

Informal summary of proposals presented during the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue¹

FUNDING

Make data on funding more transparent and accessible

- Consideration should be given to having an aggregated and concise document that contains the key deliverables, related results and funding requirements of all UNDS entities to ensure better alignment between core and non-core resources, help identify over- and/or under-funded areas, and lead to better targeting of resources to match country-level priorities

Achieve a mandated baseline of core resources to support the overall “platform” of the UNDS in country, including its operational footprint, and core functions (such as the UN normative, leveraging and convening roles, capacity development and the RC system)

- The expectation would be for upfront commitments to be made by funding partners to finance this component of UN entities’ strategic plans
- This would require identifying a set of activities within each strategic plan that are fundamental to discharging the entity basic mandate (normative, policy and related operational responsibilities)
- Activities beyond this set would be funded through non-core resources
- Three funding modalities to consider to help reach this baseline of core resources
 - i. Assessed contributions;
 - ii. Negotiated voluntary core pledges;
 - iii. Voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

Enhance quality of non-core earmarked funding

- Increase the amount of softly earmarked funding through instruments like thematic funds and multi-donor trust funds
- Ensure full cost recovery

UN entities which have not already done so to consider engaging in structured financing dialogues to discuss ways to ensure more predictable, flexible and sufficient funding

- The dialogue process would help establish better alignment between core functions of an entity and how it is financed
- The dialogue process would also build strong Member States ownership of an entity’s strategic intent and financing requirements

Learn from successful funding arrangements that have driven a system-wide integrated approach

- The Spain-UNDP MDG Achievement Fund represented a significant innovation as it tried to produce a model which enabled a strategic outreach to live side by side with a programming process that respected the pluralist base of the system (one single management entity – UNDP – with a political-level strategic steering committee limited to Spain and UNDP and thematic, agency-led steering committees to actually allocate resources system-wide)

¹ Source: Vice-President’s Summaries of formal sessions, workshops and retreat of phase 1; background papers produced by independent experts, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the UN development Group (UNDG). This list is not exhaustive. This is just an attempt to capture the key ideas presented during phase 1 of the ECOSOC Dialogue.

FUNCTIONS

Engage in a thorough analysis to identify what the UNDS should focus on and the tasks that could be taken on by other players

- UN functions must be based on the UN comparative advantages, namely its universal legitimacy, global reach and neutrality

Focus on UN role as a convener, broker and advocate of integrated normative and technical support

- Norms and operations should not be conceived as two separate aspects, operations have to be more robustly connected to norms (the SDGs provide the global policy framework)
- Functions must also be demand-driven and promote national ownership

Strengthen the links among the humanitarian, peacebuilding, human rights and development arms of the United Nations

- Protracted crises have become the new normal. Focusing on prevention by reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience requires 'across the board measures'. This calls for even stronger synergy among the UN system and its executive boards, and between the UN and the broader multilateral system for an integrated response by the different arms of the United Nations

Respond to increasingly differentiated country capacities and needs

- Improve and strengthen tailored and differentiated support for **MICs**²
- Continue to provide the necessary technical support to **LDCs**
- Reflect further on the role in and of **high-income developing countries**

Focus on global challenges requiring a collective response, including by:

- Fostering strategic innovation
- Improving quality and quantity of data for monitoring and reporting
- Strengthening support for South-South and triangular cooperation
- Leveraging multi-stakeholder partnerships

Support greater impact at the regional level

- The nature of the post-2015 development agenda will necessitate strengthened and new roles for the UNDS at regional level, beyond coordination and information sharing

² Income is an imperfect means to categorize countries, there may be need to gravitate towards clusters of needs and thematic issues, ranging from example from fragility and vulnerability, to human development status, impact of climate change and natural disasters, and levels of inequality.

GOVERNANCE

Strengthen the role of ECOSOC and the HLPF with a view to ensuring system-wide governance in the implementation of the SDGs

Transform the QCPR into a truly strategic system-wide tool to assess, monitor and report on operational activities for development

- Expand the QCPR to include specialized agencies to ensure a coherent, strategic system-wide approach to operational activities for development
- Transform the QCPR into a system-wide strategy/framework to guide, monitor and report on system-wide results
- Ensure that the QCPR provides guidance for a separate system-wide strategy/framework to guide, monitor and report on system-wide results

Adopt an integrated system-wide strategy/framework

- The strategy/framework for all 34 entities of the UNDS could serve as the missing link between the individual UN entities' strategies in support of system-wide coherent coordinated results
- The QCPR could be transformed into such strategy/framework, or be the place to provide strategic guidance for such a strategy/framework to be developed by the UN development system
- ECOSOC and the HLPF could monitor progress in the implementation of the strategy/framework
- In the long-term, a unified governance arrangement could be established for consolidated governance of the United Nations development system

Include results frameworks based on the SDGs in UNDS entity plans

- To allow horizontal, joint or shared objectives vs agency/vertical specifics

Review representation, capacity and working methods of the Executive Boards

- Ensure that governance structures rise to the challenge of a new development agenda, align with system-wide directions, and reflect the reality of today's players in the development arena
- Adopt **multi-stakeholder governance models**, which help attract partners, harness their strengths, benefit from their expertise, and contribute to horizontal accountability (voting rights would be preserved exclusively for Member States)

Undertake governance of operations at the country level

- This would require adjustments but not a diminished role of the Executive Boards

ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Conduct a review to evaluate the role and organizational arrangements of each UN entity to determine the optimal size and make-up of its operations

- A highly selective process of identifying emerging functions which would benefit from organizational consolidation may only be politically possible if an independent process were to be put into place. This is not a reform that can be delivered from within the system
- In LDCs and countries facing crisis situations, it may be important to have a large UN presence. In others, such as in MICs, there is the possibility of scaling down presence and making greater use of regional capacity
- A policy of selective and strategic integration—rather than of deep integration—may be a more appropriate pathway to choose

Move from convergence to integration of operations

- Need to improve performance of country operations and country coherence, moving genuinely towards One UN and delivering results as one
- At global level, there is scope to reduce fragmentation and expand collaboration among UN entities during the strategic planning phase
- At national level, rescale and reorganize country level operations to improve the distribution of resources across the system, coherence among entities, and flexibility in management

Ensure organizational arrangements in line with country priorities and needs

- There is the challenge of achieving a much greater level of consolidation and integration in the 30+ fragile and conflict affected countries where the UN has a large and multi-purpose mission

Move from a representational model to one geared towards the achievement of results

- One possibility is to organize country teams by issue rather than entity, fostering a team mentality and making it easier to merge some functions and build on the comparative advantages of individual entities
- Ensure that RCs are selected based on their experience, cultural sensitivity and leadership qualities, as well as good understanding of the humanitarian, peace and security, and human rights sectors, and have the capacity to link these with the development agenda

Build in flexibility into the system

- The UNDS must be able to change its work plan and goals to respond more effectively to the needs of countries, particularly at country level and in countries affected by crises

Innovate with new models for UNDS presence in MICs

- An analysis of the profile and cost of the UN system's presence in middle income countries may lend itself to exploring the merits of selective consolidation of UN presence

Review current tools such as DaO, UNDAF and the RC system and assess whether they adequately address the 2030 Agenda challenges or a new generation of instruments is required to complement them at country and regional levels

- Explore the merit and specificities of an “UNDAF+” and a “DaO+”
- Explore prospects for sub-regional and regional forms of DaO and UNDAF

CAPACITY and IMPACT

Ensure stronger capacity for horizontal coordination at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels

- Explore methods and capacity for strategic planning and budgeting on cross-cutting issues
- Develop and sustain a more strategic and coherent results culture, including for cross-agency collaboration, including through strong leadership, adequate capacities and skills and an enabling environment to discuss both good and poor results, not only within UN organizations but also their governing bodies

Ensure capacity to deliver on the increasingly diverse country needs and priorities

- Ensure different and new skillsets among staff at global, regional and country levels to strike a balance between normative and operational support
- Ensure skills to build resilience and addressing the humanitarian-development nexus
- The increasingly diverse realities of MICs require strategic and coherently provided advisory and technical services that entail a different array of capacities to respond to their needs
- Explore options for new and strengthened regional and/or sub-regional platforms, and instruments on data, statistics, monitoring and review of progress, as well as on transborder, intra-regional and cross-regional issues, and provide specialized support to country offices

Ensure capacity to engage in the design and operationalization of new funding modalities, including a new funding literacy

- The increasing complexity and needs of the development agenda requires strengthened financial skills, knowledge sharing platforms on innovative financing and a new lexicon on funding to develop and manage a new financial architecture

Attract, retain and build a modern workforce

- Fit to deliver for the changing environment, grounded in a stronger common UN identity and shared values and able to deliver on mandates that are increasingly cross-programmatic

PARTNERSHIP

Adopt a system-wide approach to partnerships to ensure coherence of partnership practices in support of SDG implementation

- Define parameters and criteria for multi-stakeholder partnerships that link global change to local impact

Establish a system-wide mechanism to set standards, review progress and guide a system-wide approach

- A forum whereby all UNDS relationships with non-state actors can be viewed, and which sets out partnership objectives, types of partner contributions, governance and sources of funding

Ensure transparency, oversight, accountability and alignment with UN goals and mandates

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships must be leveraged and brought to scale ensuring national ownership and Member States' lead

Re-assess how the UNDS interacts with other actors

- The role of the UNDS may end at leveraging rather than implementing transformational partnerships without necessarily leading or being directly involved in them

Establish a voluntary membership fee to be part of the UN family

- The fee could amount around .001 of total income
- This would ensure the financial feasibility for the UN development system to invest in the capacities of the system to project itself as a system