

Driving innovative partnerships for the SDGs

The UN Resident Coordinator system in support of Kenya



Kenya's impressive recent development trajectory has upgraded the country to a lower middle-income status. Yet access to concessional financing at scale remains a deep-rooted challenge, as traditional Official Development Assistance (ODA) is declining, which makes innovative public and private, national and international partnerships critical to deliver Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) solutions at scale.

With the leadership of the empowered and independent UN Resident Coordinator (RC) in Kenya, supported by 26 UN agencies, a range of innovative partnerships for SDG delivery has been developed by leveraging all sources of financing to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, especially for those most left behind.

This case study showcases two areas where the RC has helped drive innovative partnerships for the SDGs: to advance health outcomes and to sustain peace.

 **26**

Number of entities in the UN country team

 **US\$ 845M***

UN country team's expenditures through the UNDAF and the Cooperation Framework (2022)

1. Partnerships to unlock new investments for health

Supporting the Government's strong emphasis on the capacity of public-private partnerships to deliver national development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) launched an "SDG Partnership Platform" (SDGPP), supported by a secretariat based in the RC Office. By offering an impartial "one-stop shop" for access to the UN, Government and development partners, as well as international and Kenyan private sector investors, the platform unlocks innovative SDG investments, financing and public-private partnerships to deliver SDG solutions at scale.

The SDG Partnership platform initiative was instrumental in identifying new market opportunities for Kenya: a US\$6b bankable market opportunity for private sector investment in operation and provision of primary healthcare clinics was identified by the RC bringing together the UN country team, USAID and McKinsey & Company for a "market opportunity study" of the primary healthcare sector in the country.

The leadership of the RC has also been central in enabling the SDG Partnership Platform to ignite a range of new partnerships; a new \$120m investment pipeline was created through forging a broad coalition of investors with Royal Dutch Philips, the Government of the Netherlands and the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) now leading the way. The creation of an SDG Partnership Platform "Health Window" supported the rollout of primary healthcare clinics through bringing together private actors and UN technical expertise and harnessing the "H6 Formula" - with the collective strengths of UNAIDS, the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women and the World Bank. Thanks to these private sector consortia, 200 basic public health clinics in Kenya have been updated and a major effort to expand health insurance coverage in the city of Kisumu was supported, which in turn has created an expanded market for health service suppliers.

With the leadership of the RC, the world's first Development Impact Bond for Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health was developed in 2021 by the UN (UNFPA, UNAIDS and WHO) and private sector and philanthropy partners to advance financial innovation further. The Bond was made possible through support from the [Joint SDG Fund](#), which unlocked a first catalytic \$7m

investment in 2022 and is expected to be launched in the second half of 2023. Over the last year the "[SDG Partnership Platform](#)" spearheaded successive rounds of negotiations with international impact investor outcome funders, which will leverage an additional \$11m in private funding over the four-year life of the new programme.

With these performance-based investments in 10 out of 47 counties in Kenya, 500,000 of the country's most vulnerable young women and girls are expected to get access to critical reproductive health and HIV/AIDS services. A new smartphone application will provide young Kenyans with the opportunity to give feedback in real-time on their user experience with health services, which in turn will determine payment to the investors in a "virtuous circle" of performance improvement.



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UN Resident Coordinator Stephen Jackson and private sector health partners.

*The figure includes loans by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

2. Supporting constitutionally-mandated organs to sustain peace

Ahead of the 2022 Kenyan elections, Kenya's constitutionally-mandated "national peace infrastructure" developed a long-term Roadmap for Peaceful Elections, as a prerequisite for sustainable development. This included a [National Strategy for Countering Hate Speech](#), intended to curb disinformation and inflammation via social media and to inform the counter-messaging for peaceful elections.

In response to the Government's formal request to the United Nations to provide overall electoral support and building on the ability to guarantee neutrality, the RC worked together with the Government and relevant authorities including the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and the Media Council of Kenya to create an innovative, high-tech consortium to track and counter hate speech in real time. It built on partnership with artificial intelligence startups ([Code for Africa](#)), youth media platforms (Shujaaz) and

online influencer organizations ([Aifluence](#)), made possible through financial support from the Peacebuilding Fund and international partners and with technical leadership from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and advice and support from the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide.

The partnership enabled peace-messaging and counter-narratives on Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and other platforms through over 60 social media influencers and the local radio, reaching over 12.4 million users online, while similar messages were transmitted in local vernacular stations reaching over 10.4 million listeners. This initiative eventually formed part of a larger UN programme, funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and the German Government, aimed at enhancing Kenya's National Early Warning System, both online and offline.

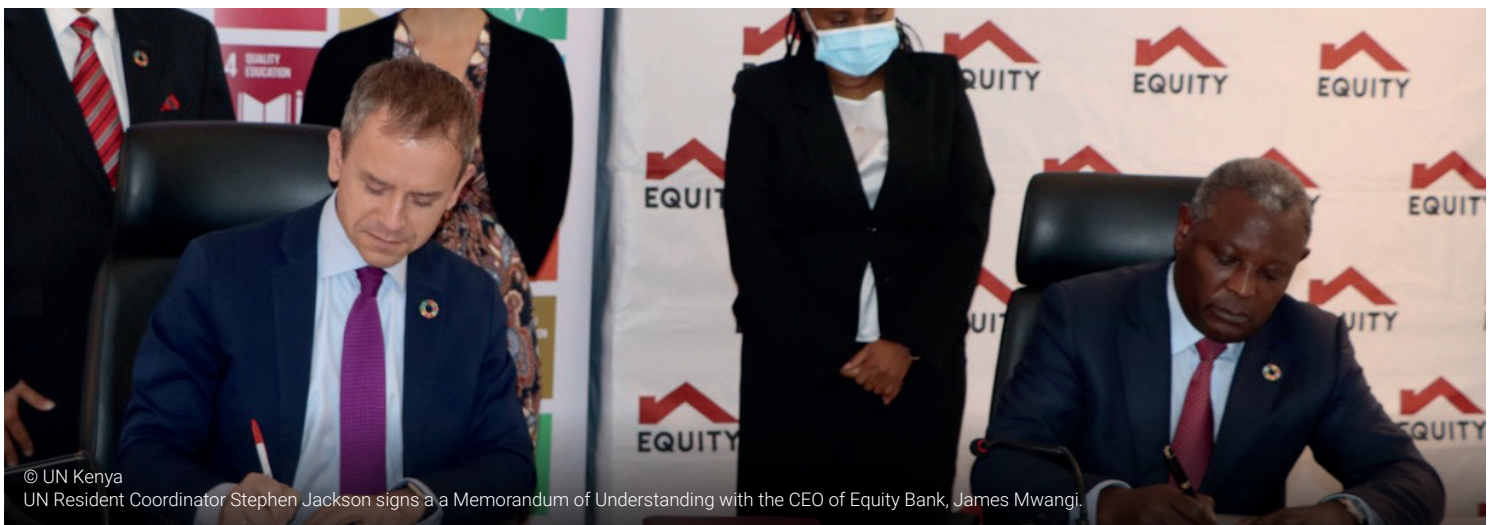
3. Galvanizing new partnerships for the SDGs

Under the leadership of the RC, the new [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(2022-2026\)](#) includes a central focus on convening, connecting, catalyzing and curating partnerships covering the full arc of the SDGs, responding to Kenya's national priorities – including to strengthen human capital and access to social services; support Kenya's "green transition"; resilience-building and enhanced climate action; digital transformation in commerce and governance; and youth and gender empowerment.

The RC has played a catalytic role in putting joint programmes and pooled funding at the forefront of the implementation of the Cooperation Framework, incentivizing joint and collective action from the onset. This includes a new country-level Multi-Partner Trust Fund, which has already received support from a growing number of donors, private foundations and private sector contributors. The ambition of the UN country team is to deliver 50 per cent of the projects under the umbrella of the Cooperation Framework through joint programmes.



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UN Resident Coordinator Stephen Jackson signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the CEO of Equity Bank, James Mwangi.