

JSC reviews: synthesis of findings and recommendations

The focus of the review process in all seven countries focused on the articulation and operationalization of collective outcomes as a transformative tool to bring humanitarian, development and peace actors together around the same priorities and objectives that can reduce need, risk and vulnerability in view to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the field level. The UN adds value to the country by supporting the Government to providing a strategic operational direction for international assistance. The review identified collective outcomes that are issues/theme based and/or sub-region specific, for which much progress has been made.

Issues around prevention, peacebuilding, peace and security and references to human rights and gender were not prominent in the reviews despite being at the root of the crises. This therefore reinforced the notion of the UN and its partners still being overly focused on being reactive to needs, rather than being driven by the overall aim of prevention and solutions. The centrality of human rights provides solid foundations to define and work towards collective outcomes, which should be defined in clearer terms by identifying the targeted populations and areas of focus, and by giving priority to those “left furthest behind”.

The reviews were also very light on highlighting key regional processes and global processes, including the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and its Support Plan, the Lake Chad Basin Governor’s Forum, the joint UN-AU frameworks on peace and development, the UN-World Bank Partnership Framework, regional migration plans, including those for the Horn of Africa and Yemen, and the Famine Action Mechanism that are focusing on the Horn, Sahel and Lake Chad Basin. These processes play a very important role for engaging with governments, bilateral and IFIs, yet the absence of mention in the reviews indicate that there may still be a disconnect to the immediate country-level response. The following priorities have been identified as key recommendations for the JSC Principals to ensure progress at the country level.

1. Leadership and Capacity

Government leadership in leading/ co-leading the processes around the articulation, implementation and resourcing of collective outcomes is critical. At the same time, **RC/HC’s sustained leadership** in initiating the process, ensuring key stakeholders and agencies are engaged early on in agreeing on joint priority areas, as well as in harmonization of resource flows and the monitoring of the implementation of collective outcomes **is indispensable. Working towards collective outcomes requires that RC/HCs need to be supported by a capacitated Resident Coordinator Office (RCO).** Currently, there is a need to strengthen the RCO with adequate capacity on the nexus. In addition, **support and full buy-in by the main operational agencies, key donors and partners** is needed to plan towards identified collective outcomes and harmonize programming and resourcing over multiple years.

Recommendations

- **JSC members, in collaboration with other relevant entities, should support RC/HCs and UNCTs in implementing system-wide approaches, including the UNISS and the Prevention Strategy in the Horn of Africa, and tools that promote establishment of country-led collective outcomes engaging the governments and all relevant stakeholders to foster integrated action, strengthen collaboration and mutual accountability for results.**
- **The JSC should agree on entry points and initiatives to strengthen government capacity to lead/co-lead collective outcomes processes, including information management and analysis as well as coordination capacity.**

- **The DSG, DCO and the JSC should devise a strategy for reinforcing RCOs where the NWO or nexus is being prioritized** – including through an initial trial of additional RCO capacity in the seven priority countries, using extrabudgetary resources. The JSC should consider practical and inclusive ways of strengthening RCO capacity drawing on relevant parts of the UN system to ensure a whole-of-system approach in moving forward the New Way of Working, taking into account existing country level processes.
- **RC/HCs (supported by JSC members and in collaboration with other relevant entities) should conduct joint analysis to identify joint priorities at the earliest possible time**, to ensure key stakeholders buy-in in the articulation, implementation and resourcing of collective outcomes.

2. Joint Information and Analysis

Integrating and consolidating all relevant information and analysis, including on underlying causes/drivers of risk, needs and vulnerabilities is important to identify agreed priority areas that can serve as a basis for collective outcomes. **Human rights analysis is absent or weak in the country reviews, despite human rights violations, including of economic, social and cultural rights being underlying causes of humanitarian crises and conflicts. In many country settings there is no common cross-pillar platform to consolidate or even share relevant data and information for priority setting purposes** or to review how planning and programming needs to be adjusted. Some RC/HCs have requested support in establishing a platform or create a dedicated integrated analysis team within the RCO. **Integrating the analyses of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) into the Common Country Analysis (CCA) can serve as a basis for joint planning** and provide the priority areas for collective outcomes, as well as information provided by Governments, donors and/or IFIs.

Recommendations

- **The DSG should instruct RC/HCs to conduct a risk informed and gender sensitive cross-pillar common country analysis, including by drawing from data/information from HNOs, IFIs and others, to identify the collective outcomes and enhance evidence based analysis towards a common set of agreed priority areas for collective action, in line with the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and the Prevention Strategy in the Horn of Africa.** The aim should be to create a shared understanding of priorities to reduce risk, vulnerability and need.

3. Articulation and operationalizing of Collective Outcomes

In four of the priority countries collective outcomes have been articulated [Burkina Faso, Chad, Nigeria, Somalia], while in three countries they are being identified [Cameroon, Ethiopia, Niger]. Several of the RC/HCs from the seven countries had requested further guidance on developing and operationalizing collective outcomes,

Collective outcomes should drive the programming and resource decisions of all key stakeholders, including Government, agencies, IFIs, donors, etc. RCs should hence engage all key stakeholders early on in joint analysis, prioritization, and articulation of collective outcomes, paying particular attention to drivers of vulnerability (often in the case of protracted crisis this relates to peace and security aspects), and promoting durable solutions to end crisis and displacement. Collective outcomes should be framed in clear terms, identifying a clear time-frame and the number of people targeted as well as the targeted populations and areas, giving priority to those “left furthest behind.” Collective outcomes need to be articulated in those areas of vulnerability and risk that would lead to the recurrence of or increase humanitarian need if not reduced. If they do not tackle the hard issues behind the recurrent humanitarian crises, collective outcomes risk to become the lowest common denominators leading to business as usual. **RC/HCs have found different ways to coordinate around collective outcomes,** including through regular joint UNCT/HCT

meetings or even joint meetings with government staff, donors, and IFIs. **Lack of coordination among development actors and with the development system** (and particularly bilateral development donors) was observed as a challenge in several countries. **It is critical that all actors** adjust their programs and implementation efforts in line with the collective outcomes identified and existing overarching frameworks, including the UN-AU joint frameworks to enhance peace and security and implement sustainable development.

Recommendations

- **The JSC should support the development and dissemination of light guidance to RC/HCs on how to articulate, operationalize and monitor collective outcomes**, building on, existing good practice and lessons learned, including the work of the IASC and others. (This should complement the joint letter to RC/HCs on 21 December 2018).
- **JSC members, particularly those entities mandated to lead guidance development, should ensure that the implementation of the newly developed UNSDCF and inter-agency Humanitarian Response Plan guidance enables the achievement of collective outcomes and that, where collective outcomes have been agreed, UNSDCF's and HRPs include, mirror or are in line with these outcomes.**
- **JSC Principals should instruct their country representatives to devise their programming and resource mobilization toward achievement of agreed collective outcomes through the different accountability frameworks such as the UNSDCF (former UNDAF), the Humanitarian Response Plan and Integrated Strategy Framework.**

4. Harmonizing resources and financing

In most countries where collective outcomes have been agreed, funding decisions and processes remain mostly unchanged. Resources must be harmonized and avoid gaps between traditional humanitarian and development programmes, including by financing transition and recovery action that contribute to conditions that are more suitable for development efforts. Donors must be engaged as early as possible in the articulation of collective outcomes in country. A dedicated implementation and resourcing plan for each collective outcome must be developed and reflect how respective humanitarian, transition, development and peacebuilding activities contribute to achieving the SDGs. There needs to be a harmonization of resources and collective outcomes must drive funding and programming decisions of multilateral and bilateral donors, including the UN's Multi Partner Trust Funds.

Recommendations

- **The JSC should call on RC/HCs and Country Teams on the ground to engage and involve key multilateral and bilateral donors as early as possible in the articulation of collective outcomes and to promote that donors align their financing towards programmes and activities that contribute to collective outcomes.**
- **The JSC Directors should task the UNSDG with providing further guidance to RC/HCs on leveraging existing funds and financing streams in a country towards collective outcomes and to identify gaps through the UNSDCF companion guide on financing strategies.**

- The DSG could consider representing the JSC at key DAC donor events including the WB/IMF meetings, DAC meetings, and bi-laterals with key DAC donors, to hold them to account on their obligation to the Recommendation on the nexus.¹
- The JSC should advocate with DAC donors to provide flexible, multi-year funding towards transition, recovery and peacebuilding-type programming necessary for contributing to conditions that are more suitable for development efforts and can contribute towards collective outcomes.

5. Accountability and monitoring

- **None of the seven priority countries have developed a dedicated monitoring and evaluation framework for integrated action yet. A common accountability framework between Government, agencies, key bilateral donors and multilateral donors and other stakeholders centered around agreed priorities and collective outcomes and the commitments made in this respect is critical.** Lessons learned indicate that the role of the RC/HC needs to adjust in this respect. RC/HCs need to support the development of indicators, actively monitor the implementation and the progress towards collective outcomes, including identifying and addressing gaps. They also need to lead a process of adjusting collective outcomes if the operational environment changes. **The RC/HC and Government should carry out regular stakeholder reviews of each collective outcome**, to allow for impact acceleration or programming adjustment.

Recommendations

- **The DSG, through the RCs, should call on the UNCTs in the seven priority countries to review their programs against agreed collective outcomes in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and adjust them accordingly. Such meetings should also agree on a framework for monitoring and progress measurement.**

¹ OECD, DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, OECD/LEGAL/5019 (<https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf>)