Capacity development

A report prepared for
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List of acronyms

CEB	Chief Executives Board
DaO	Delivering as One
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GA	General Assembly
IADG	Internationally Agreed Development Goal(s)
ILO	International Labour Organization
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goal(s)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
TCPR	Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Glossary of terms

Capacity	The ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully (OECD)
Capacity development	The process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time (UNDG)
Evaluation	The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision– making.
Indicators	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor or intervention.
Outcomes	Describe the intended changes in development conditions resulting from interventions. They can relate to changes in institutional performance. UNDAF outcomes are the collective strategic results for the United Nations system cooperation at country level, intended to support national priorities.
Outputs	Specific goods and services produced by the programme. Outputs can also represent changes in skills or abilities or capacities of individuals or institutions, resulting from the completion of activities within a development intervention within the control of the organization.
Result	The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.
Operational activities for development	Those activities of the United Nations development system entities that promote the sustainable development and welfare of developing countries and countries in transition. They cover both longer-term development-related activities as well as those with a humanitarian – assistance focus and relate to the work of those United Nations fund, programmes, specialized agencies, departments and offices which have a specific mandate in this regards. (Source: Secretary-General's report 2014– get full citation)
Partners	Partners in development cooperation includes governments (national, regional and local), multi-lateral organisations, philanthropic foundations and non-governmental organisations, and the private sector (e.g. through social impact investment and social responsibility)
Programme countries	Those countries that receive development cooperation that includes programmable aid and other forms of external assistance

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Executive Summary

Introduction

i.   The Secretary-General of the United Nations was mandated by the General Assembly to submit a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations development system (UNDS). As part of the comprehensive analysis, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) commissioned a desk review of progress made by the UNDS in implementing those aspects of GA resolution 67/226 pertaining to capacity development. In addition to assessing the progress and challenges, the desk review makes forward-looking recommendations taking into consideration the unfolding 2030 development agenda.

ii.   The following key questions guided the review:

a) How does the United Nations development system define and understand the concept of capacity development? How is this understanding reflected at different levels of the United Nations development system (corporate and field/country level)?
b) What progress has been made with regard to capacity development since the 2012 QCPR? Which factors have facilitated progress? Which factors have hindered progress?
c) What are the key challenges in capacity development that should be discussed in the Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly?
d) What key lessons have been learned that can inform capacity development in the post-2015 era?
e) What practical recommendations can be made for Member States' consideration in the report of the Secretary-General?

iii.   The review drew on multiple sources of information, namely, surveys conducted by DESA between 2012 and 2015 of Resident Coordinators, programme countries governments and headquarters of UNDS entities; reports and other documents of UNDS entities and other United Nations entities; and Skype interviews with a sample of capacity development focal points in UNDS entities.

Key Findings

iv.   United Nations entities have introduced several measures to enhance their efforts in developing national capacities. These measures include revising their capacity development strategies and approaches; introducing new or revised guidance and tools on capacity development; and internal reorganisation in headquarters and regional centres to better support country offices in developing national capacities. For most entities within the UNDS, capacity development is integral to what they do and is integrated into their strategic plans and programming documents, including the UNDAF.

v.   Surveyed programme countries governments identified the UNDS as their preferred provider for institutional capacity development, but were moderate in their endorsement of the effectiveness of the UNDS in developing national capacities. Programme countries governments proposed that the UNDS could improve its effectiveness in developing national capacities by, among other things, making greater use of existing national capacities and systems. Other

measures they proposed to improve effectiveness in capacity development include closer collaboration between United Nations entities and government ministries to ensure that initiatives are demand-driven and based on national development priorities; greater coordination and harmonization among United Nations entities at country level; simplification of United Nations' procedures; adopting a results-based approach to capacity development; and better access to knowledge and information resources, including good practices from other countries.

vi.   Resident Coordinators and programme country governments perceived the UN system to make limited use of national procurement and financial systems. From the perspective of Resident Coordinators, obstacles to the use of national systems included the limited capacity of national institutions, the lack of transparency and accountability, staff turnover within government institutions, and stringent donor requirements. From the perspective of programme governments, the UN systems and procedures were seen as cumbersome.

vii.   There are several important lessons learnt that should inform the UNDS approach to capacity development. Capacity development is more likely to be effective if it is driven by programme countries, and based on an acknowledgement that there are existing capacities that can be strengthened. Country contexts differ and there should be room for flexibility and innovation in supporting capacity development efforts of programme countries. It is also essential to invest in the on-going development of capacities of staff in country offices to support the development of national capacities. It is important for United Nations entities and national partners to have a common understanding of capacity development.

viii.   The successful implementation of the SDGs and attainment of development results will require strengthened technical and functional capacities on several fronts, and capacity development is expected to remain a core function of the UNDS. Several measures will be required to improve the effectiveness of United Nations entities in capacity development.

Conclusions

ix.   **Conclusion 1**: The United Nations development system has a strong commitment to supporting and strengthening national capacities in programme countries, evidenced by its introduction of several measures to enhance its capacity development support. Since the 2012 QCPR, the United Nations development system has introduced measures to improve its support to programme countries. The new cycle of strategic plans (2014 -2017) for most entities reflect capacity development as a core function or a core strategy for achieving the results set out in the strategic plan. Some entities have reviewed and revised their guidance and tools for capacity development, and have invested in training staff and national partners in the use of these tools.

x.   **Conclusion 2:** The United Nations development system, although it has made progress in supporting the development of national capacities, is perceived by programme countries to be moderately effective in developing national capacities. The use of national capacities as a means of strengthening national capacities has been a recurring theme in GA resolutions on the operational activities of the United Nations development system. UNDS entities are using national experts and institutions in the design and implementation of programmes and projects, but the use of national procurement systems, financial systems and monitoring and reporting systems remains limited. Not enough has been done by the United Nations development system

to put in place the necessary strategies to strengthen these national systems so that they can be used. More can be done to strengthen national evaluation capacities.

xi.   **Conclusion 3**: The United Nations development system faces a number of challenges that undermine its effectiveness as a capacity development partner. A funding model that relies heavily on non-core resources has negative implications for capacity development as a core function of the United Nations development system. Fragmented finance sources, the short-term nature of funding and the specific conditions that may be attached to funding present a challenge for supporting long-term capacity development. While results and value-for-money are important for the constituents of partner (donor) countries, an over-emphasis on these can inhibit innovative capacity development and undermine national ownership of capacity development initiatives. Measuring progress in capacity development is a major challenge for the United Nations development system, and work on a common approach to measurement is underway.

xii.   **Conclusion 4:** The 2030 development agenda represents an opportunity for the United Nations development system to transform its approach to capacity development. With the scale of the SDGs, the United Nations development system will need to focus very sharply on areas where it has a comparative advantage, and make the shift to a facilitative role in capacity development. Its own capacities for policy advice and knowledge brokering will need to be enhanced, as well as its capacities to support programme countries in domestic resource mobilisation and working with new and emerging development cooperation partners in the non-state sector. The 2030 development agenda provides an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between funds and programmes and specialized agencies on the one hand, and regional economic commissions in supporting the development of national capacities for the implementation of the 2030 development agenda.

Recommendations

1.   The 2030 agenda presents an opportunity for the UNDS to make significant strides in supporting the development of national capacities:

(a) The UNDS should devise and implement strategies for strengthening national capacities and systems that have been under-utilised, namely, financial systems and procurement systems.

(b) Implementation and monitoring of the SDGs will require sound national statistical systems, results frameworks to be monitored and reported on, as well as effective national evaluation capacities. The UNDS should make greater use of South-South and triangular cooperation to complement and extend its own efforts in these areas.

(c) The UNDS should invest in developing its own capacities to support capacity development efforts of programme countries. In addition to on-going orientation of UNDS staff to adopting a systems approach to capacity development that goes beyond training, there should be investment in developing staff capacities for policy advice and knowledge brokering in middle-income countries. Staff capacities to support domestic resource mobilisation also need to be enhanced.

(d) The UNDG Guidance on Capacity Development should be reviewed and updated to reflect the changes in approach to capacity development since the guidance was first drafted in 2008.   Consideration should be given to having norms and standards for

capacity development that agencies may wish to subscribe to, similar to the norms and standards for evaluation adopted by agencies that are members of UNEG. These norms and standards can provide agencies with the necessary flexibility in their approaches to capacity development while ensuring that there is compliance to basic principles of effective capacity development.

2.   In order to be able to adequately fulfil its role on capacity development, the UNDS will need to be resourced in line with the requirements for that role, namely flexible and longer-term funding that would enable a targeted yet systematic approach to capacity development priorities of programme countries.

1   Introduction

1.1   Background and purpose

3.   The development of capacities in programme countries is a core function of the United Nations development system, and the General Assembly (GA) in its resolutions has, for the past two decades, consistently emphasized the centrality of capacity development in achieving internationally agreed development goals. Resolution 67/226 called for, among other things, the United Nations development system to support the development of national capacities for development planning, data collection and analysis, implementation, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. It further called for measures to ensure sustainability in capacity-building activities through use of national systems and national capacities to the fullest extent possible.

4.   This desk review serves as an analytical input to the Secretary-General's 2016 Report on the implementation of GA resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). It seeks to i) review progress and challenges with the implementation of resolution 67/226 with regard to capacity development; and ii) make forward-looking recommendations for consideration in the Secretary-General's Report, taking into account the unfolding post-2015 development agenda.

1.2   Scope and Methodology

5.   The scope of the desk review is on operational activities for development. These are defined as "….*those activities of the United Nations development system entities which promote the sustainable development and welfare of developing countries and countries in transition. They cover both longer-term development-related activities as well as those with a humanitarian –assistance focus and relate to the work of those United Nations fund, programmes, specialized agencies, departments and offices which have a specific mandate in this regard.*"[1]

6.   The following key questions guided the review:

a)   How does the United Nations development system define and understand the concept of capacity development? How is this understanding reflected at different levels of the United Nations development system (corporate and field/country level)?

b)   What progress has been made with regard to capacity development since the 2012 QCPR? Which factors have facilitated progress? Which factors have hindered progress?

c)   What are the key challenges in capacity development that should be discussed in the Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly?

d)   What key lessons have been learned that can inform capacity development in the post-2015 era?

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[1] A/70/62–E/2015/4 Annex: Technical note on definitions, sources and coverage
http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/qcpr/pdf/technical_note_on_funding.pdf

e) What practical recommendations can be made for Member States' consideration in the report of the Secretary-General?

7. The review drew on multiple sources of data, namely, semi-structured interviews with a sample of officials from programmes, funds and specialised agencies; surveys conducted by UN DESA between 2012 and 2015; documents (reports, policy documents, guidance notes) emanating from United Nations entities and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and other literature on capacity development. The list of documents consulted is shown in Annex A. Officials consulted were from the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO). The list of officials interviewed is shown in Annex B.

1.3   Structure of the report

8. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

Section 2 discusses the concept of capacity development and its use in the United Nations development system. It also outlines the key aspects of General Assembly resolution 67/226 dealing with capacity development.

Section 3 reviews the progress made by the United Nations development system in implementing the capacity development mandates set out in General Assembly resolution 67/226. It reviews the progress made in supporting the development of national capacities, as well as what United Nations organisations are doing to develop their own capacities to support programme countries.

Section 4 discusses the key challenges in implementing the capacity development mandates and identifies lessons learnt that can inform and enhance the United Nations' efforts in capacity development.

Section 5 discusses the implications of the 2030 development agenda for capacity development. It explores how programmes, funds and agencies intended responses to the capacity development demands of the SDGs.

Section 6 draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the implementation of the QCPR mandates in the area of capacity development.

2 Capacity development: policy and mandates

2.1 Historical perspective

9.   The concept of capacity building (later replaced by capacity development) gained prominence in development discourse in the 1990s as a better way of 'doing' development. While little was written in academic literature on capacity development in the previous decades, the 1990s and subsequent years saw a dramatic increase in references to capacity development.[2] Development organisations, both multilateral and bilateral, emphasise the importance of capacity development in their strategy documents, and for several of these organisations, capacity development is the primary purpose of their development assistance.[3]

10.   The concept of capacity development has evolved over the past two decades, from one that focused on human resource development and individuals, to a concept that encapsulates individuals, organisations and the wider society in which they function. Importantly, there is recognition in development discourse that sustainable capacity development is an endogenous process driven by those whose capacities are to be developed. This means that while external assistance can play an important role in developing capacities, externally imposed initiatives are less likely to develop sustainable capacities. Developing sustainable capacity, therefore, needs to be demand-driven and focus on outcomes or results, in contrast to technical assistance that tends to be supply-driven and focus on inputs.

11.   Capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system and has appeared in resolutions of the General Assembly for the past two decades. (See Annex C for a chronology of General Assembly resolutions on capacity development.) As far back as December 1995, GA resolution A/RES/50/120 comprehensively addressed the issue of capacity development (then referred to as capacity-building). The General Assembly decided "….*that the objective of capacity-building and its sustainability should continue to be an essential part of the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, with the aim of integrating their activities and providing support to efforts to strengthen national capacities in the fields of, inter alia, policy and programme formulation, development management, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and review;"*[4]

12.   The themes reflected in the General Assembly resolutions on capacity development have been consistent over the past 20 years, though the emphasis and language has changed to incorporate new agendas and reforms in the United Nations system, for example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. These themes include:

- Sustainability of capacity building

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[2] Venner. M., 'Capacity Development: old wine in new bottles?', Paper presented to the Sixth Oceanic Conference on International Studies, University of Melbourne, 9-11 July 2014

[3] The prominence of capacity development in development discourse in the early 1990s is attributed to the work done by UNDP and the World Bank. [expand this note to indicate sources]

[4] General Assembly resolution A/RES/50/120, p.5

- National ownership of national development strategies
- Use of national expertise and national systems, national execution/implementation
- Access to new and emerging technologies

13.   In 2005, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) established an Inter-Agency Task Team on Capacity Development to help redefine the role of UNDG members in capacity development and provide guidance to UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in supporting national capacity development strategies; to clarify the role of UNCTs in strengthening capacities in developing countries given the emergence of new aid modalities; and identify ways of measuring effectiveness of capacity development efforts.[5] The subsequent Position Statement on Capacity Development produced in 2006 set the overarching policy on capacity development for members of the UNDG. Capacity development is one of the five programming principles of the UNDAF, and United Nations country teams (UNCT) are required to conduct capacity assessments as part of preparations for the UNDAF and country strategies or programmes.

2.2   How capacity development is understood in the United Nations development system

14.   The terms 'capacity' and 'capacity development' are not precise terms and are open to varying interpretations. Capacity development is often used synonomously with training and technical assistance, or policy advice, although these are amongst several approaches to developing capacity. In development discourse the term 'capacity development' is preferred to the term 'capacity building' - capacity development starts from the premise that capacity exists and can be strengthened, whereas capacity building assumes that no capacity exists.

15.   The UNDG has adopted the concepts of 'capacity' defined by the OECD/DAC as "…..*the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully*…" and capacity development as "….*the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.*"[6] United Nations entities in their corporate guidance documents have used the UNDG definition or slight variations of this. For example, UNDP views capacity development as "……..*the how of making development work better and is in essence about making institutions better able to deliver and promote human development.*"[7]

16.   There is convergence within the United Nations development system on a framework for capacity development. United Nations entities see capacity development at three levels, namely, individual, organisational, and the enabling environment. These levels are seen as interlinked, and the entry point for capacity development depends on the country context and the particular development issues to be addressed. For capacity development to be effective, experiences within

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[5] UNDG Programme Group, *Enhancing the UN's Contribution to National Capacity Development – A UNDG Position Statement*. United Nations. New York. December 2006.
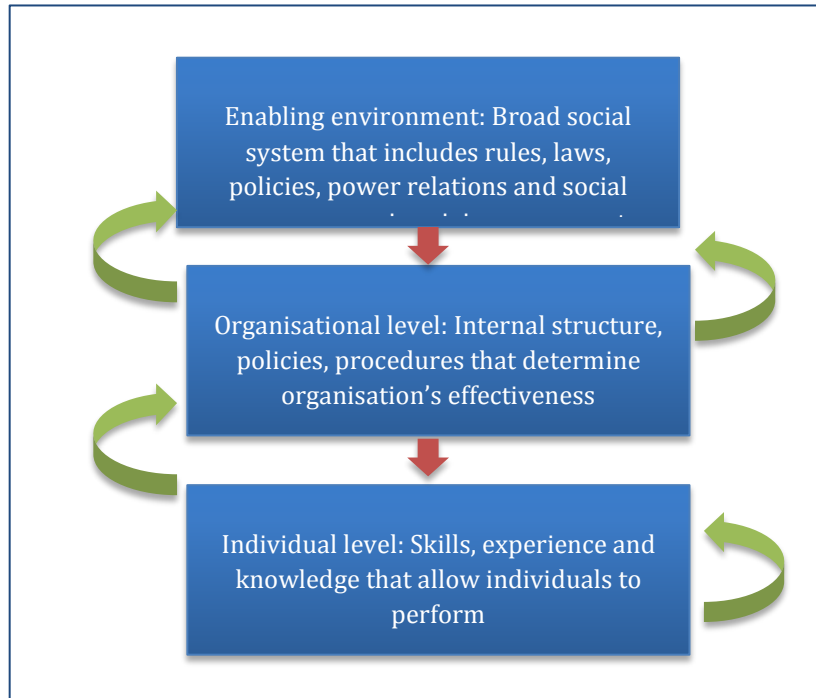[6] United Nations Development Group, 'UNDG Capacity Assessment Methodology: User guide for national capacity development', February 2008, p.3
[7] United Nations Development Programme, 'Measuring Capacity', July 2010, p.2

the United Nations development system and elsewhere indicate that capacity development should ideally be addressed at all three levels and follow a systems approach. For example, developing skills of individuals will not be effective if policies and systems in the organisation do not support the utilisation of these newly acquired skills.

17.   Figure 1 illustrates the capacity development systems approach adopted promoted by UNDP and adopted by several United Nations entities.

Figure 1: Capacity development systems approach

Source: adapted from UNDP

18.   It is essential to understand whose capacities are to be developed, what capacities are to be developed, and why capacities are to be developed.

a) On the question of *whose capacities* are to be developed, General Assembly resolutions refer to 'national capacities'. National capacities are assumed to include the capacities of state actors, as well as non-state actors who may or may not be involved in implementation of government programmes and initiatives.

b) *What capacities*? United Nations entities support the development of *technical capacities* in their areas of specialisation, for example, FAO supports capacity development of small-scale farmers in conservation agriculture, as well as functional capacities, for example, planning, monitoring and evaluation. UNDG guidance and agency specific guidance stress the importance of developing technical capacities as well as functional capacities.

c) *Why develop national capacities?* Capacity development is not an end in itself, but rather seeks to contribute to development effectiveness, and in turn, impacts development positively. Developing national capacities enables national actors to define their own development priorities, improve national prosperity, and manage their social, economic and environmental affairs in sustainable ways.

2.3   QCPR mandates on capacity development

19.   GA resolution 67/226, as in the case of previous resolutions, called upon entities within the United Nations development system to further support efforts of developing countries to establish and/or maintain effective national institutions, as well as support the development and implementation of national strategies for capacity-building, including policy advisory support. The resolution envisaged that such support be aligned with the UNDAF.[8] The resolution further encouraged the United Nations system to strengthen normative and operational linkages, and to support countries in building national capacities for national development processes that targeted poor and vulnerable people. [9]

20.   GA resolution 67/226 called for strengthening technical and scientific cooperation through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation for exchange of experiences and expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance.[10] It also stressed the importance of developing countries having access to new and emerging technologies through technology transfer, and technical cooperation.[11] The General Assembly called on the United Nations development system to focus its support on the development of national capacities for development planning, disaggregated data collection and analysis, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. In doing so, United Nations entities are required to emphasise integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, namely, social, economic and environmental, and make the resources, knowledge base and expertise of all resident and non-resident agencies accessible to developing countries.[12] The United Nations development system was also called upon to support developing countries at their request, to support capacity development in coordination and evaluation of external development assistance.[13]

21.   To ensure the sustainability of capacity development activities, the resolution reiterated previous resolutions calling for strengthening national execution/implementation and the use of available national expertise and technologies as the norm for implementing operational activities wherever possible, and avoiding establishing parallel implementation units outside of national and local institutions.[14] The importance of the use of national professional staff and national consultants

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[8] GA resolution 67/226, OP 57
[9] GA resolution 67/226, OP 58
[10] GA resolution 67/226, OP 59
[11] GA resolution 67/226, OP 65
[12] GA resolution 67/226, OP 61
[13] GA resolution, 67/226, OP 62
[14] GA resolution 67/226, OP 64

was reiterated as well.[15] Additionally, the resolution encouraged the increased use of national public and private systems in delivering support services. These include procurement, security, information technology, telecommunications, travelling and banking services, and where appropriate, planning, reporting and evaluation systems should be used.[16]

22.   GA resolution 67/226 sought to promote system-wide coherence in capacity development, and in this regard, requested the United Nations development system to develop a common approach for measuring progress in capacity development. It also requested the development of frameworks that would enable programme countries to design, monitor and evaluate results in capacity development.[17] The resolution further urged organisations of the United Nations development system to intensify inter-agency information sharing at a system-wide level on their capacity development activities with a view to learning and improving.[18]

23.   GA resolution 69/238 requested funds and programmes of the United Nations development system to consider those capacity gaps repeatedly highlighted by programme countries, including strengthening the use of national capacities; and to report to their governing bodies in 2015 with recommendations for implementation. Specialised agencies were invited to do so.[19]

3   Progress and challenges with implementing QCPR mandates

24.   This section of the report discusses progress made and challenges experienced by the United Nations development system in implementing the QCPR mandates pertaining to capacity development. It first discusses the measures United Nations entities have introduced to enhance their approaches to support the development of national capacities in programme countries. This is followed by a discussion on the progress made with supporting the development of national capacities in programme countries. The section draws primarily on the surveys conducted by DESA for the QCPR, in particular, the surveys carried out in 2015, and the subsequent survey reports, as well as interviews with focal points in a sample of United Nations entities.

3.1   Measures to enhance capacity development

25.   **United Nations entities have introduced several measures to enhance their efforts in supporting the development of national capacities.** These measures include revising their capacity development strategies and approaches; introducing new or revised guidance and tools on capacity development; and internal reorganisation to better support country offices in developing national capacities. For most entities within the United Nations development system, capacity development is integral to what they do and is integrated into their strategic plans and programming documents, including the UNDAF. Support to capacity development by United Nations entities covers technical (sector) capacities as well as functional capacities of individuals,

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[15] GA resolution 67/226, OP 67
[16] GA resolution 67/226, OP 66
[17] GA resolution 67/226, OP 63
[18] GA resolution 67/226, OP 68
[19] GA resolution, 69/238, OP 7

organisations and the wider enabling environment. Some form of capacity assessment is usually conducted as part of country programming and the UNDAF. In addition to supporting the development of national capacities through country offices and regional centres where appropriate, United Nations entities facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation as mechanisms for capacity development.[20]

26.   United Nations entities reported progress with the implementation of capacity development in their annual reports to the relevant Executive Boards and Governing Councils. There is a great deal of variation amongst United Nations entities on how they have reported, not surprisingly, given their different mandates. In most instances the improvement measures were introduced in the past two years and it is too early to assess their effectiveness. A summary of the measures introduced by a sample of United Nations entities is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Measures introduced to strengthen capacity development support

Examples of measures introduced
FAO: Capacity development is one of seven core functions of FAO to achieve its strategic objectives. Every department in FAO is therefore involved in supporting capacity development of Member States. The Office of Partnerships, Gender, Advocacy and Capacity Development leads and guides the implementation of FAO's corporate strategy on capacity development (2010). In 2012 FAO organised a series of seminars to reflect on its current and past approaches, culminating in revised guidance and new learning modules in 2013. These learning modules on capacity development are supported with tools (for example, capacity assessment tool) and good practice briefs from the field. FAO officials have been trained to use the learning materials.[21] The Capacity Development Unit has worked with FAO technical departments to improve the definition of outputs, outcomes and indicators and align these to capacity development. Work is in progress to develop a methodology for assessing FAO's contribution to capacity development.
ILO: The ILO uses technical cooperation as a vehicle for supporting capacity development of its constituents (government, workers and employer organisations). Within the context of ILO internal reforms and wider UN reforms, the ILO conducted a review of its Field Operations & Structure and Technical Cooperation in 2013. A new technical cooperation strategy 2015-2017 was adopted in 2014, and included capacity development as one of four elements (others being focus, effectiveness and resource mobilisation).[22] The strategy placed greater emphasis on developing institutional capacity than had been the case in previous strategies that emphasised the development of human capacity. The strategy will be updated in October 2015 to take into account the Sustainable Development Goals. Training through the ILO International Training Centre still constitutes an important method of capacity development, with new and upgraded offerings, and learning methods, for example, e-learning.
UNAIDS: The Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) 2012-2015 included indicators to measure capacity development in programme countries to plan, implement and evaluate programmes. Following the 2014 mid-term review, UNAIDS refined these indicators, based on experiences in 2012 and 2013. In September 2014, UNAIDS updated the guidance to country level Joint UN Programmes and Teams on AIDS to reflect results-based planning and budgeting, strengthened joint work, and improved effectiveness and transparency to achieve results and 'deliver as one'.

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[20] This overview of capacity development comes from interviews with Capacity Development focal points and entity documents

[21] See http://www.fao.org/capacity-development

[22] International Labour Organization, ILO's Technical Cooperation Strategy 2015-2017, document presented at 322nd session of the Governing Body, Geneva 30 October to 13 November 2014

UNDP: The organisation's capacity development framework (2009), and capacity measurement (2010) have provided guidance not only to UNDP staff and national partners, but also to other organisations of the United Nations development system. Since then, UNDP has developed programming quality standards that include criteria for assessing strengthened partner capacities, and have tested these quality standards and tools in 21 countries between December 2014 and March 2015. The adjusted standards and tools will be rolled out to 70 country offices to December 2015, with the view to being prescribed for the entire UNDP in 2016. UNDP also contributed to UNDG *Guidance on Effective Use and Development of National Capacity in Post-Conflict Contexts* (2013).

UNDESA: Capacity development is one of DESA's functional pillars of its mandate, and the department's operational activities aim to develop capacities of developing countries to translate internationally agreed policy frameworks into national strategies and programmes. UNDESA's *Capacity Development Strategy (2011*) outlines the entity's capacity development work in five priority areas linked to its mandate and expertise: (i) strengthening statistical capacities and monitoring of MDGs; (ii) macro-economic advisory and international tax cooperation; (iii) support to develop national social policies that address societal conditions that create vulnerabilities and social exclusion; (iv) sustainable development including climate change mitigation and adaptation; and (v) public administration and ICT for development, including e-government. DESA subscribes to the UNDG definition of capacity development and as a member of the UNDG and a non-resident entity, DESA works in partnership United Nations entities to extend its reach to the national level.

UNEP: UNEP's capacity building and technology mandate emanates from the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (2005), an inter-governmentally agreed framework for strengthening the capacities of governments in developing countries and transition economy countries to address their environmental needs, priorities and obligations. The mandate has evolved since the adoption of the BSP by UNEP's Governing Council. The outcome document of the Rio+20 conference called for strengthening and upgrading UNEP's capacity to provide capacity building to countries, as well as support and facilitate access to technology. UNEP is strengthening its regional presence with the establishment of five new sub-regional offices.

UNFPA: Capacity development is one of UNFPA's strategic interventions for achieving the outcomes set out in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, and takes the form of technical assistance, for example, provision of experts to assist national governments in developing programmatic tools and guidance, as well as short- and longer-term training. UNFPA is updating its Practical Guide to Capacity Development (2012) to include an implementation resource kit with good practice examples from different countries. UNFPA has compiled an annotated bibliography of capacity development policies, frameworks and tools across the United Nations system, for inclusion in the resource kit, and has shared the bibliography with the UNDG Working Group on Capacity Development.

UNICEF: Capacity development at the individual, community and government levels is one of UNICEF's main implementation strategies in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, and is embedded in the seven outcome areas of the strategic plan. These outcome areas include 'Increased national capacity to ensure availability of and access to services and to strengthen systems; and /Increased capacity of governments and partners, as duty-bearers, to identify and respond to specific challenges related to the protection and promotion of the rights of children and gender equality.' UNICEF has prioritised strengthening national and sub-national collection, analysis and use of data to enable an equity focus in the design and implementation of policies and programmes.[23]

UN Women: Capacity development is integral to the work in UN Women in fulfilling its triple mandate (normative, operational, coordination), and focuses on developing capacities of partners in governments, civil society, and other UN organisations. Capacity development is embedded in the 2014-2017 strategic plan, where it is captured in the Development Results Framework that addresses what UN Women

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[23] UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017

intends achieving. UN Women's capacity development activities usually involve a combination of training, financial support and mentoring. At the enabling environment level it supports capacity development in, for example, the adoption of laws that promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. UN Women commissioned an external review of its capacity development work with national partners, to assess the extent of alignment with UNDG guidance on capacity development, what has worked well and what should be improved, as well as document good practices. The report is to be finalised in October 2015, and will serve as a basis for developing an overarching framework for capacity development, and so establish a common understanding of capacity development in UN Women and its national partners. Guidance will be developed on planning and programming, including monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

WFP: In 2009, the Executive Board approved a revised capacity development policy for WFP, following an evaluation of the 2004 Capacity Development policy. The policy will remain in force until it has been evaluated at the end of 2015. A new policy may be introduced in 2016. In 2014, WFP expanded its technical unit into a Capacity Development Service that focuses on mainstreaming capacity development into WFP's work.

WHO: The provision of technical support to catalyse change, and building sustainable institutional capacities is one of the core functions of WHO. The Twelfth General Programme of Work 2014-2019 sets out priorities that will contribute to strengthening national capacities in areas of WHO's mandate. WHO uses the Country Cooperation Strategy as the primary tool for identifying strategic priorities for WHO cooperation at country level, for strengthening national capacities. WHO released a new Country Cooperation Strategy Guide in 2014, replacing the 2010 guide. The new guide has a greater focus on strategic analysis to identify cooperation priorities more selectively; and is more explicit in linking WHO planning with the UNDAF and One Programme processes at country level.

27.   **The UNDG established a task team, led by UNDP, to develop a common approach to measuring progress in capacity development.[24]** As capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system, it is essential that the United Nations development system is able to measure the results of its capacity development programmes. Various United Nations entities have developed approaches to measuring capacity development, with some approaches more advanced than others. UNDP developed a results-based approach for measuring capacity development (2010) and FAO's training modules (2012) provide tools for capacity development practitioners to measure capacity development.[25] The UNDG task team has undertaken to prepare an inventory of measurement approaches used by various entities system-wide; a White Paper on a UNDG capacity measurement approach; and designing a piloting strategy to test the new approach.[26] A draft document is scheduled for completion by the end of 2015 for consultation within the UNDG.[27]

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[24] Other members of the task team are UNAIDS, UNEP, UNFPA, FAO and WHO.

[25] The World Ban Institute introduced a capacity development results framework (2009) and a Guide to evaluating capacity development results (2012) *http://wbi.worldbank.org/ wbi/Data/wbi/wbicms/files /drupal- acquia/wbi/Guide%20to%2 0Evaluating%20Capacity% 20Development%20Results_ 0.pdf*

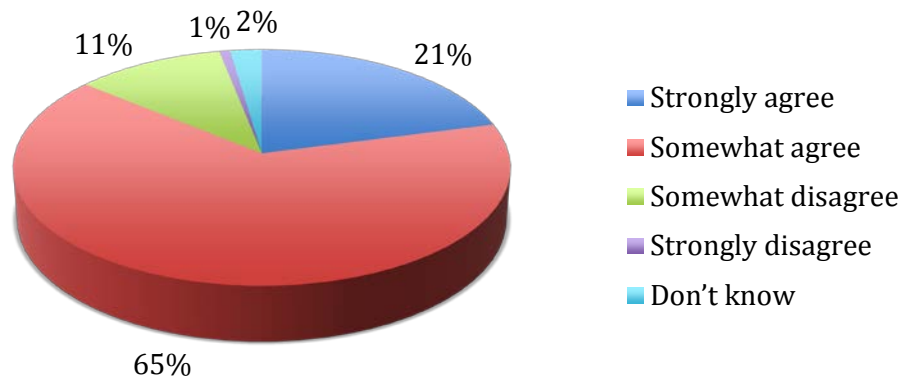[26] United Nations Development Group, 'UNDG Working Groups' 2015 mid-year progress report, 16 June 2015

[27] Communication from UNDG Team on Capacity Development.

3.2 Supporting development of national capacities

Effectiveness in developing national capacities

28.   **Programme countries identified the United Nations development system as their top preferred partner for institutional capacity development. However, they perceived the United Nations development system to be moderately effective in supporting the development of national capacities.** The United Nations system is strongly preferred as a partner for institutional development over other partners, namely, other multi-lateral organisations and regional institutions not part of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, OECD/DAC partners, Thematic of alliance-based partners and Southern partners.[28] While this is a strong endorsement of the relevance of the United Nations development system in supporting the development of national capacities, programme countries are not as positive in their views on the effectiveness of the United Nations development system in supporting the development of national capacities. In response to the statement "All things considered, the UN has been effective in developing national capacities", 21 % of respondents *strongly agreed* with the statement, and 65 % *somewhat agreed.* (Chart 1)

Chart 1: Programme countries 2015: UN has been effective in developing national capacities

Use of national capacities and national systems

29.   **Resident Coordinators perceived that the UN made use of national expertise and institutions as much as possible in the design and implementation of programmes and projects. Programme countries were not as positive in their assessment of the UN's use of**

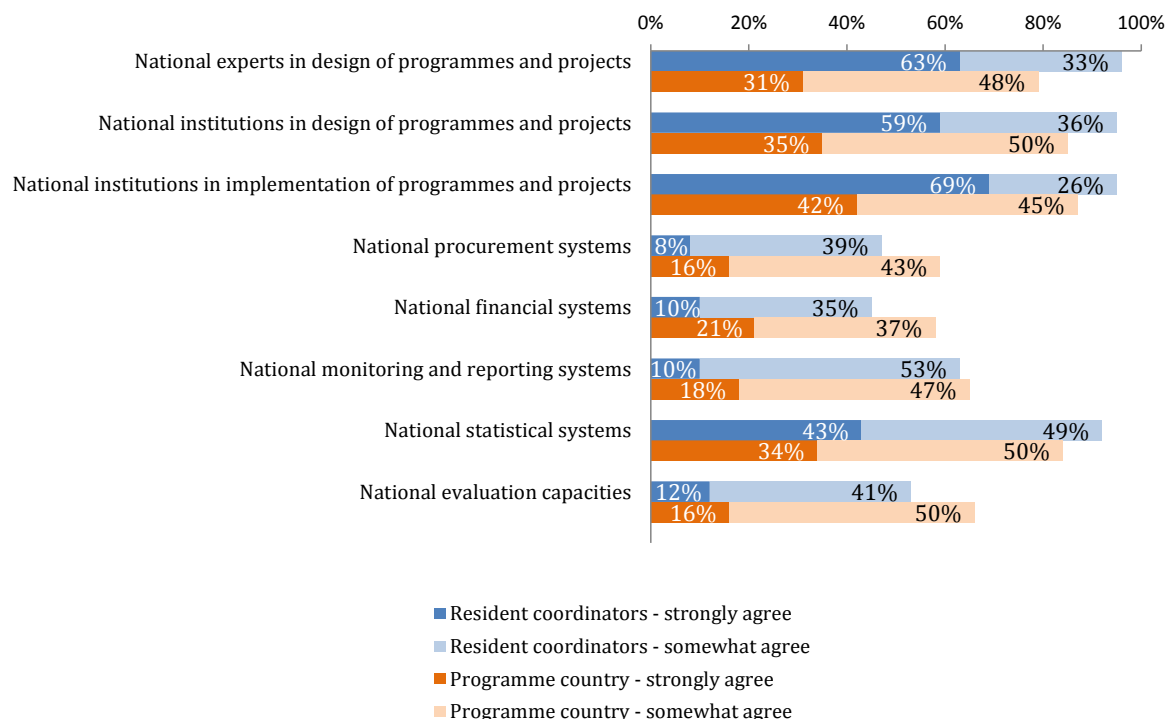[28] Programme Country Survey (2015), (formatted) Q 22: 83 countries rated UN system in their top two preferred partners for institutional development, followed by 54 countries rating other multi-laterals and regional institutions, 49 countries for Bretton Woods Institutions, 46 countries for OECD/DAC partners, 25 countries for thematic of alliance-based partners, and 17 countries for Southern partners.

national expertise. On the use of national systems (for example, procurement and finance), Resident Coordinators and programme countries perceived the UN not making as much use as possible of these systems. The use of existing national capacities (experts and systems) is an important element of developing sustainable capacities in programme countries. It is a policy mandate that existing national capacities, including national systems, should be used as much as possible, taking into consideration the conditions that exist in each country.

30.   Chart 2 depicts the perceptions of Resident Coordinators and programme countries on the use of national capacities and national systems. Resident Coordinators tended to agree strongly that the UN used national expertise as much as possible in the design and implementation of programmes and projects: (64% *strongly agreed* on the use of national experts in the design of programmes and projects, 59% *strongly agreed* on the use of national institutions in the design of programmes and projects, and 68% *strongly agreed* on the use of national institutions in the implementation of programmes and projects.

31.   Programme countries were not as positive about the use of national expertise in the design and implementation of programmes and projects. 31% of programme countries *strongly agreed* that the UN used national experts as much as possible in the design of programmes and projects, 35% *strongly agreed* on the use of national institutions in the design of programmes and projects.

Chart 2: Use of national capacities and systems

Source: 2015 Survey of Programme Country Governments and 2015 Survey of Resident Coordinators

32.   There is room for improving the use of national systems. Only 16 percent of programme countries and 8% of Resident Coordinators *strongly agree* that the United Nations was using national procurement systems as much as possible; 21 percent of programme countries and 10% of Resident Coordinators *strongly agree* in the case of national financial systems; 18% of programme countries and 10% of Resident Coordinators *strongly agreed* in the case of monitoring and reporting systems; and 16% of programme countries and 12% of Resident Coordinators *strongly agreed* in the case of national evaluation capacities.

33.   The relatively low use of national procurement and financial systems was identified in DESA surveys in 2012 and 2013. Feedback obtained from these surveys pointed to multiple challenges or obstacles to using national systems, as perceived by Resident Coordinators. These included the limited capacity of national institutions, the lack of transparency and accountability, staff turnover within government institutions, and stringent donor requirements. From the perspective of programme governments, the UN systems and procedures were seen as cumbersome.[29]

34.   Resident Coordinators identified similar obstacles to the use of national systems in the 2015 DESA survey. The lack of national capacity was identified by identified again as a major constraint to the use of national systems. As one Resident Coordinator observed "…*UN policies, procedures and practices have not prevented the UN system from being effective. Rather, it is the lack of national capacities and accountability that have been obstacles.*" An alternative view was that UN rules were not sufficiently flexible to allow UNDS to make full use of national systems. The lack of financial resources on the part of the UNDS at country level was also identified as an obstacle. Concerns about the lack of national financial and procurement capacities are legitimate. However, only 20% of Operations Management Teams surveyed in 2015 had a strategy to strengthen procurement capacities.

35.   The use of national expertise and national institutions for the design and implementation of programmes and projects is essential for national ownership and sustainability, and perceptions of low usage fuel perceptions that the UNDS entities do not trust national experts or national systems and are unwilling 'to let go'.

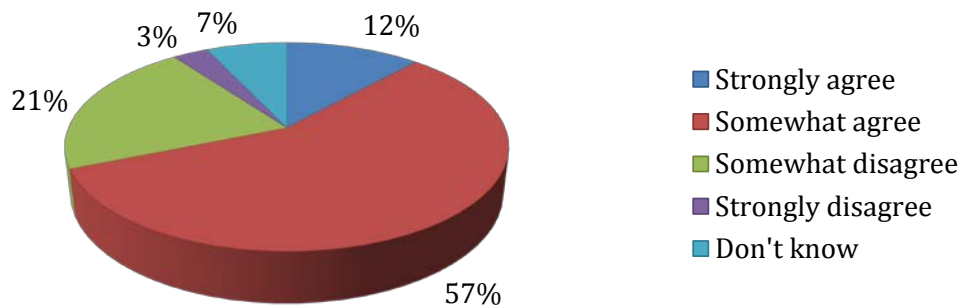*Strengthening national evaluation capacities*

36.   **Programme countries were moderate in their assessment of the extent to which the United Nations has contributed to strengthening national evaluation capacities. This, together with perceptions of a limited use of existing national evaluation capacities, suggests that there is scope for improvement**. GA resolution 67/226 identified the development of national evaluation capacity among the functional capacities to be developed. This was reaffirmed in GA resolution 69/237 that such capacities may be further strengthened by the United Nations development system upon request by Member States.[30] When asked about the extent to which they agreed that the United Nations has contributed to the strengthening of national evaluation

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[29] General Assembly Economic and Social Council, Implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development – Report of the Secretary-General, 13 January 2015, (A/70/62 – E/2015/4, p31.

[30] General Assembly resolution 69/237, 19 December 2014

capacities, 11.7% of programme countries *strongly agreed* with the statement, while 57% *somewhat agree* with the statement (Chart 4). One means of strengthening national evaluation capacities is through using existing national evaluation capacities. As pointed out in Chart 2, only 12% percent of Resident Coordinators and 16% of programme countries *strongly agreed* that United Nations organisations used national evaluation capacities.

Chart 4: Strengthening evaluation capacities

37.   There is however cause for optimism in developing national evaluation capacities. Since 2009, UNDP, in collaboration with international professional voluntary evaluation associations, has convened a biennial conference on developing national evaluation capacities. The 2015 conference[31] was the largest in the series, with 100 countries and 450 participants from government, civil society, academia and the research community, and included training workshops. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) participated as one of three international evaluation networks sharing their experiences in supporting national evaluation capacities. The conference issued the *Bangkok Principles on National Evaluation Capacity for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) era*. Recalling GA resolution 69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at country level, the Bangkok declaration put forward several options for supporting national evaluation capacities[32] (See Box 1).

Box 1: Bangkok Declaration: Options for supporting national evaluation capacities

- Conduct of country-level 'SDG evaluation needs' reviews and diagnostic studies
- Evaluability assessments pertaining to individual country or sector SDG goals and targets
- Fostering of evaluation as component of national governance and public sector management reform
- Establishing national evaluation legal frameworks - legislation and policies
- Developing clear national and local sub-national level mechanism for independent evaluation of progress against the SDGs

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[31] The Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities took place in Bangkok, Thailand from 28-30 October 2015. UNDP partnered with the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS).

[32] Bangkok Principles on National Evaluation Capacity for Sustainable Development, 30 October 2015: downloaded from www.ieo@undp.org, 23 November 2015.

- Assigning resources (a percentage of the initiatives' costs) for the conduct of evaluations when realigning national plans with the SDGs and when designing/approving projects/ programmes/ policies
- Strengthening national and local data systems to monitor SDG progress
- Establishment of frameworks of formal competencies and professional evaluation standards
- Establishing evaluation training programmes within academic and public sector professional training institutions
- Creating opportunities for local, young and emerging evaluators
- Developing systems to promote transparent follow-up of evaluations recommendation
- Support to national, regional and global evaluation professional organizations
- Support for international forums of exchange between users and producers of evaluation, via the right of access to information, including regional workshops and web-based platforms for knowledge management

Source: Bangkok Principles on National Evaluation Capacity for Sustainable Development, 30 October 2015

Factors facilitating support in developing national capacities

38. **Programme countries identified alignment with national priorities, use of national capacities, stakeholder participation, resources, and knowledge and expertise as important factors that have enabled or facilitated the United Nations development system to be effective in supporting the development of national capacities**.

a) *Alignment:* The willingness and ability of the UN Country Teams to align their activities with national development priorities is an important factor for programme countries in ensuring that capacity development efforts of United Nations entities are relevant and reinforce the capacity development efforts of programme governments. The majority of Resident Coordinators and programme countries perceive the activities of the United Nations system in-country to be closely aligned or very closely aligned to the country's development needs and priorities, though Resident Coordinators were more likely to assess the alignment to be very close.[33] In DaO countries, Resident Coordinators and programme governments were more likely to perceive alignment with national development priorities as close or very close, than in the case of non-DaO countries.

b) *Consultation:* The UNDAF processes and structures were identified by some programme countries as important for consultation and coordination between UN country teams and national partners. Multi-stakeholder engagements were identified as a facilitating factor, noting that such engagements should include non-traditional partners such as the private sector.

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[33] UNDESA Resident Coordinators: Survey 2015: Resident Coordinators responses: 55% very closely aligned, 40% closely aligned; UNDESA Programme countries Survey 2015: Programme country responses: 19% very closely aligned, 67% closely aligned.

c) *Use of capacities*: Programme countries also mentioned the use of national capacities, in particular, the involvement of civil servants in design and implementation of projects as factors that facilitate effective support to capacity development.

d) *Knowledge*: United Nations entities were seen to have specialised knowledge in their sectors, a good understanding of the national context, and importantly, access to regional and global expertise.

e) *Financial resources*: The resources that United Nations entities were able to provide in the form of financial support, training and technical support were also considered to be important facilitating factors.

39. **Programme countries identified some challenges to achieving closer alignment between the activities of the United Nations and the country's development needs and priorities**. The lack of harmonisation between the planning cycles of government and the UNDAF was identified as a challenge. The Resident Coordinator survey reported that the UNDAF was aligned with national government cycles in 66% of cases, an improvement over the previous two years. Some programme countries believe that there is insufficient transparency in disclosure of information on the programmes, operations and finances of United Nations entities at country level. With the government's own monitoring and evaluation capacities being weak, governments feel less able to monitor the activities undertaken by the United Nations development system.

40. There is still a sense among some programme countries that United Nations entities are not sufficiently coordinated, that there is competition amongst entities[34], and not enough was being done to harmonise and simplify UN processes. The increasingly limited resources of UNDS entities and internal capacity constraints were identified by some programme countries as challenges. Programme countries also noted their own limitations including their own lack of capacity and lack of coordination among government ministries as challenges to achieving closer alignment.

National ownership and leadership

41. Effective capacity development is premised on the principle of national ownership and leadership of national development programmes, including capacity development. Joint Government-United Nations Steering Committees and results groups or thematic groups are important mechanisms not only for coordination between governments and UNCTs, but also to strengthen national ownership and leadership. There were joint steering committees in 66% of programme countries surveyed in 2015 and this represents a good starting point for national ownership and leadership.

42. However, there needs to be incentives and capacities for government partners to participate and exercise leadership in joint steering committees. The 2015 survey found that 37% of programme countries *somewhat agreed* that their government's participation in joint steering

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[34] UNDESA Programme Countries Survey 2015:: 16.7% of programme countries perceive UN agencies to compete for donor funds to a large extent, 42.1%: to a moderate extent, 19.8% to a small extent, 21.4%: not at all.
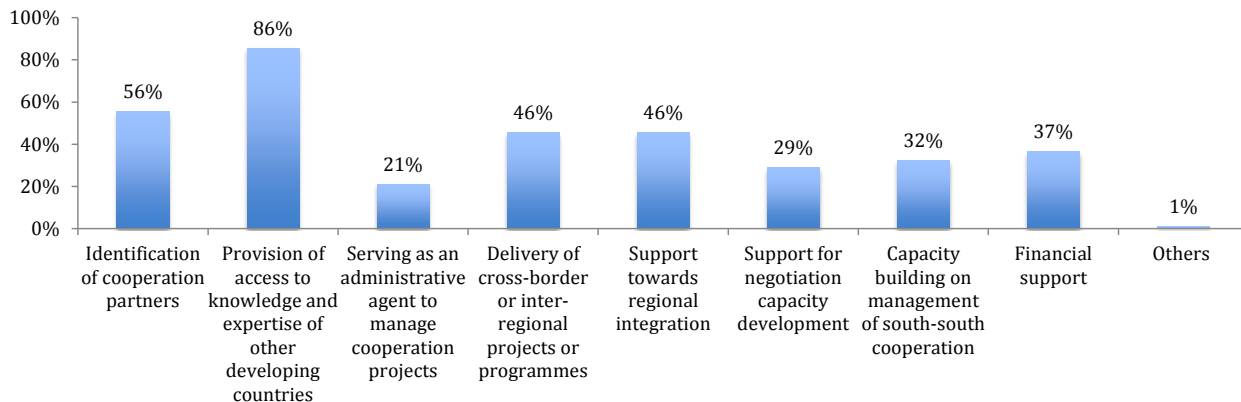
structures allowed the government to exercise leadership over UN programmes, and 29% *strongly agreed* that this was the case. In DaO countries, there appears to be a stronger sense of national leadership – 42% of DaO countries *strongly agreed* that their government's participation in the steering structure allowed their government's to exercise leadership over UN programmes, compared to 22% of non-DaO countries who *strongly agreed* that this was the case.

Capacity development through South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation

43.   **There is a demand from programme countries for support in their cooperation with other countries, and United Nations entities have endeavoured to respond to requests for support**. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of programme countries surveyed in 2015 provided development cooperation to other countries. Of the Resident Coordinators surveyed in 2015, 78% responded that they had received requests from programme country governments to support their cooperation with other developing countries. Chart 5 shows the type of requests received.
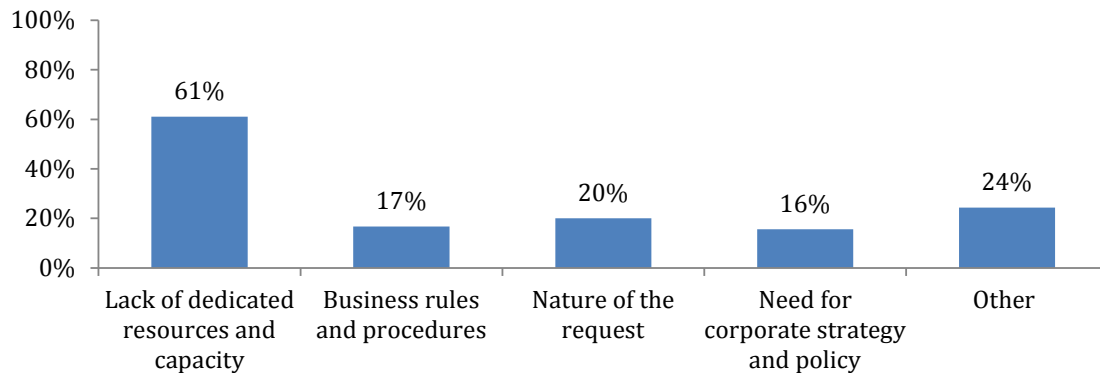
Chart 3: Type of request for support

44.   Provision of access to knowledge and expertise of other developing countries was the most frequently identified type of support requested (85.6%), followed by requests for support in identifying cooperation partners (55.6%). There were also requests for capacity building on the management of South-South cooperation and support for negotiation capacity development. On the side of programme countries surveyed, 20 indicated that they had received support in the area of knowledge and technology transfer, and 68 countries indicated that they would like to receive support in this area. There is a clear demand for South-South cooperation and/or triangular cooperation in the area of knowledge and technology transfer.

45.   **UNCTs have experienced challenges in responding to requests from programme country governments for support in their cooperation with other developing countries**. Chart 6 shows the challenges reported by Resident Coordinators in this regard. The lack of dedicated resources and capacity was the challenge identified most frequently by Resident Coordinators.

**Chart 4: Challenges in responding to requests for assistance
in supporting South-South and triangular cooperation**

Measures to improve effectiveness in supporting development of national capacities

46.   **Programme countries identified several measures that could be taken by United Nations entities to be more effective in developing national capacities**.

a) *Alignment with national needs and priorities*: The measures proposed most frequently pertained to United Nations entities aligning capacity development strategies and programmes with national priorities. There was a call for a more demand-driven approach and for United Nations entities to support governments' own capacity development initiatives. Programme countries proposed greater *collaboration* between United Nations entities and government ministries and *consultation* with all relevant stakeholders, including non-state actors, to ensure that capacity development initiatives are relevant to the needs and priorities of the country. The involvement of ministries in the design of programmes and projects was also proposed.

b) *Use national systems and capacities*: There were several proposals pertaining to the *use of* existing national capacities and national systems, to ensure sustainability. Measures to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations development system include greater and better use of country systems (financial and procurement), and national expertise. There was a call for strengthening existing capacities where strengthening is required rather than gap filling with external advisers. It was suggested that United Nations entities should have trust in governments to implement programmes.

c) *Harmonisation and coordination*: Programme countries proposed better coordination among United Nations entities in country. Greater institutional commitment to work together and leverage each entity's resources to support a greater common agenda, embracing Delivering as One and Harmonised Cash Transfers (HACT), and simplifying procedures were among the measures proposed. Another measure proposed was that United Nations entities should also improve their coordination with other development partners.

d) *Approaches and priority areas:* Programme countries suggested that the United Nations development system could be more effective in supporting the development of national capacities by paying attention to sustainability; supporting long-term capacity development programmes and moving away from ad hoc approaches; and adopting a results-oriented approach to capacity development. They also identified areas that required more attention, for example, capacity development in development and planning; conducting capacity assessments for institutions responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluating national development and poverty reduction plans and strategies. There were suggestions that more attention be paid to line ministries with inadequate capacities rather than focus almost exclusively on central agencies; do more to develop capacities at sub-national levels; and greater attention to be paid to capacity development of women.

e) *Resources for capacity development*: Programme countries expressed the need for increased resources for capacity developed. Measures proposed in respect of resources pertained primarily to knowledge and information resources. These include access to good practices from other countries that can be replicated; transfer of knowledge and know-how; sharing technology and providing support and assistance based on advanced technology. With regard to financial resources, it was proposed that governments should receive advance information on proposed technical assistance when government does its planning so that assistance provided by the United Nations is not ad hoc.

Monitoring and evaluation: Few measures were proposed in respect of monitoring and evaluation. Examples include the need for better monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and evaluating the effectiveness of capacity development strategies and programmes.

3.3   Role of regional commissions in capacity development

47.   The five regional commissions of the United Nations share the objectives of (i) fostering economic integration and regional and sub-regional levels; (ii) promoting the regional implementation of internationally agreed goals; and (iii) supporting sustainable development through bridging economic, social and environmental gaps among member states and sub-regions. Regional commissions carry out capacity development in various forms, including policy review and advice, monitoring and reporting on trends at national, sub-regional and regional levels, and facilitating dialogue and learning through South-South cooperation.[35]

48.   Regional commissions differ in their areas of focus as they need to respond to the different regional contexts within which they operate. The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is the most explicit of the five regions on its capacity development role and functions. UNECA works closely with the Africa Union and the Africa Union Commission (AUC). It complements the capacity of the AUC, and collaborates with the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency of the Africa Union, the African Development Bank and other regional institutions. Following an internal review of the

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[35] See the report of the Joint Inspection Unit JIU/REP/2015/3 on Cooperation among the United Nations regional commissions for a discussion on the role of regional economic commissions of the United Nations.

organisation in 2012, UNECA established a Capacity Development Division responsible for the delivery of knowledge generated by the substantive divisions of UNECA that focused primarily on policy research.

49.   Member States approved UNECA's *Capacity Development Strategy* in 2014. This strategy is guided by the *Africa Union Agenda 2063* that sets out the vision for a transformed Africa. As UNECA is the regional arm of the United Nations and also forms an integral part of the Africa institutional architecture, UNECA's Capacity Development Strategy is guided by the UNDG Position on Capacity Development as well as the *Africa Capacity Development Strategic Framework (2011),* the latter being the guiding document for capacity development on the Continent. UNECA provides capacity development services at the institutional, organisational and individual levels: [36]

- Promoting system-wide synergies (for example, upgrading sub-regional coordination mechanisms for more effective support to regional economic communities in Africa)
- Strategic initiatives (for example, high impact campaign on Illicit financial flows)
- Policy dialogue (convene, facilitate, promote policy dialogue)
- Policy advisory services on demand from member states and regional economic communities
- Skills development (training and innovative skills development approaches, links to academia)
- Knowledge facilitation and management (solution exchange, communities of practice, creating, combining, repackaging and re-purposing of knowledge).

50.   United Nations Regional Commissions have engaged in dialogue on their role in implementing the 2030 agenda. What has emerged to date is that Regional Commissions are expected to assist Member States within their regions to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, provide technical support for the implementation of the SDGs and facilitate effective follow-up and review. Areas for involvement of Regional Commissions include[37]:

- Integrating SDGs into national development plans and fiscal frameworks
- Promoting policy coherence, consistency and coordination
- Enhancing the data and statistical capacities of Member States
- Identifying and promoting alternative and innovative sources of financing for development
- Leveraging science, technology and innovation in support of Agenda 2030
- Harnessing South-South and regional partnerships

4   Challenges and lessons learnt

This section of the report discusses the challenges and lessons learnt from the experiences of implementing initiatives and responses to the QCPR mandates on capacity development. Some of the issues raised here have been alluded to in Chapter 3 of this report.

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[36] United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *Capacity Development Strategy (2014).*
[37] United Nations Regional Commissions, Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: The Role of Regional Commissions, September 2015

4.1   Challenges

51.   **Strengthening national capacities through use of national systems remains a major challenge for several United Nations entities.** As discussed in the preceding section [link paragraph], the main reason advanced by Resident Coordinators for the low usage of national systems, especially procurement, financial, and monitoring and reporting systems was that these systems were weak or did not meet standards set in United Nations policies and/or the policies of partner (donor) countries. As capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system, it is expected that United Nations entities will have strategies in place to support the strengthening of those national systems that need strengthening, but this is not always the case. Pressure to spend funds within a financial year also acts as a disincentive to use national procurement systems that are slow, and undermines national ownership.

52.   **Although United Nations entities have invested in providing guidance, tools and training for staff, it is a challenge to ensure that staff as well as national partners and beneficiaries see capacity development as more than the provision of training, workshops and study tours**. Several entities noted that staff, as well as national partners tended to equate training with capacity development. Developing the skills of individuals is an important aspect of capacity development and undoubtedly responds to a real need expressed by national partners and programme beneficiaries. However, without addressing the organisational issues and issues in the enabling environment, the improvements achieved in knowledge and skills will not necessarily translate into higher level development outcomes and impact. Some United Nations entities also indicated that it was an ongoing challenge to ensure that all staff had a common understanding of capacity development, and with staff turnover, it was necessary for ongoing training and awareness of capacity development concepts and frameworks.

53.   **Measuring progress made in capacity development was identified as a challenge by a number of entities.** As capacity development is a core function of the UNDS, it is essential that it is able to measure the results of its capacity development programmes. A particular challenge for entities is how to develop meaningful indicators for capacity development at the level of outcomes. Outcomes are high level results that take many years to achieve, and many development actors, including national partners, contribute to results at the outcome level. In these circumstances it becomes difficult to formulate results statements and indicators that adequately capture the contributions of the United Nations entities, individually or collectively. One view expressed was that results-based management (RBM) should be improved so that capacity development can be measured effectively. Another view expressed concern that the rigid application of RBM may not be appropriate for as complex a strategy as capacity development.

54.   **For agencies that have mainstreamed capacity development, it is a challenge to disaggregate capacity development from other results**, while for others the absence of a distinction between capacity development and capacity augmentation presents a challenge for measuring capacity development.   UNDP's work on the measurement of capacity development published in 2010 remains the most substantive work on measuring capacity development in the UNDS. The ILO revamped guidance to country offices in 2012, and the revised guidance includes measuring capacity development. The work of the UNDG Task Team on Capacity Development may

provide clarity and guidance to entities in the UNDS on measuring capacity development. UNDS entities should be realistic in their expectations**:** it is not feasible to have a common approach to measuring capacity development in as complex as system as the UNDS, and it would therefore be more realistic to talk of guiding principles.

55.   **Reporting systems reinforce a narrow view of capacity development.** Given the challenge of measuring capacity development outcomes and the pressure to demonstrate tangible results, it is not surprising that reporting systems favour reporting on outputs. Some entities have indicated that headquarters reporting systems emphasise counting of things rather than reporting on (intangible) results.

56.   **The emphasis placed on results and value-for-money by resource partners pose a challenge to United Nations entities in supporting national capacity development.** Developing sustainable capacity is a long-term process and it takes time to demonstrate changes in capacities. As there are many factors that influence capacity development outcomes, United Nations entities cannot attribute their support to the outcomes. Capacity development is also a learning process – learning from successes and from failures. An environment where there is a low tolerance for failure and a great deal of pressure to demonstrate results, is a disincentive to undertake capacity development that is transformational.

57.   **The lack of sufficient resources to support capacity development programmes was identified by some Resident Coordinators and programme countries as a major challenge.** Financial resources were not always sufficient to support comprehensive, longer-term capacity development initiatives, and there was a tendency for shorter-term, ad hoc interventions. Some entities indicated that their human resource capacities at country level were seldom sufficient to respond to requests for support from national partners.

58.   **Conditions within countries pose challenges for the United Nations development system in supporting the development of national capacities.** For the United Nations development system to coordinate its capacity development support, government partners themselves need to be coordinated. Coordination in government is a common problem in many countries, developed and developing, and sector ministries operate as silos unless there is a strong 'centre of government' that has the mandate and capacity to coordinate ministries across sectors in pursuit of a common goal, for example, poverty eradication. Also, if national coordination mechanisms for development partners do not exist or are ineffective, it poses a challenge for the United Nations development system to coordinate its activities. High turnover of staff in government and civil society also poses a challenge to the sustainable development of national capacities.

59.   **The United Nations development system has not paid sufficient attention to the evaluation of capacity development policies, strategies and approaches.** Few entities have conducted evaluations of their capacity development strategies in the recent past. The most recent evaluations (or reviews) are UN Women (to be completed in October 2015), ILO review of technical cooperation (2013), FAO review workshops (2013). UNDP conducted a thematic evaluation of its contribution to capacity development in 2010, and WFP conducted an evaluation in 2008 and has

scheduled one for 2015. Capacity development policies, strategies and approaches should be evaluated periodically to determine if they are still relevant, especially as the development context is not static. It should be noted that the UNDG Position Statement on Capacity Development was adopted in 2006 and the associated user guide was released in 2008, and no substantial changes have been made to these documents since then.

4.2 Lessons learnt

Understanding capacity development

60.   Capacity development is an endogenous process – it cannot be driven or imposed externally. The United Nations development system cannot develop the capacities of programme countries, it can only support or facilitate the development of national capacities. There is also a responsibility on the part of programme countries to articulate their capacity development priorities and requirements. Self-assessments of capacity development are more likely to enhance national ownership than externally driven capacity assessments. Capacity development starts from the premise that there is existing capacity. Programme countries have some form of capacity, even though it might be weak or not suited to the task at hand. These existing capacities should be acknowledged and strengthened rather than ignored.

61.   Developing capacity involves human beings, and is a complex, iterative process that does not follow a neat linear path. It requires constant adaptation and flexibility. It requires innovative approaches where old approaches no longer work. Subjecting capacity development to rigid results chain and logical frameworks is likely to stifle capacity development efforts, rather than enhance them.

62.   There is no one singular way to develop capacity or support the development of national capacities. An approach that works in one context or with one institution may be totally unsuited for another. So, while guidance and tools on capacity development are necessary and useful, they should not be prescriptive, and need to allow for innovation. It also becomes important for those involved in capacity development to evaluate capacity development approaches, and document good practices and lessons learnt.

Introducing change or new approaches

63.   Several United Nations entities introduced changes or improvements in their policies and approaches to capacity development since 2012. These were not introduced in isolation but were part of a broader corporate change and improvement processes. Entities highlighted the important role played by the senior leadership of the organisation in demonstrating their commitment to the changes through ensuring that the necessary resources were available to implement the changes. They also emphasised the time taken to introduce the changes or improvements, and the need to be realistic about what can be achieved within the short period of time.

Investing in country office capacities

64.   It is essential to invest in the ongoing development of capacities of staff in country offices to support the development of national capacities. The experience of United Nations entities is that staff tend to equate capacity development with training. It is also erroneous to assume that staff have the requisite skills to support capacity development. Developing capacities in country offices is an ongoing process that requires investment.

Engaging national partners

65.   It is important for United Nations entities and national partners to have a common understanding of capacity development. A lesson learnt by United Nations entities is not to assume that national partners share the same understanding of capacity development as United Nations entities. There must be open dialogue between United Nations entities and national partners about the capacities to be developed, premised on a capacity assessment process led by national partners. By sharing with national partners the capacity development tools that entity staff use, the United Nations development system can foster a shared understanding of capacity development. It is also essential that United Nations entities use the capacity development policies, strategies and plans of the programme country as the starting point for their support to strengthening national capacities.

5   Implications of the 2030 development agenda

66.   The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an ambitious and transformational development agenda. The development of new capacities and strengthening existing capacities is a theme underpinning all the SDGs. Target 17.9 in SDG 17 speaks of enhancing international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. The successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and attainment of development results will require strengthened technical and functional capacities on several fronts. Measures will be needed to improve the effectiveness of United Nations entities in supporting capacity development.

67.   **The scale of the SDGs will require a significant improvement in coordination and coherence amongst United Nations entities in supporting the development of national capacities in programme countries**. It will be necessary for United Nations entities to collaborate more closely and have more joint capacity development programmes that foster the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. This will not be an easy task if the structures and incentives for effective coordination on the side of programme governments are not in place. The United Nations development system will need to be very targeted in its capacity development efforts and work in those areas where it has a clear comparative advantage and mandate to do so. The Delivering as One approach is maturing and holds good potential for improved coherence and coordination of capacity development at the country level.

68.   **The 2030 development agenda calls for both technical and functional capacities [38]to be developed**. Greater focus is needed on the development of functional capacities in programme countries, especially in planning and programming the implementation of the SDGs, and the development of robust results frameworks for monitoring and reporting on progress made in implementation. Developing countries increasingly will be expected to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and draw on resources from non-state actors including the business sector and philanthropic foundations. Functional capacities will need to be developed for domestic resource mobilisation and developing and managing a diverse array of partnerships. This will require staff in regional centres and country offices to have the necessary functional capacities in these areas so that they can support their national counterparts effectively.

69.   **Strengthening national evaluation capacities will require greater attention than has been the case to date**. Programme countries have not given a strong endorsement of the United Nations' efforts in strengthening national evaluation capacities. Effective implementation of the 2030 development agenda will require improvement in the quality of decentralised evaluations. The availability and quality of data in many programme countries pose a challenge for monitoring progress and measuring development results. Several United Nations entities are supporting programme countries in improving the availability and quality of sector data (for example, labour, health, education, and environment) as well as disaggregated data (for example, sex, age), and some are collaborating with the United Nations Statistics Division. It is essential that efforts to develop national statistical and data systems are coordinated at country level.

70.   The SDGs make a strong call for reducing inequalities between countries and within countries, requiring an approach that recognises the importance of assisting 'hard-to-reach' populations. Sub-national levels have a critical role to play in this regard, and **supporting the development of capacities in programme countries need to extend beyond the national level to sub-national levels.**

71.   **The United Nations development system at country level will need to support capacity development for domestic resource mobilisation**. Developing countries increasingly will be expected to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and draw on resources from non-state actors including the business sector and philanthropic foundations. Functional capacities will need to be developed for domestic resource mobilisation and for developing and managing a diverse array of partnerships. This will require staff in regional centres and country offices to have the necessary functional capacities in these areas so that they can support their national counterparts effectively.

72.   **The United Nations development system at country level will need to programme support for South-South and triangular cooperation to a greater extent than has been the case to date**. There is demand from programme countries for assistance from the United Nations development system to them in accessing knowledge and expertise from other developing countries, identification of cooperation partners, as well as support in the management of South-

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[38] Technical capacities refer to those capacities required for working within a specific sector, for example, curriculum development in the education sector. Functional capacities refer to those capacities required for example, in developing policies, strategies and legislation, and managing these processes.

South cooperation. The United Nations development system has experienced challenges in responding to the demand primarily due to the lack of dedicated resources and capacity for South-South cooperation. This demand for support in South-South cooperation can be expected to increase with the implementation of the SDGs.

73.   **The 2030 development agenda has implications for the United Nations development system's own capacities to effectively support capacity development in programme countries**. The United Nations development system will require capacities that speak to a facilitative role in development, rather than an implementer role that almost invariably amounts to unsustainable gap-filling. This facilitative role emphasises among other things, capacities for policy advice, brokering partnerships, knowledge brokering, and facilitating multi-stakeholder engagements. It also calls for capacities within the United Nations development system to support countries in coordinating the new and different forms of development cooperation to complement domestic resources for development. The United Nations development system at country level will need capacities for partnerships in middle-income countries that already have substantial capacities in the public and private sectors, for joint action, knowledge sharing and research.

6   Conclusions and recommendations

6.1   Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The United Nations development system has a strong commitment to supporting and strengthening national capacities in programme countries, evidenced by its introduction of several measures to enhance its capacity development support. Since the 2012 QCPR, the United Nations development system has introduced measures to improve its support to programme countries. The new cycle of strategic plans (2014 -2017) for most entities reflect capacity development as a core function or a core strategy for achieving the results set out in the strategic plan. Some entities have reviewed and revised their guidance and tools for capacity development, and have invested in training staff and national partners in the use of these tools.

Conclusion 2: The United Nations development system, although it has made progress in supporting the development of national capacities, is perceived by programme countries to be moderately effective in developing national capacities. The use of national capacities as a means of strengthening national capacities has been a recurring theme in GA resolutions on the operational activities of the United Nations development system. UNDS entities are using national experts and institutions in the design and implementation of programmes and projects, but the use of national procurement systems, financial systems and monitoring and reporting systems remains limited. Not enough has been done by the United Nations development system to put in place the necessary strategies to strengthen these national systems so that they can be used. More can be done to strengthen national evaluation capacities.

Conclusion 3: The United Nations development system faces a number of challenges that undermine its effectiveness as a capacity development partner. A funding model that relies heavily on non-core resources has negative implications for capacity development as a core

function of the United Nations development system. Fragmented finance sources, the short-term nature of funding and the specific conditions that may be attached to funding present a challenge for supporting long-term capacity development. While results and value-for-money are important for the constituents of partner (donor) countries, an over-emphasis on these can inhibit innovative capacity development and undermine national ownership of capacity development initiatives. Measuring progress in capacity development is a major challenge for the United Nations development system, and work on a common approach to measurement is underway.

Conclusion 4: The 2030 development agenda represents an opportunity for the United Nations development system to transform its approach to capacity development. With the scale of the SDGs, the United Nations development system will need to focus very sharply on areas where it has a comparative advantage, and make the shift to a facilitative role in capacity development. Its own capacities for policy advice and knowledge brokering will need to be enhanced, as well as its capacities to support programme countries in domestic resource mobilisation and working with new and emerging development cooperation partners in the non-state sector. The 2030 development agenda provides an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between funds and programmes and specialized agencies on the one hand, and regional economic commissions in supporting the development of national capacities for the implementation of the 2030 development agenda.

6.2   Recommendations

74.   The 2030 agenda presents an opportunity for the UNDS to make significant strides in supporting the development of national capacities:

> (a) The UNDS should devise and implement strategies for strengthening national capacities and systems that have been under-utilised, namely, financial systems and procurement systems.

> (b) Implementation and monitoring of the SDGs will require sound national statistical systems, results frameworks to be monitored and reported on, as well as effective national evaluation capacities. The UNDS should make greater use of South-South and triangular cooperation to complement and extend its own efforts in these areas.

> (c) The UNDS should invest in developing its own capacities to support capacity development efforts of programme countries. In addition to on-going orientation of UNDS staff to adopting a systems approach to capacity development that goes beyond training, there should be investment in developing staff capacities for policy advice and knowledge brokering in middle-income countries. Staff capacities to support domestic resource mobilisation also need to be enhanced.

> (d) The UNDG Guidance on Capacity Development should be reviewed and updated to reflect the changes in approach to capacity development since the guidance was first drafted in 2008. Consideration should be given to having norms and standards for capacity development that agencies may wish to subscribe to, similar to the norms and standards for evaluation adopted by agencies that are members of UNEG. These norms and standards can provide agencies with the necessary flexibility in their approaches to capacity development

while ensuring that there is compliance to basic principles of effective capacity development.

75.   In order to be able to adequately fulfil its role on capacity development, the UNDS will need to be resourced in line with the requirements for that role, namely flexible and longer-term funding that would enable a targeted yet systematic approach to capacity development priorities of programme countries.

Annex A: List of documents consulted

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Annex B: List of People Consulted

Aggarwal-Khan, Sheila, Programme Strategy and Planning Team, UNEP

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Annex C: Chronology of General Assembly resolutions

A/RES/50/120 20 December 1995

22. <u>Decides</u> that the objective of capacity-building and its sustainability should continue to be an essential part of the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, with the aim of integrating their activities and providing support to efforts to strengthen national capacities in the fields of, inter alia, policy and programme formulation, development management, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and review;

23. <u>Recalls</u> the importance of accountability as well as of simplifying reporting requirements, which should be in line with national systems;

24. <u>Decides</u> that, where Governments so desire, the United Nations system should be ready to engage in providing an enabling environment to strengthen the capacity of civil societies and national non-governmental organizations that are involved in development activities, in accordance with national priorities;

25. <u>Also decides</u> that the United Nations system should use, to the fullest extent possible, available national expertise and indigenous technologies;

26. <u>Calls for</u> further work on the development of common guidelines at the field level for the recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel, including national consultants in the formulation and implementation of development projects and programmes supported by the United Nations development system in order to enhance the coherence of the system;

27. <u>Decides</u> that the United Nations development system should continue to work on promoting a common understanding and the operationalization of capacity-building concepts, as well as on ways of enhancing the sustainability of capacity-building;

28. <u>Also decides</u> that the United Nations development system should continue to work on improving the definition and guidelines for national execution and the programme approach;

29. <u>Requests</u> the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to undertake efforts in the context of national execution and capacitybuilding to enhance the absorptive capacity in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries and Africa, and to assist similar efforts undertaken by those countries;

30. <u>Stresses </u>the important role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system in transferring and facilitating the necessary technical and substantive expertise to support the national execution of United Nationsfunded programmes and projects, and invites the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the heads of specialized agencies, to inform the Economic and Social Council of the measures taken by those specialized agencies in response to General Assembly resolution 47/199, in particular as regards national execution;

A/RES/53/192 15 December 1998

Capacity-building

37. *Reaffirms* that capacity-building and its sustainability should be explicitly articulated as a goal of technical assistance provided by the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, with the aim of strengthening national capacities in the fields of, inter alia, policy and programme formulation, development management, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and review;

A/RES/56/201 19 December 2001

Capacity-building

28. *Stresses* that capacity-building and its sustainability should be explicitly articulated as a goal of technical assistance provided by operational activities of the United Nations system, with the aim of strengthening national capacities, and that the technical skills profiles of country offices should be regularly assessed to ensure effective capacity-building of the recipient countries, and requests United Nations organizations to review their efforts in the field of capacity-building and to report, through the Secretary-General, to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2002, on the results achieved in this area;

29. *Also stresses* the importance of disseminating, to the fullest extent possible, the expertise acquired through the technical assistance provided by operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the programme countries;

30. *Reiterates* that the United Nations system should use, to the fullest extent possible and practicable, available national expertise and indigenous technologies in the implementation of operational activities, and also reiterates its call for the development of common guidelines at the field level for the recruitment, remuneration and training of national project personnel, including national consultants, for the formulation and implementation of development projects and programmes supported by the United Nations development system;

31. *Requests* the United Nations system to enhance the capacity of national Governments to coordinate the external assistance received from the international community, including from the United Nations system;

32. *Calls upon* the organizations of the United Nations development system to support the strengthening of the capacity of Governments to establish databanks and carry out poverty assessments at the country level;

A/RES/59/250 22 December 2004

Capacity-building

26. *Recognizes* that capacity development and ownership of national development strategies are essential for the achievement of the MDGs,2 and calls upon United Nations organizations to provide further support to the efforts of developing countries to establish and/or maintain effective national institutions and to support the implementation and, as necessary, the devising of national strategies for capacity-building;

27. *Urges* all organizations of the United Nations development system to intensify inter-agency sharing of information at the system-wide level on good practices and experiences gained, results achieved, benchmarks and indicators, monitoring and evaluation criteria concerning their capacity-building activities;

28. *Encourages* all organizations of the United Nations development system to include reporting on their capacity-building activities in their annual reports to their respective governing bodies;

29. *Requests* the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to analyse the capacity development efforts of the United Nations development system and to make recommendations on measures necessary to enhance their effectiveness, including through the improvement of the assessment and measurement of results;

30. *Calls upon* United Nations organizations to further strengthen the capacity of developing countries to better utilize the various aid modalities, including system-wide approaches and budget support;

31. *Also calls upon* United Nations organizations to adopt measures that ensure sustainability in capacity-

building activities, and reiterates that the United Nations development system should use, to the fullest extent possible, national execution and available national expertise and technologies as the norm in the implementation of operational activities;

32. *Stresses* that developing countries, in order to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, should have access to new and emerging technologies, including information and communication technologies, which requires technology transfer, technical cooperation and the building and nurturing of scientific and technological capacity to participate in the development and adaptation of these technologies to local conditions, and in this regard urges Member States and the United Nations system to ensure the promotion and transfer of new and emerging technologies to developing countries;

33. *Encourages* the United Nations development system to support the national development strategies and plans of countries with economies in transition that face continuing difficulties in economic and social development, specifically to assist them in addressing the challenges of achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

A/62/208 19 December 2007

Capacity-building and development

35. *Recognizes* that capacity development and ownership of national development strategies are essential for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and calls upon United Nations organizations to provide further support to the efforts of developing countries to establish and/or maintain effective national institutions and to support the implementation and, as necessary, the devising of national strategies for capacity-building;

36. *Stresses* that capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to take measures to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach by the United Nations development system in its support to capacity development efforts of programme countries;

37. *Calls upon* the United Nations development system to further support capacity-building and capacity development of developing countries, upon their request, to effectively coordinate and evaluate the impact of external development assistance in line with national development plans and priorities;

38. *Requests* the United Nations development system to support the development of specific frameworks aimed at enabling programme countries, upon their request, to design, monitor and evaluate results in the development of their capacities to achieve national development goals and strategies;

39. *Calls upon* United Nations organizations to adopt measures that ensure sustainability in capacity-building activities, and reiterates that the United Nations development system should use, to the fullest extent possible, national execution and available national expertise and technologies as the norm in the implementation of operational activities by focusing on national structures and avoiding, wherever possible, the practice of establishing parallel implementation units outside of national and local institutions;

40. *Calls upon* the United Nations development system to continue to strengthen national execution bearing in mind the importance of building national capacity, simplifying procedures and aligning them with national procedures;

41. *Requests* the United Nations development system to strengthen its procurement systems, guided by best practices, and to progressively rely on national systems for procurement;

42. *Also requests* the United Nations development system, in consultation with Member States, to create and report on a specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound results framework to measure capacity-building initiatives and activities of the United Nations development system in developing countries;

43. *Encourages* the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system to intensify collaboration at the country and regional levels to achieve more effective use of their expertise, resources and actions towards strengthening national capacities, in accordance with national priorities and development plans, including through the common country assessment, when required, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

44. *Welcomes* efforts and initiatives to enhance the quality of aid and to increase its impact, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and calls for concrete, effective and timely action in implementing all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, with clear monitoring and deadlines;

45. *Stresses* that programme countries, in order to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, should have access to new and emerging technologies, which requires technology transfer, technical cooperation and the building and nurturing of scientific and technological capacity to participate in the development and adaptation of these technologies to local conditions, and in this regard urges Member States and the United Nations system to support the promotion and transfer of new and emerging technologies to programme countries;

46. *Requests* the United Nations development system to strengthen its role in facilitating access of developing countries to new and emerging technologies;

47. *Urges* all organizations of the United Nations development system to intensify inter-agency sharing of information at the system-wide level on good practices and experiences gained, results achieved, benchmarks and indicators and monitoring and evaluation criteria concerning their capacity-building and capacity development activities;

A/67/226 21 December 2012

Capacity building and development

57. *Recognize*s that capacity development and ownership of national development strategies are essential for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and calls upon organizations of the United Nations development system to provide further support to the efforts of developing countries, in alignment with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to establish and/or maintain effective national institutions and to support the implementation and, as necessary, the devising of national strategies for capacity-building, including policy advisory support, to deal with national and global challenges;

58. *Encourage*s the United Nations system to promote sustainable development outcomes through strengthening normative and operational linkages within the United Nations system and, in this regard, to direct particular efforts to supporting programme countries, at their request, in building national capacity for inclusive, equitable, participatory, transparent and accountable national development processes, in order to target and empower the poor and people in vulnerable situations;

59. *Emphasizes* the need for enhanced capacity-building for sustainable development, and in this regard calls for the strengthening of technical and scientific cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, and reiterates the importance of human resources development, including training, the exchange of experience and expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance for capacity-building, which involves strengthening institutional capacities, including planning, management, monitoring and evaluation capacities;

60. *Stresses* that capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system and one of the key interrelated principles that must be applied at the country level, and in this regard notes the efforts undertaken by the United Nations development system to identify capacity gaps, in particular the 2010 common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidelines and the 2010 United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance and support package;

61. *Calls upon* the United Nations development system to strengthen its focus on developing national capacities for development planning, disaggregated data collection and analysis, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, with an emphasis on the effective integration of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development, and in this regard recognizes that the resources of the United Nations development system, including the knowledge base and expertise of all resident and non-resident agencies, should be available for access by developing countries;

62. *Also calls* upon the United Nations development system to further support the capacity-building and capacity development of developing countries, upon their request, and to effectively coordinate and evaluate the impact of external development assistance in line with national development plans and priorities;

63. *Request*s the United Nations development system to develop, for the consideration of Member States, a common approach for measuring progress in capacity development, as well as to develop specific frameworks aimed at enabling programme countries, upon their request, to design, monitor and evaluate results in the development of their capacities to achieve national development goals and strategies;

64. *Calls upon* United Nations organizations to adopt measures that ensure sustainability in capacity-building activities, and reiterates that the United Nations development system should use, to the fullest extent possible, and strengthen national execution/implementation and available national expertise and technologies as the norm in the implementation of operational activities by focusing on national structures and avoiding, wherever possible, the practice of establishing parallel implementation units outside of national and local institutions;

65. *Stresses* that programme countries, in order to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, should have access to new and emerging technologies, which requires technology transfer, technical cooperation and the building and nurturing of scientific and technological capacity to participate in the development and adaptation of these technologies to local conditions, and in this regard urges Member States and the United Nations system to support the promotion and transfer of new and emerging technologies to programme countries;

66. *Encourages* the United Nations development system to make increased use of national public and private systems for support services, including for procurement, security, information technology, telecommunications, travel and banking, as well as, when appropriate, for planning, reporting and evaluation, and also encourages the United Nations development system to avoid and significantly reduce the number of its parallel project implementation units in programme countries as a means of strengthening national capacities and reducing transaction costs;

67. *Recalls* paragraph 127 of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the importance of the use of national professional staff and national consultants, wherever feasible and to the advantage of the programme countries;

68. *Urges* all organizations of the United Nations development system to intensify inter-agency sharing of information, at the system-wide level, on good practices and experiences gained, results achieved, benchmarks and indicators and monitoring and evaluation criteria concerning their capacity-building and capacity development activities;