



ECOSOC Dialogue on the “longer-term positioning of the UN development system”

“UNDG Perspectives” on Capacity, Impact and Partnership Approaches, 22 May 2015

“A UN system that is “fit for purpose” to deliver on the post-2015 agenda is one that is relevant, innovative, agile, inclusive, coordinated and results-oriented. ... It provides specialized advice when requested, and is equally adept at ensuring an integrated approach, working across disciplines with relevant skill sets to better support Member States in addressing complex multisectoral challenges. It forges effective partnerships to leverage external partners’ expertise, capacities and resources. Such a system requires shared goals, visionary and committed leadership, and a global, highly- skilled and adaptable international civil service. And it must reach the highest standards of accountability, transparency and impact.”

UN Secretary-General’s Synthesis Report¹

1. Introduction

This paper presents initial “UNDG perspectives” on capacity, impact and partnership approaches developed in advance of draft papers on this topic prepared by UN DESA and by independent consultants. The paper will be provided as an input to, and complements, the UN DESA background paper, and will serve as “UNDG perspectives on capacity, impact and partnership approaches” for the fourth ECOSOC workshop to be held on 27th May 2015.

This is the fourth “UNDG perspectives” paper developed by the UNDG ASG AG for the ECOSOC dialogue. Taken together these four papers outline some of the key questions the UNDG would like to see Member States consider during the dialogue, and in the lead up to the 2016 QCPR. The remit of this final paper is particularly broad, given that it covers three subjects that are central to the current QCPR and critical to the longer-term positioning of the UN development system (UNDS) and the role it will need to play in the post-2015 era. As with other papers, this “UNDG perspectives” paper therefore takes as its primary focus the country and interagency level.

2. Definitions

The term capacity is used in two ways in this paper. The first relates to the *capacity development* support that the UNDS provides to Member States and other stakeholders. For the purposes of this paper, capacity development is defined as “*the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time*”. Capacity is understood to be interdependent across the levels of the individual, organizational and enabling environment². The second relates to the capacity of the *UNDS itself* to support countries and deliver results in the most coherent, effective and efficient manner in the post-2015 era. This includes both the capacity of the system as a whole, and of its leadership and staff. This “UNDG perspectives” paper will primarily focus on the internal capacity of the UNDS, in particular at the country level.

¹ The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet (A/69/700)

² https://undg.org/main/undg_document/technical-brief-on-undg-programming-principles-capacity-development/

For the purposes of this paper, *impact* is understood as the changes in people’s lives, including “*changes in knowledge, skill, behavior, health or living conditions for children, adults, families or communities, produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended*”³.

Finally, *partnership approaches* refers to the strategies and modalities used to engage diverse stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, in inclusive, transparent and accountable collective efforts to achieve development impact and deliver the SDGs. For the purposes of this paper, *partnerships* primarily refer to the issue-based, multi-stakeholder partnerships and coalitions that will be central to delivering results and impact in the post-2015 era.

3. Current status of “capacity, impact and partnership approaches”

This section provides a brief snapshot of the “current state of play” with regard to capacity, impact and partnerships approaches, in particular at the interagency and country level.

i) Capacity development of national partners

The QCPR identifies capacity development as a core function of the UNDS, as was also echoed in the first ECOSOC workshop on functions. As noted in the 2015 QCPR report, more coherent and sustainable support to capacity development is a priority for programme countries⁴. Surveys conducted for the QCPR report show that programme country governments see room for improvement in the UNDS’s support for capacity development: 31 percent strongly agreed and 59 percent somewhat agreed that the UN is effective in developing country capacities. In “Delivering as One” countries, more than half of governments strongly agreed that the UN is effective in this regard, highlighting the contribution of the “Delivering as One” approach to effective capacity development⁵.

As noted in the 2015 QCPR report, UN Agencies are improving their measurement and reporting on capacity development within the framework of their Strategic Plans, and are refining approaches to measuring change in capacity levels in different sectors. Further, as noted in the report, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, and WFP have adopted harmonized language and methods to monitor agency-specific work in their respective Strategic Plans⁶.

For example, WFP has developed a National Capacity Index that measures changes in capacity level, and is being used in support of projects to strengthen national capacity to end hunger. UN Women is currently reviewing its approach to capacity development with a view to ensuring better alignment with the UNDG and QCPR. Capacity development has been fully

³ Such effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types. <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>

⁴ A/70/62 - E/2015/4, para 73

⁵ Governments were most likely to agree that UN Country Teams were using national institutions for implementation, and national institutions and experts for design, of programmes and projects, as well as national statistical institutions. They were least likely to agree that UN Country Teams were using national procurement and financial systems. http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/qcpr/pdf/qcpr_programme_country_survey_%20analysis-2014.pdf

⁶ A/70/62 - E/2015/4, para 74

mainstreamed throughout UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA's Strategic Plans. For example, UNICEF's results framework includes output results to measure progress on UNICEF's work in support of capacity development in each of the seven outcome areas of the Strategic Plan. UNICEF's work at country level in supporting the development of national capacity includes the use of the multiple indicator cluster survey as a capacity-building tool for national and local statistical bodies and governments. Sustainability is ensured through the use of existing staff and by embedding innovative ways of collecting and analyzing data into legal, institutional and administrative frameworks⁷. Capacity development is also paramount in UNFPA's Strategic Plan, where 12 out of 15 development outputs focus on strengthening national capacity. At the regional level, UNFPA's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia is finalizing its regional capacity development strategy, with a focus on learning and skills building, governance, capacity utilization, retention and sustainability, with the primary aim of strengthening regional and national organizations and institutions. Further, UN Regional Commissions provide capacity building to Member States in support of implementation of regional conventions and agreements sponsored by the Commissions.

Capacity development is one of five key UN programming principles used in country programming, and the UNDG approach is outlined in guidance to UNCTs preparing UNDAFs⁸, and in complementary UN-wide guidance on capacity development in post-conflict settings⁹. In line with the QCPR, the UNDG is currently developing a common approach to measuring capacity development which will build on this guidance, as well as on an approach and framework for measuring capacity development developed by UNDP. A task team has been convened under the UNDG Programme Working Group to develop a common approach to measuring capacity development. Refined terms of reference and deliverables have been identified: as a first step, an inventory of approaches will be developed, as the basis for a harmonized approach, building on the work previously done by the UNDG.

Further, and in the context of supporting countries to implement the SDGs, the UNDG is developing and updating guidance for UNCTs on country programming, on how to support countries to mainstream the SDGs into national frameworks and plans, as well as guidance on national reporting on the SDGs.

ii) Capacity of the UNDS system, leadership and staff

The QCPR highlights the importance of strengthening the capacity of the UN development system to effectively address the “*full range of development challenges of our time*”. It calls on UN Agencies to enhance their investment in staff development to ensure the UNDS has the right mix of capacities and skills, including leadership skills and high-quality policy and programme advice, to effectively support programme countries. In addition, the QCPR calls for the strengthening of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) function, including through appropriate training, preparations, support and qualifications of UN Resident Coordinators, as well as

⁷ Key lessons learned are that duty-bearers must play a greater role in promoting programming that focuses on equity, and that assistance should be directed at removing specific systemic bottlenecks in delivering essential services for children.

⁸ https://undg.org/main/undg_document/technical-brief-on-undg-programming-principles-capacity-development/

⁹ https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CivCap-Capacity-Development-Guidance-Note_130816.pdf

strengthened capacity of Resident Coordinator's Offices (RCOs) to enhance coordination and effectiveness at the country level.

At the global level, the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) is leading the human resources management agenda, including through the inter-agency Human Resources Network¹⁰, with the overarching goal of developing an independent, neutral, highly skilled and engaged civil service that can meet the ever-changing requirements of the international community in the post-2015 era. Strengthened leadership and managerial culture, effective staff development policies and mechanisms, and an organizational environment that recognizes and rewards good performance, are key to this effort. The HLCM is actively engaged in achieving interagency mobility, and in the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) review to develop a competitive and simplified compensation package that enables Organizations to attract and develop staff of the highest caliber and reduce transaction costs.

As identified in the UN Secretary-General's 2014 report on the status of women in the UN system, the representation of women is inversely proportional to the level at which they serve. Overall from 2011-2013 women represented 42 percent of professional and higher categories of staff: ranging from 57.9 percent of P2 staff, to 30.1 percent of D2 staff. Further there is a 15 percent gender gap in promotions at the P5-D2 level and a higher level of separations among women in non-headquarters postings. As the report notes, the continuing challenge for the UN system, including the Secretariat, is to "*reverse the inverse relationship between seniority and the representation of women*"¹¹.

With regard to the Resident Coordinator system, the UNDG has taken significant steps to clarify and upgrade the leadership role of the UN RC, including by updating the TOR to give greater emphasis to the planning and coordination role of the RC, as well as to the often multi-dimensional nature of the position, where the RC may also serve as Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), Designated Official (DO), and Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (DSRSG). Efforts have also been made to improve the RC selection process, with the design of a complete new assessment center¹² and increased focus on ensuring greater diversity within the RC cadre.

As of early May 2015, 122 designated UN RCs are currently serving or in the process of assuming their functions within the next month. Of these, 42 percent are female and 58 percent are male, 46 percent are from the South, and 54 percent are from the North, while 57 percent are from UNDP and 43 percent from other UN agencies. As noted in the "UNDG perspectives" paper on organizational arrangements, strong progress has also been made towards implementation of the Management and Accountability system. Looking forward it will be important to accelerate these efforts, including the provision that the UN RC provides input into the performance assessment of UNCT country team members, and the full implementation of the firewall.

¹⁰ The HR network brings together Directors of Human Resources departments from over 30 UN and related organizations. The HRN provides strategic advice and leadership in the management of human resources, and facilitates Delivering as One by harmonizing and reforming human resource business practices and through enhancing and facilitating inter-agency mobility. See <http://www.unsceb.org/content/hrn>

¹¹ Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system (A/69/346)

¹² See A/70/62 - E/2015/4 paras 119-131.

Through the newly agreed and adopted cost-sharing arrangement for the UN RC system, a minimum capacity for all Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) has been established, that varies according to different country settings, and the core coordination functions supported by the cost-sharing arrangement have been identified and will be reported on annually¹³. The greatest investment in RCO capacity is in LDCs and lower middle-income countries, and crisis/transition country contexts. The cost of the UN RC system remains modest, at an estimated 0.8 percent of expenditure on all UN development-related activities in 2014¹⁴.

As noted in the 2015 QCPR report, while a majority of UN Resident Coordinators reported being able to access the technical expertise of the UN system at the country level, 15 percent had experienced difficulties in doing so¹⁵. The ability for UN RCs to be able to draw on the assets of the system at all levels will be critical going forward.

In this context, regional UNDG teams are strengthening their capacity to support UN RCs and UNCTs. In 2014, regional UNDG teams supported the roll-out and implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures for Delivering as One, and supported UNCTs including through i) providing technical support to RCs/UNCTs, ii) ensuring quality assurance to UNDAFs/One Programmes, iii) performance management, and iv) troubleshooting in difficult country situations.

In Asia-Pacific, the Regional UNDG, through its Secretariat and Peer Support Group (PSG), took stock of the trends in common programming practices (UNDAF/One Programme formulation), reviewing the extent to which the UNDAF/One Programme formulation process leads to definition of strategic UN joint results, identifies ways to deliver UN joint results together better, including through “Delivering as One”, and enables the UN system to monitor and account for delivery of UN joint results in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional UNDG provided quality assurance and technical support to the 2014 roll-out countries (Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Panama and Uruguay). Looking forward, several regional teams are focusing on improving the capacity of peer support groups to conduct quality assurance of UNDAFs and One Programmes.

At the global level, the UNDG is currently rolling out a series of seminars and other workshops to ensure UN Agency staff and particularly field leadership (Regional UNDGs, RCs and UNCTs) are equipped to implement the Standard Operating Procedures for Delivering as One. The UNDG Leadership Working Group, established this year, will focus on identifying and addressing strategic leadership issues and appropriate response initiatives. The HLCM and UNDG are also collaborating on common services training for staff at global, regional and country levels. Further, OHCHR is currently developing online human rights training, and UN Women’s Training Centre offers system-wide training on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and gender and system-wide coherence. The UN System Staff College provides

¹³ These functions include: strategic analysis and planning; oversight of the UN country programming cycle; representation of and support of UN Secretariat and UN agencies/NRAs; support to national coordination systems and processes; development and management of shared operational support services; crisis management preparedness and response; external communications and advocacy; human rights and development; joint resource mobilization and fund management; and general UNCT oversight and coordination.

¹⁴ See A/70/62 - E/2015/4 para 129

¹⁵ See A/70/62 - E/2015/4 para 125.

training for UN staff on a wide range of topics, and is currently upgrading and revising its offerings for the post-2015 era, including establishing a post-2015 “hub” for UN staff: <http://post2015.unssc.org>. In addition to agency-specific training in support of leadership, programmatic, technical and operational skill development, UN Agencies are also offering training to staff of other UN Agencies, such as the UNICEF online training on HACT.

iii) Impact

The QCPR emphasizes that the contribution of the UNDS’s “operational activities for development”¹⁶ should be valued and assessed based on their impact in programme countries, including with regard to development of national capacities. Further, the QCPR requests the UNDS to accelerate work to develop and sustain a results culture at all levels, and develop clear and robust results frameworks in the context of their Strategic Plans. The QCPR also highlights the need to streamline and improve planning, monitoring, measurement and reporting on system-wide results¹⁷.

As noted in the 2015 QCPR report, significant progress has been made in aligning Agency planning and budgeting cycles with the QCPR: 15 of 22 entities have aligned their cycles with the QCPR. Further, the report shows that there has been good progress towards the use of common results-based tools and principles. Common UNDG guidance on results-based management was developed in 2011 and is being used by 15 Agencies. Agencies have also significantly strengthened their use of results based frameworks in Strategic Plans, as recognized by independent multi-lateral assessments by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)¹⁸.

UN agencies, funds and programmes are also making significant strides with regard to transparency of resources provided through development cooperation, at the global level. As cited in the “UNDG perspectives on funding” paper, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, WFP and UNAIDS have open data platforms which include information on resources and results. For example, open.undp.org presents UNDP’s 6000+ development projects and 8000 outputs in 177 countries and territories worldwide by location, funding source, and focus area, and users are able to drill down for comprehensive project data. UNICEF’s website, open.unicef.org, has similar functions. UNDP ranked first globally in the 2014 Aid Transparency Index, ahead of the UK, US, GAVI, the Asian Development Bank, Sweden and the World Bank, due to consistent improvement in information published to IATI about its activities¹⁹. UNICEF also ranked above average in the 2014 assessment. Other UN Agencies are publishing to the IATI standard²⁰. For

¹⁶ As highlighted in the “UNDG Perspectives on Organizational Arrangements” paper, the term “operational activities for development” as defined in the QCPR is understood to encompass the normative and policy advisory role the UNDS plays at the country level, the technical assistance and advice it provides, and the operational support and direct service delivery it undertakes.

¹⁷ A/RES/67/226

¹⁸ See for example the 2014 assessments of FAO, UN Women, UNFPA and UNHCR which highlight the progress made in developing a results culture and articulating strategic results which are relevant at both the global and country levels.

¹⁹ See <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/donor/undp/>

²⁰ OCHA was assessed in 2014 and rated fair. Other agencies publishing under IATI include UNOPS, UN-Habitat, UNCDF, UN Women, WFP, UNFPA and IFAD. Organizations planning to publish include ILO and UNESCO. <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/major-donor/united-nations/>

example, UNFPA's data.unfpa.org rates among the top five agencies ranked as "ambitious" by IATI²¹.

The WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work (GPW) provides a high-level strategic vision for the work of WHO. The GPW has defined a clear results chain to explain how the work of the Organization contributes to the achievement of a clearly defined set of outcomes and impacts, and the means by which WHO can be held accountable for the way resources are used to achieve specific results²². Further, WHO has developed a Programme Budget portal with the aim of increasing transparency and accountability regarding WHO financing, and to improve reporting on results. The portal is updated on a quarterly basis to provide the latest financial information, and on an annual basis to provide updates on technical implementation²³.

According to UNDG Guidance on "How to Prepare an UNDAF", all UN Country Teams are required to hold annual reviews, together with government and partners, to monitor progress towards achieving the results of the UNDAF. To increase the robustness of cross-agency results reporting to national governments, and ensure a coherent approach across agencies at country level, a common format is used for annual results reporting to governments. This is in use in almost all of the 45 countries adopting the "Delivering as One" approach. Gaps between countries conducting annual reviews, and providing common written results reporting persist however. According to the survey of UN Resident Coordinators conducted for the 2015 QCPR report, in 2014, 40 of 78 UN RCs reported preparing an UNDAF report in 2014: 80 percent of DaO countries that responded had provided such a report.

As recognized in surveys conducted with governments and UN RCs for the 2015 QCPR report, the quality of UNDAF reporting has been improving with more reports structured around UNDAF/One Programme outcomes²⁴. For example, the UNCT in Tanzania has reported three times on its 2011-2016 UNDAF (UN Development Assistance Plan), most recently in 2013-2014. The UNDAF, and UNDAF annual reporting, is aligned to national priorities, and reports against the three priority areas of the UNDAF, as well as results under the Delivering as One initiative²⁵. Further, as highlighted in the "UNDG perspectives" paper on organizational arrangements, several countries, including Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda, have in place, or are developing, online UNDAF monitoring tools to increase transparency of results reporting.

While critical for accountability, dual reporting - as individual agencies, and as the UNCT as a whole - remains a challenge. This includes difficulties in harmonizing and resourcing both Agency and system-wide country level reporting, linking UNCT reporting to national development results and including the work of the UN system as whole. Nevertheless, strong progress has been made. According to the 2015 QCPR report, 13 agencies reported that they have developed specific measures to simplify and harmonize their agency-specific programming instruments, and have discussed these with their governing boards. Agencies are ensuring

²¹ Organizations' implementation plans are categorized into groups based on their intention to publish, their overall publication approach and coverage. See <http://tracker.publishwhatyoufund.org/plan/organisations/>

²² WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/112792/1/GPW_2014-2019_eng.pdf

²³ See: <https://extranet.who.int/programmebudget/>

²⁴ http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/qcpr/pdf/desa_rc_survey_analysis_2014.pdf

²⁵ <http://tz.one.un.org/images/PDF/UNDAP-AR2013-2014-WEB.pdf>

harmonization of country and global level results frameworks and/or reporting with UNDAF/One Programme frameworks²⁶. For example, UNDP and UNICEF draw Country Programme Document outcomes verbatim from the UNDAF to facilitate coherence between country and headquarters reporting. UNFPA's new results planning, monitoring and reporting system will enable reporting against both the UNFPA Strategic Plan, and the UNFPA Country Programme contribution to the UNDAF.

The Standard Operating Procedures for “Delivering as One” recommend that the UNDAF/One Programme be developed at the Outcome level, while agency specific documents outline the outputs that contribute to the achievement of these outcomes, helping to further streamline the reporting process. As noted in the 2015 QCPR report, and as reflected in the UNDG Plan of Action for Headquarters, the introduction of a system-wide template for UN country results reporting is also designed to address the issue of separate and often uncoordinated reporting²⁷.

Critical to achieving results and ultimately impact is the availability of robust, disaggregated data both within the UN system, and in the countries the UNDS serves. Currently the UN Chief Executives Board is considering how best the UN system can support the data revolution and is developing a programme of work in this regard, which aims to ensure availability of global data on progress towards the SDGs, as well as open and transparent access to UN system data. Operationalizing the data revolution will be key including harmonizing individual agency support to different survey instruments at country level. Within the UNDG, the Sustainable Development Working Group is developing a strategy for furthering national capacities for data, accountability and reporting for roll out to UNCTs in the second half of 2015.

As highlighted in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on organizational arrangements, there is a trend towards more frequent scanning and monitoring at country level. UNCTs designing their UNDAFs in 2015 are developing real-time monitoring frameworks for their new UNDAFs (in Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique and Benin), and are focusing on validating and decentralizing data collection (in Chad, Gambia, Thailand and Malawi). Further, some countries (such as Eritrea, Vietnam, Uganda and Zimbabwe) are bringing the UN, national statistical institutions, and other international development partners together to exchange and coordinate data for development at country level.

With regard to communicating the results and impact of the work of UNCTs, and engaging the general public in sustainable development solutions, there are solid foundations in place that can be built on. A majority of UNCTs have in place joint communications strategies, and most UNCTs have common UN country level websites. Many new UNDAFs give greater emphasis to public engagement, transparency, and accountability, including by supporting partners in conducting satisfaction surveys, and managing data analysis to inform and improve policy development. As highlighted in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on organizational arrangements, UNCTs are building on the experience of the post-2015 consultations, and are developing models

²⁶ A/70/62 - E/2015/4

²⁷ A/70/62 – E/2015/4

to engage citizens in the design of their UNDAFs (in Albania, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Lesotho and the Lao People's Democratic Republic).

However, greater investment is needed to better evaluate and communicate results and impact at the country level. Surveys of programme countries and UN Resident Coordinators conducted for the 2015 QCPR report show that UNCTs continue to face challenges linking country results reports to national development results. Further, the 2014 survey of UN Resident Coordinators found that UNCTs in only half of all countries with an UNDAF or One Programme have arranged for its evaluation in the last 5 years.

It also remains a challenge to evaluate and assess system-wide results and impact at the global level. UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and WFP have developed a common set of QCPR indicators in their Strategic Plans. Some agencies have other mechanisms to report on QCPR implementation: for example the World Health Assembly has a standing agenda item on collaboration in the UN system, and the WHO secretariat reports on the adoption of the QCPR and its implementation. System-wide accountability frameworks such as the UN-SWAP for gender equality and the empowerment of women provide an important mechanism for tracking system-wide progress towards a common set of targets. More remains to be done however in particular with regard to improving system-wide reporting on coordination efforts and development results and impact.

iv) Partnership approaches

The QCPR highlights the importance of the UNDS increasing its capacity to engage in partnerships with diverse stakeholders and at all levels. As highlighted in the 2015 QCPR report, UNDS agencies see their role in facilitating partnerships as increasingly important, and this was highlighted as a key function in the first ECOSOC workshop on functions. Demand for support requested by countries is changing, and the UNDS is expected to shift from providing support to facilitating relationships and partnerships at the global, regional and country level²⁸.

At the global level, the UN Office for Partnerships serves as the gateway for public-private partnerships in support of the MDGs. This includes the UN Fund for International Partnerships, which had channeled approximately \$1.3 billion cumulatively at the end of 2013, supporting 544 projects and programmes implemented by 43 UN agencies in 124 countries. Further, the UN Democracy Fund, established in 2005, focuses on strengthening the voice and participation of civil society, promoting human rights and ensuring participation in democratic processes, and had channeled \$135 million to 500 projects in 100 countries by the end of 2013²⁹.

UNDS agencies are actively involved in such partnerships at all levels. There are many examples. "Every Woman, Every Child" was launched in 2010 to accelerate progress towards MDGs 4, 5 and 6, and has engaged a broad array of partners, with more than 300 organizations making over 400 specific commitments to contribute to improving the lives and health of women and children. UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, the World Bank, UNAIDS and UN Women (the H4+) provide joint guidance, leadership and programmatic support to countries. Funding for women's and children's health has increased from \$40 billion in September 2010 to \$59.8 billion in May

²⁸ A/70/62 – E/2015/4 para 89

²⁹ United Nations Office for Partnerships, Report of the Secretary-General, 31 July 2014 (A/69/218)

2014. Since 2010 2.4 million lives of women and children have been saved, 11 million additional women have given birth in a health facility, and 8.4 million women and girls use modern contraceptives³⁰.

The Global Plan to eliminate new HIV infections among children and keep their mothers alive is a UNAIDS public-private partnership, bringing together 30 countries and 50 civil society, private sector, networks of people living with HIV, and international organization partners. Launched in 2011 and spearheaded by UNAIDS and the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the initiative leads the international call for collective action on mother to child transmission of HIV, and acts as a catalyst for concerted country-level action. It prioritizes 22 countries with the highest number of pregnant women living with HIV in need of services. By the end of 2013, and for the first time since the 1990s, the number of new HIV infections among children in 21 Global Plan priority countries had dropped to under 200,000 representing a 43 percent decline in the number of new HIV infections among children in these countries since 2009.

Launched in 2011, the Sustainable Energy for All initiative aims to mobilize action from all sectors of society to provide universal access to modern energy services, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency, and double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. FAO, UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, the World Bank, the UN Foundation and other partners and stakeholders have partnered with more than 85 developing countries, identifying over 50 high impact opportunities and mobilizing resources in support of these objectives.

The MDGs have provided a framework for leveraging partnerships and channeling technical assistance, financing and advocacy efforts towards achieving a common set of results. In Colombia, for example, the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) has been applied across 76 territories, at state and municipal levels, with UN support. Local governments are partnering with the private sector to implement regional MDG acceleration plans, aimed at reducing poverty and gender inequality in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities. In three departments in the Caribe Colombiano, the MAF is being applied by WFP and the Ministry of Social Protection with a focus on food and nutrition security. In the municipalities of Nariño and Santander, acceleration solutions will be implemented in partnership by local government and UN organizations including UNDP, WHO, FAO, and UN Women. Overall, the MAF continues to be an important tool for engaging diverse partners in development at country level, in particular the private sector, which has played a vital role in mobilizing funding in support of the initiative.

UN RCs and UNCTS report engaging in new partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders and an increasing number of UNCTs are calling their UNDAFs “partnership” or “cooperation” frameworks to highlight the growing importance of partnerships and collaboration as the foundation of the UN's work at country level. For example, in Tunisia, the UN-Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – UNPRPD – supported the commitment of national authorities to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The partnership has successfully engaged civil society organizations working on disability issues, and has also

³⁰ http://everywomaneverychild.org/images/March_17_EWEC_GSR_Layout_v08_LR.pdf

brought CSOs who have not traditionally worked on disability issues into the partnership. In Mozambique, a public-private partnership with the Swedish Embassy, Norwegian company Lurio Green Resources (LGR), and UNICEF, WHO and UNHCR, aims to strengthen the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system, by promoting free registration of children in districts where LGR is operational.

The QCPR also calls on the UNDS to strengthen its support to North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation³¹. The 2015 QCPR report highlights the rising demand for UNDS support to South-South cooperation (SSC). The first ECOSOC workshop on functions also stressed the importance of the UNDS' role in fostering and supporting South-South, North-South, South-North and triangular cooperation.

Twenty UN entities have included such cooperation in their Strategic Plans, while 11 are providing support to projects managed and supported by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation. UNDP continues to strengthen its support to system-wide coordination by hosting the UN Office on South-South Cooperation. UNDP also actively integrates South-South and triangular cooperation modalities into its global, regional and country programming. As at the end of 2014, 469 projects supported by UNDP have supported South-South and triangular cooperation to achieve development results. By leveraging its' country and programmatic reach and resources, UNDP will provide a global operational arm for South-South and triangular cooperation, facilitated by a global demand-supply matching and solution exchange platform that is also accessible to other UNDS agencies.

Eighteen entities have reported on South-South cooperation in their annual reports, and several have also undertaken evaluations and assessments of their efforts in this regard. Several agencies have developed or are in the process of developing corporate strategies for South-South and triangular cooperation³². For example, UNFPA has scaled up its engagement in South-South cooperation, with 74 percent of programme countries using this modality to strengthen programme performance in 2014. South-South cooperation has been identified as a corporate priority in 2015, with a dedicated project established on South-South cooperation. In 2013, ninety-five UNICEF country offices reported engagement in South-South cooperation. This cooperation included study tours, country exchange visits and sharing of innovations such as U-report (a social monitoring tool using text messaging to engage young people) and use of text messaging for birth registration. South-South cooperation is reflected in the WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work (GPW). Recognizing the presence of WHO in some 150 countries, territories and areas, the GPW restates the role of WHO as a provider of technical support to individual Member States, facilitating increasing linkages within and between countries in the interests of South-South and triangular cooperation³³.

The ILO promotes city-to-city cooperation within the framework of its South-South and Triangular Cooperation strategy to advance the Decent Work Agenda. Since 2012, when the ILO and United Cities and Local governments agreed to cooperate in the area of local economic and

³¹ A/RES/67/226, para 59.

³² http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/qcpr/pdf/qcpr-hqsurvey_analysis_report-2014.pdf

³³ WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/112792/1/GPW_2014-2019_eng.pdf

social development, a roadmap on South-South cooperation between cities has been adopted, and local economic and social development, and South-South cooperation, have been discussed during two meetings bringing together intermediary cities from the North and the South.

UNAIDS is working with governments and a range of stakeholders to strengthen and promote South-South cooperation and technology transfer, within the overall context of the 2011 UNGA Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which called for shared responsibility and global solidarity, and the African Union Roadmap on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, TB and Malaria. Initiatives have included setting up a specialized working group with UNIDO and WHO on developing Southern pharmaceutical companies to improve access to medicines, including anti-retrovirals, and provision of a platform at the World Investment Forum, bringing together UNCTAD, WHO and generic-producing pharmaceutical companies from the South.

At country level, some 80 percent of UN Resident Coordinators surveyed for the 2015 QCPR report had received requests from programme countries to support their cooperation with other such countries. They reported a high level of interest among programme countries in receiving UN support to access the knowledge and expertise of other developing countries and identify cooperation partners, as well as support for regional integration and financial support. 14 percent of UN RCs reported integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into the UNDAF to a great extent, and 67 percent to some extent. South-South and triangular cooperation is more explicitly reflected in new UNDAFs and One Programmes, including as a specific outcome, partnership strategy, and approach to development.

In Brazil, the 2012-2015 UNDAF includes a specific outcome on South-South cooperation. In 2013, the UN system mobilized \$202 million to promote knowledge exchange and the UNCT in Brazil actively pursues this cooperation modality through a Horizontal Cooperation Thematic Group. The UN in partnership with the Ministry of Health is expanding mechanisms for systematized knowledge management, with the aim of providing technical and financial resources to the Health Agency for the Americas (ASA). Five South-South technical cooperation projects have already been approved, under the ASA's Plan, in cooperation with the Community of Portuguese Language Communities, with a further 10 awaiting approval in 2015. WFP's Centre of Excellence against Hunger is also based in Brazil, and makes Brazil's experience in addressing Zero Hunger available to other developing countries. The Centre advocates for the development of nationally owned, sustainable programmes and policies for school feeding, social protection and nutrition improvement, and in 2014, the Centre had completed 3 years of operations, and provided support over 34 developing countries.

The UN in Chile has included South-South cooperation as one of four areas of cooperation in the new UNDAF 2015-2018, and has committed to support Chile in developing and implementing a strategy for South-South cooperation. A flagship initiative is UNDP's cooperation in Chile's Fund Against Poverty and Hunger, under which 18 projects are currently underway throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, together with several humanitarian based donations.

At the regional level, UN Regional Commissions continue to promote South-South and triangular cooperation through their ongoing support to regional cooperation and integration

efforts, working in close partnership with other regional and sub-regional organizations including regional development banks, and supporting country capacity to integrate agreed regional norms, standards and policy objectives into national plans and initiatives.

At the global level, the UNDG has established a Task Team on South-South and triangular cooperation under the Sustainable Development Working Group, to ensure a coordinated approach, and better equip UN country teams and UN RCs to support national counterparts in implementing and following up the post-2015 development agenda.

4. Principles

In a post-2015 era, capacity, impact and partnership approaches must align with and support the overall purpose – support to Member States to deliver the SDGs and lift the poorest, most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations out of poverty, and address all forms of inequality and discrimination, so that no-one is left behind and all can benefit from sustainable development – as well as to support the key future functions of the UNDS. The capacity of the UNDS both as a system, and of its leadership and staff; the impact and results it achieves; and the partnerships that enable it to deliver, are all critical for the future relevance, coherence and effectiveness of the UNDS. Key principles, based on experience and lessons learned to date, may therefore include the following:

- **Ownership and alignment** – capacity, impact and partnership approaches must promote and support national ownership by Member States and all other stakeholders, and be aligned to national sustainable development plans and strategies, to be effective. In line with this, the UNDS must ensure inclusiveness and participation at all levels.
- **Principle-based** - in the context of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, the UNDS must support implementation of normative standards and commitments at all levels, including by strengthening capacities of duty bearers to realize these commitments, and of rights holders to understand and claim their rights.
- **Accountability and transparency** – the UNDS must be more accountable, transparent and open including in its capacity development efforts, measurement and reporting on impact, and in partnerships at all levels.
- **“Interoperability”** – the UNDS must ensure greater interoperability, recognition, and reciprocity of systems, processes, and operations at all levels, as well as across the pillars of the UN, in support of more open, transparent and inclusive capacity development efforts, measurement and reporting on system-wide results and impact, and multi-stakeholder partnership modalities and approaches.
- **Comprehensiveness and coherence** – the UNDS must ensure a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to its capacity development efforts, internal capacity building of UN management and staff, monitoring and reporting on results and impact, and approach to partnerships and South-South and triangular cooperation.

- **Complementarity and cost-effectiveness** – the UNDS must ensure that there is no duplication of efforts by the UN and its partners, and that it provides “value for money”, building on the comparative advantages of each agency.
- **Innovation and knowledge transfer** – a more systematic and scaled up approach to innovation and knowledge will be critical to support the UNDS to respond and evolve more rapidly in the post-2015 era.
- **Evidence-based, risk-informed and safeguards-based approach to development** - the UNDS must ensure that development interventions are informed by evolving realities and lessons learned from evaluation while integrating social and environmental safeguards and effectively managing risks.

5. Implications of the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs.

Capacity, impact, and partnership approaches must align with and support the UNDS’s role in supporting implementation of the SDGs, as well as the key priority functions of the UNDS in the post-2015 era. Key implications of the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs for capacity, impact and partnership approaches may therefore include the following.

- i) *Strengthened UNDS support to “capacity development” of partners will be key.*

As highlighted in the 2015 QCPR report, system-wide and coordinated approaches to capacity development will be critical in the post-2015 era. As identified in the UNDG sponsored “Dialogues on Implementation”, which aimed to create opportunities for individuals and groups to contribute ideas and proposals for implementation of the post-2015 agenda at country and global level, capacity development is at the core of successful implementation of a new development agenda that is more complex, transformative, interdependent and universally applicable than the MDGs.

A transformative development agenda requires significantly upgraded, coordinated, and integrated institutions and capacities. It will be critical to ensure more coherent and coordinated delivery of capacity development initiatives at the country level. The UNDG will need to accelerate efforts currently underway to develop a common approach to defining, assessing needs for, delivering and measuring capacity development. Promotion of systems-thinking, the ability to manage and respond in complex and rapidly-changing environments, the capacity to act in a cross-sectoral, whole of government manner to multi-sectoral challenges, and the ability of government actors and institutions to engage with non-state actors will be key. Capacity building of non-state actors including civil society will also be vital. Further, upgraded capacities for monitoring and accountability for the new development agenda, including for better data and statistics, will be essential³⁴. There is a wealth of system-wide and individual agency evaluation³⁵ focused on the impact of UNDS support to national capacity development that can be built on in this regard. These evaluations have demonstrated the role of the UNDS, and its relevance, as

³⁴ UNDG 2014 Delivering The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Opportunities At The National And Local Levels <https://www.worldwewant2015.org/dialogues2015>

³⁵ See for example, UNDP 2010, Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Strengthening National Capacities;

recognized and appreciated by national institutions, and provide important lessons learned for capacity development efforts going forward.

The 2013 UN Guidance Note for Effective Use and Development of National Capacity in Post-Conflict Contexts sets out principles that are relevant across different country contexts and which are worth re-stating here, namely that: national ownership must be the starting point for all capacity development efforts at country level; a clear understanding of how capacity development impacts existing power relations is critical for sound capacity development; support must be adapted to fit the national context while adhering to global norms and standards; capacity development support must be prioritized to address critical gap areas where there is commitment to change; a strategic approach is needed which balances achieving quick wins with investment in longer-term results; leveraging countries with comparable experience to contribute to national capacity development is key; use of both national and international human resources should be managed to reduce negative impact on national capacity; capacity development initiatives must strengthen national institutions while at the same time also strengthening capacities of a broad range of stakeholder including the most vulnerable and marginalized; perceived risks of using national systems and capacities must be understood and managed so as not to weaken national institutions; and, vitally, proactive leadership and engagement is required to ensure a coherent, joined-up response by UN Country Teams and other actors³⁶.

Promising initiatives will need to be built on and extended. For example, the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) was launched in 2007 and brings together six UN organizations – UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, and WHO, with UNITAR, UNOPS, WMO, IFRC and GFDRR as observers to deliver coordinated and comprehensive support to developing national capacities for disaster risk reduction and preparedness for emergency response. CADRI facilitates system coherence on capacity development at country level, and provides access to tools, methodologies, and expertise for delivering capacity development services. The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the prevention and control of Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), established in 2013 by the UN Secretary-General under WHO leadership, supports the realization of commitments made in 2011 by Heads of State and Government in the Political Declaration on Non-communicable Diseases, to promote, establish or support and strengthen multi-sectoral national policies and plans for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, in particular through the implementation of the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013–2020. One of the main objectives of the Task Force is to strengthen national capacity, leadership, governance, multi-sectoral action and partnership to accelerate country responses for the prevention and control of NCDs³⁷.

- ii) *Ensure UNDS system, staff and leadership capacities support SDG implementation and enable the UNDS to deliver key priority functions.*

Second, and just as critical, is to ensure the UNDS itself has the capacity to support implementation of the SDGs, and fulfill its key priority functions. Looking forward, it is clear that the strategic re-positioning of the UN system must be pursued at all levels – programmatic,

³⁶ See: https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CivCap-Capacity-Development-Guidance-Note_130816.pdf

³⁷ See: www.who.int/nmh/ncd-task-force/en/

operational, and management – and concurrently. It is also clear that staff are the major asset of the system and UN leadership and staff must be “fit for purpose”. Key priorities include the following:

- **Building a modern workforce with the right expertise and skills.** An independent, highly skilled, engaged international civil service is required to implement a universal, transformative, rights-based agenda. This means that the UNDS will need to build a modern workforce for the changing environment, grounded in a stronger common UN identity, shared values, and sense of purpose. This is particularly critical for national staff, who act as change agents in their countries, and also ensure sustainability of UNDS support. Staff and leadership must be able to work with mandates that are increasingly cross-programmatic and who can work across sectors – and across the pillars of the UN. Competencies and capabilities such as systems-thinking, teamwork, cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity, and the ability to exercise sound judgment will be increasingly important. UN leadership is increasingly wearing multiple hats – as RC, HC, and DSRSR – leading and managing in very complex environments where peace and security, human rights, humanitarian and development activities are increasingly interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and must be properly equipped and supported to do so.

High quality normative and policy expertise will be at the heart of the UNDS’s work going forward, and UN leadership and staff will require the requisite skills and expertise to provide this support. Further, leadership and staff must be empowered and supported to implement a rights-based approach. Skills in financial planning and management will also be key if the UNDS is to effectively facilitate and support new financing mechanisms, as discussed in the “UNDG Perspectives” paper on funding. Common UN training on core competencies of leaders and staff will need to be extended and scaled up. Existing training institutions, including the UNSSC, ILO-ITC and UN Women’s Training Centre, among others, will need to review and upgrade their offerings accordingly, and ensure they are affordable and accessible to UNCTs.

At country level, investing in UN leadership and technical teams that have the right mix of knowledge and skills to deploy and support national and regional post-2015 response strategies that integrate all dimensions of sustainable development will be key. This will require optimizing the selection and placement of UN RCs and Agency representatives to ensure matching skills and capacities that team well together. Creating an enabling environment for UN RCs and UNCTs to take risks and innovate, and move away from a risk-averse approach, will also be critical. As highlighted in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on organizational arrangements, the UNDS will need to be able to field highly-skilled, expert policy and operational teams at the country level, including in middle-income and higher-income countries. Supporting and facilitating staff to work more horizontally across sectors, and different country contexts, to develop partnership and coalition-building skills, and the ability to leverage support policy change and partnerships, including by developing the necessary facilitation, negotiation and advocacy skills, is essential.

- **Effective performance management and incentives.** The performance management, compensation, and administrative systems of the UNDS must support such a modern, mobile

and diverse workforce. The UNDS needs strengthened selection and performance management systems. Recognition of good performance, strengthened linkages to career development and clear recognition of mutual accountability for contributions to common or joint UN endeavours will be key as will encouraging integrated and coherent approaches in staff work plans and performance appraisals. UN staff must be motivated to work in increasingly difficult and dangerous locations, and appropriate incentives and benefits for staff including those in non-family duty stations are being considered in the context of the ICSC review. Also critical will be to accelerate HLCM and UNDG initiatives to facilitate mobility across the UN system for all staff. This must be supported by updated business models that are evidence based, promote transparency and reduce transaction costs, through simplification and better use of technology, with sufficient flexibility to meet different organizational needs.

As highlighted in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on organizational arrangements, mutual recognition of different agency business models and use of common services will be key to support flexibility and capacity to react. For example, in response to a request from the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), WFP rolled out an integrated common service platform. WFP’s logistics capacity was adapted to this new type of crisis: building Ebola treatment units, transporting suspected blood samples and symptomatic aid workers, and supporting the medical supply chain. This included managing common logistics forward bases and setting up an inventory system to track the storage and supply chain of medical equipment, including that of partners such as WHO, UNICEF and civil society organizations.

A more horizontal, integrated agenda represents a major shift that requires rethinking and redevelopment of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of leadership and staff at all levels. Key to this will be to put in place more modern management systems and flatter organizational structures as well as ensuring greater diversity in the profile of staff and leadership. Greater focus is needed on expanding opportunities for younger staff members, as well as for women and people from key populations, including the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, that are most affected by the work the UNDS does. Increasing the diversity of the UNDS workforce is both a matter of equity, and a programmatic enabler. Significant investment in change management within and across agencies is also needed, to ensure the right performance management systems, incentives and drivers of change are in place to support new roles and behaviors at all levels. Building on experience to date, including within Agencies, and in the DaO countries, will be key in this regard.

- **Short term SURGE capacity.** As the post-2015 development agenda is finalized, and as UN RCs and UNCTs prepare for SDG localization and implementation, also critical will be to ensure UNCTs, in particular those developing UNDAFs/One Programmes, and adopting the “Delivering as One” approach, can access short-term SURGE capacity – whether from within or outside the UN system – to enable them to support governments as they make the transition from the MDGs to SDGs. Drawing on the experience of fielding SURGE capacity in the peace and security and humanitarian sectors, as well as in the “Delivering as One” pilots, will be key. Mapping of existing capacities and intellectual capital available within the system will be important to support this effort.

- **Managing risks including safety and security.** It will also be critical to accelerate efforts to manage risk at all levels, including with regard to the safety and security of UNDS staff in a period where UN staff are increasingly being targeted. Initiatives such as the programme criticality framework, discussed in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on organizational arrangements, are key in this regard. The HLCM has recently approved an Occupational Health and Safety Framework developed by the UN System’s Medical Directors, which aims to ensure the UN system, as an employer, discharges its duty of care to staff. In this context, the HLCM will examine the programmatic need to stay and deliver, against the imperative of duty of care for staff in high-risk environments. With the UNDS increasingly called upon to be the “implementer of last resort” in crisis and conflict affected settings, the implications for risk management, for the internal resilience of staff and leadership, and the incentives and support provided to staff working in these settings, will all need to be considered. Adequate and sustainable investment in the capacity of the UNDS to serve in such settings will be critical going forward.

iii) *Effectively, transparently and strategically measure and report on the impact of UNDS support*

In a post-2015 era, within the framework of shared global sustainable development goals, the UNDS will need to build on and extend the efforts made to date to measure and report on results and increasingly on the impact of the UNDS’s contribution to achieving global goals and commitments, including both system-wide and country results. If you “become what you measure”, the UNDS must more robustly, systematically and coherently measure and report on its collective impact *as a system*, as called for in the current QCPR. With an array of actors and stakeholder contributing to SDG implementation, it will be critically important for the UNDS to clearly demonstrate its collective and individual contribution.

Linked to this, and particularly critical in the context of the ECOSOC discussion on the “longer term positioning of the UN development system”, is the importance of developing robust theories of change for the support the UNDS provides at global, regional and country level – as well as for how change happens in the UNDS itself - which can both inform the operational activities of the UNDS and its coherence efforts, but also and as importantly provide a basis on which to measure and evaluate impact. As highlighted in the first workshop on functions, there is a need for the UNDS to have a clear “strategic intent” – or purpose, *as a system*. Such a clear strategic intent, and theory of change are essential for the UNDS to measure and report on system-wide results³⁸.

Individual agencies are already building in such approaches to their global programming: for example, UNICEF and UNFPA’s Strategic Plans 2014-2017 are underpinned by theories of change for each outcome within the plan. In addition, UNFPA has developed theories of change for each output. Further, the experience of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) shows that pooled funding mechanisms are more effective when they are underpinned by a clear theory of

³⁸ For example as highlighted in the Independent Evaluation of Delivering as One, there was no clear “strategic intent” or agreed common framework for how the first generation of “Delivering as One” should be implemented, which posed challenges to the pilots, in particular when it came to assessing and measuring progress towards results.

change. Looking forward, theories of change would need to be much more explicitly built into UNDAFs and One Programmes, possibly at the outcome level, as is done by UNICEF globally.

In the immediate term, it will be important to complete implementation of the current QCPR mandates, including the use of common results-based management tools, production of UNCT annual results reports, and evaluation of UNDAFs/One Programmes. Greater transparency and accountability to the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the UN's operational activities will be essential in the post-2015 era. A common approach is required whereby all agencies make transparent, real time data available on investments – including both resources and staff capacity - performance, and results at the global level. Such information also needs to be made available by UN Country Teams. An immediate possible step could be for those agencies already publishing country level data and information to expand their IATI reporting to include results – just as is currently done for the resources channeled through One Funds and country-specific trust funds managed by the MPTF. Others within the UNDG not yet reporting to IATI should accelerate efforts to do so, building on established reporting standards to ensure coherence across the UNDG.

The UNDS will need to accelerate its efforts not only for greater transparency, but also to more consistently and robustly communicate the results of its work to all stakeholders – to “tell the story” of the contribution the UNDS is making to changing the lives of people for the better, and expand its reach and engagement with stakeholders at all levels. The UNDG-sponsored consultations on post-2015 and dialogues on implementation, together with the MY World Survey represent an important evolution in the UN's work in this regard which can be built on and extended including at country level.

Looking forward, it will also be important to accelerate efforts currently underway to better measure the results and in particular the impact of upstream policy work and normative support. This is a perennial issue for the international development community as a whole, but now assumes greater urgency in the context of a universal, rights-based and transformative post-2015 development agenda, where all countries expect the UNDS to provide policy and normative support, and normative and policy change is integrated with programme and operational support at all levels.

While attribution remains a challenge in particular at the global level, there is good work and experience to build on in this regard. For example, OHCHR has developed a framework of indicators to monitor implementation of human rights commitments³⁹ and has also prepared advice on a rights-based approach to monitoring SDG implementation. UNFPA has developed a framework for monitoring upstream policy support in the context of its Strategic Plan, with indicative indicators for country offices to use to monitor progress in four key domains: advocacy, policy, knowledge management, and capacity development. UNDP has mapped innovations in monitoring and evaluation of results many of which lend themselves to monitoring and evaluation of upstream policy work and UNICEF has developed Monitoring and Evaluation

³⁹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Human_rights_indicators_en.pdf

guidance for monitoring and evaluating advocacy⁴⁰. The UNAIDS vision and Strategy is operationalized through an innovative business model, the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF), to maximize the coherence, impact and accountability of the UN system response to AIDS.

Interagency tools and approaches are also being developed: for example, the UN Evaluation Group has developed a handbook for conducting evaluations of normative work and the UNDG has developed draft guidance on joint real-time monitoring of equity results, led by UNICEF. The challenge will be to aggregate these approaches and make the best of them available in system-wide guidance to UNRCs and UNCTs, and build them into the monitoring and evaluation of UNDAFs, One Programmes and other programming instruments. Also critical will be giving greater emphasis to evaluating development impact. The meta-evaluation and synthesis of UNDAF evaluations 2012-2014 to be conducted in 2015-2016⁴¹, will be an important source of information and reflection in this regard.

Looking forward, a “two-track” approach is needed to enable system-wide reporting on development results and impact as well as coherence efforts. This would echo the individual Agency approach whereby agencies report on development results as well as on operational effectiveness and efficiency. At country level, UNCTs will need to report both on substantive results achieved – the “what” – but also on “how” the UN is delivering results together, linked to explicit theories of change articulated in the UNDAF. Further, and building on a theory of change for “how change happens in the UNDS”, a more strategic, higher-level monitoring and evaluation framework could be developed for the next QCPR, whereby agencies, funds and programmes report collectively on “how” they are working together to deliver the SDGs.

A key priority will be to measure and report more consistently and robustly on the results and impact of the UNDS’s work and support to countries to “leave no-one behind” and reduce inequalities and inequities. This requires building in explicit theories of change, and specific targets and indicators, for the UN’s work on inequalities at the global, regional and country levels. Again, there is good experience to build on here, including the OHCHR framework for monitoring human rights commitments, as well as Agency guidance on monitoring and evaluating equity (UNICEF, UNAIDS), and development of specific indicator sets for measuring progress on gender equality and elimination of violence against women (UN Statistical Division).

Related to this, as highlighted in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on functions, is the need for the UNDS to ground its work in cutting edge analytics focused on inequalities, lack of rights and heightened vulnerability and risk, and to develop and nurture open and common systems for the production, sharing and use of high quality data. Looking forward, the UNDG will need to support capacity development to build capacities to use data for improved and responsive service delivery, public sector management and accountability of governments and the private sector, as

⁴⁰ See <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/discussion-paper--innovations-in-monitoring---evaluating-results.html>. Other actors are also developing relevant frameworks and approaches that can be adapted by the UN: for example ODI has developed options and methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy. See <http://www.odi.org/publications/8265-gates-monitoring-evaluating-advocacy>

⁴¹ See the proposal for the pilot evaluation in http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf14/swe_policy_document_4feb_2014.pdf

well as to measure and report on progress towards global commitments at the national and sub-national levels. As discussed in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on organizational arrangements, at country level, more joined up support to National Statistical bodies will be a key priority going forward. The lessons learned and recommendations identified in the independent system-wide evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection, currently underway, will also be important in this regard.

- iv) *Dynamic partnership approaches will be fundamental to support delivery of the SDGs. The UNDS must play a role in the new generation of issues-based coalitions and partnerships that evolve to implement the SDGs and accelerate its support to South-South and triangular cooperation at all levels.*

In the context of the ongoing negotiations on the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, and on Financing for Development, it is eminently clear that partnerships will be central to, and will underpin, delivery of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. The OWG proposal calls for “*multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries*”. The UN Secretary General’s synthesis report highlights that people-centered inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships will be a key feature of implementation at all levels⁴². The revised draft of the FfD3 outcome document stresses the importance of effective “multi-stakeholder partnerships” for delivery of the SDGs and in support of country priorities, calls for innovative partnerships to address financing gaps, and highlights the need to ensure public-private partnerships are transparent, and share risks and rewards fairly⁴³.

The critical principles of ownership, accountability and transparency must be at the heart of partnership approaches going forward. In the UNDG-sponsored “dialogues on implementation”, participants highlighted that carefully constructed partnerships that can facilitate participation and voluntary engagement and draw on the assets and strengths of different actors are needed. For such multi-stakeholder partnerships to be effective and add value, there needs to be a clear delineation of responsibilities and complementarity between the various partners, and for dialogue and transparency in decision-making processes. Accountability mechanisms, including mandatory social and environmental safeguards, aimed at avoiding conflict of interest, are needed, together with enabling legislative and policy frameworks, to support such partnerships in the post-2015 era⁴⁴.

The UN system has a unique and critical role to play in facilitating, leveraging and supporting such partnerships at all levels. At the global level, the UN Secretary-General has a central role to play in catalyzing and leveraging such partnerships. At country level, the UN RC and UNCT

⁴² A/69/700

⁴³ Revised draft outcome document 6 May 2015.

⁴⁴ UNDG 2014 Delivering the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Opportunities At The National And Local Levels <https://www.worldwewant2015.org/dialogues2015>. Examples of such models can also be drawn from within the system. In its 2015 resolution on UNAIDS, ECOSOC affirmed that the Joint Programme ‘offers the United Nations system a useful example, for the post-2015 period, of enhanced strategic coherence, coordination, results-based focus, inclusive governance and country-level impact, based on national contexts and priorities.’

must drive such efforts. To do so, the UNDS will need to be able to engage all actors, including national governments, civil society, the private sector and academia, in an accountable, transparent, and coherent manner.

It will be important to build on experience to date and lessons learned from existing partnerships at all levels. Ensuring a smooth transition for existing partnerships, including multi-stakeholder partnerships established in support of the MDGs, will be critical as will more coherent, coordinated monitoring, reporting and evaluation of such partnerships, their effectiveness, and the results and impact they achieve. Clear oversight mechanisms will be needed to build trust and confidence⁴⁵. Key features of effective partnerships that must be taken forward in the new post-2015 era include solid organizational structures, clear objectives, a defined timeline, well-organized and strong facilitation, and secure funding. The UNDS has a clear role to play both as a facilitator and participant in such partnerships, including providing normative and policy advice, ensuring their alignment with UN values and standards, playing a leveraging and convening role, undertaking fund management (where appropriate) and management of programmatic and fiduciary risks, support to implementation in particular in LDCs and fragile and conflict affected settings, capacity development, and monitoring, reporting and review. Linked to this, the UNDS will need to expand and build on its capacity to enter into and support such partnerships including at the country level.

Looking forward, the UNDS will need to move beyond the siloes of ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ countries in its partnership approaches. New types of transformational partnerships will be needed, where the UNDS plays a leveraging rather than an implementing role, particularly in middle and high income countries. For example, in order to adapt to this new reality and continue to support countries that have graduated to high income status, UNICEF is gradually transforming its partnership with industrialized countries through UNICEF’s network of National Committees. These Committees are increasingly engaged in activities beyond fundraising, including local advocacy for the realization of children’s rights. UNICEF is supporting this advocacy through research and evidence: including analysis of the situation of children in wealthy countries, in order to influence social policies in these countries to address the unfinished agenda for children. Further, the humanitarian-development nexus must be strengthened throughout the system, and in particular in middle-income countries, including to benefit the over 50 million people currently displaced. A current example of the humanitarian-development nexus at work is the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3PR) for 2015-2016⁴⁶, which was developed in response to the Syria crisis, as a platform to integrate humanitarian and development priorities, capacities, innovation and resources into a single response. It brings together almost 200 humanitarian and development partners, including governments, UN agencies, and national and international NGOs in a coordinated initiative to scale up resilience and stabilization based development and humanitarian assistance.

⁴⁵ See the discussion in the background paper commissioned by ECOSOC, for the 2015 Annual Partnerships Forum, “Multi-stakeholder partnerships: Making them work for the Post-2015 Development Agenda” https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16192015partnerships_background_note.pdf

⁴⁶ See <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/>

With regard to private sector partnerships and building on the experience with the UN Global Compact, and such initiatives as the Women’s Empowerment Principles, the UN clearly has a role to play in encouraging and supporting normative and operational standard setting within the private sector, as well as strategic alliances to scale up development impact. For example, the Power of Nutrition partnership, involves like-minded investors and implementers, including UNICEF and the World Bank, to address under-nutrition, and trigger social and economic change, through a matching fund (up to \$5 for every \$1 invested in the fund) to catalyse change in financing nutrition and support large-scale and high impact programmes that will break the cycle of under-nutrition.

The Global Compact provides a platform for businesses to commit and take action to align their strategies and operations with ten global principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption. The Global Compact has already identified the need to scale up engagement with the private sector for SDG implementation, based on a recent review that found that progress towards corporate sustainability had been slower than expected, with a view to leveraging drivers for change and boosting private sector engagement at all levels⁴⁷. In line with this, the UNDS could explore the opportunity to further expand the reach of the Global Compact at the country level, and more clearly identify the offer and incentives for companies to join the Global Compact, including in developing countries.

Partnerships with civil society also need to be deepened. Participants in the “Dialogues on implementation” are calling for more consistent recognition and respect for the role of civil society, for an enabling policy and regulatory framework for civil society engagement, for greater alignment of stakeholder priorities including those of government, civil society and the private sector, and for accountability mechanisms that monitor partnerships and participation⁴⁸. The UNDS must more consistently engage civil society and play a brokering role for civil society participation, across agencies, and at the country, regional and global level.

For example, UNAIDS convenes transformative, inclusive partnerships to unite the UN system, governments, people living with HIV, civil society, the private sector, major financing institutions, academia, science, the media, and influential public figures to drive systemic change on critical drivers of the epidemic. The full and meaningful participation of people living with HIV and affected communities is central to the efforts of the Joint Programme.

Looking forward, the SDGs will require an even more flexible and open UNDS, which is increasingly fit to engage in a range of partnerships with widely differing institutions, the private sector, and individuals. As highlighted in the “UNDG perspectives” paper on organizational arrangements, greater flexibility and adaptation of business processes is required in order for the UNDS to facilitate and support the multi-sectoral partnerships that are needed to address complex development challenges in the post-2015 era.

⁴⁷<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/business-sustainability-progress-ungc-report>;
https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/about_the_gc/Architecture.pdf

⁴⁸ UNDG 2014 Delivering The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Opportunities At The National And Local Levels
<https://www.worldwewant2015.org/dialogues2015>

As highlighted in the 2014 report of the UN Secretary-General on the State of South-South Cooperation⁴⁹, in the post-2015 era, and in light of the changing development landscape, the role of South-South cooperation, aimed at poverty eradication and sustainable development, will assume even greater importance, and requires a strong and coherent response from the UNDS. The UNDS will need to scale up and expand its support to South-South, and triangular cooperation. The UNDS is already significantly engaged in support to South-South and triangular cooperation, as discussed above. It will be critical to more clearly articulate, monitor and report on this support, including through UNDAFs and One Programmes, as well as to more clearly monitor and report on UN investment, and impact, in this important area. Specific coordination mechanisms, such as results groups or thematic groups, will also need to be established more systematically at the country level.

As highlighted in the UN SG's synthesis report, the post-2015 development agenda will usher in a culture of inclusive global partnerships, *"based on agreed universal norms, global commitments, shared rules and evidence, collective action, and benchmarking for progress"*⁵⁰. In this context, and as identified in the first ECOSOC workshop on functions, it will be important to give greater emphasis to horizontal knowledge sharing between countries in comparable contexts, and across regional boundaries, through South-South and triangular cooperation. UN Country Teams and UNDG Regional Teams have an important role to play in this regard.

The UNDS will need to actively support and facilitate such intergovernmental cooperation on global agendas and challenges, such as LDC graduation⁵¹ and MDG achievements, moving in the near future to support cooperation on SDG achievements, acceleration and reporting. The UNDS can also offer mapping of successful cases of SDG achievement, using the UNDS global reach and presence on the ground to facilitate effective partnerships between countries.

Looking forward, in a post-2015 era, the UNDS has a role to play in i) strengthening the global and system-wide "eco-system" for South-South and triangular cooperation including expanding the data and knowledge base about South-South and triangular cooperation and facilitating opportunities for knowledge exchange; ii) expanding the partnership space for South-South and triangular cooperation by enabling partnerships to be identified and developed by a wide range of institutions and entities through an open, transparent, and principles based peer to peer "exchange"; iii) boosting the operational engagement of the UNDS in South-South and triangular cooperation including its support to arrange, manage and help implement such partnerships; and iv) deepening the enabling institutional environment for South-South and triangular cooperation for regional and country levels to boost the scope and opportunities for national, cross-boundary, city and neighborhood, and inter-regional cooperation.

⁴⁹ A/69/153

⁵⁰ State of South-South cooperation, Report of the Secretary-General, 17 July 2014 (A/69/153).

⁵¹ For criteria for LDC graduation, see <http://unohrrls.org/about-ldcs/criteria-for-ldcs/>

6. Questions

The following questions are included for the consideration of Member States:

- *What are the examples of innovative capacity development of national partners that can be built on in the post-2015 era?*
- *How can we accelerate current efforts to build the leadership and staff capacities needed in the post-2015 era? What can the UNDS learn from the humanitarian and peace and security pillars of the UN in this regard?*
- *How can the next QCPR be more strategic in its monitoring and evaluation framework and focus on results and impact?*
- *What else needs to be done for the UNDS to more effectively work in partnership in particular at country level? What role should the UNDS be playing in such partnerships?*
- *What is needed for the UNDS to take a leadership role in leveraging capacity development, partnerships, financing, and so on?*
- *How can the UNDS better articulate and demonstrate its added value in South-South and triangular cooperation?*