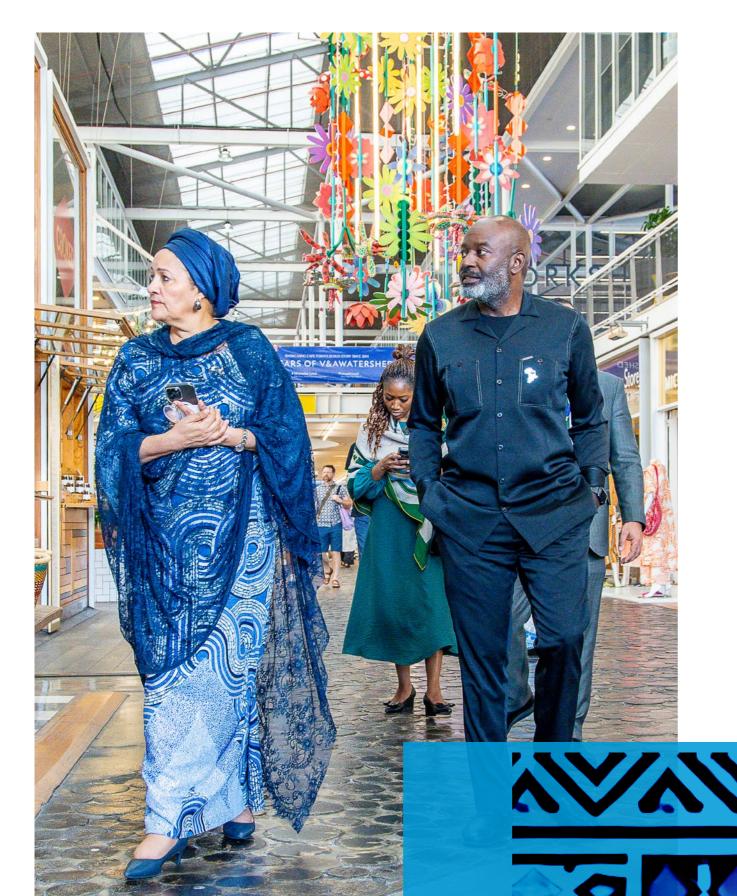


Annual Results Report 2024



SOUTH AFRICA ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 SOUTH AFRICA



# Table of Contents

Foreword	
UN Country Team	
South Africa at a Glance	
Highlights 2024	10
Chapter 1   Key Developments in the Country and Regional Context	14
Chapter 2   UN Development System Support to National Development Priorities through the Cooperation Framework	16
2.1. Cooperation Framework Priorities and Results	
2.2. Key Challenges in the Implementation of the SDGs during 2024	
2.3. Results of the UN Working More and Better Together: UN, Coherence,  Effectiveness and Efficiency	44
2.4. Evaluations and Lessons Learned	
2.5. Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization	48
Chapter 3   UNCT Key Focus for 2025	50
Acronyms	52



### Foreword by the Resident Coordinator

Nelson Muffuh
UN Resident
Coordinator
in South Africa

The year 2024 marked a pivotal period for South Africa, characterized by political and governance shifts, economic challenges, and social transformation. Against this backdrop, the United Nations Country Team in South Africa remained steadfast in its commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supporting the nation's development priorities. This report highlights our collective efforts, achievements, and lessons learned as we worked with government institutions, civil society, the private sector, and development partners.

South Africa's economic landscape in 2024 presented a complex mix of slow growth, persistent unemployment, and fiscal constraints. While GDP growth remained subdued at 0.6%, the unemployment rate stood at 31.9%, placing a particularly high burden on women and youth. In response, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) reinforced its support for inclusive economic growth, focusing on job creation, strengthening small and medium enterprises (SMMEs), and advancing social protection initiatives. The expansion of the social relief of distress grant and the creation of millions of work opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme reflected the impact of our efforts to promote economic inclusion and women empowerment.

With 65% of young people aged 15 to 34 currently unemployed or not in education or training, tackling youth unemployment is one of the most urgent priorities for South Africa's future. In response, the UN launched Generation Unlimited South Africa (GenU SA) to equip over 1.5 million young people with digital, scientific, and entrepreneurial skills by 2030. This initiative has become a catalyst for cross-sector collaboration, expanding digital connectivity in schools, fostering entrepreneurship, and positioning youth as co-creators of social innovation.

Beyond national efforts, South African youth have also played a key role in shaping global discussions at the UN Summit of the Future, where they influenced decision-making on critical issues such as climate change, digital transformation, and social justice. Through platforms like the Youth Imbizo, young leaders moved beyond rhetoric to action, co-developing policy recommendations and advocating for systemic reforms that embed youth leadership in governance and economic policy. These initiatives reaffirm the UN's commitment to empowering young people as agents of change, ensuring they are at the forefront of shaping South Africa's economic and social future.

Throughout 2024, our support for human capital development and building human capabilities was instrumental in improving access to health, education, and social services. The UN played a key role in advancing the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, expanding HIV/AIDS treatment, and promoting nutrition security. Education initiatives, such as early childhood development (ECD) programmes and digital learning platforms equipped young learners with essential skills working across the education sector, while programmes addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection reinforced social safety nets for the most vulnerable women and children.

The global urgency of climate action is evident, and South Africa's leadership in the Just Energy Transition (JET) became a focal point of United Nation's collaboration. Through policy support, public awareness campaigns, and technical assistance, the UNCT contributed to advancing the country's transition to a low-carbon economy in line with the National Development Plan. At the same time, our efforts in biodiversity conservation,

water resource management, and disaster preparedness strengthened environmental resilience and sustainability.

South Africa's assumption of the G20 Presidency presented a unique opportunity to amplify the voices of the Global South, with the UN playing a key role in shaping the agenda through insights from Indonesia, India, and Brazil, as well as guidance from Executive Office of the Secretary-General and UN Sherpa teams. This collaboration ensured that global priorities reflected diverse stakeholder aspirations, reinforcing the G20's role in advancing a fairer, more sustainable world.

At all levels of government, national, provincial, and district, the UNCT played a catalytic role in strengthening oversight, planning, democratic governance and state capability. In partnership with DPME, SAL-GA, COGTA, the District Development Model (DDM) and other platforms, the UN advanced improved planning and monitoring for service delivery, launched innovative citizen engagement platforms, localized the SDGs, reinforced accountability mechanisms, and supported the professionalization of the public service. Strategic support was also extended to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), including contributions to the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), to reinforce integrated planning, monitoring, and evaluation across sectors.

The UN's close engagement in the May 2024 national elections reflected its commitment to inclusive democratic processes, providing in-depth political analysis and supporting the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). This was complemented by on-the-ground efforts to ensure peaceful, participatory elections—training over 600 domestic observers and mobilizing more than 100,000 youth through the

**>><<>>**<<

#WeAreVoting campaign. In collaboration with the Independent Electoral Commission, Independent Elections Observer Missions, civil society, and media practitioners, the UN addressed mis- and disinformation, promoted civic awareness, and strengthened social cohesion through mediation and legal support mechanisms for vulnerable groups, including women, youth and asylum seekers.

As we look ahead, 2025 presents an opportunity to accelerate progress toward the SDGs, leveraging the lessons learned and strengthening partnerships. The UNCT remains dedicated to working in unity with all stakeholders, fostering innovation, and ensuring that no one is left behind in South Africa's development journey.





# UNITED NATIONS SOUTH AFRICA

## **UN Country Team**

Under the leadership of Resident Coordinator Mr. Nelson Muffuh, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in South Africa has played a pivotal role in advancing the Cooperation Framework, ensuring a coherent, effective, and impact-driven UN response to national development priorities.

Comprising 24 UN entities, including 20 resident and 4 non-resident agencies, the UNCT functions as a key inter-agency platform for joint planning, policy coordination, and strategic decision-making.

Through strengthened collaboration, the UNCT has delivered integrated support to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), deepen government partnerships, and promote inclusive and sustainable development. By aligning expertise, resources, and policy guidance, the UN system in South Africa continues to operate as One UN, maximizing its impact and ensuring that no one is left behind.



### **Resident agencies**









































### **Non-resident agencies**









### South Africa at a Glance



of people 0-14 yrs old

33% of people 15-34 yrs old

51.5%



**Biodiversity** 11,280,684
Hectares of protected



### **Gender-Based** Violence

20.5% Percentage of ever partnered women 18 years and older who experienced physical iolence ever by any

> who were victims of sexual offence in the previous 12 months, by type of sexual offence

marriages experienced by girls before the age of 15



#### **Education**

60.2% Percentage of children aged 0-4 years with access to some form of early childhood development programme

aged 5-24 years attending an educational institution

37.6% Percentage of persons aged 20 years and older who completed secondary education



### **Water, Sanitation** and Hygiene

Percentage of households with no access to piped water

66.3% in the country that have their refuse removed by a local authority once a week



### **Food Security**

reporting experiencing hunger

### **Nutrition**

Prevalence of stunting among children under 5

Prevalence of wasting among children under 5



### **Economics**

0.60% Gross domestic product growth (constant prices)

#### Unemployment

59.6% Youth (15-25)

39.4% Youth (25-35)





### **Maternal** and **Infant Mortality**

100.6

Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births

22.9 Under-five mortality rates per 1,000 live births



### **Electricity**

Inequality

Gini Coefficient

0.67

million people receiving





# Highlights of 2024



#### Strengthening energy, health and food systems

As a key highlight of its integrated support, the UNCT played a pivotal role in advancing transformative change in both food systems and health resilience. In partnership with national authorities, the UN facilitated a series of national food systems dialogues that led to the development of a coordinated national roadmap and implementation plan, the establishment of a National Food Systems Coordinating Committee, and four thematic Pathways Sub-committees, laying the foundation for more sustainable, in-

clusive, and resilient food systems. Concurrently, the UN supported a successful multi-agency partnership bringing together the Department of Health, FAO, WHO, and UNICEF that secured funding from the second round of the Pandemic Fund. This strengthened South Africa's pandemic preparedness and response capabilities, while also contributing to the Just Energy Transition agenda by reinforcing the integration of health, food security, and climate resilience into national development priorities.



## Call to Action: Leveraging the Power of Changemakers and Accelerating the SDGs through TEDx

As a result of this transformative initiative, the 2024 TEDx event became a catalyst for action and change. Seventeen trailblazing changemakers from across South Africa took the stage, sharing their impactful experiences and insights, planting the seeds of hope, empowered communities, and harmonious stewardship in the hearts of attendees. Their compelling ideas inspired action, sparked meaningful conversations, and challenged the audience to become drivers of change in their own communities. The call to action is now clear: turn inspiration into impact.



### Summit of the Future and Generation Unlimited Activation

With a view to stepping up youth participation and unleashing their power in the efforts to acceleration achievement of the SDGs and leverage the Summit of the Future, the UN extensively engaged 100s of young people in intergenerational dialogues and imbizos. An impactful billboard advocacy and awareness raising campaign with key messaging and a call to action on the Summit of the Future was also deployed across the country. GenU SA was formally re-launched, strengthening its mission to connect young people with employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact opportunities. Through this transformative initiative, the UN empowered 884 new entrepreneurs, bringing the total to 2,915. The YoMobi youth platform expanded its reach to 16,622 young people, while participation from organizations increased from 140 to 183, amplifying impact and unlocking greater opportunities for South African youth.

## Highlights of 2024



### Support for improved planning, 30 year Review, and Development of the Medium-Term Development Plan

The UN played a pivotal role in shaping South Africa's Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), setting the strategic direction for the next five years under the Government of National Unity (GNU). As part of broader efforts to support improved national planning and policy coherence, the UN in close collaboration with DPME, provided strategic and technical support to the development of the MTDP, the 30-Year Review, and the refinement of long-term development frameworks. On building a capable and developmental state, the UN

convened key stakeholders to engage in substantive dialogue on priorities, implementation pathways, and the institutional roles required to drive the plan forward. Expertise was made available to inform the design of effective planning, coordination, and oversight models ensuring that the MTDP is anchored in evidence, inclusivity, and measurable results. With this support, South Africa is now better positioned to deliver impactful, future-fit policies that drive sustainable and equitable progress.



#### **Backing the Voluntary National Review and Voluntary Local Reviews**

The UN supported the country in developing the Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2024, empowering it to measure progress, bridge gaps, and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. By providing analytical and technical expertise, as well as facilitating inclusive stakeholder engagement, more social partners shaped the narrative. As a result, the government identified key transformative pathways for acceleration including building an inclusive economy, prioritising human capabilities, investing in women and young people, infrastructure development, building state

capability and creating conditions for economic growth and opportunities by increasing sustainable energy sources. At the suggestion of the UN and as part of a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach, the government of South Africa, together with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and 14 municipalities, initiated a remarkable process to localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, resulting in ten Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) with many other very positive downstream impacts in just eight months.



# Highlights of 2024



#### **Supporting South Africa's G20 Presidency**

The UN provided critical support to South Africa as it prepared to assume the G20 Presidency, reinforcing the country's leadership in shaping global development priorities and advancing multilateral reform. Through policy, technical, and convening support at all levels, the UN accompanied and helped shape South Africa's priorities, fostering coordination across government and aligning efforts with the acceleration of the SDGs. Central to this engagement was advancing the Pact for the Future and driving progress on key transition, including financing for development, climate

resilience, and social inclusion. The missions of the UN Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General to South Africa further elevated this partnership, as they engaged in high-level discussions to champion reforms in international financial architecture, debt relief, and sustainable development financing. These visits underscored South Africa's pivotal role in placing Africa at the centre of global development discourse, while also reaffirming the UN's commitment to supporting inclusive, coordinated, and transformative development outcomes.



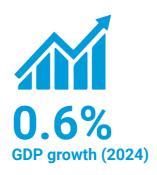
### Accompanying the Elections and Strategic Engagement with the Government of National Unity

The UN provided proactive, high-level advocacy and technical support to help navigate the complex political and socio-economic landscape ahead of, during and following the national elections. Through its dedicated Elections Task Team, the UNCT conducted in-depth risk analysis to identify potential drivers of turbulence, including increased political contestation, the entry of independent candidates under new electoral laws, coalition uncertainties, voter apathy and disillusionment, misinformation and rising anti-foreigner sentiment. Recognizing the potential impact of these dynamics on stability and social cohesion, the UN engaged directly with election management authorities, the Government, elections observers, and civil society stakeholders. Following

the elections, strategic engagement, positioning, and collaboration to reinforce cohesion, effective planning, and retain focus on development aspirations were advanced in discussions including with the Speaker of Parliament, the Deputy President, several ministers, the Public Service Commission and others. These engagements underscored the UN's commitment to supporting inclusive governance processes, fostering social cohesion, mitigating risks and supporting development efforts in the country. By offering timely political analysis, strategic advice, and convening platforms for dialogue, the UNCT contributed to a more informed and coordinated national response during a pivotal moment for South Africa's democracy.

Key Developments in the Country and Regional Context









Annual GDP growth remained at 0.6% in 2024, while unemployment stood at 31.9%, with the expanded unemployment rate—including discouraged workers—at 41.9%. Gender disparities persisted, with unemployment rates at 33.9% for women and 30.0% for men, rising to 45.2% and 38.8%, respectively, under the expanded definition. The South African Reserve Bank gradually reduced interest rates to 7.8% as annual inflation declined to 4.4%, providing some relief to borrowers and consumers. However, fiscal space for sustainable development remained constrained, with slow growth requiring a driver of acceleration. Investment in energy infrastructure remained insufficient to accelerate economic expansion.

The 2024 national elections marked a turning point as the African National Congress (ANC) secured only 40.2% of the vote, losing its parliamentary majority for the first time since 1994. In response, the ANC formed a Government of National Unity (GNU) in June 2024, marking a historic shift towards multi-party governance. Along this change, the GNU's priorities remain focused on inclusive growth, job creation, poverty reduction, social protection and building a capable, ethical, and developmental state. Since its formation, the GNU has maintained policies aimed at tackling unemployment, providing social safety nets, and pursuing poverty alleviation, including ongoing discussions on the establishment of a Universal Basic Income (BIG). Some

policy changes include reforms to streamline the process for Zimbabwean Exemption Permit holders and to simplify work permit applications with the aim of attracting skilled labour.

In December 2024, South Africa assumed the G20 Presidency, marking the first time an African nation had led the group. President Ramaphosa emphasized using this platform to elevate the development priorities of Africa and the Global South, reinforcing the country's commitment to fostering a more inclusive and sustainable global economy.

As a key proponent of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the country continues to advocate for trade policy harmonization, tariff reductions, and enhanced facilitation. By leveraging its manufacturing, financial, and retail sectors, South Africa seeks to strengthen intra-African trade. However, greater policy coordination with other African nations remains critical to fully unlock the benefits of the AfCFTA.

South Africa faces increasing challenges in maintaining its non-aligned foreign policy amid rising global polarization. Its decision to take Israel to the International Court of Justice over genocide allegations aligns with Global South priorities but risks straining relations with Western allies, particularly the USA and the EU.

2 UN Development System
Support to National
Development Priorities Through
the Cooperation Framework

### 2.1 Cooperation Framework Priorities and Results

The United Nations Cooperation Framework serves as a strategic blueprint for advancing South Africa's national development priorities while aligning with the SDGs. Through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach, the UNCT has worked with the government, civil society, and development partners to drive change across four key areas: inclusive economic growth, human capital and social transformation, governance and institutional capacity, and climate resilience.

Tangible results include job creation, social protection reforms, and key interventions in health, education, and gender-based violence prevention. UNCT support has been instrumental in tackling some of South Africa's most urgent development challenges. Additionally, the report outlines progress in governance, electoral participation, and environmental sustainability, reaffirming the UN's commitment to a just, resilient, and sustainable future

### **Strategic Priotiries**

Inclusive, Just and Sustainable Economic Growth

**Human Capital and Social Transformation** 

**Efficient, Effective and Transformative Governance** 

**Climate Resilience and Sustainably Managed Natural Resources** 



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The UN supported inclusive growth in South Africa through social protection, job creation, women's empowerment, youth training, and sustainable transitions





#### **Improved Social Protection Coverage**

The UN partnered with the government to refine the draft Green Paper on Comprehensive Social Security, aligning it with global best practices. The aim is to build a stronger, more inclusive social security system. This collaboration led to a multi-tiered system, expanding coverage and linking cash benefits to active labour market policies to enhance economic security and opportunity.

To strengthen social protection for children, the UN conducted evidence-based research on the impact of essential goods and services on poor households. The findings will shape policy recommendations on the social protection floor to be presented to the President in 2025.

High-level roundtables convened by the UN brought together key stakeholders to advance dialogue on climate financing, open budgets, and social protection. The resulting discussions are expected to inform policies that empower communities, strengthen economies, and promote transparent, inclusive, and effective public financial systems.



#### **Job Creation**

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) aims to drive economic inclusion and social transformation by generating 5 million work opportunities over five years. To enhance its impact, the UN partnered with the government to shape the programme's Fifth Phase, prioritizing innovation, scaling successful initiatives, and establishing sustainable exit pathways. This initiative is a key driver of job creation, skills development, and long-term economic empowerment.

To promote greater participation of persons with disabilities in the EPWP, the UN supported the development and adoption of a transformative disability inclusion policy framework, ensuring more equitable access to opportunities.

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### **Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups into the Economy**

The UN SheTrades initiative is reshaping the landscape for women entrepreneurs in South Africa by equipping them with the skills, resources, and market access needed to compete globally. To date, SheTrades has empowered over 3,500 women, enabling them to scale their businesses, increase exports, and contribute to economic growth.

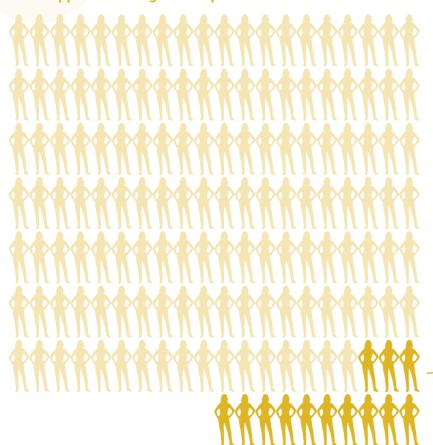
Efforts to boost women's participation in public procurement gained momentum in 2024, supported by the UN in alignment with President Ramaphosa's goal of directing 40% of government contracts to women-owned businesses. The passage of the Public Procurement Act marked a significant milestone, embedding gender equality and women's empower-

ment provisions informed by UN recommendations. By prioritizing procurement access for women, youth, and persons with disabilities, the legislation advances a more inclusive and equitable economic landscape.

The EntreprenHER project is transforming women's economic empowerment by equipping 150 low-income women entrepreneurs—especially those in male-dominated industries—with essential business, digital, and climate-smart agricultural skills. Through targeted training and peer learning exchanges in Limpopo, the initiative is fostering enterprise sustainability, job creation, and financial independence

Advancing the Integration of Human Rights into Economic Practices, the UN developed a strategic paper and spearheaded impactful awareness campaigns focused on the practical application of rights-based business models.

150 women entrepreneurs in Limpopo Province were supported through the Improve Your Business model



As a result, 18 women (12%) are now fully compliant with funding institutions, enabling them to access financial support



### Just Energy Transition and Leaving No One Behind

To advance a disability-inclusive Just Transition, the UN commissioned a landmark study assessing the integration of persons with disabilities in South Africa's transition policies. By identifying gaps and opportunities for greater intersectionality, the research provided actionable recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders, ensuring full inclusion in climate action and Just Transition frameworks. The study culminated in a case analysis, serving as a roadmap for a more inclusive and equitable transition.

An innovative Policy Guide, jointly developed by the UN and GIZ, has advanced global gender equality efforts within the context of Just Transition and climate action. Drawing from real-world insights and case studies across Southern Africa, including targeted analysis of gender-based violence and harassment in South Africa's mining sector, the guide offers strategic policy recommendations and showcases best practices for building a more inclusive and sustainable mining industry.

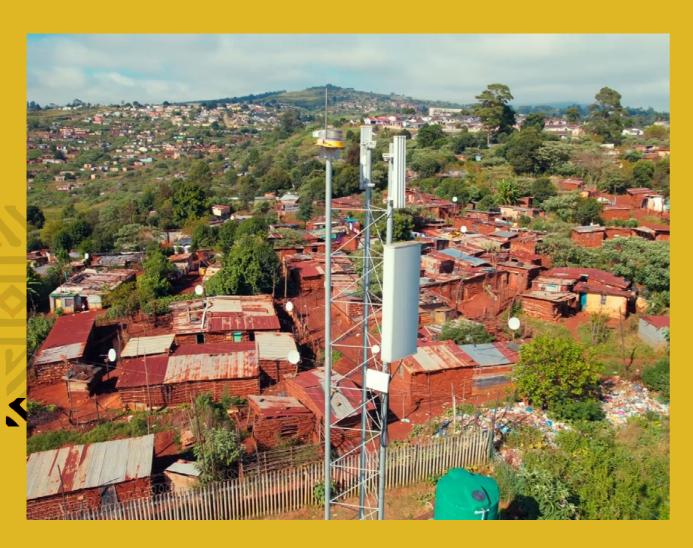
The Advancing Just Energy Transition Project, led by UN with funding from GIZ and EWSETA, is catalyzing South Africa's green energy future by equipping young people—especially women—with critical renewable energy skills. In Limpopo, 28 lecturers and 101 female students from seven TVET colleges have completed specialized Solar PV Rooftop Standalone Installation training, building a workforce ready to drive the clean energy revolution. This strategic investment in human capital not only promotes gender equity and economic empowerment but contributes to strengthening South Africa's transition to a sustainable and inclusive energy economy.

In a significant step toward advancing South Africa's just energy transition and addressing the critical affordable housing shortage, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) committed a \$300 million loan facility to expand access to renewable energy and affordable housing finance. Partnering with banks such as Standard Bank, this investment is set

to catalyze lending for clean energy solutions and unlock home ownership for low-income South Africans. With a housing shortfall of approximately 3.7 million units predominantly in the low-income segment this initiative directly targets the most urgent market needs. Standard Bank will leverage the IFC's financing through green and social loans, sustainability-linked instruments, and impact-driven financial products to scale renewable energy projects and inclusive housing finance. This collaboration not only accelerates climate-resilient infrastructure but also delivers tangible, people centred development outcomes at scale.



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### Story of Change

# **Building ICT infrastructure and expanding connectivity**

To enhance internet access in rural areas, UNDP supported women- and youth-led SMMEs in deploying TV White Spaces (TVWS) technology, utilizing unused radio frequencies to provide affordable connectivity. This initiative established 183 public Wi-Fi hotspots, linking 273 small businesses, 2,637 households, and 56 public facilities, benefiting over 70,000 daily users. Additionally, it created 144 job opportunities for local youth and women.

To scale impact, UNDP set up a computer lab at Olwandle High School in KwaZulu-Natal, connected to the TVWS network. This facility

enhances digital learning by enabling students to access online resources, conduct research, and apply for university admission and funding opportunities.

UNDP's youth empowerment strategy fosters digital skills, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Through initiatives like Accelerator Labs, young innovators receive technical training, business support, access to prototyping facilities, and seed funding. These efforts drive tech entrepreneurship, strengthen South Africa's digital economy, and promote sustainable growth.



### Youth Skilling and Inclusion into the Economy

A total of 639 unemployed youth completed a digital skills training programme, while 294 employed individuals enhanced their digital competencies through a collaboration between UNDP SA, GIZ, and CSIR across four provinces. In partnership with BPeSA, the initiative ensured training aligned with industry needs, enhancing employability and workforce readiness.

The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) is transforming South Africa's 250 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) campuses, which serve over 518,000 students but face challenges in delivering high-demand skills. Launched by the UN and the Department of Science and Innovation, HEIF is reshaping TVET institutions from traditional training centers into hubs for entrepreneurship and innovation, equipping students with future-ready skills.



#### **Strengthening SMMEs**

Through a strategic partnership with NAACAM, the UN facilitated LEAN training for six key automotive component suppliers, resulting in a 1.2% productivity increase and a 10% rise in capacity per employee. This initiative improved efficiency, reduced waste, and strengthened workforce engagement for 272 workers, driving measurable gains across the sector.



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**UN-supported initiatives** enhanced healthcare, education, and gender equality, focusing on HIV services, STEM, and violence protection





### **HIV/AIDS Response**

With UN support, 6,112 young people accessed essential services at supported health facilities. In Limpopo, the innovative TIKO model reached 4,284 youth, enrolling 5,143 new participants for HIV testing, contraceptive services, antiretroviral therapy (ART) initiation, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). The initiative significantly increased access to health services and empowered adolescents to take charge of their health.

South Africa has the world's largest paediatric HIV epidemic, with 7,000 new infections among children annually. In response, the UN is driving action and accountability through the Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children by 2030. Since joining the initiative, 12,000 children have initiated treatment.

To strengthen youth access to quality healthcare, the Safeguard Young People Programme upgraded 91 health facilities across KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape,

6,112

5,143

In Limpopo...

4,284

The TIKO model enrolling 5,143 more for

6,112 young people

accessed essential

health services

reached 4,284 youth, **HIV** testing

and Limpopo. Through improved data systems and provider training on rights-based, integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV, and gender-based violence (GBV) services, the initiative is advancing youth-friendly, comprehensive care that empowers young people to take charge of their health.

At the national level, the UN supported the finalization of the Global HIV Prevention Roadmap in collaboration with the National AIDS Council, and addressed adolescent pregnancy in Limpopo through a Critical Thinking Forum.



#### **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**

South Africa has made notable strides in building resilient and inclusive health systems, with strong backing from the UN, particularly in advancing the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Act as a step toward Universal Health Coverage (UHC). UN contributions have also been pivotal in shaping national health policies grounded in human rights, encompassing sexual and reproductive health, as well as both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Notable progress in non-communicable disease (NCD) management includes the development of national guidelines for cardiovascular disease and a policy on drug and alcohol dependence treatment. These advancements reflect strong policy frameworks, evidence-based decision-making, and growing multisectoral and community engagement in health governance.

To combat teenage pregnancy, the UN released a powerful policy brief analysing District Health Information System (DHIS) data to identify hotspot areas, sparking urgent dialogue at a high-level critical thinking forum with government and

multi-sector partners. The forum's key outcomes—highlighting the alarming rise in pregnancies among 10 to 14-year-olds and the urgent need for research into the lived experiences of teenage mothers—were featured in a widely circulated news article.

To meet the growing demand for health services in supported districts, peer educators were equipped through a cascading model in comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for out-of-school youth. In 2024, a national workshop with curriculum officials and special needs educators critically reviewed the Breaking the Silence manual, resulting in a clear roadmap for updating lesson plans, strengthening master trainer capacity, and improving the alignment and application of teaching materials.

The UN's national survey on condom accessibility revealed critical last-mile distribution gaps, with most supplies limited to government facilities and failing to adequately serve the LGBTQI+ community. To address this, the Safeguard Young People programme launched an innovative partnership with the KZN Taxi Association, training drivers and distributing over 182,000 condoms alongside targeted educational materials to reach commuters with safer sex messaging.





#### **Vaccination Management**

Through UN-supported, district-led interventions, the number of zero-dose children was reduced by 43% in three targeted districts within six months. This was achieved by strengthening local planning, community profiling, capacity-building of community health workers, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems.

To reinforce national immunization efforts, training materials and guidelines on vaccine management were distributed to 3,000 primary healthcare facilities. In parallel, 308 managers and clinicians were trained on child wasting indicators, caseload estimation, and nutrition supply forecasting. The national Global Alliance dashboard was also developed and institutionalized, improving real-time monitoring and response capacity.



#### **Cholera and Mpox Outbreaks**

Responding to cholera and Mpox outbreaks, the UN deployed a multimedia truck, reaching over 200 individuals in high-risk communities with critical health information. Complementing this, digital platforms such as U-Report were used to expand outreach and conduct a rapid qualitative assessment to inform Mpox vaccine strategies.



Training materials and guidelines on vaccine management were distributed to 3,000 primary healthcare facilities



### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The UN's WASH emergency response directly benefited over 17,000 individuals and learners, improving access to essential water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Through social media and community radio, more than 4 million caregivers received vital information on health, nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, youth-led environmental initiatives engaged 60 schools and 7 universities, fostering long-term community-driven change.



#### **Nutrition**

In close partnership with South Africa's Department of Health, the United Nations has contributed significantly to the transformation of national food systems, promoting equitable livelihoods, sustainable production, and better nutrition for children. This collaboration led to the development of food labelling and marketing regulations, enhanced nutrition management capacity, and the integration of critical malnutrition indicators into the national health system.

Moreover, 1.8 million youth were mobilized to advocate for healthier school food environments, aligning policy and practice to combat obesity and promote improved nutrition outcomes.

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### **Education**



**1** 101,254

ECD and Foundation Phase educators were trained in play-based pedagogical approaches.

2

16,000 parents were capacitated on early learning.

#### **Early Childhood Development**

The UN supported the completion of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) for children aged 0–4 years, addressing key challenges in early childhood education. Under the Foundation Phase Initiative (FPI), over 16,000 educators and 10,700 school leaders were trained, enhancing learning for approximately 652,000 children.

The P.L.A.Y. online platform continued to deliver impactful in-service teacher training, with 148,624 new users registered in 2024 and a 50.1% course completion rate, exceeding global benchmarks. As a result, an estimated 1.86 million children benefited from improved teaching practices.

Over 16,000
educators and
10,700 school
leaders were
trained, improving
the education of
approximately
652,000
children

651

10,700

3

2,558,744 children aged birth to nine years benefited from early childhood development initiatives.



2,110 in-service teac

in-service teachers were capacitated through targeted training programmes.



### **Basic Education and Curriculum Strengthening**

Enhancing literacy, numeracy, and digital learning through the Early Grade Reading Programme (EGRP), the UN advanced literacy and numeracy outcomes. In the Northern Cape, 635 teachers were trained, reaching 21,945 learners; in the North West Province, 735 teachers supported 25,400 learners.

As part of the GIGA global initiative, the UN facilitated improved school connectivity and digital learning by mapping all schools—except in the Western Cape—to support ICT planning. The Siyavula and Junior Tukkies online platforms expanded access to math and science education, reaching over 1.5 million and 654,000 learners, respectively.



### **Promoting STEM, Coding, and Robotics Education**

A major milestone in 2024 was the approval of the National Coding & Robotics Curriculum by Umalusi. The UN supported the Department of Basic Education in training 1,032 teachers (59% female), benefiting 62,515 learners (54% girls) across 1,011 schools.

To address resource gaps in low-quintile schools, the UN provided 150 LEGO Spike Prime Kits, 125 laptops, and other essential equipment to five provinces. These contributions supported the creation of Coding & Robotics hubs that will serve as training centers for surrounding schools, expanding access to quality STEM education in underserved communities.



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### Story of Change

### Girls in STEM: Coding and robotics are the future

"My name is Ayanda Mkhulisi, and I'm currently in Grade 11 at Mt Curry Senior Secondary School. When coding and robotics were introduced to us, I felt excited and curious, because robotics is the future. Many industries already use robots in production, and I believe that, in time, they will play a major role across sectors.

I always wanted to become an accountant, but learning about coding and robotics changed my perspective. Although it's a field still dominated by men, I'm not afraid to step into it as a young woman. I want to make a difference in my community. I'm deeply grateful to UNICEF for training our teachers to become champions in this subject."

Seventeen-year-old Ayanda lives in a rural area near the town of Kokstad with her aunt, her legal guardian, and three cousins. She lost both parents—her father in 2011 and her mother in 2012—and has no siblings. Despite limited school resources, including a shortage of computers and poor internet connectivity in the area, Ayanda remains determined to pursue her dreams.



**SOUTH AFRICA** ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 SOUTH AFRICA

### **Protection from Violence** and Discrimination





12,323 vulnerable children on the move were reached with essential services



33,599 children indirectly reaped the benefits of enhanced support and protective interventions



11,768 key education stakeholders were empowered to combat school violence.



### **Strengthening the Gender-Based Violence Response**

The UN has made significant progress in advancing policy reforms to address gender-based violence (GBV). In February 2024, a high-level consultation convened 40 delegates to finalize a Discussion Paper on Non-Custodial Measures for Adult Offenders, focusing on alternative sentencing approaches in GBV cases.

As part of efforts to enhance national systems for preventing and responding to GBV, 395 professionals received training in forensic evidence management and DNA handling, bolstering both investigative and judicial capacities.

The UN also provided technical support for key regional and global frameworks, including Beijing +30, CSW Resolution 60/2, and the SADC Strategy for Addressing GBV. A high-level, three-day regional meeting brought together stakeholders to assess progress, identify gaps, and plan the next steps on GBV, HIV/AIDS, and gender inequality. Outcomes included the evaluation of CSW 60/2 implementation, the adoption of a regional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, and preparations for CSW69 and Beijing +30.

At the community level, four educational workshops engaged 190 traditional and religious leaders across the eThekwini, Ugu, and uThukela districts. Using clinical data to emphasize sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), gender justice, and women's empowerment, the workshops supported leaders in developing actionable plans to combat GBV in their communities.

In the Western Cape, gender-sensitive training was delivered at 40 police stations, leading to the revision of police case forms to better support the LGBTQI+ community and promote a more intersectional approach to justice. Additionally, HeForShe dialogues were expanded to 15 sites in KwaZulu-Natal, engaging men and boys in challenging harmful gender norms and promoting accountability among local leaders.



#### **Safety in Schools**

Through the Global Fund AYP Programme and PEP-FAR, the UN empowered 11,768 education stakeholders, including school management teams, governing bodies, and parents, to promote comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and combat school-related violence. This initiative contributed to safer, more inclusive school environments.

Further efforts included partnerships with the government on the "Let's Talk EUP" dialogues and the 16 Days of Activism campaign, led by education officials to address GBV, early pregnancies, and violence in schools. These initiatives reached 1,456 young people, promoting awareness and action at the community level.

In addition, 776 officials across multiple provinces participated in Parent-Child Communication workshops, equipping them with the tools to foster healthier relationships and improved learning environments for students and educators.



ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 SOUTH AFRICA

















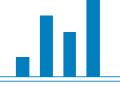
UN initiatives strengthened democratic governance, enhanced service delivery, advanced anti-corruption efforts, and improved asylum systems through training, data, and legal support



#### **Elections**

The UN played a pivotal role in strengthening democratic governance by training 300 domestic observers and launching the #WeAreVoting campaign, which mobilized over 100,000 youth. In collaboration with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and media practitioners, the UN addressed mis- and disinformation in the electoral process and promoted civic engagement through a comprehensive legal assistance framework for asylum seekers, while also advancing social cohesion initiatives.

The UN played a pivotal role in strengthening democratic governance by accompanying closely the national elections of May 2024 with a bespoke team that provided, with increasing frequency, in-depth analysis of election-related political developments as election day approached and the formation of the GNU in the elections' aftermath. This high-level activity was coupled with practical support on the ground to ensure greater voter's participation and a peaceful and orderly process, by training and preparing over 600 domestic observers and implementing the #WeAreVoting campaign, which mobilized over 100,000 youth. In collaboration with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and media practitioners, the UN addressed mis- and disinformation in the electoral process and promoted civic engagement through a comprehensive legal assistance framework for asylum seekers, while also advancing social cohesion initiatives.



### Leveraging Data for Enhanced Service Delivery

In partnership with the Department of Health, the UN supported planning for the Fourth South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) using 2022 Census data. Collaboration with Statistics South Africa resulted in the completion of the e-Census Handbook and the Leaving No One Behind Framework, aimed at addressing disparities in SRHR, HIV, gender, and youth outcomes.

To strengthen local governance, 152 public servants across 44 districts in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo were trained in evidence-based planning for Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), with a focus on demographic dividend indicators to inform strategic decision-making.





#### **Anti-Corruption Efforts**

Through a collaboration with the University of Cape Town, the UN launched the Senior Executive Leadership Programme, a year-long initiative enhancing the capacity, independence, and integrity of anti-corruption bodies. Key participants included the Public Protector, Director General of Public Service and Administration, and senior officials from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), Public Service Commission, and Public Protector's Office.





### The Professionalisation of the Public Service

With technical and financial support from the UN, the Public Service Commission advanced the Professionalisation Framework, successfully embedding it into the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). This strategic integration aims to enhance public service efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens' needs.

The UN partnered with the National Prosecuting Authority to build the investigative and prosecutorial capacity of prosecutors addressing environmental crimes. Tailored training sessions improved understanding of national legislation and contributed to better-quality dockets and improved court outcomes.

To combat crime in the fisheries sector, the UN conducted a comprehensive value chain analysis, mapping key actors and identifying vulnerabilities to inform targeted anti-crime interventions. This laid the foundation for a more coordinated, systemic response to illegal activities in the sector.

The UN significantly supported the Refugee Appeals Authority of South Africa in addressing a backlog of 130,000 asylum appeals, funding 10 quasi-judicial staff and increasing productivity by 15% through improved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Additional efforts included advancing community communication, legal advocacy, and joint actions with the Minister of Home Affairs and the Border Management Authority. These efforts have helped reduce litigation costs—currently at ZAR 500 million—and enhanced access to justice for refugees and asylum seekers, strengthening the asylum system amid a dynamic political context.



**SOUTH AFRICA** ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 SOUTH AFRICA



















The UN supported youth environmental initiatives, waste management, biodiversity preservation, and just energy transition, empowering communities and fostering sustainable practices across the country





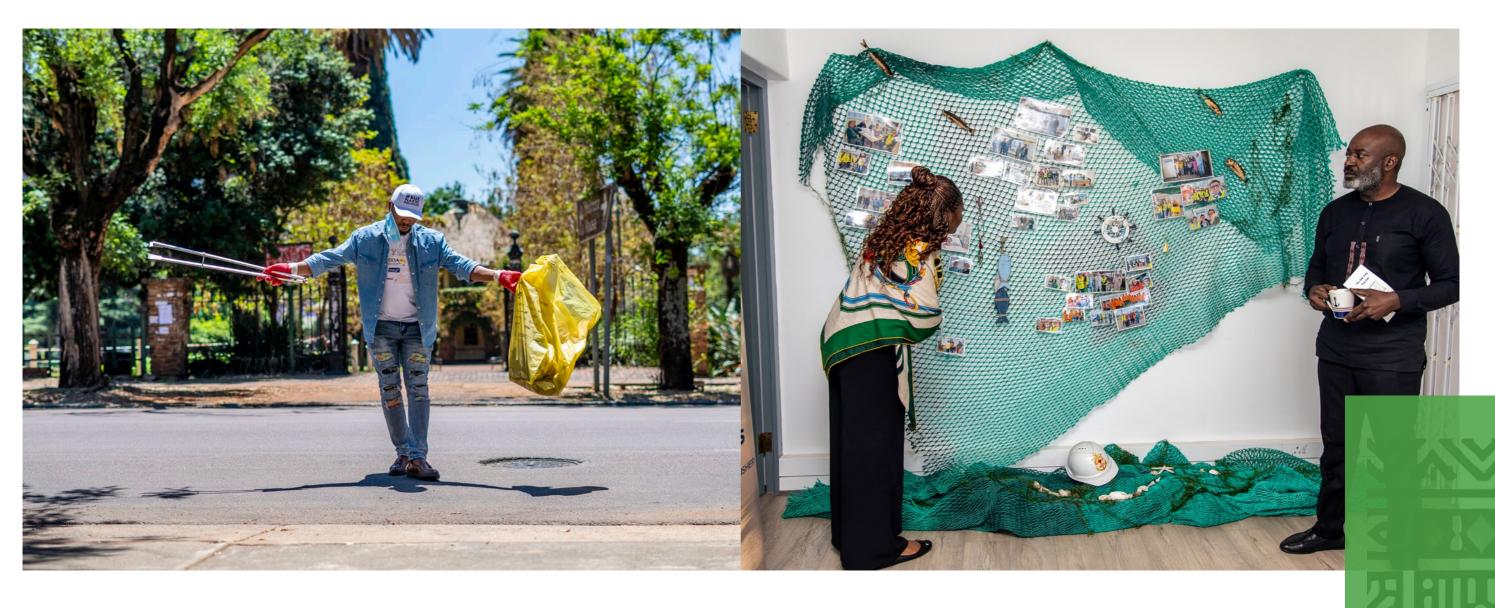
#### **Awareness Raising**

The Youth Environmental Reporters and Advocates Programme mobilized 400 young people (including 307 females) across four provinces, equipping them with skills in investigative journalism, environmental science, advocacy, public speaking, and social media engagement. These trained youth are now leading climate campaigns in their schools and communities.

Through the Green Rising initiative, children and volunteers are being empowered as environmental champions, driving sustainability and waste management efforts. The initiative has reached 60 schools and seven universities across three provinces, fostering a new generation of eco-conscious leaders.

The UN also produced a pioneering report, "The Just Energy Transition: From the Perspectives of South African Mining Communities", in partnership with Seriti. Drawing insights from over 10,000 residents in coal-dependent areas, the report highlights community perspectives, concerns, and aspirations regarding the energy transition. It provides actionable recommendations to improve communication and engagement in the Just Energy Transition (JET).

In advancing gender equity within the renewable energy sector, the UN trained 35 female lecturers and 123 women as solar technicians across seven TVET colleges. Internships for trainees in Limpopo are set to begin, with programme expansion planned for North West, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape. This initiative, implemented in collaboration with USAID, GIZ, and EWSETA, is building a strong pipeline of skilled women professionals in a traditionally male-dominated field.





#### **Waste Management**

The UN's waste management initiative has made significant progress in promoting sustainable practices and community empowerment. A key milestone was the handover of biodegradation laboratory equipment to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), strengthening local capacity for research and innovation in waste management.

In the Eastern Cape, capacity-building workshops provided targeted training on waste management practices and waste picker integration, equipping local stakeholders with tools to support inclusive, sustainable solutions.

In collaboration with the African Reclaimers Organization, the UN introduced waste pickers to newly developed national waste picker guidelines, fostering formal inclusion into the waste economy. Additionally, in partnership with PETCO, the UN supported the development of educational materials on PET recycling, focusing on separation, storage, and scaling of recycling efforts to promote sector growth.

Engagements with OR Tambo District and Nyandeni Local Municipality confirmed strong municipal support for inclusive waste systems. Training workshops on waste characterization and waste picker inclusion further solidified local commitment to sustainable waste management and social integration.



#### **Fisheries and Maritime**

In partnership with the Department of Employment and Labour and SAMSA, the UN supported the development of a digitized Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) aimed at enforcing decent working conditions in South Africa's fishing industry. This comprehensive SOP clearly defines the roles of government, civil society, and key stakeholders in identifying human rights violations, conducting vessel inspections, and holding perpetrators accountable for forced labour and other irregular labour practices.





**G20** 

In support of South Africa's G20 Presidency, the UN worked closely with the G20 Task Team to facilitate strategic engagements with national agencies and international partners. Contributions also included consolidated inputs to the G20 Energy Transition Working Group issue note, co-led by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy. These coordinated efforts helped align South Africa's G20 agenda with global priorities, advancing sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, and stronger multilateral cooperation.





#### **Just Energy Transition**

The UN played a central role in the regional Just Energy Transition (JET) Dialogue, emphasizing the critical role of minerals in enabling renewable energy technologies and supporting JET in the region. Through this platform, the UN reaffirmed its commitment to collaborate with SADC in developing a Just Energy Transition Framework that advances environmental sustainability and regional development goals.

Demonstrating its commitment to responsible mining, the UN—together with partners—co-organized and actively participated in the Regional Stakeholders Workshop on the Environmental and Social Aspects of Critical Energy Transition Minerals (CETM) and the African Mining Indaba. These engagements facilitated vital continental dialogue on the environmental and social impacts of metals and minerals.

Technical expertise and capacity development provided by the UN supported the alignment of Africa's mining strategies with global sustainability objectives and climate commitments.



#### **Biodiversity Preservation**

In partnership with SANParks, the UN launched South Africa's first biodiversity offset bank, pioneering a model that integrates economic development with environmental conservation. The initiative secured 17,000 hectares for protection and facilitated the sale of biodiversity credits to a private wind energy company, ensuring infrastructure projects contribute directly to ecosystem preservation. With UN technical support, the exchange is expected to generate ZAR 1.2 million for conservation, along with an annual investment of ZAR 100,000 for the next 30 years.

Under the Be Resilient South Africa project, the UN revolutionized climate resilience by installing advanced monitoring infrastructure: seven climate data gateways, nine weather stations, and eight water sensors to help communities anticipate and respond to floods, fires, and droughts. A cutting-edge Internet of Things system in the Kruger-to-Canyons Biosphere Reserve now delivers real-time environmental data, strengthening science-based adaptation strategies.

Beyond technology, over 50 youth were trained in Citizen Science, combining indigenous knowledge with scientific insights to support sustainable water and land management at the community level.



**SOUTH AFRICA** ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.2 Key Challenges in the Implementation of the SDGs During 2024

Persistent energy insecurity and a youth unemployment rate of 32.1% continue to impede economic growth and social stability, limiting progress toward inclusive and sustainable development. The increasing frequency of floods, heatwaves, and prolonged droughts poses significant threats to lives, food security, and infrastructure, particularly in the agricultural sector, underscoring the urgent need for resilience and adaptation strategies to safeguard national food systems and supply chains.

Structural inequalities in rural areas, informal settlements, and townships require a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to promote social cohesion and equitable development. Strengthening district and provincial partnerships is essential for enhancing service delivery, supported by workforce analysis and targeted capacity-building investments across government institutions.

The increasing occurrence of climate-related disasters highlights the urgency of enhancing emergency preparedness, particularly for vulnerable populations at the district level, through integrated resilience strategies embedded in both development and humanitarian programming.

South Africa's upper-middle-income status limits eligibility for international donor funding, posing challenges for scaling successful pilot initiatives. This reinforces the need for diversified financing mechanisms and strategic resource mobilization to sustain impact. In addition, intersecting challenges-including climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and the post-pandemic recovery-demand coordinated, rights-based responses that strengthen social protection and promote sustainable development across sectors..

### 2.3 Results of the UN Working **More and Better Together**

To ensure a coordinated and effective response to national priorities, the UN established dedicated working groups focused on critical and emerging issues. These included efforts to strengthen electoral processes, support safe and culturally sensitive customary male initiation practices, and advance climate action through NDC 3.0 and the Just Energy Transition, aligning South Africa's development with global sustainability goals. The groups also leveraged South Africa's G20 engagement to promote inclusive economic growth and contributed to the transformation of food systems to enhance food security, resilience, and sustainability.

A Disability Task Team was formed to promote disability inclusion, both within the UN and in collaboration with the government, reinforcing the UN's commitment to leaving no one behind. As part of this effort, the UN successfully convened a consultation with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, ensuring their perspectives were integrated into the Cooperation Framework design.

Thematic groups also strengthened their efforts across cross-cutting priorities:

- ▶ The Gender Theme Group retrained focal points on gender mainstreaming and the gender equality marker, reinforcing accountability for gender equality.
- ▶ The Youth Theme Group led efforts to advance youth inclusion across programmes and policies, including the relaunch of Generation Unlimited (GenU) to empower young people.

The PSEA Task Team made significant strides in safeguarding, notably through a training-of-trainers workshop that retrained nearly 100 staff on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The Task Team also engaged implementing partners on investigative procedures and the draft country strategy on PSEA, enhancing coordination and effectiveness in protection efforts.



The Resident Coordinator played a central role in convening high-level ministerial engagements and strengthening collaboration between the UN Country Team (UNCT) and government leaders. Through these strategic engagements, the UNCT delivered a clear value proposition, reinforcing its commitment to supporting South Africa's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### **Business Operating System (BOS)**

Implementation of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) has continued, coordinated through the UN's results-based framework. The approach emphasizes collaboration among UN entities at the country level, through joint services or services delivered by one UN entity on behalf of others. The implementation of BOS has significantly enhanced the delivery of the Cooperation Framework. In 2024, the UNCT successfully achieved cost avoidance amounting to USD 1.3 million by streamlining operations and fostering collaboration. Beyond cost savings, the UNCT has also emphasized quality improvements across all Common Service Lines, ensuring more efficient and effective service delivery.

#### **UN Communications Group: Report** on Communication and Advocacy

The UN Communications Group (UNCG) played a pivotal role in advancing the UN's mission in South Africa by aligning its communications strategy with the Cooperation Framework. Through strategic campaigns, stakeholder engagement, and media collaboration, UNCG enhanced partnerships and increased public awareness of global priorities.

Key public awareness initiatives included billboard campaigns for the Summit of the Future and the UN Global Road Safety Campaign, reinforcing messages on sustainable development and road safety. UNCG also supported major events such as the International Social Justice Conference, TEDx Johannesburg Salon Talks on the SDGs, and the Indigenous Languages and Media Seminar, facilitating dialogue on equity, sustainability, and linguistic diversity.

Media engagement was strengthened through relationships with journalists and co-hosted seminars with the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF), covering topics such as artificial intelligence, climate change, and mis- and disinformation. UNCG also facilitated media coverage of visiting UN dignitaries.

Advocacy efforts were further reinforced through leadership of activities for UN Day, 16 Days of Activism, Nelson Mandela International Day, and other commemorative events. A robust digital presence on UN South Africa's platforms ensured continuous public engagement.

These efforts contributed significantly to advancing the SDGs, promoting multilateralism, and cultivating public awareness across South Africa.



### 2.4 Evaluation and Lessons Learnt

The strong collaboration between the co-chairs of the Results Group has been instrumental in the successful convening of the Cooperation Framework Technical Steering Committee. Joint leadership between the government and the UN has ensured alignment of processes, strengthened stakeholder ownership, and reinforced commitment to implementation. Active participation in Results Group Reviews has upheld a results-driven approach.

Achieving behaviour change through multimedia campaigns requires sustained engagement, evidence-based messaging, and the meaningful involvement of youth as agents of change. While extended assessments improve the validity of findings, service delivery inefficiencies persist and must be addressed to enhance the inclusivity and responsiveness of interventions in 2025.

Effective coordination mechanisms have reduced duplication, while a strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework—combining qualitative and quantitative methods—has strengthened advocacy impact. The Private Sector Coalition experience highlights the importance of integrating ILO Convention 190 into corporate policies, enhancing accountability and compliance in preventing workplace gender-based violence. Embedding UN instruments within corporate frameworks will further reinforce these gains.

Recognition by national statistical bodies has enhanced the UN's credibility in data collection and analysis, supporting evidence-based policymaking. Leveraging emerging technologies has improved data efficiency, while well-structured South-South and Triangular Cooperation has fostered impactful, peer-driven knowledge exchange. Institution-

alization through capacity-building, mentoring, and government commitment is key to long-term sustainability.

Women's economic empowerment efforts must extend beyond direct beneficiaries, supporting small-scale traders and informal workers. Advancing women's participation in business and leadership requires early interventions through STEM education, entrepreneurship, and digital skills development. Shifting mindsets and engaging girls early is essential for long-term transformation.

In education, multi-stakeholder collaboration, innovation, and capacity-building remain central to improving learning outcomes. Strengthening early childhood education includes curriculum support and parental engagement, as seen in the National Parental/Primary Caregiver Capacity-Building Programme. Technology and play-based learning are boosting foundational skills, with the P.L.A.Y. online platform benefiting millions of children. Private sector partnerships—such as BMW's support for the Coding & Robotics Curriculum—are promoting future-proof skills. However, resource constraints and systemic capacity gaps must be addressed to ensure sustainability and scale-up.

Strengthened collaboration and coherence across UN-supported programmes will accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Regular reviews of UNCT configuration and expertise will maintain agility in responding to evolving challenges. Expanding South-South and Triangular Cooperation will deepen knowledge exchange and support national efforts toward sustainable development.

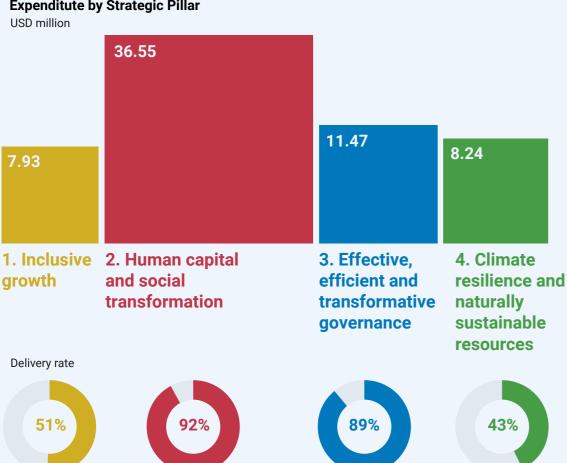
ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024 SOUTH AFRICA **SOUTH AFRICA** ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2024

### 2.5 Financial Overview and **Resource Mobilizations**

#### **Financial Overview**



#### **Expenditute by Strategic Pillar**



### Resource **Mobilization**



Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires substantial financial investment. As South Africa's economy continues to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and global geopolitical disruptions, the country remains committed to aligning its fiscal framework with both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Development Plan (NDP) - Vision 2030. However, persistent low economic growth continues to exacerbate the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, limiting progress in meeting national and public aspirations.

### Resource mobilization remains essential to overcome these barriers and accelerate progress toward sustainable development.

In 2024, the UN Country Team (UNCT) adopted a multifaceted resource mobilization strategy to support the implementation of the Cooperation Framework and its Joint Work Plans. Guided by the Cooperation Framework Joint Financing and Resource Mobilization Strategy, the UNCT ensured coordinated planning, targeted allocation of resources, and maximized development impact.

The UNCT continued to identify and engage partners whose mandates align with the strategic priorities of the Cooperation Framework. A multi-stakeholder approach was employed to expand collaboration with the private sector, civil society, academia, think tanks, foundations, and high-net-worth individuals, enhancing both the diversity and sustainability of funding sources.

Significant progress has been achieved under the RC and UNCT leadership, with the EU committing to support UNICEF and UNESCO in addressing GBV in schools. UNHCR and FAO have successfully accessed donor funds through the National Treasury, enhancing their operational capacity. UN-Habitat, with the RC's strategic backing, secured departmental, ministerial, and cabinet approval for its Country Presence and Programme, set to launch in 2025. Additionally, the RC facilitated SDG Joint Fund support for the JETP programme and secured SE4ALL's commitment to providing technical and coordination assistance, reinforcing sustainable development efforts

### 3 UNCT Key Focus for 2025

To accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development **Cooperation Framework, the UN** Country Team has identified key focus areas and collaborative initiatives for 2025. These priorities will be implemented jointly across all **Results Groups, in partnership with** government, civil society, and the private sector, under the principle of Delivering as One and through a whole-of-society approach to ensure greater impact and sustainable outcomes. The following are some of the key areas identified:

### Supporting South Africa's G20 Presidency

- ➤ Continued coordination, advocacy and convening on issues of SDGs Transitions, taking forward Pact for the Future, and Financing for Development
- ➤ Provide strategic engagement platforms, technical expertise and policy advisory to the government and G20 teams and work streams.
- ▶ Strengthen G20 outcomes for people and planet through the engagement groups and social summit as well as providing insights into the official tracks.

Advancing South Africa's Just Energy Transition (JET), NDCs 3.0 and Continued support to biodiversity preservation, resilience, and eradication of pollution and waste

- ▶ Provide convening, advocacy, technical and financial support for the development and implementation of NDCs 3.0, ensuring ambitious economy-wide climate targets are aligned with the Just Energy Transition.
- ➤ Accompany the finalization and rollout of the early warning for all, the climate change response fund, and other disaster response platforms.
- ➤ Continue to convene and support the country's efforts in JET through the implementation of joint support initiatives, including the SDG-Funded Programme and PAGE 2.0.

## Development of the 2026-2030 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

- ► Lead a consultative, multi-stakeholder engagement process to inform the priorities of the next Cooperation Framework.
- ▶ Align the new Cooperation Framework with the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), SDG transitions and acceleration pathways, the VNRs 2024/2025 report, and the AU Agenda 2063.

### Tackling Poverty and Enhancing Wellbeing

- ► Implement the Pandemic Fund to strengthen the One Health approach.
- ► Support the implementation of the NHI.
- ➤ Strengthening the GBV, HIV, and Pandemic Response.
- Support Early Childhood Development

### Reducing Inequalities and Fostering Inclusive Growth

- ▶ Support rural and township entrepreneurship by facilitating the identification, registration, digitization, financing, and regulation of spaza shops and other socioeconomic opportunities including for women and youth.
- ► Support the finalizing of the National Employment Policy.
- ▶ Strengthening the Social Protection System.
- ► Accompany rollout of the food systems transformation roadmap and action plan.
- ➤ Support Youth and Women Empowerment (skills and entrepreneurship support).

### Support to building an ethical and capable state

- ➤ Accompany SDG localizations efforts through the reinforced District Development Model.
- Support improved DPME and Chapter
   9 institutions oversight, planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- ▶ Accompany the national dialogue to ensure rights are advanced and social adhesion improved.



### Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AU	African Union
BIG	Universal Basic Income Grant
BMW	Bayerische Motoren Werke (German automotive company)
BOS	Business Operations Strategy
BPeSA	Business Process Enabling South Africa
CETM	Critical Energy Transition Minerals
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DA	Democratic Alliance
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHIS	District Health Information System
DDM	District Development Model
DMRE	Department of Mineral Resources and Energy
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DoH	Department of Health
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Programme
ESKOM	Electricity Supply Commission (South Africa's public electricity utility)
EU	European Union
Ewseta	Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
GNU	Government of National Unity
HEIF	Higher Education Innovation Fund
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Integrated Development Plans
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IRMSA	Institute of Risk Management South Africa
JET	Just Energy Transition
LEAN	Learn, Engage, Apply, Network (often used in organizational efficiency models)
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NAACAM	National Association of Automotive Component & Allied Manufacturers

NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NDC 3.0	Nationally Determined Contributions version 3.0 (climate change action plan)
NDP	National Development Plan
NHI	National Health Insurance
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSP	National Strategic Plan
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PET	Polyethylene Terephthalate
PETCO	PET Recycling Company
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
P.L.A.Y	Play, Learn, and Achieve with Youth (initiative/strategy name, can be context-specific)
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADHS	South African Demographic and Health Survey
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAMSA	South African Maritime Safety Authority
SANEF	South African National Editors' Forum
SAPS	South African Police Service
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
(O model	Trust, Information, Knowledge, Ownership (youth engagement model – e.g., for HIV prevention)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVWS	TV White Spaces
UCT	University of Cape Town
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNCG	UN Communications Group
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



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