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STATISTICAL OFFICE AND UNICEF ARE LAUNCHING THE LARGEST SURVEY ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MONTENEGRO

Statistical Office of Montenegro and UNICEF has officially launched the seventh round of Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MICS), with signing the cooperation agreement by **director of Statistical Office, Mr. Miroslav Pejovic, and UNICEF representative to Montenegro, Mr. Michele Servadei.**

MICS is a part of global survey programme supported by UNICEF with the aim to produce statistically sound and internationally comparable data on children and women rights' status. It is conducted every five years in general – previous round was conducted in 2018. Popular survey, the fifth round in Montenegro since 1997, will fulfil key gaps in data and support creating an evidence-based policy in area of health, education, child development, social and child protection, as well as justice. Additionally, it will have a key role in reporting of Montenegro on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and progress toward sustainable development goals (SDGs), together with providing important insights in living conditions of children and families.

The Government of Montenegro, through the Ministry of Finance, directed from the national budget 300.000 euro for the implementation of MICS survey, while UNICEF will provide 650.000 United States dollars from its own funds. Statistical Office will implement the survey with the technical support of UNICEF, on a nationally representative sample of 6.720 households. A special survey will be implemented among households of Roma and Egyptian community.

All data will be classified by geographically, social, and demographic characteristics, including child age (0-4 years and 5-17 years), as well as of women and men (15-49 years), which provides a comprehensive analysis.

What did the previous MICS round discover about children of Montenegro?

Some of the results of the previous MICS round 2018 show why is the update of data is immediately necessary:

- Only **23% of children aged 3 - 4 years** attended the early education programmes.
- **16% of children under 5 years of age** was at risk of stunting.
- **Two thirds (66%) children aged 1 - 14 years** were exposed to physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by adult members of households in a month preceding the survey.
- **Malnutrition rate among children under 5 years** is three times higher among Roma children, compared to the rest of population.

- Only **1 of 4 mothers (24%)** start breastfeeding within one hour of giving birth, and only **1 of 5** continues with only breastfeeding during the first six months. These numbers are even lower for Roma population.
- **Every third (33%) Roma girl aged 15 - 19 years** was married or in union.
- Only **20% of Roma children aged 7 - 14 years** regularly attended school.

(Source: MICS6 Montenegro Gora 2018 – final report, [link](#))

Through the implementation of MICS survey, Montenegro will:

- Fulfil gaps in data necessary for monitoring and improvement of national strategies, politics, and action plans;
- Improve systemic monitoring of child rights via global standardized indicators;
- Generate key indicators for the EU accession process and monitoring sustainable development goals;
- Provide updated and comparable data for the assessment of progress, compared to the previous MICS rounds;
- Strengthen national capacities in area of collection and analysing data on children.

MICS is the largest survey in area of social statistics after the census, and it represents an important challenge for a national statistical system. In the same time, this is an opportunity to additionally empower capacities for collection and analysis of data which are key for understanding the position of children and families in Montenegro. In this process, it is important that citizens recognise the importance of this survey and respond as many as possible, said Mr. **Miroslav Pejovic, the director of Statistical Office.**

MICS has a central role in the EU accession process and meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The data from the previous MICS round (2018) were widely used by the Government, EU delegation, civil sector, Ombudsman, Parliament, and UN system. MICS is a key to understand the level of exercising child rights, and implementation of reforms related to children and women, and it helps Montenegro to develop or adapt policies based on sound evidence, said Mr. **Michele Servadei, UNICEF representative to Montenegro.**

MICS survey results, including standard statistical tables will be released in 2026, and publicly available for general and Roma population. The data will be available at:

- Global MICS portal: <http://MICS.unicef.org/surveys>;
- UNICEF Montenegro: <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro>;
- Statistical Office: <https://monstat.org/cg>.

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