



UNITED NATIONS
KOSOVO TEAM



United Nations
Kosovo Team
Socio-Economic
Response Plan
to COVID-19

Pristina, 24 August 2020



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

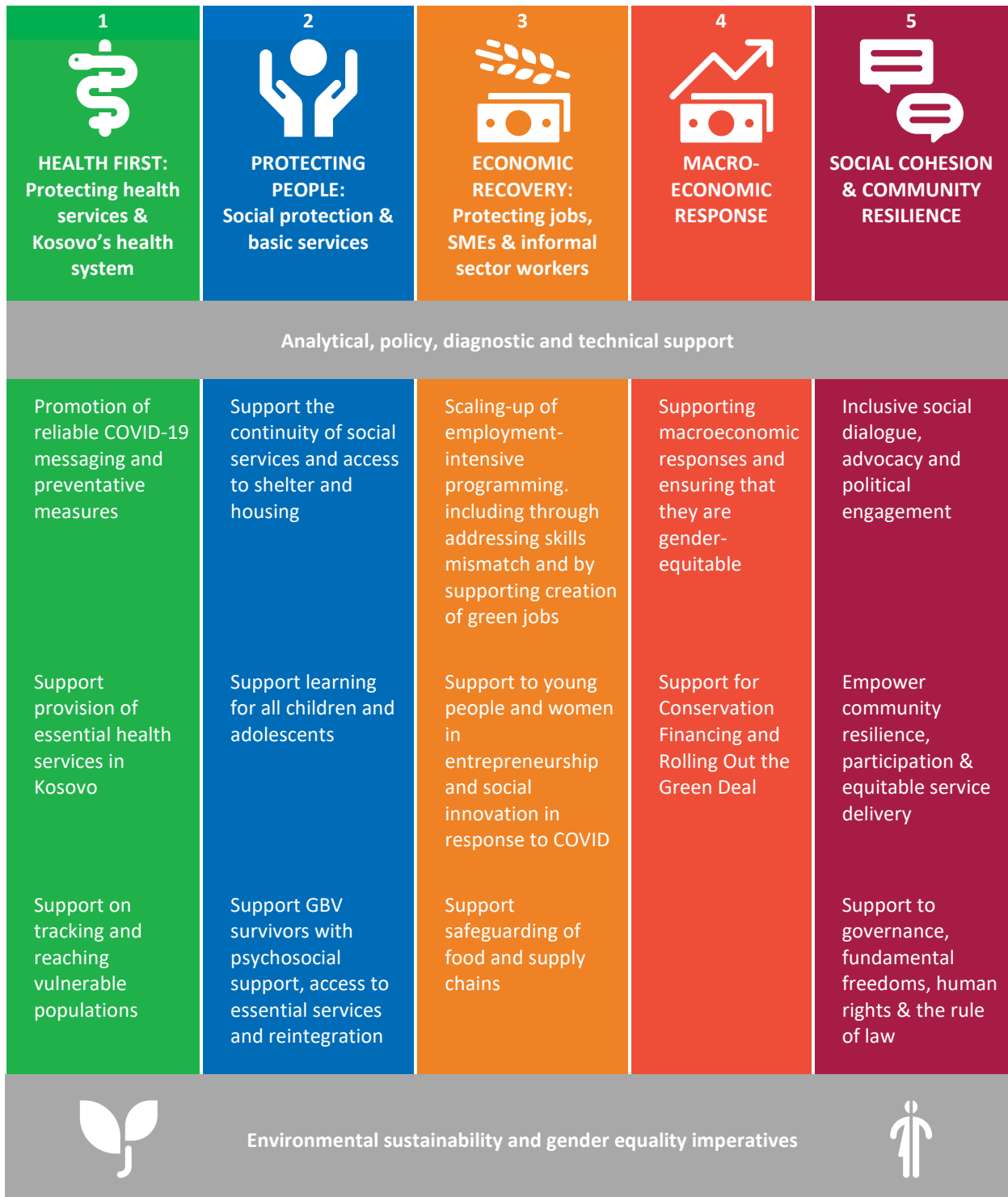
UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



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THE FIVE PILLARS OF RESPONSE



LIST OF ACRONYMS

BBB	Build Back Better	MoH	Ministry of Health
CRSV	Conflict-related Sexual Violence	MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	MSMEs	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
CSW	Centres for Social Work	NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
DCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office	NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
DV	Domestic Violence	OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
EU	European Union	PHC	Primary Health Care
FAO	Forest and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	PPP	Public Private Partnership
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	UN	United Nations
GBV	Gender Based Violence	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
IFIs	International Financial Institutions	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization	UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
IMF	International Monetary Fund	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IOM	International Organization for Migration	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IPH	Institute of Public Health	UNKT	United Nations Kosovo Team
KCGF	Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund	UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development	UNV	United Nations Volunteers
MIE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
MoE	Ministry of Economy	WB	World Bank
MoESTI	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Innovation	WHO	World Health Organisation

FOREWORD

The world faces an unprecedented human crisis, ushered in by the COVID-19 pandemic. We must rise to the challenge to ensure that lives are saved, livelihoods are restored, and that economies and people emerge stronger. This is in line with the call of the Decade of Action to deliver the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which the COVID-19 response has made more urgent.

In this spirit, the United Nations Kosovo Team Socio-Economic Response Plan aims at mitigating the impacts of the pandemic in Kosovo. This Plan puts into practice the recent report of the Secretary-General entitled “Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity,” and sets out our integrated offer to the authorities and the people of Kosovo in the face of COVID-19 over the next six to 24 months, contributing to saving lives, protecting people, and rebuilding better.

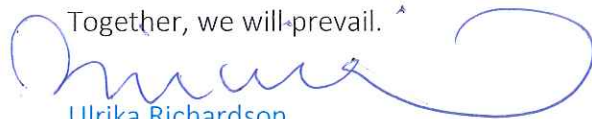
The Plan allows us to respond in an integrated way, in alignment with Kosovo’s priorities and needs and coordination with other development partners such as the EU. The UN Development Coordinator guided overall vision and collaboration on the Plan, with technical lead from UNDP and support from Task Force co-chairs UNICEF and UNDP. WHO provided leadership on the health response, UNFPA and UN Women on integrating a strong gender dimension and UNHCR and IOM provided leadership on the specific challenge for *people on the move*. We

are drawing on the full capabilities of the United Nations system in Kosovo, including thirteen agencies, funds and programmes: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women and WHO together with the World Bank. Together, we will deliver a strong, substantive and integrated response.

To date, our response has mobilised a number of operational and funding modalities and resources, including core budgets, repurposing of a portion of our portfolio, as well as new bilateral and multilateral contributions, including from UN’s COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Our aim is to deliver results, quickly and transparently, and ensure that our response moves forward decisively, in close alignment with Kosovo’s efforts. We trust that this Plan will provide useful in consolidating and coordinating responses across Kosovo’s institutions and other organisations, and to find synergies for effective impact.

Together, we will prevail. ^



Ulrika Richardson

United Nations Development Coordinator



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis and effects will continue to be felt in Kosovo long after the initial curtailment response. Even though the initial number of cases has remained manageable, Kosovo's health care resources are stretched and remain vulnerable to a wider outbreak or a significant increase in critical cases. The immense burden on Kosovo's economy is just beginning to be felt. Stretching social and economic safety nets to their limits, the pandemic risks deepening pre-existing inequalities. People in vulnerable situations are the most likely to suffer and there is an urgent need for a coherent short to medium term mitigation response. The political instability poses a challenge to a comprehensive and integrated approach, but without urgent socio-economic responses, lives and livelihoods in Kosovo may be jeopardised for years to come, affecting the realisation of development goals and economic and social rights.

This Plan sets out the United Nations Kosovo Team's offer of socio-economic support to the authorities and the people of Kosovo in the face of COVID-19, putting in practice the UN Secretary-General's March 2020 *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity* report. It provides an overview of the UN's critical efforts in Kosovo to contribute to saving lives, protecting people, and rebuilding better.

The pillars constituting this package are:

1. Supporting essential health services and protecting the Kosovo health system;
2. Helping the people of Kosovo cope with adversity, through social protection and basic services;
3. Protecting jobs, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and informal sector workers through economic response and recovery programmes;
4. Supporting macroeconomic policies designed to protect the most vulnerable; and
5. Promoting social cohesion and community-led resilience and response.

These five pillars are connected by a strong environmental sustainability and gender equality imperative to build back better; whilst targeted interventions will help protect and promote impacted human rights.

“Let's not forget this is essentially a human crisis. Most fundamentally, we need to focus on people – the most vulnerable.”

UN Secretary-General's Call for Solidarity

Collective know-how is being mobilised to implement and roll out this Plan over the next six to 24 months. Participating partners include thirteen UN agencies, funds and programmes operating in Kosovo (FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women and WHO together with the World Bank). Under the strategic leadership of the UN Development Coordinator, with technical lead of UNDP, and with UNICEF and UNDP co-chairing a broad technical taskforce, the Plan draws on a network of global and regional expertise.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Kosovo, the first cases of COVID-19 were diagnosed on 13 March followed by declaration of a public health emergency on 15 March,¹ precipitating drastic changes for Kosovo society. In March and April, increasing restrictions were put in place by the authorities to curtail the spread of the disease, with the initial number of cases manageable. As of 31 May, Kosovo had reported 1,040 diagnosed cases and 20 deaths,² and the authorities introduced a phased plan to re-open public life by June. This was supported by the Government Programme (2020-2023) approved on 5 June 2020, which places a direct focus on managing, mitigating and recovering from the COVID-19 crisis. Yet the easing of restrictions could not distract from the continuous threat posed by the virus, evidenced by a concerning spike in numbers since June (12,405 diagnosed cases and 457 deaths as of 23 August), nor the secondary and tertiary effects, which the pandemic will have on the economy and Kosovo's residents.

Kosovo's demographic and social characteristics, together with current and historic health system weaknesses, continue to make it highly vulnerable to continued spread or renewed outbreak of the virus. Measures aimed at reducing community transmission will continue to be key, allowing the health system to create and maintain surge capacity for increased demand while continuing basic services.

Meanwhile, the economic downturn will not only affect Kosovo's most vulnerable but may propel others into hardship. It will also have a major impact on macro-economic performance and fiscal outturns; which negatively impact service delivery. A recent IMF report predicts a decrease in Kosovo's GDP of 5 per cent for 2020, compared to pre-COVID projections of a 4 per cent increase.³ Consumption, one of the main drivers of Kosovo's growth, has been put under unprecedented strain. Income from tourism, remittances and foreign direct investment is vulnerable to impacts of COVID, with jobs reportedly lost in those industries. The government package aimed at protecting the economy is important but relatively small, and the new Government Programme and planned Donor Forum will be vital for putting in place practical measures to improve alignment and to identify options for resource mobilisation.

Critical to the Building Back Better (BBB) and Leave No One Behind (LNOB) agendas, and in the light of new global official development assistance modalities aimed at delivering the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the pandemic presents an opportunity to fundamentally rethink Kosovo's development pathways.

UNKT stands by the side of Kosovo's people and institutions. WHO has been supporting Kosovo in preparing for, and responding to, COVID-19 prior to it being deemed an emergency. Using core budgets, repurposing

a portion of its development portfolio, with support of new bilateral and multilateral contributions, has allowed UNKT to provide immediate support in the form of analysis and advice, basic assistance, and procurement of vital equipment, despite disruptions to supply chains. In May, UNKT secured a grant from the *UN COVID-19 MPTF*, while the World Bank will be providing significant loans, both aimed at helping Kosovo adequately respond and rebuild better. In August 2020, UNKT presented a package of support options to the Office of the Prime Minister in support of the expeditious execution of the Government Programme and this SERP, with a particular focus on the provision of technical support in preparing for the International Donor Forum, accelerating vital socio-economic reforms and linking the Government Programme and SERP around a new Development Finance (DF) approach. This approach is underscored by the right-financing approach, where policy based spending, allocative efficiency and

investment returns and positive multipliers are key to spending.

This SERP and its annexed Matrixes set out UNKT's collective and coordinated response to COVID-19 with short to medium term involvement. It is complementary to both the government's February 2020 Plan for Preparedness and Response for COVID-19 and the government's June 5 General Programme, which aims to mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic and finance recovery and which builds from the government's Euro 180 million emergency fiscal package adopted on 30 March to contain economic fallout. The government aims to mobilise Euro 1.2 billion from the national budget and international resources to meet programme objectives.

It is vital that health and socio-economic responses move forward decisively, comprehensively and in a coordinated way. As a result, SERP is complimentary to, and integrated with, the Government Programme.

II. THE PEOPLE WE MUST REACH

UNKT’s response will be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 cross-cutting sustainable development goals (SDGs) grounded in human rights; setting forth the central promise to “**leave no one behind.**”⁴ Kosovo has adopted the SDGs as part of its longer-term development agenda by adopting an assembly resolution to that effect on 25 January 2018.⁵

Given the risks of a protected pandemic, which would precipitate secondary and tertiary effects and increase fiscal pressures on government at a time of economic downturn, support must be expeditiously

deployed. Bridging the lack of resources and weak social protections to prevent devastating impacts on different fronts, strengthening gender equality and preventing further exclusion and discrimination while protecting and promoting the human rights of all people in Kosovo remain central objectives. UNKT’s support to the government, from assessment to programming, from strengthening policy advice to advocacy, and in identifying practical measures to accelerate growth and pave the transition to new modes of development financing will be driven by the following guiding questions:

UNKT’s Purpose	UNKT’s Guiding Questions
Tackling the immediate emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has been left out of Kosovo’s current health and socio-economic response measures? • What is the demographic and where do they reside? • Where are the gaps?
Focusing on the social impact and the economic response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which barriers keep people in Kosovo beyond the reach of infrastructure, employment, services, jobs and other socio-economic response measures?
‘Recovering better’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can those who are excluded, marginalised and in vulnerable situations come into the fold? How can they be made more resilient to shocks and crises? • How can the responses help remove and avoid exacerbating structural drivers of exclusion, inequalities, and discrimination? • What are the most optimal developing financing modalities to accelerate growth and maximise revenue, jobs and social protection and welfare? • How can we build back better and greener - towards low-carbon development, improved climate resilience, and greener economy?

The most marginalised and groups in vulnerable situations, lacking adequate protection equipment as well as economic means to cope with socio-economic impacts, will be at the core of our considerations and actions. If the pandemic is prolonged, further deepening economic contraction, worsening the trade balance, capital account, remittance flows and overseas development

assistance, then an increased focus on value-for-money actions will be necessary. UNKT recognises that people in vulnerable situations are driven by a variety of factors, including personal circumstances and status, type of occupation, location/residence or by legal status. For this reason, the disaggregation of impacts to include poverty rates, social and gender exclusion and other variables will be critical to securing LNOB.

AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN KOSOVO EXPERIENCING HIGH DEGREES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC MARGINALISATION AND REQUIRING SPECIFIC ATTENTION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, who continue to face de facto social discrimination due to patriarchal customs, traditional attitudes and historical gender roles, limited opportunities for political, economic and social participation, barriers to accessing justice and employment, and who are disproportionately exposed to violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Majority Communities, in particular the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who are extensively deprived in all poverty dimensions. Kosovo-Serb communities often find themselves marginalised in terms of access to participation and voice, opportunities and human security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, adolescents and youth, especially girls and young women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People below the poverty line (about 18 per cent of the population) or facing insecure and informal work and incomes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with pre-existing medical and mental health conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence victims (1,915 cases reported in 2019, but the actual number expected to be much higher) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (LGBTI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, victims of trafficking, and persons at risk of statelessness who may find themselves in irregular or undocumented situations and in many cases do not have effective access to stable jobs, medical care, education and other social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in informal settlements, homeless persons, families/individuals with housing affordability problems, or households without, or with limited access to, basic services and utilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons in detention or institutionalised settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small farmers, rural workers in informal and formal markets, and other people living in remote rural areas as well as urban informal sector and self-employed who depend on market for food

III. UNKT'S IMMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE

UNKT is placing its assets in support of an immediate to medium term response:

1. **Presence:** This Plan incorporates the efforts of 13 Kosovo-based UN agencies including the World Bank, with backing from regional offices and headquarters.
2. **Knowledge:** UNKT combines a breadth of know-how and global best practices to help address the multidimensional socio-economic aspects of the crisis.
3. **Value for Money:** UNKT, including resident and non-resident agencies, have considerable capacity to develop value-for-money solutions, many of which can be delivered through the switch to digitisation and adaptation of service delivery models and standard operating procedures.
4. **An impartial, evidence-driven and normative approach:** UNKT's actions will be implemented using a human rights-based, climate-conscious, child and gender-sensitive approach in accordance with international standards; with investments based on evidence in order to support LNOB and BBB agendas.
5. **Development portfolio and access to funding:** UNKT's overall annual development portfolio for Kosovo approximates USD\$25m across all SDGs, a significant portion of which has been reprogrammed for COVID-related needs. Additional core budget funds have been made available (USD\$2.4m to date). IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNOPS, UN Women and WHO have expanded their response with non-core contributions from Austria, Canada, the European Union, Germany, Japan, Luxemburg, Norway, Switzerland

and USA amounting to some USD\$17m. UNKT also has access to the UN's *COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF*, thus far funded by Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland, which in May granted an initial USD\$1m to IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women to further support the Kosovo health system and mitigate socio economic impact.

The WB has already approved an emergency loan of USD\$50m, which aims to prevent and respond to COVID-19, strengthen Kosovo's public health preparedness and fund Kosovo's SAS.

6. **Established funding modalities for rapid disbursements:** UNKT can use several modalities to quickly channel funds to programmatic interventions. For instance, pooled funds can be established within days, using globally agreed standards and procedures. Donors can also provide financial contributions earmarked for Kosovo through the COVID-19 MPTF.⁶
7. **A wide range of flexible support and modalities:** Support to institutions can be tailored to capacity and needs and can shift over time according to the situation. This support includes advisory services on the shift from Funding to Finance (F2F) which underpins the SDG financing ecosystem.
8. **Integrated and coordinated support:** UNKT support is integrated, connecting analysis and responses across sectors, and building continuity between immediate measures and longer-term recovery.
9. **Strong partnerships for greater reach and impact:** Beyond agencies' own expertise and resources, UNKT agencies can

mobilise partnerships with private sector, civil society and IFIs; to include development of blended financing solutions. These will be of value in assessments and analysis, financing and resource-mobilisation, policy advocacy, programme design and delivery, and long-term planning, and ultimately in sustainable economic recovery.

10. **An operational infrastructure fit for purpose:** UNKT agencies have a robust operational infrastructure that has been fully mobilised and can be expanded

quickly. Local and global logistics and procurement capabilities support accelerated delivery, cost-effectiveness and transparency.

11. **A Focus on Durable Impacts:** UNKT prioritises investments that deliver durable impacts, multiple benefit flows and solutions that can be scaled. Given the need to drive growth, enhance revenues and protect incomes, the focus on direct, indirect and induced multipliers across the socio-economic investment plan is central to all support.

IV. DELIVERING SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUPPORT

UNKT has been assessing how it can best support the people and institutions of Kosovo in the current circumstances; based on overall UNKT and resident and non-resident agency comparative advantages. Given the rather unique configuration of UNKT agencies in Kosovo, and the equally idiosyncratic nature of the pandemic, the proposed support package is aligned to government priorities, is focused on value-for-money actions and aimed at forwarding Agenda 2030 LNOB and BBB agendas.

Responsive to Government Priorities

Alignment with the Government Programme is essential for a burden-sharing approach. Ongoing and planned containment measures, efforts to strengthen the health system and interim fiscal measures continue to demonstrate the authorities' proactive approach to protecting lives and livelihoods.

Within the overall framework of Kosovo's development priorities, including Kosovo's Development Strategy 2016-2021,⁷ Economic Reform Programme 2019-2021,⁸ Health Sector Strategy 2017-2021,⁹ the Strategy for Employment and Social Welfare 2018-2022,¹⁰ as well as the June 2020 Government Programme for 2020-2023 and Kosovo's Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU,¹¹ the United Nations have been aligning efforts and resources with a view to ensuring that its COVID-19 response contributes to Kosovo's longer-term development agenda as set out in Kosovo's 2018 *SDG Resolution*.¹²

The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated containment measures have severely weakened Kosovo's economic outlook. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is forecast to report a disappointing – 5 per cent in 2020 but this situation is likely to worsen; undermining government's growth, revenue, services, employment and social inclusion goals. As the global economic lockdown also disrupts global supply chains, the true impact of the virus could take years to be properly accounted for.

SERP aligns with the 2020-2023 Government Programme which focuses on (i) managing the pandemic (ii) post-pandemic economic recovery and (iii) a regular programme of reform characterised by accelerated investment and development. The programme outlines the following strategic priorities:

- Strengthening the state, advancing democracy, combating negative phenomena, especially crime and corruption;
- Economic development based on market economy, increased employment and investment, to face the consequences of pandemics and the need to strengthen the competitiveness of local businesses and products;
- Assuming responsibility for advancing dialogue with Serbia, in co-operation with the EU and the USA, by not allowing border changes and territory swaps;

- Advancing the European integration process, through the implementation of the SAA, and the Euro-Atlantic integration process;
- Full implementation of the European Reform Agenda; and,
- Creating the environment for position-opposition cooperation on vital issues in the best interest of the country and decision-making in broad and comprehensive consultation, especially in the dialogue process with Serbia.

In order to implement COVID-19 related recovery and to bolster execution of the government programme, an Economic Recovery Fund is being established by government following the pandemic with Euro 1.2 billion for the period 2020-2021. Government aims to resource its plan by mobilising (i) € 180 million savings from the 2020 budget (ii) € 51.6 million from the IMF (iii) €100 million from the European Commission (iv) €120 million from the World Bank (v) €60 million from privatisation funds (vi) €100 million from the issuance of securities (vii) €20 million from the issuance of securities by the diaspora (viii) €300 million through international loans for financing capital projects of public enterprises, municipalities and at the central level (ix) €100 million credit guarantees for manufacturing investment projects and (x) €170 million return on pension savings for contributors from the Pension Trust.

While the Government Programme does not mention the Agenda 2030 or the SDGs, many of the actions proposed are fully aligned to

the agenda, goals and targets. In this context UNKT SERP puts into practice the UN Secretary General's Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity Report and has established an aligned investment support strategy focused on (i) health first (ii) protecting people (iii) economic response and recovery (iv) macro-economic response and multilateral collaboration and (v) social cohesion and community resilience.

Building Back Better and Greener

Sustainable development requires addressing social and economic objectives as interconnected goals and it is critical that gender and social equality is at the centre of this endeavour. In addition to LNOB, UNKT is also committed to "building back better and greener," with the environment at the heart of decision making. A post-disaster environmental assessment, as part of the socio-economic assessment, will be instrumental for the prevention of secondary emergencies, addressing acute risks to human life and health and positively contributing to the recovery and resilience of affected communities.

This Plan has been shaped by the Common Kosovo Analysis conducted by UNKT agencies finalised in May 2020 and will also be incorporated into UNKT's *Strategic Development Cooperation Framework for Kosovo 2021-2025* currently under development. Five key pillars and priorities have emerged, through which UNKT agencies will support at least 13 out of 17 SDGs.

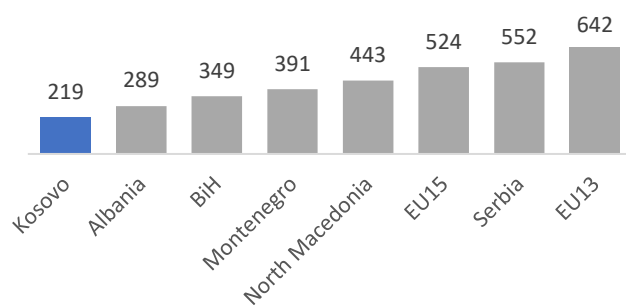
1. HEALTH FIRST: PROTECTING HEALTH SERVICES AND KOSOVO'S HEALTH SYSTEM

Kosovo's fragile health system is at risk of being overburdened by the crisis. The weaknesses of Kosovo's health system are well-known and risk being exacerbated by the crisis, which may impact the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Combined with Kosovo's demographic and social characteristics,¹³ this makes Kosovo highly vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 or system collapse. While, thus far, the number of deaths from COVID-19 has been relatively low,¹⁴ care has to be taken that this number does not exceed the number of deaths from preventable or treatable conditions. Any measures taken to address the pandemic therefore have to be balanced with the maintenance of essential lifesaving health services. UNKT is well placed in helping the government to navigate difficult choices.

Kosovo's health care indicators, including the number of physicians and nurses per patient,

In-patient beds per 100,000 (2017 or latest) (Source: KAS, WHO)



and the number of beds (see chart below), are among the lowest in Europe.¹⁵ Kosovo

has a severe shortage of qualified medical staff, with a particularly concerning situation in primary health centres. There are also reports of unavailable drugs and services, long wait times, and lack of diagnostic, lab services and specialists.¹⁶ Women are at the forefront of the COVID response, including as the default unpaid family caregivers and the majority of unpaid or poorly paid community health workers – who very often perform critical work without the necessary protective equipment and hygiene facilities.

MOVING AWAY FROM BUSINESS AS USUAL

Within the crisis, it is vital to identify, embrace and shape emerging opportunities. Within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), where the way we live, work and relate to each other is fundamentally shifting, we support the move towards greater digitisation of monetary systems and services. The pace of change has never been quicker, and the role of government in promoting governance is at the heart of this reset. The internet of things has arrived with 5G, and COVID-19 justifies the need to transition from slow legacy systems to new real time data analytical systems that are predictive and therefore inherently preventive. SERP is shaped by this important agenda.

Health expenditure in Kosovo is low relative to regional and GDP per capita comparators. The health system is predominantly tax-funded (97 per cent comes from the general budget), but private out-of-pocket payments make up a significant share of contributions. Implementation of a recent health insurance reform has been delayed, leaving Kosovo's health system under a government-managed, direct-provision mode. Public health personnel are governed by civil service law and budget rigidities. These challenges mean that Kosovo's health system has limited capacity to surge with rising demand, although several urgent health actions have been taken since early March, many of which UNKT advised on.¹⁷

The limited capacity of Kosovo's main tertiary hospital, Pristina's University Clinic, to handle COVID-19 cases has been strengthened. Its Infectious Disease Clinic is equipped with 120 beds. 122 ventilators have been identified around Kosovo that could be available to the Clinic in case of need. Further needs will be addressed by the European Union's support to Kosovo for medical procurement worth €5m.¹⁸ However, regional hospitals remain vulnerable to outbreaks due to a lack of adequate equipment and supplies.

Limited procurement and planning capacities saw the MoH struggle in securing personal protective equipment. In some cases, the re-direction of resources towards the COVID response and containment measures have limited or put on hold other essential health services, such as immunisation services (particularly risky for communities with low

vaccination coverage)¹⁹ or routine pre- and post-natal check-ups.²⁰

Given these weaknesses, mitigation measures such as physical distancing will continue to be key in the response to the pandemic, as they will limit the pressure on the health system. Enforcing such measures requires clear and consistent communication with the public and social and financial mechanisms to support people in complying. With WHO support, the MoH has created tools and reporting mechanisms, which disseminate information and guidelines

PUTTING HEALTH FIRST IS CRITICAL

When health systems collapse, both direct mortality from an outbreak and avertable mortality from other conditions increase dramatically.

Supporting Kosovo's Health system to avoid it being overwhelmed by demand for services generated by the COVID-19 outbreak is of primary importance.

through text messages,²¹ TV, radio, and internet portals.²² It has also introduced channels to record infections and trace exposed individuals, including through the IPH and a 24-hour Operations Centre. Municipalities are taking measures to re-allocate budgets and Municipal Emergency Councils are operational.

In the long run, authorities will also need to consider the impact of the pandemic on mental health for both front-line responders and for the population at large. Over 40 per

cent of Public Pulse Brief XVIII respondents note the negative effect of the pandemic on their physical health while 59 per cent reported a negative effect on their mental health.²³

Waste management capacities are also required to safely dispose of increased amounts of protective equipment that could be infected with the virus. With the possibility of uncontrolled dumping leading to health risks or uncontrolled incineration leading to the release of toxins, UN expertise can provide important guidance.²⁴

This Plan advocates for a three-pronged strategy for UNKT's response, focused on promoting coordinated management of COVID-19 preparedness and response;

targeting the health system's recovery, preparedness and strengthening in general; and supporting outreach to vulnerable populations through:

1. **Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support**
2. **Promotion of reliable COVID-19 messaging and preventative measures**
3. **Support the provision of essential health services** (including, where necessary, the development of new service delivery models, standard operating procedures and financing modalities)
4. **Support on tracking and reaching vulnerable groups**

2. PROTECTING PEOPLE: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND BASIC SERVICES

We know from experience with other crises how important social protection is. During the Ebola outbreak, more people died from the interruption of social services than from the virus itself. During the 2008 financial crisis, countries with strong social protection systems and basic services suffered the least and recovered the fastest. Hence, as elsewhere in the world, it is of utmost importance to ensure that the people of Kosovo have access to social services and protection. UNKT also recognises that during periods of fiscal stress, where resources are constrained and risks of increasing the debt burden are present, there is a need to support public sector modernisation to improve the efficiency of delivery.

In Kosovo, an estimated 18 per cent of the population already live below the *absolute consumption poverty* line (€1.85 per day in 2017 prices), with 5.1 per cent in extreme poverty (€1.31 per day) and inhabitants of rural areas and female-led households disproportionately affected.²⁵ The poverty headcount ratio at USD 5.50 a day lay at 21.6 per cent in 2017.²⁶ This category has little to no access to health services.

Household earnings in Kosovo are expected to reduce due to the supply and demand shocks to the economy arising from containment measures.²⁷ A recent UN rapid assessment showed that 30 per cent of respondents reported reduced hours of paid work or job loss (most in the construction and hospitality sectors). Decreased incomes were

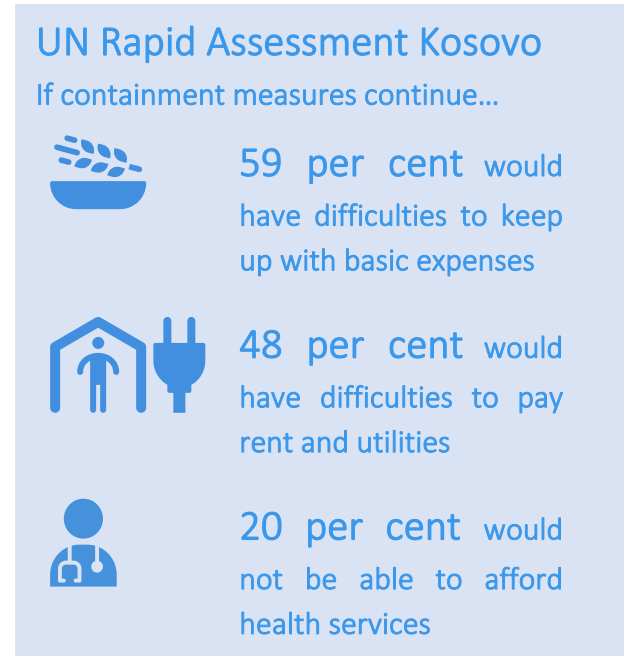
reported by 53 per cent of respondents.²⁸ A UNICEF assessment amongst vulnerable households indicated that beneficiaries most valued hygiene, food and financial assistance.²⁹ Another recent survey notes that 65.9 per cent of respondents reported a negative impact on their economic well-being while coping strategies focused on reducing expenditure (41 per cent) and borrowing money (15.3 per cent).³⁰

Experience also suggests that, during crisis, unemployment rates can rise sharply. This is particularly difficult for Kosovo, which has low rates of participation in the workforce to begin with (40.5 per cent in 2019). The fall-out from the pandemic will have effects both on women, who have pre-existing vulnerabilities in the labour market, and men who, in real terms, will be most affected by job losses.

In 2019, only 21.1 per cent of women participated in the labour force (compared to 59.7 per cent of men) and unemployment was highest among women (34.4 per cent). Many of the 13.9 per cent of women who *are* in employment may lose their jobs or receive salary cuts due to assuming greater family care duties in the wake of COVID.³¹

A WB analysis shows that close to 90 per cent of Kosovo workers in the sectors most affected by the shutdown are men (reflecting both the higher rates of employment among men and the types of work men carry out compared with women) who work informally and in small firms.³² Many such workers have no access to social insurance.

This loss of income or employment, coupled with an increase in out-of-pocket health expenditures, and the possibility of a decline in remittances,³³ another important source of income,³⁴ is likely to affect a broader range



of households, and could result in an overall increase in poverty, which would then impact the realisation of human rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living.

A recent UN rapid assessment showed that, should restrictive measures continue, over half of all respondents fear that it would be difficult to keep up with basic expenses, such as food and hygiene products (59 per cent). Many would see themselves forced to ask help from relatives and friends or the government (53 and 48 per cent respectively) or are afraid that it would be difficult to pay rent and utilities (48 per cent). 20 per cent are afraid they would have to stop seeking health services due to the

impact of restrictive measures upon their financial situation.³⁵

For people on the move in Kosovo, including refugees, IDPs and migrants in irregular situations, and victims of trafficking, the impact of COVID presents itself as three interlocking crises: a health crisis whereby people on the move may lack the tools to protect themselves against the virus; a socio-economic crisis exacerbating the risks to their already precarious livelihoods; and a protection crisis that engenders human rights issues and stigmatisation. An April 2020, UNHCR needs assessment found that the pandemic was having a major impact on the socio-economic sphere of life for all persons of concern, including through further decreased employment opportunities, more limited social interactions, and increased vulnerabilities. Similarly, some of Kosovo's most marginalised communities display pre-existing housing vulnerabilities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. In 2019, out of 16,204 displaced persons within Kosovo, 412 were living in 22 temporary collective shelters.³⁶ A January 2020 study found that the majority of members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo often live in settlements, which are in some cases informal, with poor infrastructure, and houses in dire conditions.³⁷ Another study found that marginalised Roma are more likely to live in overcrowded dwellings and less likely to have access to piped water, electricity and public sewerage than their non-Roma neighbours.³⁸ These conditions make it harder to follow

physical distancing and hygiene recommendations. In May, UNHCR identified at least 51 vulnerable returnee families who find themselves at risk of eviction due to a deterioration of their socio-economic situation in the wake of COVID.³⁹ These factors all highlight that specific targeting of these communities will be needed for improved sanitation, awareness-raising, and financial assistance.⁴⁰

The economic consequences of the pandemic may also lead to an increase in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in person flows across Kosovo. There is evidence of organised criminal groups in the Western Balkans smuggling illegal migrants through the same routes and sometimes even the same transportation methods as illicit commodities.⁴¹ Due to the removal of COVID-19-related enhanced border control measures, a continuous demand for organised migrant smuggling services in the Western Balkans and neighbouring countries is expected. The persistently high number of stranded migrants in Greece and the Western Balkans also supports that prognosis. These potential impacts can be mitigated by investments in economic recovery across both developed and

developing countries and by providing avenues for safe and regular migration routes for refugees and migrants, and regular immigration status in destination countries.

Four basic tenets guide UNKT's collective response for people on the move. First,

"[T]he ability of Kosovo's social protection system to respond rapidly to shock is undermined by the lack of any unemployment insurance, the rigid and narrow targeting criteria for social assistance, and a lack of a registry of potential beneficiaries..."

excluding people on the move from our COVID-19 response would be costly in the long-run whereas inclusion pays off. Second, an effective response to COVID-19 and protecting the human rights of people on the move are not mutually exclusive. Third, no-one is safe until everyone is safe. Fourth, people on the move are part of the solution, and we should use this crisis as an opportunity to leverage their full potential.⁴²

Meanwhile, Kosovo's social protection system is dominated by old-age pensions and conflict-related benefits. Social services, decentralised at the municipal level, suffer from a lack of sustainable funding, low quality of services provided and poor linkages with other sectors for social inclusion.⁴³ Its only poverty-targeted programme, the Social Assistance Scheme (SAS), only made up 0.45 per cent of GDP in 2018, which is much lower than the average in the region (2.2 per cent) and in developing and transition economies

(1.6 per cent).⁴⁴ Because of categorical and exclusionary filters in the eligibility process, the SAS reaches only 10 per cent of all households and excludes nearly two-thirds of households in the bottom quintile.⁴⁵

Overall, the ability of Kosovo's social protection system to respond rapidly to shock is undermined by the lack of any unemployment insurance, the rigid and narrow targeting criteria for social assistance, and a lack of a registry of potential beneficiaries, which could help the government to rapidly expand emergency cash transfer support. As a result, despite its shortcomings, the SAS remains the only instrument in Kosovo's social protection system that is capable of rapidly reaching a significant share of the poor and vulnerable population with cash transfer support. According to the UN's Rapid Assessment, 28 per cent of respondents receive their salary in cash. This suggests that access to digital financial services and capacity of transferring money quickly and efficiently to households remains to be further developed.⁴⁶

Under the SAS, a system is already in place to identify, process, and make payments to eligible households. This system includes a registry of beneficiaries, IT infrastructure to cross-check eligibility and process payments, and service agreements to make payments through regulated providers. These systems could be leveraged to increase payments to existing beneficiaries and expand eligibility to

quickly provide financial support to households that are adversely affected.

An emergency government fiscal package, adopted on 30 March, aims to subsidise certain SAS payments, pensions and incomes.⁴⁷ This signals a positive trend, but

unemployment benefits and only two per cent received financial support from their municipality.⁴⁸

The government has stated that the immediate measures in the emergency fiscal package will be complemented by the 2020-

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND BASIC SERVICES MUST BE SCALED UP

Social protection programmes and basic services will need to be scaled up throughout this crisis. UNKT will support institutions and communities following these principles:

- **Human-rights based social protection.** Under the primary responsibility of the government of Kosovo, services should provide universal coverage, with transparent management, participation of stakeholders, non-discrimination of users and a lens on gender equality.
- **Humanitarian principles** of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.
- **People-driven.** UNKT will support solutions ensuring that people's needs are met in a timely and effective manner.
- **Analysis-driven.** Decisions to provide technical and system-strengthening support will be based on analysis.
- **Sustainability-oriented.** UNKT will assist the government of Kosovo to meet the needs of the most poor and vulnerable with sustainable solutions, enabling shifts from short- to long-term responses and towards Kosovo-owned solutions with sustainable and equitable financing.
- **Partnerships-driven.** UNKT will seek close consultation and cooperation with partner agencies and Kosovo institutions.
- **Systems-driven.** UNKT will focus on the use and strengthening of existing social protection systems and services.
- **Risk-informed and embracing innovation.** Actions will be underpinned by an appraisal of possible risks to beneficiaries.

Kosovo institutions can exploit the remaining policy space to provide economic stimulus that outweighs the effects of the crisis. The UN's recent rapid assessment showed that more than 20 per cent of respondents have been facing difficulties in accessing social assistance during the crisis. Only three per cent of those who lost their jobs due to the pandemic were able to obtain

2023 Government Programme, which contains a broader set of measures.⁴⁹ The cost of the package is estimated at about 2.8 per cent of GDP; however, if the outbreak is prolonged, an extension of the emergency stimulus package may be necessary. The crisis has also precipitated a sharp fall in government revenues (by 11 per cent as compared to last year), leaving limited fiscal

space to finance these programmes. The government will therefore require external support to provide much-needed financial assistance to poor and vulnerable households over the coming months to respond to the direct economic consequences of the pandemic and the containment measures.

Two other sectors that have been negatively affected by the fallout of the pandemic are protection and education. For vulnerable groups and for women and girls, the risk of being exposed to domestic violence is on the rise due to heightened tensions in the home.⁵⁰ According to Kosovo Police, the number of DV reported cases in the first quarter of 2020 was 481 cases, an increase of 98 cases in comparison to the same period in 2019,⁵¹ and UN Women implementing partners have reported an increase in the number of victims looking for assistance.⁵² The UN's rapid assessment showed that 35 per cent of respondents did not even know where to seek help in case of domestic violence.⁵³ UN Women also identified an interruption of victims' access to social protection, with social workers refusing to visit shelters to provide social support or psychosocial counselling due to the pandemic.⁵⁴

The significant increase in online operations triggered by the pandemic (home-based work or education, online banking, social exchanges or shopping) lead to an increased risk of cybercrime, and in turn an increased need for protection. Individuals may be targeted by online fraud, extortion and child

sexual abuse, whilst systems (hospitals, agencies, businesses) may be compromised by malware seeking either illicit profit or access to login credentials or other sensitive information of intelligence value. There may also be increased opportunities for online money laundering, harming Kosovo and its people. Public awareness campaigns, online reporting hotlines and support to specialist counter-cybercrime law enforcement personnel, may all be key facets of an effective response.⁵⁵

In terms of education, parents are also currently facing additional burdens, including home schooling. With schools closed, the MoESTI has implemented distance learning for school-age children across Kosovo. While the majority of children have been able to attend regular distance learning, about 4 per cent of children missed lessons due to lack of equipment or weak internet connections, affecting their right to education.⁵⁶ If the situation continues, it will require further mobilisation and adaptation of all learning materials.

UNKT agencies have been playing a significant role in social protection in Kosovo for many years, in advisory and capacity building capacities. They will continue their work in the areas of **social and child protection, food and nutrition, education, GBV, shelter and housing interventions**, helping promote the rights to work, to just and favourable work conditions and to an adequate standard of living, as well as related SDGs:

1. Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support
2. Support the continuity of social services and access to shelter and housing
3. Support learning for children and youth in Kosovo
4. Support GBV survivors with psychosocial support, access to essential services and reintegration.

3. ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: PROTECTING JOBS, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES, AND VULNERABLE WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

Around the world, the COVID-19 crisis is plunging economies into recession with high levels of unemployment and deprivation. The health pandemic has had negative multipliers on jobs and livelihoods that threaten SDG progress and the realisation of economic and social cultural rights, in particular the right to an adequate standard of living, and is likely to disproportionately impact women in the labour force.

In Kosovo, output and employment have been dominated by the non-tradable sectors, particularly services (share of value added at more than 50 percent of GDP). The industry (17.5 per cent) and agriculture (8.3 per cent) sectors are much smaller.⁵⁷ In 2016, SMEs made up 99.9 per cent of all companies in Kosovo, generating 81 per cent of total value added and accounting for 76.2 per cent of total employment.⁵⁸ Jobs in the informal sector, which account for about 35 per cent of all employment in Kosovo,⁵⁹ are especially sensitive to economic conditions. Globally, ILO estimates that earnings for informal workers are expected to decline by 82 per cent in lower-middle and low-income countries.⁶⁰

UNKT COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery Plan, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs are the cornerstone of international development efforts, involving a commitment to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development by 2030; while ensuring that no one is left behind. Though Kosovo is not a formal member of the United Nations, given that all global development finance institutions and transnational corporations (through the Global Compact) measure the impact of their operations on SDG outcomes, applying an SDG and Development Finance approach would be beneficial, and would link well with the planned Kosovo Donor Forum. Moreover, given that any socio-economic response plan must go beyond mobilising public sector and external partner resources, establishing development financing modalities to de-risk the mobilisation of private capital will be critical to generation forward momentum.

Pre-crisis, Kosovo was one of the fastest growing economies in the Western Balkans.

At the same time, Kosovo has had one of the lowest employment rates in the region, with a wide gender gap and youth hugely affected.⁶¹ The low participation rate of women mentioned above is attributable to a combination of factors including low salaries, limited access to child and elderly care, lack of family-friendly schedules, inflexible labour regulations, patriarchal social norms and discrimination.⁶² These factors are likely to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 fallout. Whilst the pre-existing high percentage of youth unemployment (49.4 per cent in 2019, with 31.7 per cent of youth neither employed, nor in education nor training⁶³), is of concern, it also translates into a key opportunity for growth and positive prospects in the recovery phase. Challenges arising from shortages of skilled labour for labour market needs can be met by working towards the integration of a well-trained and competent young population into the labour market.⁶⁴

The consequences of the pandemic on Kosovo's already fragile economy may be severe, as business closures are already affecting employment and income, and impacting consumption.⁶⁵ A recent report estimates that a two-month economic hiatus in Kosovo's hospitality sector will affect 3,683 SMEs directly, with a €13m loss in turnover, loss of over €6m in wages, and more than 12,000 employees without income and at risk of losing their jobs. Impact on interlinked sectors could exceed €10m.⁶⁶ Another survey shows that 74.5 per cent of businesses reported loss of income, 47.8 per cent did not have the ability to keep employees on

payroll, and 36 per cent had difficulties in paying taxes or fees, while 32.1 per cent were planning to reduce their employees.⁶⁷ A recent UN rapid assessment showed that 70 per cent of responding businesses had to close or work at lower capacity, and one third of businesses were uncertain about how much longer they could afford to stay in business with ongoing containment in place. 63 per cent of businesses reported decreased revenue levels.⁶⁸

Beyond the demand and supply factors, SMEs are particularly vulnerable to shock because they often have limited liquidity and financial buffers to absorb sudden loss of revenue. Compared with larger businesses, they also often lack the ability to change work processes (for example through infrastructure upgrading or digital solutions) or diversify their supply chains.

Access to adequate finance is therefore one of the key needs of SMEs during the crisis and recovery phase, especially as 75 per cent of small and micro businesses surveyed for the UN rapid assessment indicated they would not consider taking a loan at current unfavourable interest rates. The elevated interest rate undermines the rate of return on investment, in effect denying micro enterprises in benefiting from the potential benefits of modest capital injection. Tellingly, almost none of the businesses surveyed saw new opportunities related to COVID-19.⁶⁹

A possible decrease in remittances to Kosovo would further weaken consumption, which in

UN Rapid Assessment Kosovo

Impact of COVID-19 on business



70 per cent of small businesses had to close or work at lower capacity



63 per cent of businesses reported decreased revenue levels



NO business saw new opportunities related to COVID-19

turn would affect SMEs. All these effects combine to limit household purchasing power, diminish assets and reduce access to credit. Vulnerability and poverty may increase significantly, with greatest risks to those in the informal economy and those facing long-term unemployment, low salaries, or lack of alternative income.

The COVID-19 crisis has made digital tools a lifeline for millions of people but has also shown that the population excluded from the digital world is the most at risk of being left behind. Where robust digital and financial ecosystems are in place, women entrepreneurs can harness those to continue their operations through online sales and

digital payments and prevent economies from going into complete meltdown.

The MAFRD has taken measures to support farmers and agro-processors to prevent disruptions to food production and supply chains.⁷⁰ However, given that a significant percentage of food products in Kosovo is imported, shortages could be caused by ongoing global restrictions and increased prices.

Many of the reforms required to meet the challenges outlined above may not be immediately apparent. As a result, and unless strong and systematic economic and market diagnostics are undertaken, there is a contingent risk that investment decisions are well meaning but fail to deliver high potential returns. The normative approach to investment planning is to undertake growth diagnostic work to improve the business environment for domestic investment but also as an investment destination for foreign direct investment. Supporting the development of policy notes on investment alternatives, economic forecasting and identifying the macro implications of the recovery measures and, undertaking growth and investment diagnostic work with front line economic ministries – in coordination with the World Bank and IMF as required – would be considered urgent support.

UNKT programmes target the most vulnerable productive actors in the economy. UNKT will provide active support for economic response and recovery in Kosovo through supporting the government and businesses in creating and promoting jobs

including ‘green jobs,’⁷¹ that provide decent earnings, while ensuring safe working conditions, providing social protection, and safeguarding workers’ rights, and advising on gender responsive budgeting in monitoring how the stimulus package is operationalised and implemented:

1. **Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support**

2. **Scaling up employment-intensive programming, including through addressing skills mismatch and by supporting creation of green jobs**

3. **Support to young people and women in entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to COVID-19**

4. **Support safeguarding food and supply chains through the crisis**

4. MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE

The global economy has entered the deepest economic recession since the Great Depression,⁷² with major implications for vulnerable population groups and households around the world. Kosovo’s economy was already fragile before the arrival of the pandemic, with growth largely generated by consumption fuelled by public spending and high household lending. The highest unemployment rate in the region has been a major concern.⁷³ The political uncertainty caused by the fall of the government in March 2020 after only 52 days in office has also caused concern.⁷⁴

COVID-19 has exacerbated the pre-existing fragility. The measures imposed since March have shut down large parts of Kosovo’s economy, with aggregate supply and demand contracting simultaneously. Services, which account for a large part of the economy, have been particularly hard hit by restrictions in the hospitality, retail and in-person service sectors. Highly dependent on tourism, Kosovo is also vulnerable to the

effect of ongoing travel restrictions and potential changes in consumer behaviour.⁷⁵ Another challenge remains Kosovo’s long-standing and excessive trade imbalance, with around 90 per cent of imports and 10 per cent of exports (non-tradeable sectors

“Fiscal policy support will be crucial to help the private sector. [Kosovo] has some fiscal room to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, albeit limited by the concurrent growth of expenditure ... and difficulties accessing capital markets... Alignment of longer-term recovery goals with initiatives like the European Green Deal may enhance access to external funding.”

dominate output and employment, with goods and services still largely uncompetitive). In the past, trade deficits were mainly financed by remittances and FDI, which are both vulnerable to this crisis.⁷⁶

The government's stimulus package includes temporary increases to social assistance and pensions less than €100 a month, and a payment for employees who lost their jobs because of the outbreak. The package also includes short- and medium-term measures to support affected private firms, such as wage subsidies. The cost is estimated at €190m (2.8 per cent of GDP), a rather low ratio compared to countries in the region.

Fiscal policy support will be crucial to help the private sector. As Kosovo ended 2019 with higher government deposits and relatively low debt (at 17.5 per cent, the lowest public debt-to-GDP ratio in the region),⁷⁷ it has some fiscal room to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, albeit limited by the concurrent growth of expenditure.⁷⁸ Automatic stabilisers will be limited due to weak social safety nets. As Kosovo has difficulties accessing capital markets, it has turned to IFIs for financing options. In April, it received €51.6m from the IMF; €100m in favourable loans from the EU were confirmed in May to be made available in the future;⁷⁹ and the WB has approved an emergency loan of USD50m. Alignment of longer-term recovery goals with initiatives like the European Green Deal may enhance access to external funding.

Revenues are projected to plunge by 11 per cent due to the slowdown in economic activity and a tax deferral announced by the government. The likely revenue shortfall combined with the fiscal stimulus is expected to widen the 2020 budget deficit. While before the pandemic, Kosovo was projected

to grow at around 4 per cent, experts now predict a contraction of 4.5 to 5 per cent.⁸⁰ A sharp decline in coal between March and April 2020⁸¹ poses a critical challenge for Kosovo's revenue. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to move towards a greener economy.

The epidemic has proven the importance of social protection mechanisms that can identify and support groups vulnerable to adverse economic shocks while preserving fiscal buffers. Better targeting of social protection spending is crucial for poverty reduction and as an automatic stabiliser to prevent a steep decline in consumption. To sustain inclusive growth, it will also be necessary for Kosovo to boost productivity by investing in technology and reducing administrative burdens on firms. A recent UN rapid assessment showed that 84 per cent of surveyed businesses who had plans for investments prior to the pandemic will no longer be investing. The same assessment also showed that 90 per cent of surveyed businesses did not see any impact through the government's fiscal emergency package, although deferral of tax declarations and assistance on covering operating costs were two measures that were appreciated.⁸²

With the above-mentioned large influx of funds into Kosovo to shore up the economy and to provide essential relief by the EU, IMF, World Bank and others, making sure that assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries and does not get diverted through acts of criminal opportunism or inefficiency at the interim stages is vital. Sufficient

accountability and oversight mechanisms will be vital including transparent transactions, strict observation of procurement processes, and oversight provided by government watchdogs, independent journalists and civil society organisations, as well as regular public reports on monies received.⁸³

Economic policy alone will not end this crisis, but it will play a crucial role in preserving jobs and reinforcing the social safety net; particularly if it supports to focus on not just bouncing back from crisis, but also bouncing forward by embracing a progressive reform agenda. Though containment measures are likely to be periodically relaxed, with economic activity rebounding, there is also the risk of remission. However, with the crisis affecting public and private financial buffers, efforts to consolidate and to restore balance sheets may weigh on recovery. A recurrence of the epidemic and ongoing containment measures may also overshadow recovery.

Moving away from a project-based approach to a more structured approach underpinned by development finance, requires that a range of anchor investors come together to develop investments that serve collective priorities. The recent law passed to allow public sector reforms linked to Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) provides an opportunity to usher in a new era of development financing modalities.

A number of potential anchor investors (including development finance institutions and private capital) would benefit from the agility and technical capacity of UNKT. Moreover, the adoption of pooled funding arrangements would not only allow greater leverage on private capital, it would also allow a far wider financing ecosystem to be tapped, using innovative measures to shift the balance of risk to rewards in favour of increased investments. Moreover, as most of the private development finance institutions and institutional investors engaged in Kosovo report their investment portfolios against SDG outturns, pooled funding modalities would support alignment, harmonization and de-projectization. Larger strategic investments can also be targeted through such unified modalities.

UNKT agencies in coordination with other development partners will continue to advise the government on appropriate macro-economic, economic growth and fiscal measures:

- 1. Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support.**
- 2. Supporting macroeconomic responses and ensuring that they are gender-equitable.**
- 3. Support for Conservation Financing and Rolling Out the Green Deal.**

5. SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Kosovo's communities hold the key to flattening the curve, responding to the

pandemic, and ensuring longer-term recovery. With community effectiveness at a

premium, the pandemic has on the one hand placed further strains on social cohesion, magnifying existing fault lines in a society that has long suffered from the legacy of the past. On the other hand, there have been some positive signs that the pandemic can bring divided communities together in their fight against a common enemy.

Although a multi-ethnic society,⁸⁴ Kosovo lacks a common vision shared by all communities. Political, administrative and social divisions run along ethnic lines, most prominent between K-Albanians and K-Serbs and particularly complex with regard to Serb-majority municipalities,⁸⁵ which maintain strong links to Belgrade. The early COVID response of parallel health systems run by Pristina and Belgrade, for example, caused difficulties over data⁸⁶ or movement of patients and medical staff across boundary lines.⁸⁷ Containment measures by the governments of Kosovo and Serbia were not always in congruence, resulting in Serb-majority municipalities not always respecting all Kosovo government measures.⁸⁸ However, over time there have been examples of cross-community and cross-boundary coordination including improved communication between Pristina and Belgrade health officials, movement of essential items across the boundary, as well as donations for, and treatment of patients from, the respective other community.⁸⁹ The solidarity between medical professionals and officials across ethnic and political divides, as well as numerous inter-community volunteer initiatives, have shown the unifying effect of

a pandemic that does not care about ethnicity.

While Kosovo has an advanced legal framework, the non-implementation of legal guarantees protecting non-majority communities continues to fuel an existing trust deficit. The education systems are segregated along ethnic lines, which limits opportunities for young people to engage with other ethnic communities. The division

“[T]he pandemic has on the one hand placed strains on social cohesion... On the other hand, there have been positive signs that the pandemic can bring divided communities together in their fight against a common enemy.”

is exacerbated by limited progress at central and local levels to effectively implement language legislation. During COVID-19 restrictions, several NGOs highlighted that there has been inadequate and delayed communication of government measures in non-Albanian languages with implications for the right to information in Kosovo.⁹⁰ The UN’s human rights monitoring confirmed that dissemination of Serbian language versions has taken longer, illustrating how the pandemic has exacerbated a chronic lack of language capacities and resources throughout Kosovo.

Divisive historical and political narratives and a lack of an inclusive and comprehensive ‘Dealing with the Past’ approach also continue to hamper inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation at community level. During

pandemic times, these divisions are illustrated well by the negative reactions along nationalist lines of a few public figures to Serbian government donations to Pristina's health authorities. Similarly, the distraction of many leaders away from the health crisis by ongoing political divisions have served to reduce public trust in political leadership during a time of heightened public anxiety and uncertainty, with palpable popular discontent.⁹¹ An observed increase of misinformation on COVID-19 on social media has been fuelled by users unaccustomed to fact-checking or source-verification. The monitoring of social media for racism, scapegoating or fake news is important in this context.⁹² It is similarly essential that political uncertainties not interfere with non-partisan action to fight the pandemic. Again, communities play a heightened role, as do the inclusion of all sections of the population in designing appropriate COVID responses.

There is to date, for example, limited evidence that institutional responses have taken into consideration the gender implications of the situation.⁹³ Despite legal provisions to ensure their representation, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions in central and local government institutions, which may explain imbalanced gender compositions of COVID-crisis task groups in government and municipalities or gender-blind response plans. The UN Western Balkans Action Plan focused on trust and reconciliation underscores that women's empowerment and participation in society building through

inclusive processes is needed for accelerating socio-economic progress and sustainable development. Opportunities for full, equal and meaningful participation of women as agents of change will be vital when designing measures for recovery from COVID-19.

There may also be evidence that ethnic groups may experience the effects of the pandemic differently. A recent UN assessment shows that more K-Albanian than K-Serb respondents considered themselves financially and economically vulnerable to the impacts of the current crisis, in terms of job category (private versus public sector) and need for assistance (health services, loans, help from local authorities, help from relatives and friends). For example, while 59 per cent of respondents believed they would have to ask for help from local authorities if containment measures persist, the figure was only 8 per cent for K-Serb respondents compared to 51 per cent of K-Albanians.⁹⁴

Faith-based organisations, religious and community leaders will play an important role in supporting ongoing measures to prevent community transmission of COVID-19, for example when calling on believers to refrain from family gatherings during religious festivals. They can similarly help raise community awareness on issues such as the increased risk of violence against women during COVID times.⁹⁵ The work of CSOs in general will be critical to help alleviate the impact of the pandemic and efforts will have to be made to support CSOs who have had to cut staff or suspend operations.⁹⁶

UNKT analysis has identified general entry points for greater social cohesion, which remain true during pandemic times: a need for greater inclusion beyond the circles of politicians and other power centres, as well as a need for dialogue within and between communities and the political leadership for trust and reconciliation.⁹⁷ It is important to strengthen social cohesion especially among youth (who are particularly affected by the closures of non-formal education opportunities in COVID-times and deprivation of social engagement with their peers and educators), and to strengthen access to jobs and public services. A 2019 UNDP social cohesion analysis identified areas of commonality between communities as security and prosperity linked to long-term investments in governance and rule of law,

improved service delivery, economic opportunities, and citizen engagement.⁹⁸

Community centred-solutions have always been at the heart of UNKT's work. UNKT will support social cohesion and community resilience in response to the pandemic, leveraging its technical expertise to assist the government and municipalities, and supporting marginalised groups and persons across ethnic divides:

- 1. Inclusive social dialogue, advocacy, and political engagement**
- 2. Empower community resilience, participation and equitable service delivery**
- 3. Support to governance, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law**



UNKT works closely with the peace and security pillar of the UN family, represented in Kosovo by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). This Plan is closely coordinated with UNMIK's support to the people of Kosovo in responding to the pandemic, which has included:

- **Supporting communities**, institutions, civil society and other partners, particularly protecting the most vulnerable including in non-majority communities:
 - Provision of food and hygiene packs in municipalities; PPE to municipalities, ministries and detention centres; and distance learning equipment for children in shelters and municipalities
 - Supporting access to justice for the most vulnerable people in Kosovo
- **Supporting women's specific needs** and their meaningful participation in designing pandemic-related responses, including the prevention of and redress for GBV through shelters, helplines and services (UNMIK/UN Women)
- **Supporting economic empowerment** initiatives, particularly for women and youth from different communities, for example through face mask sewing or donation of 3-D printers for face shields
- **Supporting communications initiatives** that foster professional reporting on the pandemic, that share information required for protection, or that counter misinformation:
 - Monitoring and reporting on human rights implications (UNMIK/OHCHR)
 - Supporting local authorities to communicate in official languages (UNMIK/IOM) and digital trust-building platform providing multilingual content with COVID messaging
 - Online human rights education activities with youth (UNMIK/OHCHR)
 - Online awareness campaign featuring young change-makers from diverse communities and youth-led responses
 - Virtual and televised townhall debates to increase COVID awareness
 - Bilingual public service videos and a video series featuring multi-ethnic contributors who exemplify resilience

V. HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS RESPONSE

We seek to ensure a development response of **unprecedented speed**, guided by:

- Minimum transaction costs through use of existing platforms and systems;
- Flexibility by drawing on modalities usually reserved for high risk / conflict / humanitarian responses;
- Entity-specific and joint risk management tools and information sharing at all levels;
- Coherence and discipline through collective initiatives and frameworks.

Organisation: The complete response is led and coordinated by the United Nations Development Coordinator through a Task Force Coordination Team comprised of FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNV, UN Women, WHO and World Bank, co-chaired by UNDP and UNICEF.

Design: UNKT has designed its response by making use of rapid assessments; reprogramming of existing programmatic portfolios; constant engagement with IFIs and partners; and alignment with government policies and priorities.

Implementation: The response will explore the use of established mechanisms with adaptive and remote programming and M&E modalities with necessary budget practices.

We will continue to offer non-programmatic support such as analytical and diagnostic support and policy advice to local institutions, throughout emphasising relevant human rights standards and principles and speaking out against discrimination, hate speech, false news and similar unacceptable bad practices.

Human Rights: UNKT will assess the human rights impact of the pandemic and the extent to which responses respect human rights in accordance with 10 thematic human rights indicators on COVID-19.⁹⁹

Funding for the response has been and will be approached on several fronts:

- Reprogramming and repurposing of existing activities and resources after evaluations and consultations;
- Supporting government in undertaking a Development Finance Assessment and Road Map as the basis for mobilising non-traditional resources and private capital through new modalities;
- Internal UNKT agency resources;
- Using innovative campaigns involving the Kosovo public and the private sector, and particularly the diaspora, such as the #CloseToHeart crowdfunding campaign;
- Bilateral funds for UNKT programmes (IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNOPS, UN Women and WHO have begun implementing new grants in COVID-19 response from Austria, Canada, the European Union, Germany, Japan, Luxemburg, Norway, Switzerland and USA amounting to about USD\$17m);
- Other UN sources such as *SDG Fund* reprogramming or the *UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF*, which has already awarded a first USD\$1m grant to UNKT agencies with funds from Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland. Potential contributors may make earmarked contributions to the MPTF;
- Cost-sharing arrangements with the government of Kosovo.

VI. BUILDING BACK BETTER - TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE 2030 AGENDA

In Kosovo, the pandemic has exposed the systemic vulnerability of society to two external shocks; the health risks of COVID-19 and economic impact of global lockdown. Fragility to both external shocks result from anaemic macro-economic growth and fiscal constraints and relatively weak public sector administration, which undermine social protection and welfare provision.

The pandemic has also exacerbated economic inequalities, manifested by the continuous rise in households seeking basic food supplies and unemployment benefits, and highlighted ongoing human rights challenges, including violence against women. The government's emergency fiscal package maintains a basic flow of income and supplies to communities on a short-run stop-gap basis, but the costs of such a programme are unsustainable in the long run.

COVID-19 has made existing emergencies even more pressing, but also provides opportunities for modernisation.¹⁰⁰ In January 2018, Kosovo's assembly adopted a *Resolution on the Sustainable Development Goals*, formally committing to use the SDGs as Kosovo's development framework. The current focus on combatting COVID-19 provides an opportunity to establish a better and more resilient system for the future within the framework of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, enabling an inclusive and enhanced service to all, while "leaving no one

behind." Ideally, SERP lays the foundation for the formulation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

The public health crisis also highlights humanity's limits over nature. In building back, we are given the chance to develop a fair transition towards a new social contract which creates a more resilient society, and which functions through greener dynamics with the environment.

The recovery efforts must protect gender and social equality and inclusion, the realisation of human rights for everyone, and strong, capable institutions. Alignments with the European Green Deal, the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans in accordance with the Zagreb Declaration in May 2020,¹⁰¹ and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹⁰² will be key for Kosovo as it pursues its aspirations towards European integration and may enhance access to external funding.

"We simply cannot return to where we were before COVID-19 struck, with societies unnecessarily vulnerable to crisis. We need to build a better world."

UN Secretary-General, 2 April 2020

Recovering from this pandemic must not come at the expense of tackling other burning issues in Kosovo. UNKT will do everything possible to ensure that our COVID-19 response does not divert resources

from existing priorities – addressing the needs of vulnerable groups; ending violence against women and girls; putting an end to discrimination in all its forms; and tackling climate change challenges – but proposes a holistic package.

Kosovo's recovery needs to be fair; it needs to be green, and above all, it must be inclusive. The Building Back Better agenda therefore must include investments, which support improved:

- Responsiveness;
- Resilience;
- Inclusiveness;
- Sustainability.

Horizontal issues running across this support must include a commitment to public sector governance reforms that lead to improved responsiveness to the needs of those left behind, resilience to future domestic and external shocks, inclusiveness in terms of access to opportunity and the sustainability of development, the environment and local ecological support systems.

There are a host of emerging models that benefit from the 4IR movement, including fully automated service centres that promote rapid responsiveness and lead to real time service delivery data, that supports the use of predictive analytics in public policy making. These and other SERP support options are presented in Annex 1 below, the Matrix of ongoing and planned responses.

ANNEX 1: MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
1. HEALTH FIRST: Protecting Health Service and Kosovo's Health System During the Crisis		
Sources of funding: Austria, European Union, Germany, Japan, Luxemburg, Norway, Switzerland, USA; UNDP, WHO and UNICEF Core; UN Multi-partner Trust Fund		
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on inclusion of migrants and asylum seekers within Kosovo's preparedness and response plans in line with May 2020 <i>Joint Guidance Note on Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Human Rights of Migrants</i> (IOM, UNHCR) • (UNDP) Critical communication and analyses for health crisis management • (UNFPA) Technical briefs and guidance on protection of health workers and delivering safe sexual and reproductive health and rights services • (UNICEF) Rapid technical guidance for implementation of primary health care services including home visiting and immunisation programmes • (WB) COVID-19 Impact Assessment on Western Balkans (Health Systems; Air Pollution Challenges) • (WHO) Institutional support and technical guidance based on latest findings and WHO guidance, including global and local COVID-19 SitRep • (WHO) COVID-19 Behavioural Insight Study with IPH • (WHO) Support on maintaining Expanded Programme on Immunisation • (WHO) Assess implementation of COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and provide recommendations to health institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) General UN Agency support for the development of new service delivery models, standard operating procedures and financing modalities • (UNFPA) Support government to rapidly generate population data that illustrates demographic risks including living conditions and numbers of categories of marginalised groups in different localities • (UNEP) Advice on management of COVID-19 waste (such as disposal of PPE) • (UNHCR) Advice on vaccine counselling for persons of concern • (UNICEF) Policy advice to increase the coverage and quality of primary health care services provided to children and pregnant women • (UNICEF) Support assessment and replacement of the 'cold chain' system (storing and transporting of vaccines) and strengthen vaccine quality control • (WHO) Impact assessment on essential health services to ensure continuity and availability of essential medicine and products • (WHO) Provision of technical support and advice (including as member of the Committee for Monitoring of Communicable Diseases) on providing timely and quality health care services during the pandemic, including on safe access to health care facilities or testing for the elderly and those with existing health conditions before admission to hospital 	1, 3, 5
Promotion of reliable COVID-19 messaging and preventative measures		

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IOM, UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO) Regular reporting on latest health findings and dissemination in multiple languages • (UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF) Strengthen risk communication and community engagement including through digital engagement and public attitude monitoring • (UNFPA, UN Women) Online campaigns sharing gender-sensitive recommendations to the pandemic response • (IOM, UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UNHCR) Advocate and communicate to marginalised groups to share information and prevent discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNFPA) Work with faith and municipal leaders to support measures to prevent community transmission of COVID-19 	3, 5, 10
Support provision of essential health services in Kosovo		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of PPEs for front-line health workers, institutions, border police (IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNOPS, and WHO) • (UNDP) Procurement of mobile ventilators, COVID-19 testing kits, and other urgently needed equipment • (ILO) Train labour inspectors and social partners to advise on preventing virus transmission in workplaces • (UNDP/UNV) Support to volunteers engaged with the COVID-19 Operations Centre and the Help Line for psychological support • (UNICEF) Support for resumption of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation • (UNOPS) Procurement of vital medical and intensive care unit equipment • Support all levels of health services in upgrading infrastructure and assist health facilities to adapt to effects of COVID-19 (UNOPS, WHO) •(WB) Provide funding to strengthen Kosovo’s health system through procurement of equipment, strengthening of early detection and testing, support to the Infectious Disease Clinic, and mobilisation of additional health personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Strengthen public health systems (monitoring and preparedness) • (UNFPA) Strengthen sexual and reproductive health services with focus on maternal health, family planning, commodity security and GBV prevention • (UNICEF) Strengthen home visiting programmes of family medical centres • (UNOPS) Upgrade existing or new infrastructure facilities to take account of new standards and COVID-lessons learned • (WHO) Improving technical capacities of health workers to offer essential health services • (WB) Support the government in rolling out the health insurance scheme that will help to improve the medical services and also the financing modalities for the health sector in the future. 	1, 3, 6
Support on tracking and reaching vulnerable populations		

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women) Provision of essential hygiene and basic food items for family medical centres and vulnerable populations e.g. in shelters, collective and asylum centres, remote municipalities • (IOM) Support translation of COVID-19 related information in official languages and produce video materials for online platform and TV • (IOM) Enable access of non-majority communities to essential medical services through mobile teams • (WHO) Support through Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan so health services and advice are accessible, received, understood to and by all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to medical services for vulnerable groups, including through digitalisation (UNDP, UNHCR), developing capacities of NGOs and communities (IOM), establishment of equipped Reception Centre and referral mechanism for migrants (IOM), strengthening map and data tools (UN-Habitat), coordination with authorities on provision of services and assistance (UNHCR), and supporting the adaptation of the work plan on people with disability to COVID-19 needs (UNFPA/WHO) • (IOM) Strengthen psychological support to non-majority communities • (UNDP/UNV) Deployment of community UNVs to deliver direct, community-led prevention, support, and recovery services • (WHO) Advice on safe access to health services for COVID-vulnerable persons 	<p>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 16</p>
2. PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social Protection and Basic Services		
Source of funding: Canada, European Union, Japan, Luxemburg, UN Multi-partner Trust Fund, UN Women Core Funding		
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UN) COVID-19 and People on the Move (June 2020 Policy Brief) • (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women) Rapid socio-economic impact assessment on households and businesses • (UNFPA) Multi-sectoral dialogue for establishing quarantine for identified GBV/DV cases prior to admission to shelters • (UN-Habitat) Assessment on specific housing needs (including spatial planning, construction and legalisation process of illegal constructions) triggered by COVID-19 with Association of Kosovo Municipalities • (UNICEF) Rapid Assessment of UNICEF’s emergency programme response during COVID-19 pandemic (to better understand the needs of the most marginalised and to further inform the emergency response plan) • (UNODC) Risks and responses to cybercrime in relation to COVID-19 • (UNODC) Research Brief on impact of COVID-19 on migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons • (UN Women) Rapid regional assessment on impact of COVID on specialised services for cases of domestic violence • (WB) COVID-19 Impact Assessment on Western Balkans (Education and Responses; Social Protection Responses; Poverty and Household Welfare) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNFPA) Support central-level coordination between Ministries of Health and Labour/Social Welfare to ensure that recovery strategies include older persons and people with disabilities and measures for continuity of essential services in community and long-term care facilities • (UN-Habitat) Provide technical support to Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (Housing Division) to kick-start a Kosovo-wide feasibility study on housing with a focus on the most vulnerable groups • (UNDP) Support the development of efficient service delivery models in the social protection and welfare space 	<p>1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11</p>

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
Support the continuity of social services and access to shelter and housing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IOM) Launch of migration translation app MiTA, enabling basic communication between border officials and migrants on first contact • (IOM) Establish a Reception Centre for migrants with all essential services (social, educational, medical, legal support) • Provision of psychological/psychosocial counselling to children and their families, especially to those under quarantine and/or without physical access (UNICEF), and of digital content tackling a wide range of mental health related issues to health professionals and the wider population (UNDP/UNV) • (UNDP/UNV) Provision of distance learning webinars for health professionals, volunteers and the wider population • (UN Women) Facilitation of access to essential services and shelter for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, women single heads of households, SGBV survivors, and women from rural areas • (UN Women) Support to local women’s organisations, including organisations of women with disabilities, to lead gender-sensitive prevention and recovery advocacy in communities • (WB) Fund Kosovo’s SAS (timely delivery of assistance, increase in benefits provided to beneficiaries, and temporary support to additional households) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (ILO) Provide job protection packages comprising short-time work, short-term unemployment allowance, and income compensation measures • (IOM) Involving NGOs and community liaison points to strengthen migration health and protection system through mechanisms and remote data collection (global network of displacement tracking matrix) • (IOM) Support to Faculty of Philology in language certification to improve institutions' capacity to provide services in all official languages • (UNDP) Strengthen front-line response services • (UNHCR) Strengthen referral mechanisms and child protection • (UNICEF) Mobilise and strengthen the social workforce (Centres for Social Work, child protection frontline workers, community mediators) and relevant NGOs and CSOs to identify and support children in need • (UN Women) Support provision of counselling and psychosocial support services through online platforms for SGBV survivors • (UN Women) Supporting digital solutions to enable locating DV/GBV survivors to ensure access to essential services • (WB) Supporting the government in improving social protection mechanisms to make them more efficient and poverty-targeted (e.g. SAS) 	1, 3, 5, 6, 11
Support learning for all children and adolescents, preferably in schools		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (ILO) Provide e-learning in technical, vocational and educational Training • (IOM) Access to education for migrants' children • (IOM) <i>VocUp</i> online platform for learning official languages • (UNHCR) Support asylum-seeking children to access government e-learning sessions through interpretation and school materials • (UNICEF) Online learning platforms for early childhood development and for children and adolescents (<i>Learning Passport</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNFPA) Continuous education through digital peer-education or outreach activities with implementing partners and faith based organisations • (UNHCR) Provision of internet connection, equipment and interpreter services to asylum centres to facilitate distance learning for children • (UNICEF) Support improved access to early childhood development • (UNICEF) Support teachers and students through inclusive, personalised and culturally relevant learning opportunities within a digital environment 	1, 4, 8
Support GBV survivors with psychosocial support, access to essential services and reintegration		

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Kosovo Police on domestic violence prevention and GBV reporting (UNDP) and through provision of body cameras for domestic violence units (UN Women) • (ILO) Prepare measures on DV prevention during extended periods of homeworking • (UNFPA, UN Women) Address the needs of DV and GBV survivors through referral and protection mechanism • (UNFPA) Distribute through social media information, education and communication materials to raise awareness and promote prevention of GBV related to the pandemic • (UNFPA) Capacity building of health care providers to address GBV cases • (UNHCR) Provision of psychological/psychosocial counselling to asylum seeking/refugee/IDP/returnee SGBV survivors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNHCR) Provision of psychological/psychosocial counselling to asylum seeking/refugee/IDP/returnee SGBV survivors • (UN Women) Mobilise women’s organisations to reach those left furthest behind with risk communication and to ensure women have equal voice, leadership and access to information • (UN Women) Establish an online platform to disseminate gender-responsive and rights-based information on COVID 	4, 5, 9, 16
3. ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers		
Source of Funding: European Union, Luxemburg, UNDP Core Funding, UN Multi-partner Trust Fund		
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support		

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (FAO) Rapid survey of food supply chains in Europe (including Kosovo) • (ILO) Assessment of short- and medium-term effects of the outbreak on employment and labour market and survey on impact on enterprise • (IOM) Rapid assessment of needs of previously supported businesses owned by non-majority • (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women) Rapid socio-economic impact assessment on households and businesses • (UN-Habitat) Strategic gender frameworks for north municipalities, with focus on issues amplified by the impact of the pandemic (mobility, safety, economic empowerment) • (UNICEF) Collect data on COVID-19 effect on children and women and regular engagement with adolescents and youth through U-Report platform • (UNHCR) COVID-19 needs assessments, analysis and registration/data management for asylum seekers, refugees, voluntary minority returnees and IDPs • (WB) <i>COVID-19 Impact Assessment on Western Balkans (Labour Markets)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support institutions to develop and implement gender-responsive Occupational Safety and Health policies (ILO, UNOPS, UN Women) • (ILO) Support institutions in preventing child labour as a result of COVID • (ILO) Advice on labour legislation to cover unprotected, non-standard workers (seasonal, self-employed, or digital platform workers) • (UNDP) Developing a Development Finance Road Map to introduce new investment modalities and increase the contribution of private capital • (UNDP) Develop and support early recovery measures to respond to negative socio-economic impacts by COVID-19 • (UNDP) Policy advice and dialogue for Kosovo institutions to build back towards a healthier environment and lower-carbon economy • (UNDP) Support government in integrating greener measures into economic policy, including promoting the use of renewable energy • (UNDP) Support institutions in strategic planning of recovery efforts across inter-sectoral priorities • (UNFPA) Support integration of gender-responsive family policies at central level and in the workplace • (UN Women) Capacity development support to Ministry of Finance to conduct gender analysis of the impact of COVID-19, develop guidelines and decide on sector specific emergency response • (UN Women) Support key institutions to make informed budgetary allocation towards gender equality, in line with national and international commitments, and support local government to apply Gender Responsive Budgeting tools in their plans and budgets • (UN Women) Support key institutions in the integration of unpaid care work in national statistics and data analysis 	<p>1, 2, 5, 8, 10</p>
Scaling-up of employment intensive programming, including through addressing skills mismatch and by supporting creation of green jobs		

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP/UNV) Support the Public Employment Agency (and ultimately Kosovo job seekers) through provision of PPEs, technical and human resource capacity and in operationalising their online application system • (ILO) Support tri and bi partite negotiations on measures for coping with the COVID-19 outbreak • (UNDP) Support active engagement of CSOs and the private sector, including business networks and SMEs, in the response to COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support income generating activities for vulnerable persons, including through establishment of MSMEs for non-majority community members, returnees and IDPs (IOM), diaspora engagement through knowledge, skills and funds transfer (IOM), and support to SMEs to recover their business and create new jobs for registered job seekers (UNDP) • (IOM) Support establishment of regularised labour migration, including improved skills-to-jobs matching, protection of migrant workers, facilitation of seasonal and more permanent foreign employment opportunities • (UNDP) Continue active labour market measures in cooperation with the Public Employment Agency with a focus on women economic empowerment • (UNDP) Support creation of green jobs as an integral part of economic transformation • (UNHCR) Support provision of vocational training and prepare vulnerable refugees, returnees and IDPs for the labour market • (WB) Provide grants to SMEs to deal with the impact of the COVID crisis and to increase their export capacities • (WB) Capitalise the Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund to help SMEs in getting access to finance through financial institutions 	<p>1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 16</p>
Support to young people and women in entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to COVID		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Support incubator events for young innovators to find solutions to the COVID-19 crisis • (UNDP) Promote crowdfunding and other ways of mobilising alternative finance for addressing the needs arising from COVID-19 • (UNICEF) Support online skills building programmes UPSHIFT, PONDER and PODIUM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Promote crowdfunding academy as means of mobilising alternative finance for sustainable recovery • (UNHCR) Support women's economic empowerment and socio-economic inclusion • (UNICEF) Support <i>Kosovo Generation Unlimited</i> matching platform for paid internships • (UN Women) Provide small grants for women-owned SMEs and start-up businesses • (UN Women) Support women entrepreneurs, women from DV shelters and organisations working with conflict-related sexual violence in producing prevention supplies/PPE and to market women-produced items • (UN Women) Promote strategies for women's economic empowerment and recovery, including decent work, safe and healthy work environments, with a focus on women from the most vulnerable communities 	<p>4, 5, 8, 10, 17</p>

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (WB) Empower younger youth (ages 15-20) to build skills through social entrepreneurship and civic engagement activities 	
Support safeguarding of food and supply chains through the crisis		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (FAO) Development of a surveillance system to capture effects of COVID-19 on agricultural production, livelihoods and food supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (FAO) Ensure continuity in the functioning of domestic food supply chain • (FAO) Support improved forest-based value chains through financial and capacity-building support • (FAO) Provide capacity-building support to smallholder farmers, with focus on women, youth, producers' associations and cooperatives 	2, 5, 8, 10
4. MACRO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE		
Source of Funding: UNDP Core Funding, UNDP Rapid Response Facility		
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint global Call to Action "Remittances in Crisis – How to Keep them Flowing," which draws the attention of the international community to socio-economic effects of COVID on remittances and proposes a set of concrete measures. (Member state initiative supported by IOM, UNDP, WB) • (UNODC) Prevention of Corruption in the allocation and distribution of COVID-19 economic rescue packages • (WB) Assessment of Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 in the Western Balkans • (WB) Assessment of Western Balkans Labour Markets under the COVID-19 Shock • (WB) World Bank, Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No. 17, Spring 2020 (Kosovo background note). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Support green recovery through transitioning to macroeconomic models of low carbon development • (UNDP) Support fiscal institutions in monitoring the resilience of fiscal stimulus and its impact on the poor, women and vulnerable groups • (UNDP) Support informed policy dialogue and future programming through continuous impact assessment, jointly with other partners • (UNDP) Support government to include environmentally appropriate stimulus measures for bailout packages for COVID-19, including promotion of renewable energy • (UNDP) Accelerated Economic Transition Advisory and Diagnostic Support • (UNDP) Supporting the government in undertaking a development Financing assessment and associated Road Map • (WB) Sustainability checklist for fiscal stimulus packages • (WB) World Bank, Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No. 18, (planned for Fall 2020). 	8, 16
Supporting macroeconomic responses and ensuring that they are gender-equitable		

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (WB) Emergency COVID 19 project (US\$50m) supporting the health sector and implementation of the fiscal response package, specifically some measures related to social protection, to help mitigate the fiscal impact of the COVID crisis, such as the reduction in tax revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (WB) Potential economic recovery development policy loan in consultation with the government in support of implementing some of the policies needed for economic recovery 	8, 16
Supporting conservation financing and rolling out the Green Deal		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Support for Conservation Financing and Rolling Out the Green Deal 	
5. SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE		
Source of Funding: European Union, Luxemburg, USA; UNDP and UN Women Core Funding, UN Multi Donor Trust Fund, Peacebuilding Fund		
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNKT) Common Kosovo Analysis May 2020 • United Nations May 2020 Guidance Note on Addressing and Countering COVID-19 related Hate Speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Develop integrated crisis management plan of early warning and crisis management system for government • (UNDP) Support government to become more resilient toward health emergencies • (UNDP) Support to strengthening social protection and welfare service provision • (UN-Habitat) Provide technical assistance to government and local communities using city resilience and urban profiles and strategic community planning 	3,11, 16
Inclusive social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IOM, UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UNHCR) Advocate and communicate to marginalised groups to share information and prevent discrimination • (UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UNICEF) Engage and raise awareness among youth through virtual community engagement using social media and online tools such as <i>#StayAtHome</i> and <i>Active Talks</i> campaigns or <i>Thursday's Variety</i> broadcasts mixing entertainment with public service announcements and slogans countering hate speech and misinfodemics • (UNDP/UNV) Foster vertical cohesion and stimulated confidence in public service delivery in 15 municipalities, simultaneously challenging the high rates of socio-economic inactivity of young women and men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IOM) Strengthen existing community engagement and outreach mechanisms to ensure community participation throughout the response and enhance accountability to affected populations • (UNDP) Build government capacity for climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhance societal ownership through dialogue to grow more resilient to shocks and crises • (UN-Habitat) Foster dialogue between local government and residents through citizen empowerment and civil society's participation in local government's spatial planning and development processes • (UNHCR) Facilitate inter-community dialogue, promoting diverse society 	5, 10, 11, 13, 16

MATRIX OF ONGOING AND PLANNED RESPONSE

Immediate Response (Short-Term)	Building Back Better (Medium-Term)	SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UN-Habitat) Use conflict sensitive mechanism to engage populations through networks of institutional and CSO partners to ensure social dialogue • (UNHCR) Mainstream age, gender and diversity through outreach and community based protection with asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs, minority returnees and host communities through hotline and two-way virtual communication • (UN Women) Amplify women's voices through social media and ensure the involvement of women at national and local response and decision-making 	<p>and trust building including joint community development initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNICEF) Strengthen capacities of young men and women of different communities as social agents for conflict resolution • (UNOPS) Strengthen capacities of CSOs working on labour rights and social inclusion with a focus on Occupational Safety and Health management 	
Empower community resilience, participation and equitable service delivery		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Promote community-led support and response system through partner municipalities • (UN Women) Increase support for specialized women's organizations to provide support services at local levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UNDP) Improve Centres for Social Work's governance mechanisms for responsive service delivery • (UNFPA) Work with faith and municipal leaders to support measures to prevent community transmission of COVID-19 • (UN-Habitat) Build municipal spatial planning database in GIS by mapping all technical, public and social infrastructures, housing buildings, and provide to respective municipalities 	5, 9, 10, 11, 16
Support to governance, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IOM) Support migration governance and integrated border management through secondment of staff and enhancing referral mechanism for vulnerable migrants • (UNDP) Support anti-corruption through digitalization of tools, monitoring procurement process and financial bailouts, and identifying corruption risks • (UNDP) Support community access to justice • (UNHCR) Provide policy and technical support to government on human rights standards, policies and good practices for effective pandemic prevention and response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IOM) Track presence of stranded migrants and vulnerable populations in border areas and locations in country • (IOM) Strengthen network of key informants at centres and at community level to report on issues arising as a result of COVID-19 • (UNDP) Provide advice to the government and work with CSOs on improving human rights, access to justice and prevention of gender-based violence • (UNHCR) Conduct human rights protection monitoring and advocacy intervention, facilitate access to legal aid and provide policy and technical support to government 	5, 16

ANNEX 2: UNKT CATALOGUE OF UNFUNDED SOLUTIONS

In addition to reprogramming of existing UNKT resources and mobilising resources between March and June 2020, which allowed UNKT to provide urgent socio-economic responses to Kosovo's COVID-19 challenges rapidly and effectively, UNKT has identified a number of additional crucial measures and interventions, which remain as yet unfunded. These proposed solutions would contribute to UNKT's declared objective to support the government and the people of Kosovo in "building back better" from the pandemic and working towards the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. They are also aligned with relevant sections of Kosovo's Government Programme 2020-2023 passed in June 2020.

UNKT agencies possess the requisite skills and comparative advantage to add value to the delivery of the respective identified solutions, in conjunction with the government and relevant institutions, civil society and other development partners or international partners such as the European Union. Our aim is to deliver results, quickly and transparently, and ensure that Kosovo's COVID-19 response moves forward decisively in synergy and complementarity.

Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
1. HEALTH FIRST: Protecting Health Service and Kosovo's Health System During the Crisis				
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support				
Provide advice, guidance, and assessments both in relation to (i) Kosovo's COVID-19 response as well as on (ii) maintenance of primary health care services that have been affected by the re-direction of resources towards the COVID response and containment measures. With the risk of a second wave of infections overwhelming Kosovo's health system, care has to be taken that the avertable mortality from other conditions does not exceed the direct mortality from the outbreak. Any measures taken to address the pandemic therefore have to be balanced with the maintenance of essential health services, such as immunisation, reproductive health services, home visits or ensuring availability of essential medicine. UNKT is well placed in supporting the government to navigate difficult choices and further strengthen its health crisis management through preparedness and response plans, data collection, coordination, strengthened ability to test and trace, implementation of adequate ways to safely dispose of hazardous PPE	\$817,000	IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO	1, 3	2. Management of Pandemic Caused by COVID-19 (2.2. Monitoring and response measures for long-term periods) 4. Governance, Institutional Reform and Social Cohesion (4.6. Promoting social equality) 9. Health (9.1. Healthcare priorities and key reforms; 9.2. The role of the Ministry of Health)

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Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
waste, and continuation of the delivery of essential health care. Expertise can be provided in these areas.				
Promotion of reliable COVID-19 messaging and preventative measures				
Strengthen risk communication and community engagement through digital engagement, public monitoring, online campaigns with regular reporting on latest health findings and dissemination in multiple languages, and training of labour inspectors to prevent transmission in the workplace. Mitigation measures such as physical distancing and compliance with hygiene standards will continue to be key in the response to the pandemic, as they will limit the pressure on the health system. Enforcing such measures requires clear and consistent communication with the public.	\$925,000	IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO	1, 3, 10	2. Management of Pandemic ... (2.2. Monitoring and response measures for long-term periods) 4. Governance, Institutional Reform and Social Cohesion (4.6. Promoting social equality) 9. Health (9.5. Public health and prevention of communicable diseases, 9.10. Development of partnerships and social dialogue)
Support provision of essential health services in Kosovo				
Support the provision of essential health services (for example in the areas of primary health care, immunisation and sexual and reproductive health), which have been affected by the re-direction of resources towards the COVID response and containment measures, by ensuring that health workers are able to adequately execute their functions, equipped with PPEs and strengthened capacities. The expansion and renovation of the Infectious Diseases Clinic in Pristina will free essential capacities in other parts of the health system. During the first COVID-19 wave, many health workers performed critical work without the necessary protective equipment or hygiene facilities or adequate training on how to deliver services in the midst of a pandemic.	\$4,324,000	ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO	1, 3, 5	9. Health (9.1. Healthcare priorities and key reforms; 9.3. Healthcare funding; 9.4. Management and accountability; 9.8. Pharmaceutical sector; 9.9. Licensing and Accreditation of Health Institutions; 9.12. Responsibilities and integration of three levels of health care)
Support on tracking and reaching vulnerable populations				
Support the government in identifying and tracking vulnerable populations, such as the economically disadvantaged, the elderly, persons with disabilities, stranded migrants) to ensure they have adequate access to medical services (including psychological support) and are provided with the means to allow for adequate hygienic and	\$1,379,000	IOM, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR UNICEF, UN	1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 16	4. Governance, Institutional Reform and Social Cohesion (4.6. Promoting social equality) 9. Health (9.1. Healthcare priorities and key reforms; 9.10.

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Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
nutritious conditions in their homes or the medical facilities they frequent (including in private residences, shelters, asylum centres, family medical centres). The pandemic disproportionately impacts persons in vulnerable situations as they face more challenges and difficulties. Through the United Nations' Leave No One Behind principle, tailor-made measures can be implemented for vulnerable groups.		Women, WHO		Development of partnerships and social dialogue; 9.12. Responsibilities and integration of three levels of health care)
Total Pillar 1	\$7,445,000			
2. PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social Protection and Basic Services				
Analytical, policy and technical support				
Provide advice, guidance, and assessments to the government, institutions and civil society on how to protect the most vulnerable and include them in recovery strategies and counselling services (including the economically disadvantaged, children, the elderly, those with disabilities, and victims of trafficking or GBV), with a particular focus on preventing labour exploitation, child labour, or trafficking in light of heightened vulnerabilities due to COVID-19. As COVID presents itself as three interlocking crises (health, socio-economic, protection), which engender human rights issues and stigmatisation especially for vulnerable populations, it is of the utmost importance that the people of Kosovo have access to social services and protection.	\$2,762,000	ILO, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNOPS	1, 5, 8, 10, 11	2. Management of Pandemic ... (2.2. Monitoring and response measures for long-term periods) 8. Education and Science (8.9. Inclusiveness and equality in education; 8.10. Education for non-majority communities) 13. Social Protection and Integration in Work (13.1. Social protection)
Support the continuity of social services and access to shelter and housing				
Support the provision of social services for the most vulnerable, including (i) those in economic need (job protection packages with income compensation measures) (ii) women with disabilities and GBV survivors (iii) vulnerable returnees directly impacted by the COVID fallout (reintegration assistance including rental assistance), and (iv) migrants (establishment of a full-service migrant reception centre, allowing access to health, legal and social services; migration translation app; remote health data collection). Kosovo's social protection system lacks any unemployment insurance and has a highly exclusionary poverty assistance programme, leaving many of the most marginalised	\$1,884,000	ILO, IOM, UNHCR, UN Women	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11	2. Management of Pandemic ... (2.1. Pandemic management during emergency phase) 4. Governance, Institutional Reform and Social Cohesion (4.6. Promoting social equality)

Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
communities with pre-existing vulnerabilities (such as those with inadequate housing or informal income vulnerable to the shutdown of the economy) without adequate coping mechanisms to the shock.				
Support learning for all children and adolescents, preferably in schools				
Provide online learning platforms and improved access to early childhood development and youth learning, especially increasing digital literacy of young and adolescent girls, and offer e-learning in technical and vocational training, enhancing access to education for all. Around 345,000 Kosovan children have been out of school since March (with earliest date of return in September), and the Ministry of Education has implemented distance learning across Kosovo. While the majority of children have been able to attend regular distance learning, about 4 per cent missed lessons due to a lack of equipment or weak internet connections, affecting their right to education. Advocacy and confidence-building activities for women and girls in ICT is also essential to erase gender stereotypes and bring technology closer to women and girls. Adhering to the principle of leaving no one behind, efforts need to be made to identify students who lack access to distance learning, have difficulties keeping up, or are at risk of dropping out, to avoid them falling behind further. At the same time, the pandemic also offers opportunities to close gaps of attainment, and to further enhance the quality of digital education for all.	\$2,382,000	ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women	1, 4, 5, 8, 10	5. Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development (5.3. Public expenditures and public sector size; 5.13. Information Technology) 8. Education and Science (8.2. Advancing structures and functions in education; 8.3. Educational infrastructure; 8.5. Pre-school education; 8.6. Pre-university education; 8.7. Professional education; 8.9. Inclusiveness and equality in education; 8.10. Education for non-majority communities)
Support GBV survivors with psychosocial support, access to essential services and reintegration				
Address the needs of DV/GBV survivors through enhanced referral and protection mechanisms and protection and prevention measures through advocacy and support to Kosovo Police on DV/GBV reporting. For women and girls, the risk of being exposed to DV is on the rise due to heightened tensions at home with increased cases of DV reporting and victims looking for assistance. A recent assessment showed that 35 per cent of respondents did not know where to seek help in case of DV, and an interruption of access to social protection has been identified as	\$699,000	ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women	5, 16	4. Governance ... (4.6. Promoting social equality) 6. Independent and Efficient Justice (6.1. Advancing and strengthening justice institutions) 8. Education and Science (8.9. Inclusiveness and equality in education)

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Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
social workers have drastically limited visits shelters to provide support or psychological counselling amidst the pandemic.				9. Health (9.1. Healthcare priorities and key reforms)
Total Pillar 2	\$7,727,000			
3. ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers				
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support				
Provide advice and technical support to the government, institutions and businesses on how to protect workers and sectors most impacted by the crisis through: (i) assessing social protection coverage expansion and labour laws protecting non-standard workers (ii) technical support for the implementation of labour-related priority recommendations from COVID-19 rapid assessment (iii) developing the (MoL) Employment Strategy and Action plan; (iv) supporting enterprises on issues related to job retention, productivity improvements, business continuity, and gender-responsive occupational health and safety measures (v) developing capacity of MoF to conduct gender analysis on the COVID-19 impact, and (vi) supporting institutions to make gender response budgeting and integrate unpaid care work in statistics and data analysis. These services will support the government in paving the way towards a more inclusive economy and boosting employment during the recovery.	\$4,062,000	ILO, UN Women	1, 5, 8, 10	5. Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development (5.1. Private sector) 13. Social Protection and Integration in Work (13.1. Social protection; 13.2. Employment integration)
Scaling-up of employment intensive programming, including through addressing skills mismatch and by supporting creation of green jobs				
Support decent job creation and skills-to-jobs matching for the unemployed, particularly for vulnerable women and men, youth, repatriated persons, refugees, IDPs, non-majority community members, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, farmers and women entrepreneurs, through active labour market programmes, establishment of micro and SME businesses and support to SMEs and MSMEs to recover their business. UNKT's rapid socio-economic assessment showed that many jobs were lost during the lockdown and household incomes have decreased, threatening livelihoods and economic activity. Aiming for the recovery from COVID-19 crisis to lead	\$6,194,000	IOM, UNDP, UNHCR	1, 5, 8, 10, 13	5. Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development (5.1. Private sector) 13. Social Protection and Integration in Work (13.1. Social protection; 13.2. Employment integration) 15. Diaspora

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Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
<p>to more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies, integration of green stimulus measures in different economic areas and creating green jobs will be necessary to prepare the ground for a transformative economy. Kosovo’s diaspora has huge potential and is recognised as a financial and human resource, as such, the diaspora can be engaged through knowledge, skills and funds transfer to support economic growth in Kosovo.</p>				
Support to young people and women in entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to COVID				
<p>Engage with adolescents and youth through online platforms and support skills building, entrepreneurship and social innovation through online programmes, platforms for paid internships and incubator events for young innovators to find solutions to the effects of COVID-19. Incubator events and engaging with young innovators through different platforms have proven effective in generating solutions for addressing community needs. Also, the responses include providing small grants for women-owned SMEs, supporting women entrepreneurs, and promoting women’s economic empowerment. Young change-makers and women should be given the opportunity to be engaged in developing innovative solutions in response to COVID-19. Considering financing constraints for implementing response and recovery solutions, raising finances through alternative financing models will be crucial for response and recovery. In recent years, crowdfunding has emerged as a viable alternative for funding social and humanitarian initiatives. Supporting crowdfunding academy and campaigns can help address the needs arising from COVID-19 and mobilise alternative finance for sustainable recovery.</p>	\$3,370,000	UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women	4, 5, 8, 10, 17	5. Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development (5.1. Private sector) 13. Social Protection and Integration in Work (13.2 Employment integration) 14. Culture, Youth and Sports (14.2. Youth)
Support safeguarding of food and supply chains through the crisis				
<p>Monitor and ensure continuity in the functioning of Kosovo's food supply chain, including through supporting improved forest-based value chains and capacity-building support to smallholder farmers. Maintaining food value chain functioning is crucial, particularly for vulnerable people engaged in food production and related informal and</p>	\$487,000	FAO	1, 2, 5, 8, 10	10. Agriculture and Rural Development (10.6. Value chain in agricultural production)

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Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
formal labour including transportation and marketing services, as their primary sources of income and livelihoods. Establishing a surveillance system that gives forecasts on the effects of COVID-19 on agriculture-based livelihoods and the food supply chain will support impact recovery and ensure continuity in the functioning of the food supply chain.				
Total Pillar 3:	\$14,113,000			
4. MACRO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE				
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support				
Provide macroeconomic policy and technical support for transitioning to macroeconomic models of low carbon development, including environmentally appropriate stimulus measures, and monitor resilience of fiscal stimulus and its impact on the economically disadvantaged, women and vulnerable groups. The epidemic has proven the importance of social protection mechanisms that can identify and support groups vulnerable to adverse economic shocks while preserving fiscal buffers. Better targeting of social protection spending is crucial for poverty reduction and as an automatic stabiliser to prevent a steep decline in consumption. To support sustainable recovery, it will also be necessary for Kosovo to include environmentally appropriate stimulus measures for bailout packages for COVID-19, including the promotion of renewable energy, which will ensure sustainable growth in the long run, and to prevent corruption in the allocation and distribution of the economic rescue packages. Dialogue and action with the diaspora is also crucial for developing measures to maintain the flowing of remittances.	\$6,035,000	IOM, UNDP, UNODC	1, 7, 8, 13, 16	4. Governance, Institutional Reform and Social Cohesion (4.4 Fighting corruption and organized crime) 6. Independent and Efficient Justice (6.4 Fighting corruption, crime and terrorism) 11. Infrastructure, Energy, Mines, Water and Environment (11.2. Energy, 11.5. Environment)
Total Pillar 4:	\$6,035,000			
5. SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE				
Analytical, policy, diagnostic and technical support				

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Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
Provide technical assistance to the government and local communities on city resilience, urban profiles and strategic community planning. Kosovo's communities hold the key to flattening the curve, responding to the pandemic, and ensuring longer-term recovery. With community effectiveness at a premium, there have been some positive signs that the pandemic can bring divided communities together in their fight against a common enemy.	\$297,000	UN-Habitat	11, 16	4. Governance, Institutional Reform and Social Cohesion (4.1 Approach to institutional reform of public administration) 11. Infrastructure, Energy, Mines, Water and Environment (11.1 Road and Railway Infrastructure)
Inclusive social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement				
Facilitate dialogue between the government and residents, promote advocacy through online engagement on raising awareness among youth, and amplify women's voices and ensure women's involvement in decision-making, preventing discrimination on marginalised groups. UNKT analysis has identified a need for dialogue within and between communities and the government for trust and reconciliation and has highlighted the importance of strengthening social cohesion among youth, all the more necessary during pandemic times.	\$2,608,000	IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women	5, 10, 11, 16	4. Governance ... (4.1 Approach to institutional reform of public administration; 4.3 Partnership with civil society and the media; 4.6 Promoting social equality)
Empower community resilience, participation and equitable service delivery				
Work with faith and municipal leaders and women's organizations to support measures to prevent community transmission of COVID-19. Faith-based and women organisations, religious and women community leaders will play an important role in supporting ongoing measures to prevent community transmission of COVID-19, for example when calling on believers to refrain from family gatherings during religious festivals. They can similarly help raise community awareness on issues such as the increased risk of violence against women during COVID times.	\$362,000	UNFPA, UN Women	3, 10, 16	2. Management of Pandemic ... (2.1 Pandemic management during emergency phase) 4. Governance, Institutional Reform and Social Cohesion (4.1 Approach to institutional reform of public administration)
Support to governance, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law				
Provide advice to the government on human rights and access to justice, and support migration governance and integrated border management	\$475,000	IOM, UNDP	16	4. Governance ... (4.1 Approach to institutional reform of public

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Proposed Solutions	Indicative Budget (USD)	Delivering Agencies	SDGs	Government Programme 2020-2023
through staff secondment, referral mechanisms, and informants network enhancement. While Kosovo has an advanced legal framework, the non-implementation of legal guarantees protecting non-majority communities continues to fuel an existing trust deficit. These measures will bridge and support the gaps existing in the current system.				administration; 4.6 Promoting social equality) 6. Independent and Efficient Justice (6.1 Advancing and strengthening justice institutions; 6.2 Accountability and efficiency of the justice system)
Total Pillar 5:	\$3,742,000			
Total Cost for all Pillars	\$39,062,000			

ENDNOTES

¹ Government decree no. 01/11 of 15 March 2020.

² WHO, *COVID-19 Situation Report no.132*, 31 May 2020.

³ International Monetary Fund, *Request for Purchase Under the Rapid Financing Instrument-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Kosovo*, 16 April 2020.

⁴ Information about the Agenda and the SDGs can be found at <www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>

⁵ The Assembly of Kosovo unanimously endorsed the Resolution on the Sustainable Development Goals on January 25, 2018.

Available at <http://unkt.org/2018/01/25/kosovo-parliament-unanimously-adopts-sdg-resolution/?fbclid=IwAR0A0iLd4Y8IKviYprTO91g4WptofthFyg4KAA2ehToeB0VMTb9pzF_-0Eg>

⁶ UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, <<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/COV00>>

⁷ Government of Kosovo Office of the Prime Minister. National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NDS). January 2016. Available at <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/National_Development_Strategy_2016-2021_ENG.pdf>

⁸ Government of Kosovo. Economic Reform Programme (ERP) 2019-2021. January 2019. Available at <<https://mf.rks.gov.net/desk/inc/media/4FC9C8D0-8ADF-4DD1-97B8-BB2DD36150C3.pdf>>

⁹ Kosovo Ministry of Health. Health Sector Strategy 2017-2021. November 2016. Available at <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_sektoriale_e_shendetesise_final-nentor_2016_ENG.pdf>

¹⁰ Kosovo Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Sector Strategy 2018-2022. 17 December 2017.

¹¹ See: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10728-2015-REV-1/en/pdf>

¹² The Assembly of Kosovo unanimously endorsed the Resolution on the Sustainable Development Goals on January 25, 2018.

Available at <http://unkt.org/2018/01/25/kosovo-parliament-unanimously-adopts-sdg-resolution/?fbclid=IwAR0A0iLd4Y8IKviYprTO91g4WptofthFyg4KAA2ehToeB0VMTb9pzF_-0Eg>

¹³ Kosovo is a young country: only 7 per cent of the total population is 65 years of age and above. However, older people in Kosovo largely reside with their children and grandchildren in multigenerational households. Of all households, 30.5 per cent are multigenerational (i.e. households with at least one prime-age and one elderly adult), with 61 percent of all older people living in multigenerational households where children are present. (World Bank analysis 2020, based on the Household Budget Survey 2017) This fact, coupled with the high burden of non-communicable diseases in Kosovo, means that the population is vulnerable to the rapid spread of the coronavirus.

¹⁴ As of 31 May, 20 deaths have been attributed to COVID-19. WHO, *COVID-19 Situation Report no.132*, 31 May 2020.

¹⁵ See for example Eurohealth, *Health Care Reform in Kosovo*, Vol 23 (1) 2017), <www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/335812/Eurohealth-V23-N1-2017.pdf?ua=1>. Health care indicators for Kosovo's

children remain amongst the lowest in the region, pointing to gaps in access to and quality of care. Source; UNICEF Kosovo Programme, *Analysis of the Situation of Women and Children in Kosovo*, 30 September 2019, <www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/reports/sitan>.

¹⁶ BIRN, *Brain Drain: Will the Last Doctor in Kosovo Turn out the Lights?*, 4 December 2019, <<https://balkaninsight.com/2019/12/04/brain-drain-will-the-last-doctor-in-kosovo-turn-out-the-lights/>> IBNA, *Healthcare system in Kosovo on the brink of collapse*, 12 January 2018, <<https://balkaneu.com/healthcare-system-in-kosovo-on-the-brink-of-collapse/>>; K2.0, *Patients paying price of Public System's Poor Health*, 5 June 2018, <<https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/patients-paying-price-of-public-systems-poor-health/>>

¹⁷ As observers of Kosovo's COVID-19 Emergency Committee, WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA have played an active role in providing technical expertise.

¹⁸ European Union Office in Kosovo, "EU delivers first instalment of its €5 million emergency assistance to Kosovo to fight Covid19," 30 April 2020.

¹⁹ Vaccination coverage for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Kosovo, for example, is as low as 30 per cent. Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2015*.

²⁰ UNFPA meetings with officials from the Ministry of Health, April/May 2020.

²¹ 98 per cent of the adult population own mobile phones: STIKK Kosovo ICT Association, *Internet Penetration and Usage in Kosovo*, October 2019. <https://stikk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/STIKK_IK_Report_Internet_Penetration_V3-final-1.pdf>

²² See, for example, <<https://kosova.health>>

²³ UNDP and USAID, *Public Pulse Brief XVIII*, 30 May 2020, <www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/public-pulse-xviii.html>

²⁴ UNEP Factsheet, *Introduction to COVID-19 waste management*, April 2020, <<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32282/COVIDWM.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>>

²⁵ Kosovo Agency of Statistics and World Bank Group, *Consumption Poverty in Kosovo*, May 2019; <<https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4901/poverty-statistics-2012-2017.pdf>>

²⁶ World Bank, *The Economic and Social Impact of Covid-19, Western Balkans Regular Economic Report*, 2020

²⁷ World Bank, 2020, *Fighting COVID-19: ECA Economic Update Spring 2020*.

²⁸ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020

²⁹ UNICEF Kosovo, *Rapid Assessment of UNICEF's emergency programme response during COVID-19 pandemic*, April 2020. An assessment after an initial distribution of 12,000 family hygiene kits showed that 56 per cent of respondents found hygiene kits as the most adequate way of support while 44 per cent suggested they would benefit from food items and financial support.

³⁰ UNDP and USAID, *Public Pulse Brief XVIII*, 30 May 2020, <www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/public-pulse-xviii.html>

³¹ National Council for Economic Development, *Potential measures proposed for the Government of Kosovo – immediate and mid-term*, March 2020. Note that employment of women is low to begin with at 13.9 per cent, with women mostly employed in the sectors of education, trade and healthcare, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *Labour Force Survey 2019*, April 2020 <<https://ask.rks.gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/labor-force-survey-in-kosovo-2019>>

³² World Bank staff estimates. Analysis of sectors anticipated to be most affected by the crisis using Kosovo 2018 Labor Force Survey.

³³ Remittances around the world are expected to decline. In Kosovo, remittances might prove more resilient compared with other countries, since a good share of the diaspora lives in Switzerland and Germany, high-income economies with buffers who have safeguarded employment or income levels, including through social insurance schemes for those who may have lost their jobs or decreased their activities.

³⁴ Remittances account for around 12 percent of Kosovo's annual GDP; last year, Kosovo received Euro 852 million in remittances according to Kosovo Central Bank data and Kosovo Agency of Statistics data 2019. Also see <www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/remittances_percent_gdp/>, which shows that a remittances-to-GDP ratio of 12 per cent is the second highest number in Europe, after only Moldova (World Bank data). According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics Living Standard Statistics, 2017, remittances made up about 8 per cent of the sources of individual income in 2017. Remittances have been a key remedy in the absence of strong social protection schemes. It is yet to be seen how the pandemic will affect remittances in Kosovo. According to the EBRD, remittances are expected to decline in Kosovo as the crisis unfolds, bringing a negative impact on consumption and overall economic growth. (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Responding to the Coronavirus Crisis: Update on Kosovo*, 13 May 2020) However, during previous crises, remittances in Kosovo have proven to be more resilient than for other countries (example, Euro crisis). This might be explained by the fact that about 60 per cent of the remittances and other inflows of the diaspora came from Germany and Switzerland, which were relatively less affected by the Euro crisis. Given the depth and severity of the COVID-19 crisis across the globe, the above statement might be taken with careful consideration.

³⁵ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020

³⁶ UNHCR Factsheet on Kosovo, 4 April 2019.

³⁷ OSCE, *Overview of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian Communities in Kosovo*, January 2020

³⁸ UNDP and World Bank, *Regional Roma Survey 2017 – Kosovo Face Sheet*, April 2018,

<<https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/regional-roma-survey-2017-country-fact-sheets.html>>

³⁹ UNHCR, *CALL FOR ACTION - Social protection - Rental payment for the most vulnerable Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian voluntary returnees*, May 2020.

⁴⁰ BIRN, *ROMA: Europe's Neglected Coronavirus Victims*, 1 April 2020 <<https://balkaninsight.com/2020/04/01/roma-europes-neglected-coronavirus-victims/>>

- ⁴¹ EUROPOL, *EU Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC): 4th Annual Activity Report 2019*, 15 May 2020, <www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/emsc-4th-annual-activity-report-%E2%80%932019, and UNODC Research Brief, *How COVID-19 restrictions and the economic consequences are likely to impact migrant smuggling and cross-border trafficking in persons to Europe and North America*, 14 May 2020, <www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/covid/Covid-related-impact-on-SoM-TiP-web3.pdf>
- ⁴² United Nations Policy Brief, *COVID-19 and People on the Move*, June 2020. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/sg_policy_brief_on_people_on_the_move.pdf >
- ⁴³ Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, *Strategic Plan 2018-2022*, Pristina, 2017.
- ⁴⁴ World Bank. 2017. *Closing the Gap: The State of Social Safety Nets 2017*.
- ⁴⁵ World Bank. 2019. *Kosovo Social Assistance Scheme Study: Assessment and Reform Options*.
- ⁴⁶ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020
- ⁴⁷ The Emergency Fiscal Package was adopted through a decision of the government on 30 March 2020. The Operational Plan was issued on 3 April 2020. Through the media, the government began announcing its intention to provide longer-term support from mid-April 2020. It is expected that the new government, once announced, will announce a second special fiscal package to support economic recovery.
- ⁴⁸ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020
- ⁴⁹ The Emergency Fiscal Package was adopted through a decision of the government on 30 March 2020. The Operational Plan was issued on 3 April 2020. Through the media, the government began announcing its intention to provide longer-term support from mid-April 2020. It is expected that the new government, once announced, will announce a second special fiscal package to support economic recovery.
- ⁵⁰ UN Policy Brief, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*, 9 April 2020, <www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_women_9_apr_2020_updated.pdf>; Gender-based violence and COVID-19, UNDP Brief, May 2020, <www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/gender-based-violence-and-covid-19.html>
- ⁵¹ UNFPA, *Gender-based violence spikes amid pandemic, shelters need support*, 3 April 2020, <www.unfpa.org/news/gender-based-violence-spikes-amid-pandemic-shelters-need-support> . See also Kosovo Police, *Press Release*, 15 April 2020, <www.kosovopolice.com/komunikate-per-media-5/>
- ⁵² UN Women, *Rapid regional assessment on impact of COVID on specialised services for cases of domestic violence*, May 2020, Kosovo recommendations.
- ⁵³ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020
- ⁵⁴ UN Women, *Rapid regional assessment on impact of COVID on specialised services for cases of domestic violence*, May 2020, Kosovo recommendations.

⁵⁵ UNODC, *Cybercrime and COVID-19: Risks and Responses*, 14 April 2020, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/UNODC_-_CYBERCRIME_AND_COVID19_-_Risks_and_Responses_v1.2_-_14-04-2020_-_CMLS-COVID19-CYBER1_-_UNCLASSIFIED_BRANDED.pdf>

⁵⁶ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020.

⁵⁷ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/945741571341607027/Kosovo-Snapshot-Oct2019.pdf>

⁵⁸ 2019 SBA Factsheet by the European Commission

⁵⁹ World Bank (2017), *Jobs Diagnostic Kosovo, Jobs Series Issue No. 5*. IMF estimates for 2016, using MIMIC estimation results, put the informal sector at about 38.8 per cent of GDP. IMF Working Paper, *Explaining the Shadow Economy in Europe: Size, Causes and Policy Options*, 2019, <<https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/WP/2019/wpiea2019278-print-pdf.ashx>>. See also, RIINVEST, FES, KFOS, *To Pay Or Not to Pay: A Business Perspective of Informality in Kosovo*, 2013, which indicates that about 37 per cent of the total labour force is informal.

<www.riinvestinstitute.org/uploads/files/2016/October/17/BUSINESS_INFORMALITY_5mm_bleed_no_inside_ENG_FINALV_313964385731476693005.pdf>

⁶⁰ *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work*, Third edition, 29 April 2020, <www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf>.

⁶¹ World Bank / Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, *Western Balkans Labor Market Trends 2020 and Employment Rate by Gender*, <<https://data.wiiw.ac.at/seejobsgateway-q-16463f5cd9aeb138b18033534.html>>

⁶² World Bank (2015), *Maternity Leave and Women's Labor Market Status in Kosovo: Five Key Messages*,

<<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/355271521449544766/pdf/124373-WP-P144969-PUBLIC-KSVMaternityLeavePoliciesEnglish.pdf>>; Riinvest (2017), *Women in the workforce*,

<www.riinvestinstitute.org/uploads/files/2017/November/10/Women_in_the_workforce1510308291.pdf>; Democracy for

Development (2017), *Women's inactivity in the labor market*, <https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D4D_PI_12_W4D_ENG_WEB.pdf>

<https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D4D_PI_12_W4D_ENG_WEB.pdf>

⁶³ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *Labour Force Survey 2019*, April 2020 <<https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/labor-force-survey-in-kosovo-2019>>

⁶⁴ Kosovo has a large young population and therefore a favourable demographic dividend to drive economic growth and sustainable development. Unlike most European countries, Kosovo is not confronted by the fiscal and economic pressures caused by an aging population, and a young, well-trained labour force could be a comparative advantage for boosting productivity, moving into modern economic sectors, and, ultimately, accelerating economic growth. (World Bank Group, *Republic of Kosovo: Systematic Country Diagnostic*, January 2017.) Countering this opportunity is the challenge arising from labour market needs and unmet supply of specific skills. The incompatibility between supply and demand in the labour market is due to educational plans not aligning with labour market requirements, lack of vocational schools offering relevant training and lack of cooperation between these schools with the private sector.

(Business Pulse Analysis, Public Pulse project, May 2020, UNDP Kosovo) Companies report difficulties in recruiting competent or qualified staff and nearly 63 per cent of surveyed companies have had to recruit less qualified employees or assigned additional duties to current staff (19 per cent) when unable to find employees with the desired qualifications. Assumptions around the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic makes the integration of a well-trained and competent young population into the labour market with the specific and soft skills needed a priority, which could eventually lead to increased productivity, more investments and income gains, supporting recovery and future growth prospects in the future. This could also contribute to political and social stability, as low levels of participation of youth in the labour market have proven to make Kosovo more exposed to discontent and social tensions.

⁶⁵ World Bank, *Kosovo's Economy Projected to Contract by 4.5 Percent in 2020 Due to COVID-19*, 29 April 2020, <www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/29/kosovo-economy-projected-to-contract-by-45-percent-in-2020-due-to-covid-19>

⁶⁶ Swiss Contact and RIINVEST, *Estimating the Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Kosovo's Hospitality Sector*, 27 March 2020, <https://ppse-kosovo.org/file/repository/COVID_19_Impact_on_Hospitality_Sector_ENG.pdf>

⁶⁷ ICK-Pyper, *The Impact Of Covid-19 On Kosovo Startups*, April 2020

<<https://ickosovo.com/news/post/startup-businesses-in-the-face-of-covid-pandemic-in-kosovo-research>>

⁶⁸ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020

⁶⁹ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020

⁷⁰ <https://www.mbpzhr-ks.net/sq/lajmet/deklarata-e-ministrit-te-bujqesise-pylltarise-dhe-zhvillimit-rural-besian-mustafa-ne-konferencen-per-media-sot-me-23032020>

⁷¹ For example, a recent ILO report shows that investment in transforming the transport sector could create millions of new jobs and help countries move to greener, healthier economies. ILO, *Jobs in Green and Healthy Transport: Making the Green Shift*, 2020, <www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_745151.pdf>

⁷² IMF, *Global Economic Outlook*, 14 April 2020, <www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020>

⁷³ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Regional Economic Prospects – COVID19: From Shock to Recovery*, May 2020.

⁷⁴ World Bank, *The Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19: Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No. 17*, Spring 2020.

⁷⁵ BIRN, *Kosovo Economy Faces Fresh Hit if Diaspora Stays Away*, 22 May 2020, <<https://balkaninsight.com/2020/05/22/kosovo-economy-faces-fresh-hit-if-diaspora-stays-away/>>

⁷⁶ At the same time, Kosovo's diaspora may prove more resilient compared with other countries, as a good share lives in Switzerland and Germany, high income economies with buffers who have safeguarded employment or income levels, including through social insurance schemes for those who may have lost their jobs or decreased their activities. For example, it appears that Kosovo's diaspora has already contributed some €720,000 to the Kosovo Emergency Fund over the past three months; Press Release, Office of the Prime Minister, 22 May 2020, <<https://kryeministri-ks.net/en/acting-prime-minister-kurti-held-conversations-with-entrepreneurs-and->

representatives-of-albanian-diaspora-businesses/>. The government recognises the importance of the diaspora, as financial and human resource, and has declared its intention to strengthen its role, for example through mechanisms such as that of a National Council for Foreign and Strategic Investments within the Office of the Prime Minister.

⁷⁷ CEIC, *Kosovo Public Debt 2018, 2019*, <www.ceicdata.com/en/kosovo/public-debt/public-debt>

⁷⁸ World Bank, *Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No. 17*, Spring 2020 (Kosovo background note).

⁷⁹ European Council, *COVID-19: Council adopts €3 billion assistance package to support neighbouring partners*, 20 May 2020, <www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/05/20/covid-19-council-adopts-3-billion-assistance-package-to-support-neighbouring-partners/>

⁸⁰ WB, *The Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19*; EBRD, *COVID19: From Shock to Recovery*.

⁸¹ Bloomberg Commodity Index Family, retrieved on 1 June 2020, <www.bloomberg.com/professional/product/indices/bloomberg-commodity-index-family/>

⁸² UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020

⁸³ UNODC, *Accountability and the Prevention of Corruption in the allocation and distribution of emergency economic rescue packages in the context and aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic*, April 2020, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/COVID-19_and_Anti-Corruption-2.pdf>. The *UNCAC Gap analysis in Kosovo* finalised by UNODC and UNDP in December 2019 on the compliance of Kosovo legislation with the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) assessing Kosovo's adherence to the international standards set by the Convention may be informative in this regard.

⁸⁴ The population of Kosovo by ethnicity based on the 2011 census is composed of Albanians (92.9 per cent), Bosniaks (1.6 per cent), Serbs (1.5 per cent), Turkish (1.1 per cent), Askhali (0.9 per cent), K-Egyptian (0.7 per cent), Gorani (0.6 per cent), and K-Roma (0.5 per cent). However, as a result of the partial boycott of the census by the K-Serb community, the population estimate is not representative of this community.

⁸⁵ UNDP and Folke Bernadotte Academy, *Social Cohesion in Kosovo: Context Review and Entry Points*, July 2019, <www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/social-cohesion-in-kosovo--context-review-and-entry-points.html>

⁸⁶ Data provided by the Kosovo Institute of Health, for example, does not include complete data for K-Serb residents who receive treatment by, and appear in the records of, the Serbian health system in Kosovo. See also BIRN, *Belgrade Takes Charge of Kosovo Serbs with COVID-19*, 30 March 2020, <<https://balkaninsight.com/2020/03/30/belgrade-takes-charge-of-kosovo-serbs-with-covid-19/>>.

⁸⁷ For example, a number of diplomats noted with concern that Serbian medical personnel were not allowed to enter Kosovo, calling “on all parties to prioritize citizens’ health and welcome all opportunities for international and regional cooperation aimed at saving lives and protecting the population from the pandemic” (including through the regional free flow of medical supplies and personnel), *Gazeta Express, Heads of EU Missions, Norway, and UK react after Serb doctors were not allowed to enter Kosovo*, 20 May 2020, <www.gazetaexpress.com/heads-of-eu-missions-norway-and-uk-react-after-serb-doctors-were-not-allowed-to-enter-kosovo/>

- ⁸⁸ BIRN, Kosovo Govt Tightens Freedom of Movement Restrictions, 14 April 2020, < <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/04/14/kosovo-govt-tightens-freedom-of-movement-restrictions/>>
- ⁸⁹ *Statement by Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, to the Security Council*, 24 April 2020, <https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/eng_unsc_statement_by_srs_g_tanin_24_april_2020.pdf>
- ⁹⁰ E.g. NGO Aktiv, *Issues of Non-Majority Communities with the Implementation of a Package of Measures to Counter the Economic Impact of the Coronavirus*, 13 May 2020, <www.ngoaktiv.org/news/issues-of-non-majority-communities-with-the-implementation-of-a-package-of-measures-to-counter-the-economic-impact-of-the-coronavirus>
- ⁹¹ *Statement by Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, to the Security Council*, 24 April 2020, <https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/eng_unsc_statement_by_srs_g_tanin_24_april_2020.pdf>
- ⁹² See, for example, *United Nations Guidance Note on Addressing and Countering COVID-19 related Hate Speech*, 11 May 2020, <www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20related%20Hate%20Speech.pdf>. See also UNODC, *Cybercrime and COVID-19: Risks and Responses*, 14 April 2020, <www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/UNODC_-_CYBERCRIME_AND_COVID19_-_Risks_and_Responses_v1.2_-_14-04-2020_-_CMLS-COVID19-CYBER1_-_UNCLASSIFIED_BRANDED.pdf>
- ⁹³ Kosovo Women's Network, *Addressing COVID-19 from a Gender Perspective - Recommendations to the Government of Kosovo*, 6 April 2020, <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Addressing-COVID-19-from-a-Gender-Perspective_04_04_2020.pdf>
- ⁹⁴ UNKT, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, *Rapid Kosovo Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*, May 2020
- ⁹⁵ UNFPA, *Gender-based violence spikes amid pandemic, shelters need support*, 3 April 2020, <www.unfpa.org/news/gender-based-violence-spikes-amid-pandemic-shelters-need-support>
- ⁹⁶ Kosovo Civil Society Foundation, *How is COVID-19 affecting CSOs in Kosovo*, April 2020, <www.kcsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/How-is-COVID-19-affecting-CSOs.pdf>
- ⁹⁷ This chimes well with a call on the donor community by a number of Kosovo civil society organisations, to “stress the importance of governments to uphold democratic values and principles and respect human rights” in its response to COVID-19 and to “demonstrate ongoing commitment to help mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic to the civil society as a whole, and not only those focusing on the emergency situation relief.” *Joint Statement by the Civil Society Actors from the Western Balkans on COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2 May 2020, <www.ngoaktiv.org/news/joint-statement-by-the-civil-society-actors-from-the-western-balkans-on-covid-19-pandemic>
- ⁹⁸ UNDP and Folke Bernadotte Academy, *Social Cohesion in Kosovo: Context Review and Entry Points*, July 2019, <www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/social-cohesion-in-kosovo--context-review-and-entry-points.html>
- ⁹⁹ UN, *Initial Guidance for Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams on Implementation of Human Rights Indicators on COVID-19*, 20 May 2020

¹⁰⁰ UN/DESA, *Policy Brief #65: Responses to the COVID-19 catastrophe could turn the tide on inequality*, 1 May 2020, <www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-65-responses-to-the-covid-19-catastrophe-could-turn-the-tide-on-inequality/>

¹⁰¹ See EU, Zagreb Declaration, 6 May 2020, <<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43776/zagreb-declaration-en-06052020.pdf>>. The Green Agenda for the Western Balkan is expected to be ratified by members of the Biodiversity Task Force of South East Europe (BDTF SEE) including Kosovo before autumn 2020; see Balkan Green Energy News, *Towards greener agenda for Western Balkans*, 22 May 2020, <<https://balkangreenenergynews.com/towards-greener-agenda-for-western-balkans/>>

¹⁰² European Commission, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, 20 May 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-annex-eu-biodiversity-strategy-2030_en.pdf>