

CHAPTER 2

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT
SYSTEM SUPPORT TO DEVELOPMENT**

2.1 FROM ANALYSIS OF THE NEEDS IN IRAN TO COOPERATION FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES

In 2021, the United Nations Country Team engaged in consultations internally and with a wide range of national partners to discuss the development trajectory for the country. This identified several significant findings that served as the evidence base for the prioritization of development needs and opportunities for the new UNSDCF.

The strategic priorities for the UNSDCF were discussed in November 2021 at a wideranging consultation meeting of over 200 stakeholders representing national partners, including government ministries. The key trajectories emerging from the analysis and discussions were:



1. Economic growth and social resilience

Social resilience and promotion of equality remain high priority areas, with special emphasis on social protection and livelihoods development, including in small and micro enterprises, aiming poverty reduction and support for people in vulnerable situations.



2. Public health

The COVID-19 pandemic in Iran affected the Iranian health system, as it did globally. Notably, the country had achieved an almost 100 per cent vaccination rate for the major communicable diseases and by end of February 2022 had vaccinated 73 per cent of the population against COVID-19, indicating the overall strength of the public health system. The process of developing the new UNSDCF showed that more can be done to improve public health coverage and to address non-communicable diseases, which are on the rise as the population ages.



3. Environment

Iran is faced with immediate repercussions of global climate change, particularly profound in a semi-arid country with limited water resources. Adverse effects include changes in precipitation patterns, persistent drought, heat stress, air pollution, water pollution, soil erosion and loss of biodiversity. Transboundary environmental issues such as sand and dust storms are becoming more prevalent. Challenges created by climate change also pose the risk of reducing agricultural productivity, such as through greater frequency of locust swarms. To effectively tackle these environmental challenges and their potential consequences, the cooperation envisaged in the new UNSDCF is designed to support the Government in that regard.



4. Disaster risk reduction and management

In addition to these growing environmental challenges that have the potential to cause floods and other serious disasters, Iran is at constant risk of catastrophic earthquakes because of the geological configuration of the country. In the past decade, the country started moving to a comprehensive approach that in addition to planning for effective preparedness and response, looks at disaster risk reduction and endeavours to mitigate and reduce disaster risks by reducing hazards, vulnerabilities and exposure to risks. The Disaster Management Law passed in 2019 puts in place a mechanism to reduce the risks from natural disasters and to reduce the effects of future climate-change-induced disasters. It is a long-term strategy, and the Government has clearly identified this as a major area for national investment in the future.



5. Impacts of drug use and drug trafficking

Iran is concerned about the high level of drug trafficking into and through the country. This has been exacerbated by circumstances in Afghanistan, which is a major producer of opiates. This has had domestic implications, resulting in increased use of opiates and amphetamine-type substances. Drug use disorders are strongly associated with various vulnerabilities and adverse effects on individuals and their families. Addressing the multisectoral dimensions of this situation and supporting efforts of the Iranian Government to control the trafficking in drugs and to support drug users who undertake treatment and access harm reduction centres are among the development priorities for cooperation.