

Highlights

on the United Nations development system reform

May 2024

Sustainable development is now at the heart of the UN, with stronger leadership at all levels. The 2030 Agenda has greater emphasis across UN activities.

Resident Coordinators (RCs) convene and mobilize support for the SDGs, leveraging their independence and drawing better on expertise from across the UN system and all partners.

Enhanced coordination has ensured immediate and long-term UN system-wide responses to unprecedented development challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic to climate change and the global impacts of regional crises to rescue the SDGs.

UN responses in countries are more integrated and effective, focusing on strategic policy advice and integrated programmatic support.

Cooperation Frameworks have become the most important instrument to drive sustainable development, pushing UN country teams (UNCTs) towards strengthened joint planning and programming, beyond sectoral approaches.

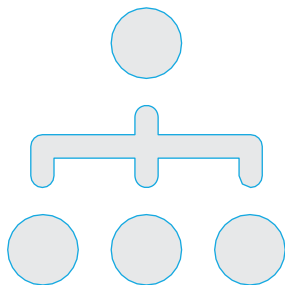
The UN offer is better tailored to the different needs of countries, from Least Developed Countries to Landlocked Developing Countries, Middle Income Countries and Small Island Developing States, including for the latter through significantly stepped up capacities and resources in multi-country offices.

The UN regional architecture transitioned to new Regional Collaborative Platforms, with common knowledge hubs and increased levels of coordination and transparency.

New funding instruments, including a revamped global Joint SDG Fund and new pooled funds in countries, are catalyzing joint action.

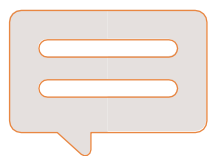
Accountability and transparency for results have increased, through better UN Results Reports to Governments and new platforms to harness and manage knowledge, information and data.

UN development system entities share resources and staff more easily in ways that realize tangible business efficiencies, particularly through improvements in business operations strategies, common premises, global shared service centers and common back offices.



Key feedback on the UN development system from host governments in 2023

Country team programming and policy support is increasingly well regarded by host governments, with stronger alignment to national needs and priorities.



96%

of host governments say that **UNCTs are effectively responding to national priorities** for SDG delivery.

94%

of host governments agree that **Cooperation Framework activities are closely aligned with national needs** - up from 81% in 2019.

90%

of host governments said **UNCTs have the right mix of capacities** to support national development efforts (from 76% since the reforms).

87%

of host governments consider **UNCT configuration adequately tailored** to meet their challenges and needs - an improvement from 81% in 2021.

94%

of host governments agree that the UN adequately provided **evidence - based policy** advice, compared to 92% in 2022 and 88% in 2021.

98%

of host governments agree that UNCTs have effectively strengthened capacity to help build **resilience to crises, disasters and extreme climate events**.

90%

of host governments say that the UN CTs provide adequate support to **financing for the SDGs**, compared to 89% in 2022.

84%

of host governments agree there is **stronger coherence and less duplication**, following the reforms.

82%

of host governments say that focus on **common results** has improved, compared to 78% in 2022.



100%

of **African countries** and **Small Islands Developing States** consider that development system activities are aligned with their needs and priorities.

97%

of **Least Developed Countries** and **96%** of **Landlocked Developing Countries** consider that development system activities are aligned with their needs and priorities.

87%

of **Middle-Income Countries** report that the UN development system has adequately supported them by providing joint integrated policy advice.

Key feedback on the reinvigorated RC system from host and donor governments and UN country teams in 2023

Resident Coordinators are doing more than simply coordinating. They are utilizing their convening power to bring the development system together to deliver effective, efficient and coherent support to national priorities. Through effective coordination, the work done by the UN system at the country level is greater than the sum of its parts.

92%

of host governments say that RCs effectively lead the delivery of **strategic support** for national plans and priorities, compared to 79% in 2019

91%

91% of donor governments say that the RC system has **scaled up collective action for the SDGs**

91%

of host governments agree that RCs have the needed **profile and skillsets**, increase from 88% in 2020

87%

of host governments say RCs contributed to leveraging **partnerships** in support of national efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda and achieve the SDGs, compared to 85% in 2020

85%

of host governments note that RCs provide strengthened **leadership** compared to before the reforms – a 23% jump since 2019

88%

of host governments point out that RCs have increased focus on **common results** – an increase of 28% since the reforms

84%

of host governments agreed that RCs displayed strengthened/increased **impartiality** vis-a-vis UN entities than before the reforms – an increase of 25% since 2019

79%

of host governments say that the RC system helped **minimize duplication** of efforts and advances efficient use of resources, compared to 71% in 2021 and 77% in 2022

82%

of host governments say the RC serves as a strengthened **entry point to the UN offer** – a 20% increase from perceptions prereforms

82%

of UNCTs note that RC system contributed to building stronger **synergies across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding** interventions, as in 2020

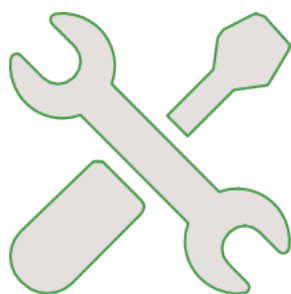


UNCTs value the support received from RCOs:

Strategic planning: **90%** - Economic analysis: **79%** - Partnerships: **71%**

Communication and advocacy: **89%** - Data and results reporting: **84%**

The road ahead in four key areas



UNCTs must be fully equipped to support countries to advance the SDGs, including by aligning individual programme documents with the Cooperation Frameworks and a UN footprint in line with evolving country needs.

The dual accountability model between RCs and UNCTs requires continued attention by UNSDG Principals and governing bodies for full implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework.

Securing **funding for the RC system** and delivering on the **Funding Compact commitments** require a step change, to enable and build incentives for collective UN work.

Culture change and reform ambition must be consolidated, **particularly at regional level** through real-time expertise and support to RCs and UNCTs, as well as excellence and efficiency of **business operations**.