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Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda*

Country programme document

Serbia

Summary

The country programme document (CPD) for Serbia is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and approval at the present session, on a no-objection basis. The CPD includes a proposed aggregate indicative budget of \$4,250,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$19,998,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2026 to 2030.

* E/ICEF/2025/27.



Programme rationale

1. Serbia is an upper-middle income economy that has been a candidate for European Union membership since 2012. It ranks sixty-fifth on the Human Development Index.¹ The country has steady economic growth, with an annual gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$29,622 and a GDP growth rate of 2.5 per cent.² The population of 6.7 million, of which 17 per cent are children, is ageing and shrinking due to negative natural growth and high emigration.³

2. While Serbia has achieved high levels of basic service coverage by actively pursuing national reforms, including on healthcare, early childhood development (ECD), preschool, inclusive education, and child protection, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access for all. Serbia is among Europe's least equal countries in terms of income. In 2024, 13.6 per cent of the population experienced severe material and social deprivation nationally. The at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate was 27.2 per cent in 2023 compared to 21.4 per cent for the 27 European Union member countries.⁴ Youth unemployment was 24.5 per cent in 2023.

3. Children remain susceptible to living in poverty, with an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 19.5 per cent in 2023.⁵ Children from Roma communities and those living in rural areas lag behind the general population in many areas of life. In Roma settlements, 83 per cent of households reported three or more material deprivations, compared with 25 per cent of households nationally.⁶ Children with disabilities face persistent stigma and discrimination, as well as barriers to education, healthcare and community participation, increasing their risk of social exclusion. Serbia is on the migration route from the Western Balkans to other parts of Europe, with many children and women on the move faced with significant protection risks.

4. Serbia faces a range of environmental threats, including pollution and climate change. Children are particularly vulnerable to flooding, drought and heatwaves, and environmental hazards.

5. Serbia is a signatory to all core international child rights treaties and human rights values are stipulated in its Constitution. However, gaps in the regularity and disaggregation of data, and in intersectional analysis of equity, poverty and deprivation, impede the design and implementation of child-responsive policies and evidence-based decision-making.

¹ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2023/2024*: UNDP, New York, 2024.

² Data on Serbia from World Bank Open Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Serbia>, accessed on 23 May 2025.

³ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings*, Belgrade, 2022.

⁴ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 'Household budget Survey, Income and living conditions Survey - Income and living conditions', <https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-vesti/statisticalrelease/?p=15328#:~:text=The%20at%2Drisk%2Dof%2Dpoverty%20or%20social%20exclusion%20rate,percentage%20points%20relative%20to%202022>, accessed on 2 June 2025.

⁵ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 'Household budget Survey, Income and living conditions Survey - Income and living conditions', <https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-vesti/statisticalrelease/?p=15328#:~:text=The%20at%2Drisk%2Dof%2Dpoverty%20or%20social%20exclusion%20rate,percentage%20points%20relative%20to%202022>, accessed on 2 June 2025.

⁶ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and UNICEF, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*: Belgrade, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and UNICEF, 2020. (Hereinafter referred to as MICS 6.)

6. The country has made positive progress towards the child-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the reduction of maternal, under-5 and neonatal mortality, stunting and wasting, as well as access to ECD services and preschool education. However, the attainment of minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics has stagnated,⁷ primary and secondary school completion rates are decreasing, and vulnerable children continue to face significant risks of social exclusion.

7. Investments in maternal, neonatal and child healthcare have resulted in improved maternal and child health indicators, with a steady decline in the maternal mortality and the child mortality rate. However, disparities persist, with higher mortality rates among vulnerable populations such as the Roma.⁸ Significant regional disparities in mortality and morbidity indicate persistent gaps in the organization of perinatal services, staffing capacities, professional practices, equipment and transportation, all impacting equity of access to quality maternal and childcare services.

8. Overall vaccination rates have been increasing after a sharp decline during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with high variations and disparities seen at the district level. A strong national response to outbreaks of measles and pertussis led to an increase in diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis and measles, mumps and rubella vaccination rates to 92.8 per cent and 84.5 per cent, respectively, in 2023, although these are both still below the 95 per cent target.⁹ Immunization coverage is impacted by vaccine hesitancy and inefficiencies in the organization of health services and catch-up campaigns.

9. Significant progress has been achieved in integrating ECD into primary healthcare, including through family-centred early childhood interventions. While the quality of home visiting and paediatric care has substantially increased, staff shortages remain a challenge. The youngest children, especially those with disabilities, Roma children and children living in poverty, often lack stimulating and nurturing environments. Regulatory changes are needed to ensure comprehensive access to parenting and family-centred early childhood interventions.

10. Adolescents today have poorer mental health compared to previous generations, with increasing numbers experiencing anxiety, irritability and sleep difficulties, particularly adolescent girls. While there have been significant efforts to improve mental health services across the country, the availability of services at the community level are insufficient and the stigma still hinders those in need from seeking support.

11. National reforms have steadily increased enrolment rates in early childhood education and care across all age groups, rising from 47 per cent in 2014–2015 to 62 per cent in 2023–2024.¹⁰ However, coverage remains below the targets of the European Union and the Sustainable Development Goals, with significant regional disparities and low enrolment among vulnerable groups. Only 10.5 per cent of children aged 3 to 5.5 years from the poorest quintile and 7 per cent of Roma children are enrolled in preschool.¹¹ Barriers include uneven preschool distribution, lack of local resources and low parental awareness.

⁷ UNICEF Data, Child-related SDG Progress Assessment for Serbia, <https://data.unicef.org/sdgs/country/srb/>, accessed on 27 May 2025.

⁸ MICS 6.

⁹ World Health Organization/UNICEF, “Joint Reporting Form on Immunization”, 2023.

¹⁰ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, ‘Education – Preschool upbringing education’, <https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-us/vesti/statisticalrelease/?p=15100>, accessed on 2 June 2025.

¹¹ MICS 6.

12. Participation in primary and secondary education is high, with completion rates of 95.6 per cent in primary and 86.4 per cent in secondary education in 2023/24.¹² However, only just over a quarter of children from Roma communities attend secondary school, and more than 20 per cent of children from the lowest income quintile are not enrolled in secondary school.¹³

13. There has been significant investment in inclusive education over the past 15 years, with an increasing number of students receiving support in mainstream education. However, the number of children learning in segregated settings of special schools, classes or preschool groups remains large.¹⁴ Effective governance, equitable financing of schools and local self-governments, and the transformation of special schools into resource centres, will be crucial for promoting inclusion.

14. Education quality and modernization of teachers' practices require increased investment. In 2022, 15-year-olds in Serbia lagged almost 1.5 academic years behind other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. Approximately 6 in 10 of the most vulnerable students do not achieve basic literacy.¹⁵ There is a need to modernize the education curricula and strengthen teachers' competencies to implement modern teaching practices and enquiry-based learning. Non-formal learning and skills development opportunities outside the school system are lacking, especially for vulnerable young people. The rate of young people aged 15–24 years not in employment, education or training was 24 per cent in 2024.¹⁶ National efforts are under way to improve legislation and implement targeted interventions to integrate the most vulnerable youth into the workforce and educational system.

15. The number of children living in residential institutions has decreased significantly over the past decade through social welfare reforms and deinstitutionalization. However, there has been a concerning increase in the number of very young children aged 0–3 years placed in residential care, and children with disabilities remain disproportionately represented, making up 66 per cent of those living in residential care.¹⁷ Further efforts are needed to improve family support services and the quality of foster care.

16. Social norms perpetuating violence and discrimination remain prevalent in Serbian society. Children face violence at home, in schools and communities, and online. Reported cases of violence against children comprised 21.9 per cent of all domestic violence cases in 2022.¹⁸ In schools, teacher-on-pupil violence, as well as peer violence and attacks on teachers, are an increasing concern. In response to two mass shootings in 2023, there was a prompt national response to combat violence against children and employees in schools. There is need to strengthen the regulatory framework, establish effective coordination mechanisms and build the capacity of professionals across sectors for the prevention and reporting of, and response to violence against children.

17. The protection and promotion of the rights of children in contact with the law is a national priority. While significant progress has been made in victim and witness

¹² SORS data, 2024.

¹³ MICS 6.

¹⁴ SORS data, 2024.

¹⁵ Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, Serbia, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022: National Report, Belgrade, 2024.

¹⁶ SORS data, 2024.

¹⁷ Republic Institute for Social Protection, Serbia, Report on Children in Social Protection System in 2022, Belgrade, 2023. (Hereinafter referred to as RISP 2023.)

¹⁸ RISP 2023.

protection, further efforts are needed to ensure that the justice system is more child-friendly.

18. Child protection services for unaccompanied and separated children are being integrated into the national social protection system, including case management and guardianship. Serbia has also aligned its legal framework for child protection with international standards, although these national standards are not yet fully operationalized.

19. The national Youth Strategy for 2023–2030 of Serbia emphasizes the need for greater youth participation. In 2023, 90 per cent of young people were not involved in any form of civic, sport, cultural or political organization, only 25 per cent had been engaged in voluntary activities, and the majority had not participated meaningfully in decision-making processes.¹⁹

20. Policy frameworks and investments are needed to support a smooth transition from education to the labour market for young people, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds. Stigma, gender disparities, inadequate career guidance and limited opportunities contribute to low youth participation in non-formal learning, skills development and education-to-employment pathways.

21. While the country's total public spending on child-focused sectors such as education and health is comparable to that of its upper-middle-income peers, there is a need to strengthen national and local capacity for child-responsive budgeting. Insufficient public investment in pro-poor spending over an extended period may exacerbate inequities and leave marginalized groups at significant risk of poverty, social exclusion, pollution and climate-induced stresses and shocks. There is a need to strengthen the generation and use of evidence to monitor and adjust child-focused policies.

22. This country programme is informed by UNICEF and United Nations evaluations and their recommendations. As Serbia gradually progresses towards high-income status, it becomes crucial to strengthen the capacities of local institutions, especially in public finance, and to leverage partnerships for high-impact investments and results at scale for children.²⁰ There is a need to prioritize inclusive development, considering the most vulnerable populations. The Gender Programmatic Review 2023 highlighted the importance of addressing entrenched discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes.

Programme priorities and partnerships

23. The overarching goal of the country programme is to contribute to national efforts to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals and advance child rights in Serbia, with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized. The programme will contribute to the national priorities of Serbia and support the advancement of key reforms in line with the collection of common rights and obligations that constitute the body of European Union Law as well as its standards and accession requirements.

24. The country programme will focus on closing equity gaps and addressing the most critical child deprivations by providing targeted technical assistance to drive systemic and sustainable change for children, especially the most vulnerable, including children from poor households, children in rural areas, Roma children, children with disabilities, children without parental care, children in institutional care,

¹⁹ Ninamedia, survey on the position and needs of young people in Serbia, 2024.

²⁰ United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Final Evaluation Team, *Final Evaluation: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Serbia (2021-2025)*, UNSDCF Final Evaluation Team, Belgrade, 2025.

children in contact with the law, and refugee and migrant children. This will include policy and expert advice, targeted capacity-building, promotion of child-focused policies, budgets and plans, and leveraging of advocacy and public and private partnerships for greater scalability and impact.

25. The country programme derives from the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2026–2030 and aligns with the recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other human rights mechanisms for Serbia. It is informed by the Government of Serbia and UNICEF Situation Analysis 2024 and the United Nations Serbia Common Country Analysis Update 2023. It has been designed in close consultation with the Government, other United Nations agencies, partners and the private sector. Its overarching framework is the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2026–2029. It is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations and UNICEF Gender Action Plans and the UNICEF Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy, 2022–2030.

26. Six strategies will be applied at the national and subnational levels:

- (a) Generating data and evidence for child rights monitoring;
- (b) Providing strategic policy and technical advice to foster more inclusive and equitable systems;
- (c) Leveraging domestic resources, and public and private finance and partnerships as well as promoting child-responsive public finance, governance and social policies to ensure adequate and equitable investments for all children;
- (d) Supporting social and behaviour change to foster child development and tackle harmful social norms;
- (e) Conducting high-level advocacy and mobilizing the influence of media and businesses to advance child rights;
- (f) Harnessing digital transformation and innovation to support inclusive systems and reach the most marginalized children.

27. The country programme will provide targeted support in cross-sectoral areas of work where UNICEF is a trusted adviser and has demonstrated leadership and the ability to convene partners to drive systemic changes and high-impact results for children. The five programme components of the country programme will focus on accelerating the achievement of high-impact results in the following three cross-sectoral areas.

(a) **Best start in life for all children:** UNICEF will prioritize efforts to ensure that every child enjoys nurturing care during their early years, including health, adequate nutrition, safety, responsive caregiving and stimulation, and learning through play. Through intersectoral, gender-responsive and innovative approaches, UNICEF will provide targeted support to the health, preschool education and social protection sectors, so that ECD, family-centred early childhood interventions and parenting services are well integrated, of good quality, inclusive and responsive to the needs of children and families. Parents will also be equipped with the confidence, knowledge and skills to foster optimal development for every child.

(b) **Better learning and skills development opportunities for all children, adolescents and youth:** UNICEF will strive to improve learning outcomes and skills, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF will support the education system's modernization, including the adoption of innovative learning approaches and increased capacity of teachers to foster students' critical thinking, socioemotional awareness, and twenty-first century skills, including digital skills and science, technology, engineering and

mathematics, and environmental literacy, with the aim of improving learning outcomes for the most vulnerable. The quality and inclusiveness of non-formal learning and skills development programmes will be strengthened to empower children, adolescents and young people, especially the most vulnerable, to participate in civic life and to transition smoothly from education to livelihoods.

(c) Violence-free and supportive environment for the safety and psychological well-being of all children, adolescents and youth: UNICEF will support national and local stakeholders to ensure that all children and young people are safe, protected and supported whether at home, in school, within their community or online. Support will focus on strengthening violence prevention and response systems and promoting provision of mental health support. Parents, caregivers and professionals across the health, education, social welfare and youth sectors will be equipped to promote non-violent environments and psychological well-being, foster help-seeking behaviours and provide responsive local services.

28. Across all programme components, the effects of climate and environment-related issues on children will be considered a priority. UNICEF will offer policy advice to public institutions and decision makers to integrate children's rights into national plans on environmental protection, climate and energy. Environmental health, climate education and green skills will be promoted among health and education professionals. Young people will be empowered to influence policies and lead local action that strengthen community resilience and drive sustainable solutions.

29. UNICEF will promote inclusive and gender-responsive approaches to address inequities and dimensions of poverty and vulnerability that differently impact girls and women. Social and behaviour change strategies will be employed to promote child development and bring an end to violent discipline, harmful gender stereotypes and all forms of stigma and discrimination.

30. UNICEF will build on its long-standing partnerships with the Government, other United Nations agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs), the European Union, the private sector, civil society, academia and the media to bring innovative models to scale by leveraging domestic, public and private financing, and by providing policy and expert advice.

31. Partnerships with IFIs will be strengthened to harness expertise and resources in support of national reform priorities across child and maternal health, primary education, juvenile justice and public finance. UNICEF will engage closely with local self-governments to further develop, strengthen and sustainably finance decentralized services for all children.

32. Partnerships will be deepened with businesses and business associations as key influencers and duty bearers in support of child rights. Partnerships with traditional and digital media will be harnessed to strengthen the reach and advocacy of UNICEF, engaging key audiences, particularly young people, to drive awareness, interaction, behavioural change and social mobilization.

33. The three cross-sectoral areas of work will be supported through five programme components:

Health and early childhood development

34. In partnership with the Ministry of Health, investments in maternal and child health and the primary healthcare system will be leveraged to scale up high-quality and equitable maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent care services, aligned with European standards and optimized to address the health needs (including nutrition,

immunization, and perinatal, environmental and mental health) of the population, especially the most vulnerable children and their families.

35. UNICEF will collaborate with national and local governments to improve access to and quality of ECD and family-centred early childhood intervention services across primary healthcare, education and social welfare. UNICEF will focus on supporting changes to policies and regulations, service optimization, and scaling up innovative models to support family-oriented services that are responsive, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive and stigma-free, and prevent violence.

36. The Ministry of Health and other ministries will be supported to strengthen the mental healthcare system for prevention, early identification and integrated response, including developing the workforce and strengthening the collaboration between the health, education, social protection and youth sectors. Mental health literacy will be promoted to encourage health-seeking behaviours and tackle stigma.

Quality and inclusive preschool, primary and secondary education

37. In partnership with the Ministry of Education and local self-governments, UNICEF will support the provision of high quality, inclusive early learning that is accessible to all children, by solidifying gains from early childhood education and care reforms, with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized. UNICEF will provide targeted support to strengthen governance, sustainable financing and evidence-based policies for inclusive education, and further transformation of special schools into resource centres. The models used for building staff teaching capacity will draw on partnerships with IFIs to reform the education system, introducing single-shift schooling, improving the quality of educational outcomes for the most vulnerable children and strengthening inclusive practices. UNICEF will support systemic efforts to implement cross-sectoral policies through a “whole-school approach” aimed at supporting inclusion, preventing violence and promoting student well-being.

38. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF will support the modernization of teaching practices, so that they are learner-centred and competency-based. Education governance, school leadership and systems for teacher professional development will be strengthened to improve education quality and equity. Innovative digital solutions will be harnessed to strengthen teachers’ competencies, improve the learning outcomes of the most vulnerable children and bridge the digital divide in education. Climate education will be further promoted.

Child protection

39. In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Family Care and Demography and the Ministry of the Interior, UNICEF will focus on sustaining the impact of the childcare reform, further strengthening the social welfare system for the prevention of family separation and the provision of quality family-based alternative care, with a focus on addressing regional disparities, and the specific vulnerabilities of children with disabilities and Roma children. UNICEF will also support the ability of child protection systems to provide adequate care for refugees and migrant children.

40. National efforts for the prevention of and response to violence against children will be supported through the improvement of the regulatory frameworks, coordination mechanisms across the social protection, education and health systems, and improvement of the capacities of professionals to identify and refer cases.

41. UNICEF will also support the justice and protection systems to ensure equitable access to justice for children in contact with the law and children at risk of offending,

including those with complex behavioural and mental health issues. This will include improving the regulatory framework, the quality of protection of child victims and witnesses, and early interventions for children below the age of criminal responsibility, and the systematic integration of the best interests of the child in civil and administrative proceedings. Support will be provided to promote the use of restorative justice for child offenders and to ensure that free legal aid services are child sensitive.

Adolescents and youth

42. In partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Youth and the Ministry of Education, UNICEF will provide targeted support to strengthen the strategic framework, standardization, quality assurance and scale-up of inclusive non-formal learning and skills development programmes, with a focus on increasing access for the most vulnerable and marginalized young people. UNICEF will also support the modernization of the legislative and regulatory framework for youth work and the implementation of quality standards for youth spaces.

43. UNICEF will advocate for laws, policies and increased investments that prioritize youth participation in decision-making, enabling young people to be active contributors to society and to engage with issues of concern to them, including climate change, mental health and violence prevention. UNICEF will also support the promotion and standardization of volunteering services.

Social policy, public financing and child rights monitoring

44. This programme component will support evidence-informed, child-responsive policies and equitable public investment for children. UNICEF will build on its existing engagement with government ministries, the National Assembly and local-level stakeholders to strengthen knowledge and skills in child-responsive budgeting and support the institutionalization of budgeting frameworks that prioritize children's needs. Targeted support will be provided to increase transparency and accountability in public financial management and to influence public finance policy reforms, so they are more responsive to children's needs and enable the scale-up of child-focused interventions. In cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, local planning, monitoring and child-centred budgeting will be promoted and scaled up.

45. Technical expertise will be provided to help to monitor the commitments of Serbia under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments. National institutions such as the National Assembly, the Ombudsman Office, other independent institutions and civil society organizations will be supported in ensuring that all duty bearers promote the realization of child rights, respond to child rights violations and integrate the needs and views of children and young people into national policies, budgets and plans.

46. In conjunction with knowledge partners, gaps in availability, disaggregation, analysis and use of data about children will be addressed, including that on emerging environmental issues. A new Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey will be conducted in 2029–2030 in partnership with the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

Programme effectiveness

47. Programme effectiveness will support the efficient and effective management of the country programme and financial and human resources. It will comprise programme coordination and management for results, including planning, monitoring and evaluation, communication, partnerships and cross-sectoral programmatic issues.

48. Private sector fundraising, communication and advocacy components will support all programme outcomes, driving knowledge dissemination and public support, expanding UNICEF outreach, and supporting effective mobilization of resources and influence to advance child rights. Evidence-based advocacy will be central to influencing domestic policies and investments for children. By leveraging high-quality evidence and data-driven insights, and listening to and amplifying the voices of youth, UNICEF will further engage decision makers and mobilize public support.

49. The Government of Serbia will endorse efforts by UNICEF to mobilize and leverage resources, assets and expertise from the local and regional private sector to support UNICEF programmes in Serbia and worldwide, ensuring donations received by the organization from individuals, corporations, foundations, foreign governments, and any other actions are tax exempt and that donors benefit from tax deduction.

50. Recognizing the mandate and legal status of UNICEF as an international organization, the Government shall not subject the tax exemption or any other acts to the registration of UNICEF under any national legislation applicable to charities in Serbia. The Government shall ensure that donors to UNICEF enjoy the tax and other regulatory benefits in equal conditions as donors to registered national charitable organizations.

51. The Government will take all necessary regulatory measures to facilitate and promote UNICEF programmes and fundraising operations, including by facilitating the creation of bank accounts, import and export of funds and activities under the Business for Results initiative.

Summary budget table

<i>Programme component</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources*</i>	<i>Total</i>
Health and early childhood development	998	4 850	5 848
Quality and inclusive preschool, primary and secondary education	998	7 673	8 671
Child protection	998	3 650	4 648
Adolescents and youth	256	2 025	2 281
Social policy, public financing and child rights monitoring	500	1 300	1 800
Programme effectiveness	500	500	1 000
Total	4 250	19 998	24 248

* Other resources (emergency) (ORE) may be mobilized, as required, through humanitarian appeals processes.

Programme and risk management

52. The country programme will be implemented in line with UNSDCF and will ensure compliance with UNICEF policies and procedures.

53. The following assumptions and risks assessed for this country programme include reduced funding for development work, reduced fiscal space, political and social developments, advancement of reforms and accountability frameworks, availability of adequate resources and partnerships to accelerate results and bring successful models to scale, and environmental emergencies.

54. Risk-mitigation measures will include the effective management of financial resources, strengthened governance and oversight with a focus on cost-efficiency, a selective partnership strategy, the optimization of the new business model and structure, the leveraging of partner resources and preparedness mechanisms.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

55. UNICEF will contribute to and monitor progress towards national and international commitments, including through national reporting on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

56. UNICEF will make a significant contribution to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Partnerships will be expanded with national and international academic institutions to close knowledge gaps and provide additional evidence for planning.

57. Progress towards planned results will be monitored based on the results and resources framework of the CPD, annual workplans and UNSDCF, through annual reviews with the Government and implementing partners.

Annex

Results and resources framework

Serbia – UNICEF country programme of cooperation, 2026–2030

Convention on the Rights of the Child: Articles 1–7, 9, 12–15, 18–20, 22–26, 28, 29, 32, 34–39 and 40
National priorities: Sustainable Development Goals 3–5, 10 and 17
United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) outcomes involving UNICEF: Outcome 3: By 2030, all people in Serbia, particularly vulnerable groups, benefit from high-quality, gender-responsive, equitable and inclusive and innovative health, education and social protection services, ensuring well-being across the lifecycle – under Strategic Priority 2: Human capital, well-being and social cohesion. Outcome 4: By 2030, Serbia ensures an independent and transparent judicial and law enforcement system, good governance and inclusive digital transformation, civic engagement and full realisation of human rights and gender equality, fostering social cohesion and an inclusive and participatory democracy for all – under Strategic Priority 3: Rule of law, human rights, human security and institutions.
Related Impact Results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2026–2029: 1–5

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
Outcome 3 under Strategic Priority 2	1. By 2030, girls and boys and their parents and families, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from equitable, inclusive and high-quality maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent	Percentage of children aged 0–23 months old who were put to the breast within one hour of birth B: 35.8% T: 50%	National breastfeeding database, Institute of Public Health of Serbia (IOPHOS)	1.1 By 2030, high-quality and equitable maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent healthcare services are aligned with European standards and optimized to address the health needs of all children (including immunization and perinatal, environmental, and mental health), with a focus on the most vulnerable children and their families.	Ministry of Health (MOH), national and regional institutes for public health, primary healthcare centres, Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MOLEVSA), Ministry of	998	4 850	5 848
		District or equivalent administrative unit with at least 80 per cent coverage of measles-containing vaccine for children <1 year old B: 72% T: 92%	IOPHOS annual immunization report					

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
	healthcare services, that contribute to ECD, improved health and nutrition outcomes, and family well-being.	Children under 5 years of age benefit from early stimulation, nurturing care, childcare services and parenting support, including children with disabilities Cumulative B: 66,000 (Country programme 2021–2025) T: 238,000 (Country programme 2026–2030) Annual increase B: 24 000 T: 71 000	UNICEF project reports	1.2 By 2030, integrated, quality, and family-centred ECD services including paediatric care, home visiting, developmental and parental counselling, and early childhood interventions are scaled up and sustainably supported by cross-sectoral policy, coordination, public and private financing and quality assurance mechanisms, promoting gender-responsive parenting practices, equitable access, improved child development, violence prevention and well-being, with a focus on the most vulnerable children and families.	Family Care and Demography (MOFCD) Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, civil society organizations (CSOs), professional associations, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs), private sector			
Outcome 3 under Strategic Priority 2	2. By 2030, all boys and girls, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from equitable, inclusive, high-quality and modernized education,	Net enrolment rate of children aged 3 to 5.5 years (boys (B) and girls (G), poorest, rural urban) B: 68% (B: 67.7%; G: 68.4%) T: 83% (B: 83%; G: 83%)	Administrative data, - Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS)	2.1 By 2030, a strong, equitable early childhood education system is in place, supporting the development of key competencies for lifelong learning and well-being, with a focus on girls and boys from vulnerable groups.	MOE, Institute for the Improvement of Education, IEQE, academia, CSOs, United Nations agencies, European Union, IFIs, private sector	998	7 673	8 671
		Students aged 15 years achieving at least the minimum proficiency	Programme for International					

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
	leading to improved learning outcomes and equipping them with skills for lifelong learning, well-being, and sustainable development.	level (2) in core subjects (mathematics, reading science) B: Mathematics: 57%; reading: 64%; science: 65% T: Mathematics: 75%; reading: 75%; science: 75%	Student Assessment study, Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation (IEQE)	2.2 By 2030, teachers have enhanced skills and practices, supported by robust systems that ensure high-quality, modern and inclusive education, responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable children, thereby improving their learning outcomes, competencies and well-being.				
Outcome 3 under Strategic Priority 2 Outcome 4 under Strategic Priority 3	3. By 2030, children, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from quality services that prevent and respond to violence and family separation, and from inclusive and responsive justice and social protection systems, contributing to improved care and justice, and to safe, supportive environments for children.	Number of children (aged 0–17 years) in residential care B: 566 T: 400	Republic Institute for Social Protection (RISP) report on children in the social protection system	3.1 By 2030, the social welfare system is strengthened to sustain childcare reform and enhance quality and accessibility of family strengthening services and alternative care for children, especially for the youngest and most vulnerable (children with disabilities, Roma children, etc.). 3.2 By 2030, well-coordinated and effective violence against children prevention and response systems are in place, and children and their caregivers have improved access to	MOLEVSA, MOFCD, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Tourism and Youth (MOTY), United Nations agencies, European Union, IFIs, private sector	998	3 650	4 648
		Number of girls and boys who have experienced violence reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services through UNICEF-supported programmes B: 8,531 (2022) T: 9,500	RISP report on children in the social protection system					
		Percentage of children in conflict with the law subject to a diversion order or a non-custodial measure	Administrative data (SORS)					

<i>UNSDCF outcomes</i>	<i>UNICEF outcomes</i>	<i>Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)</i>	<i>Means of verification</i>	<i>Indicative country programme outputs</i>	<i>Major partners, partnership frameworks</i>	<i>Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
						<i>RR</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Total</i>
		B: 7.4% (2023) T: 15%		quality services that adequately prevent and respond to violence against children. 3.3 By 2030, justice and social welfare systems are enhanced to ensure early intervention, protection and rehabilitation of children in contact with the law (victims/witnesses, in civic proceedings, in conflict with the law) or with complex emotional and behavioural needs and at risk of offending.				
Outcome 3 under Strategic Priority 2 Outcome 4 under Strategic Priority 3	4. By 2030, adolescent girls and boys and young people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from quality non-formal learning and skills development opportunities, and from enhanced access to mental health	Percentage of youth not in employment, education or training B: 15.2% (aged 15–29 years); 12.4% (aged 15–24 years) T: 9.1%; 7.3%	Labour Force Survey, SORS, Sustainable Development Goals database Programmatic reports from UNICEF-supported initiatives. Administrative records from implementing partners. Monitoring and evaluation data from civic	4.1 By 2030, adolescent girls and boys and young people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from inclusive, high-quality non-formal learning and skilling programmes that contribute to their transition to adulthood. 4.2 By 2030, the mental healthcare system is strengthened across all sectors, enabling children, young	MOTY, MOH, MOE, National Qualification Agency, Office for Dual Education, CSOs, youth centres, United Nations agencies, European Union, IFIs, private sector	256	2 025	2 279

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
	services, that support their well-being and enable their meaningful participation in society.		engagement programmes.	people and caregivers to seek and access quality prevention and response services. 4.3 By 2030, adolescent girls and boys and young people benefit from increased opportunities to meaningfully participate in civic life and to contribute to national and local policies.				
Outcome 4 under Strategic Priority 3	5. By 2030, children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from inclusive, evidence-based, and child-responsive policies, innovative solutions, and public finance at national and local level, contributing to the advancement of child rights and the	Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection) B: 49.80% T: 49.80% (Stable percentage indicates that increased revenues are expected to increase absolute spending in the social sector)	Public finance data	5.1 By 2030, national and local authorities and stakeholders have strengthened systems and capacities to implement inclusive, child-responsive, and transparent public finance, and to promote adequate and equitable funding allocations for child-specific priorities. 5.2 By 2030, the quality and availability of statistics, evidence, and innovative solutions are enhanced and support the design of child-focused	Ministry of Finance, Fiscal Council SORS, Ministry of European Integration, Public Policy Secretariat, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, MOTY, United Nations agencies, European Union, IFIs private sector	500	1 300	1 800
		Availability of child-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators B: Score 1 T: Score 3	Statistical data					
		Level of integration of measurable commitments on child	National planning documents					

<i>UNSDCF outcomes</i>	<i>UNICEF outcomes</i>	<i>Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)</i>	<i>Means of verification</i>	<i>Indicative country programme outputs</i>	<i>Major partners, partnership frameworks</i>	<i>Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
						<i>RR</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Total</i>
	sustainable development goals.	rights in national planning documents B: Score 2 T: Score 3		policies, programmes and budgets. 5.3 By 2030, there is coherence and collaboration between key stakeholders in advancing child rights based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Sustainable Development Goals and European Union accession benchmarks.				
Programme effectiveness						500	500	1 000
Total resources						4 250	19 998	24 246