development that benefits more people, the choice must be for a path that is fair, green and inclusive. The UN's work within the 2021 - 25 Cooperation Framework binds all these efforts together. We (the UN) are ready to support the country and its citizens in all dimensions of the sustainable development.
- BiH is achieving significant progress in rolling-out and implementing SDGs given the complexity of the country's structure and challenging political environment which in general, is not conducive to advancing the development agenda and SDGs;
- This provides a unique opportunity for the authorities in BiH to strategically plan and implement country-wide and long-term sustainable development in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The benefits are many.

12. Latest HQ messages on C19, as well as the latest version of the core UN in BiH C19 messages are attached as reference to this strategy.



- The UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the line authorities and local communities to respond more effectively to the shifting dynamics of mixed movement in BiH. The UN is an indispensable operational actor in the field of human mobility, supporting human rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers across the world, and developing effective responses to changing mixed movement patterns. UN remains a key source of advice on mixed movement policies and practice.
- The SDGs represent a global, apolitical and relevant sustainable development platform for BiH. The SDGs are fully aligned and complementary to the EU agenda and its priorities in BiH – they are mutually reinforcing.
- Sustainable development approach on which the UN – BiH Cooperation framework is founded offers an opportunity to work together towards creating a better future – a future with a just and prosperous society, in which citizens can have a healthier and better life.

## ■ The 2021- 2025 UNSDCF

The Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF) between the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the United Nations (UN) system is a partnership for achieving results as defined in this Cooperation Framework for all people in BiH.

The strategic priorities and outcomes for cooperation are:

### **I. Sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth**

- By 2025, people benefit from resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth ensured by the convergence of economic development and management of environment and cultural resources

### **II. Quality, accessible and inclusive education, health and social protection**

- By 2025, people benefit from more inclusive and higher quality educational programmes

focused on 21st century skills for enhanced employability, well-being and active participation in society

- By 2025, people have access to better quality and inclusive health and social protection systems

### **III. People centered governance and rule of law**

- By 2025, people contribute to, and benefit from more accountable and transparent governance systems that deliver quality public services, and ensure rule of law

### **IV. Citizen and community engagement for social cohesion**

- By 2025, there is stronger mutual understanding, respect and trust among individuals and communities

To sustain linkages between the outcomes, the authorities in BiH and the UN system will engage with a diverse range of partners

and stakeholders and pursue cross-sectoral approaches.

## ■ The SDGs Decade of Action

The UNSDCF 2021-2025 for Bosnia and Herzegovina coincides with the global call on the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and the adoption of the SDGs Framework in BiH.

The Cooperation Framework priorities and outcomes represent localized efforts within the Decade of Action.

→ At the global level, **#ForThePeopleForThePlanet is the guiding global message, coupled with the #RecoverBetterTogether in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic:** *“A transformative recovery from COVID- 19 should be pursued, one that addresses the crisis, reduces risks from future potential crises and relaunched the implementation efforts to deliver the 2030 Agenda and SDGs during the Decade of Action.”*<sup>13</sup>

→ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on the situation analysis with regard to sustainable development - the key development trends, opportunities and obstacles, particularly within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s accession to the European Union and extensive consultations held with key stakeholders, three pathways of sustainable development in Bosnia and Herzegovina were determined: 1) Good Governance and Public Sector Management; 2) Smart Growth; 3) Society of Equal Opportunities, and two horizontal themes 1) Human Capital for the Future and 2) the “Leave no one behind” Principle. Within each of the mentioned development pathways the accelerators and drivers are defined which have to lead to the desired changes by 2030. These, as outlined in the SDGs Framework in BiH, complement the UNSDCF priorities.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/>

## ■ UN Identity communication in Joint Projects or Initiatives

Per UNCG recommendation, the UNCT will decide which of three modalities responds most appropriately to a given joint project, initiative or communications product:

### 1. *presenting the United Nations as one identity*

This method is suggested for all joint outreach activities per identified joint priorities, for jointly produced or supported communication materials, or on communication materials which aim to strategically communicate that the United Nations is a single entity. This presentation features the identity of the United Nations, represented by the United Nations in BiH logo, and as per HQ guidance should be used if there are more than 2 UN agencies involved. If needed/agreed individual agencies could be represented through use of logos or an attribution list.

### 2. *presenting United Nations agencies together in partnership*

This coordinated presentation features multiple agency logos and conveys that the agencies are working together in partnership or are co-authors of the published materials. Usually recommended if there are two agencies working in partnership.

### 3. *presenting the individual agencies separately*

For mandate-specific communications, it is recommended to use a separate, singular identity presentation that shows one agency logo and its brand, in accordance with agency specific guidance. Coordination may still be achieved using mandate-specific communication products by engaging in joint planning, with each agency communicating a country priority through the lens of its own mandate and with its own brand presentation.

These modes apply to all of the produced and disseminated materials, such as websites, statements, press releases, signage, publications, events, etc.

## ■ Communicating in a Crisis

The “Communicating together in times of crisis: Standard Operating Procedures for the UN system”, attached as Annex #5 to this Strategy, outline the difference between longer-term or continuing emergencies (where we can now classify the COVID19 pandemic), and the crisis as “situations where the focus of global public

attention is on a particular event over a specific period, and the expectations of United Nations action that this focus builds.”

Considering the standing existence of the UNCG in BiH and the at least 3 emergency situations jointly dealt with in the past years (2014 floods, number

of crisis developments with the mixed-movement situation, and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic), this section will only serve to consolidate and adjust some of leading HQ principles<sup>14</sup>:

- UNCT must work together, speak together and avoid contradiction. This does not mean that the UN must have only one person speaking, but it does mean that the overall messaging be complementary as agencies speak according to their own mandates.
- Each UNCT agency, fund or programme relevant to a crisis must identify its own information focal points, who can serve as spokespeople when called upon, and take the lead in areas of their expertise. The coordination of communication messages does not, however, preclude individual agencies sending communication material (data, stories, photos, footage etc) to their headquarters separately for information and fundraising purposes.
- When complaints or criticisms are made, UN communication focal points must communicate an openness to investigate errors and to report back on findings.
- All UN system public information messages are to be channeled through UNCG for the consumption of the local and international media on-site, for UN agencies at HQ or regional levels, and for the Spokesperson's Office at UN Headquarters.
- Public statements must be carefully

considered in relation to other steps being adopted as a system-wide response to the changing situation. They can be an important and powerful public diplomacy tool in one situation yet may jeopardize the UN's efforts to calm tensions and carry out its work in another context. The decision on whether to publicly comment must always be context specific. When a decision has been taken to go public, statements must in all cases adhere to the values and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

- The Resident Coordinator (RC) is the designated representative of the Secretary-General. As UNCT head, the RC leads and coordinates the response of the UN.
- Public statements should entail prior consultations with DCO (Regional Director's Office and Communications Office) and other relevant HQ departments where necessary.
- In some cases, it may be politically opportune not to react at country level and work with UN HQ to issue a statement by the Secretary-General, his spokesperson or other UN senior officials. As a general rule, HQ will follow the RC's recommendation in deciding whether to publicly comment at country or HQ level.
- In case of a crisis, the UNCG and UNCT are to follow the full HQ SoPs and keep in close consultation with the UN HQ and relevant departments and offices.

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<sup>14</sup> as per "Communicating together in times of crisis: Standard Operating Procedures for the UN system" and the UN 2020 „Communications Guidance In Response To Protests“



## ■ UN INFO: what is it and what are we using it for?

UN INFO is one of the tools/data systems used by the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) – as the global high-level UN coordination forum. It digitizes the UNSDCF. The digitized results frameworks and joint work plans showcase activities, update data on results indicators and extract crucial information to improve coordination, accountability and transparency. This data is then automatically linked with the UN website in the given country, visually showcasing the key areas of engagement, partners, funding, progress and key SDGs tackled.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is expected to roll-out UN INFO in 2021, while it is already providing info for the COVID-19 data Portal (also under UN INFO dashboard).

UN INFO will enable UNCT and UNCG to have a quick access to latest data on the implementation of the UNSDCF, with a possibility to easily extract visuals for meetings, partners and general public presentation.



**4**

**HOW WE COMMUNICATE**

This section outlines the approach with the agreed core elements.

## ■ Basic set of Communication activities

While the concrete yearly activities are to be developed via AWP at the beginning of each year, and endorsed by the UNCT, the standing set of communication activities should entail:

- Joint marking of the identified international days and campaigns
- Implementation of at least one joint campaign per year
- Continuous common messaging and advocacy as per identified thematic priorities, led by the UN Resident Coordinator
- Continuous localized/linked SDGs messaging and advocacy
- Continuous use of storytelling for showcasing joint results, partners and outreach on the UN BiH website
- Where possible, producing and distributing joint results updates or visual presentations of joint work
- Producing and distributing “ UN Year in Review” materials
- Supporting the Model UN events (separate note on support to MUNs available/developed by RCO)
- Joint marking of the UN Day as outlined in the “Joint approach” section
- Participating in volunteering campaigns that promote core UN values;
- Providing communications and PR support to individual agencies when needed;
- Supporting events and initiatives that promote the UN values and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Developing and implementing crisis communications actions if and when required;
- Supporting ad hoc actions where and when appropriate.

## ■ Communication Channels and Tools at hand

Different communication products, tailored to the different needs and desired outreach will be developed on a case by case basis, with specific communication channels and tools, however the standard basis for the UNCG entails:

- The new UN BiH website, UN BiH social media

accounts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), and the UN Sustainable Development Group website

- The UN RC primarily with the official Twitter account and official statements issued by the RC on behalf of the UN in BiH when needed



and agreed for greater impact (in line with the RC's role as the primary spokesperson for the UN in a country)

- UN Agencies' website and social media accounts, including official social media accounts of the Heads of Agencies
- Media outlets as longstanding partners of the UN agencies in BiH

**With:**

- Press releases by the RC, by UN in BiH, or joint with international partners, OpEds and thematic stories
- Media advisories, press conferences, press briefings (including informal briefings), press visits to project and programme locations
- Interviews across all types of media
- Stories, factsheets, infographics, photo-messages/cards, photo galleries, video stories, video animations, presentations, etc.
- Joint presentations of yearly results via Year in Review materials
- Joint events – primarily UN day, joint campaigns and markings of the identified key dates/international days
- Results reports, joint reports, assessments and publications (“UN as knowledge hub”), including possible setup of a regular/monthly update (e.g. UN newsletter, or email chain)
- Joint programmes and projects
- Promotional materials;
- Outreach and engagement with partners, including media, academia, local authorities and beneficiaries



**5**

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS  
& COORDINATION**

With the new generation of RCs, RCOs, UNCTs and UNSDCF, there is also a global shift towards joint “Communicating Results” work. The UNCG will be expected to work in close coordination with the programme colleagues (in each of the

respective agencies and across the joint groups) in shaping up and promoting the Country Results Reports.

## ■ Roles and Responsibilities

The **UN Communications Group (UNCG)** (See annex 1 for updated ToR ) was first established in November 2014 in accordance with SOP for Countries Adopting the Delivering as One Approach. It was reinvigorated with new membership at the beginning of 2020, and is chaired by a country representative on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator<sup>15</sup>.

As per UNSDCF 2021-2025, the **“United Nations Communication Group (UNCG) will work to increase awareness and visibility of CF results. It pools communication expertise and resources and enhances joint communication.”**

Within this Strategy, the UNCG is tasked with:

- A. the development of the Joint **Annual Work Plan and shared Calendar** at the beginning of each year for UNCT approval. These documents should identify and reflect:
- Priorities for the year taking into account key planned programmatic milestones as per UNSDCF’s Joint Work Plans
  - Integration of SDGs and the Secretary General’s priorities for the given year
  - Key international dates and campaigns to be marked: (i) individually by specific agency, (ii) jointly as UNCT, (iii) with significant RC

engagement.

- In addition, the UNCG will develop and disseminate specific **joint campaigns concepts, communication products, advocacy campaigns, and common messages**, to enhance the visibility of the UN in BiH within the Annual Work Plan. The UNCG will propose **at least one joint campaign** per year.

- B. Organization of **joint promotional activities, field visits and events.**

The **Programme Management Team** is responsible to ensure that the UNCG is alerted to programmatic milestones as per UNSDCF, and that UNCG is provided with information needed to provide any requested support and to develop appropriate communication on the role of the UNCT and achievement of UNSDCF outcomes. This can be done by informing the RCO Communications and Advocacy Officer or by PMT members informing individual UNCG members within each of the UN agencies.

All AWP and joint campaigns concepts are to be agreed by the UNCG on a “no objection” basis; this is to be followed with a clearance by the RC and the UNCT.

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15 UN Women in 2020/2021

With this in motion, the RCO Programme **Communication and Advocacy Officer** will provide support to the UNCG Chair and coordinate the UNCG work as agreed, including (i) provide substantive support to UNCT and PMT on potential issues, concerns and risks related to communications and advocacy, (ii) provide substantive support to the UNCG throughout the stages of the UN Cooperation Framework cycle. The UNCG will hold regular meetings and continuous electronic communication to ensure a coherent approach, information-sharing and coordination of joint initiatives, and annual

UNCG retreat will be used to update the Strategy if/where needed, review activities and discuss/formalize Annual Work Plan.

All UNCG members are encouraged to regularly share information on communications activities of their respective agencies to foster harmonized approach to communicating: with regular updates of the joint calendar, weekly or when-needed joint email updates, thematic joint meetings and with regular updates to the separately developed joint messages.

## ■ Reporting

The UNCG Chairperson reports to the UNCT on behalf of the UNCG, including for the endorsement of the Annual Work Plan and any corresponding joint activity.

The UNCG's contribution to the annual UN Country Results Report will be provided in line with the format and guidelines for the UN Country Results Reports (provisional attached

as an Annex) and as described in the previous section, however, it may be expanded accordingly to cover sections or aspects not included in the guidelines, in agreement with the PMT.

Additionally, annual DCO reporting for the IMS system includes reporting on joint communications and will be used for consolidating information on joint activities and outreach.

## ■ Budget

The annual needed budget will be indicated within the Annual Work Plan and presented to the UNCT for approval.

- UN agencies
- HQ funding streams
- Partner Funds

Resources for joint communications activities will be secured through cost-sharing with:

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The UNCG will continuously monitor implementation of the strategy, primarily through the implementation of the activities yearly set in the AWP, and corresponding M&E. The UNCG Chair reports to the UNCT on joint communication plans, activities and progress (coordinated by the RCO Programme Communications and Advocacy Officer). UNCT's monitoring of the implementation also includes proposals for further action and any other priority areas as coming from the UNSDCF or the developing country context.

Towards the end of each year, all UNCG members will support key results reporting as per their agency's inputs for the "Year in Review" visual presentations of the work of the UN in BiH.

Annual review (and whenever context-required) of the Joint Strategy will be conducted to ensure progress towards the outlined objectives is on track and still context-appropriate.

Tools that will be used to evaluate communications activities are:

- Analysis of media clipping, quantitative and qualitative (external communications);
- Campaign results reports where applicable
- Perceptions analysis of the UN in the country (externally conducted, if possible and budget allows);
- Social media insights and data
- Perceptions surveys with few specific questions on the UN in BiH, work, visibility and areas of engagement; where possible use any existing or planned perception survey (e.g. those planned for regular CDA/CCA/Peace and Development analysis updates) for incorporation of these questions;
- Interviews with key counterparts, beneficiaries, donors and other partners, where applicable and appropriate

The use of externally-driven tools for monitoring depends on the respective budgets at hand.

