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**Operational activities of the United Nations**  
**for international development cooperation:**  
**follow-up to policy recommendations of the**  
**General Assembly and the Council**

## **Implementation of General Assembly resolution [75/233](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [72/279](#), [75/233](#) and [77/184](#), provides an update on the system-wide implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the reform of the United Nations development system. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/4](#), the report also provides an update on the progress made in implementing the review of the resident coordinator system.

Amid setbacks and reversals at the halfway point to the target date of 2030 for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the report addresses how the United Nations development system supported countries in strengthening transformative policies to accelerate progress towards the Goals. The report also examines progress made in delivering on the pledge of leaving no one behind, including critical support provided by the United Nations development system to youth, women and girls, and persons with disabilities.

Scaling up means of implementation to advance the Goals is detailed in the report, with an analysis of the development system offer to boost financing for development, catalyse partnerships and harness science, technology and innovation. The report pays special attention to the support provided to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as to middle-income countries. It identifies high, and rising, levels of satisfaction

\* [A/78/50](#).



among Member States with the alignment of the United Nations development system with national needs and priorities.

The report also addresses progress made in strengthening the United Nations development system's oversight, system-wide evaluations and results-based management and reporting. The independent findings of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group System-wide Evaluation Office are incorporated throughout. The report also evaluates critical improvements made in relation to the funding of the United Nations development system and provides an update on the funding of the resident coordinator system.

The report draws on the findings of surveys administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs between December 2022 and January 2023, addressed to host country Governments and Governments that make voluntary contributions to the United Nations development system, the headquarters of United Nations development system entities, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. Inputs were sought from across the system, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. Financial data were sourced primarily from the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

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## I. Introduction

1. The world is facing troubled times. Poverty and hunger are growing. The climate emergency is escalating. Lives and livelihoods are at risk from overlapping food, energy and financial crises that have been amplified by the conflict in Ukraine. The Sustainable Development Goals are off track. The rights of millions of women and girls are being trampled on. While military spending grows, the number of conflicts increases and humanitarian spending struggles to keep up with demand, sustainable development is chronically underresourced.

2. We all know, however, that sustainable development is the only comprehensive solution. It is the only way to address the drivers of instability, vulnerability and structural inequality. It is the only way to leave no one behind. It is humanity's ultimate prevention tool.

3. The present report outlines the work of the United Nations development system to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with the mandates of the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

4. The report reflects the results of several surveys<sup>1</sup> designed to track progress in meeting the policy review mandate. The 2023 edition of the report is the most data-rich yet. It benefits from multiple years of consistent data from these surveys, which allow for more meaningful comparisons over time. It is also bolstered by objective insights garnered from independent evaluations conducted by the newly established United Nations Sustainable Development Group System-wide Evaluation Office.

5. All data, from different sources, continue to point in the same direction: the investments made in the repositioning of the United Nations development system are delivering results. It is what gives me hope that we can be strong partners as governments work to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Host countries are reporting increased levels of satisfaction with the United Nations development system offer. The development system is consistently reported as their preferred partner for integrated, evidence-based policy advice. Countries in special situations are reporting particularly favourably. All least developed countries and landlocked developing countries report that development system activities are closely aligned with their needs and priorities, and 95 per cent of African countries responded likewise.

7. In my previous report ([A/77/69-E/2022/47](#)), I noted with concern that the satisfaction of small island developing States was relatively low. In 2019, 70 per cent of these States satisfied with the alignment of the United Nations development system support. The ratio improved to 84 per cent in 2021 and to 95 per cent in 2022. The increased satisfaction is due, at least in part, to the reforms of the multi-country resident coordinator offices, which service almost all small island developing States. We now have greater capacities on the ground and enhanced engagement at all levels.

8. Findings from the surveys, as well as recent reports and evaluations, provide strong evidence that we have made great strides in lifting the coherence and collective

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<sup>1</sup> The surveys were conducted in early 2023 by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. They include a survey of host country Governments, completed by 66 per cent of the total number of countries; and a survey of Governments that make voluntary contributions to the United Nations development system, which received 72 responses, including from 11 of the top 20 contributors. A survey of resident coordinators was completed by 95 per cent of the total, while 799 United Nations country team members from 44 entities took part in a survey of United Nations country teams. A survey of headquarters of United Nations development system entities drew responses from 30 organizations, accounting for 97 per cent of all funding for operational activities for development.

nature of the offer at the country level under the leadership of resident coordinators. Country team programming and policy support is increasingly well regarded by host governments, with stronger alignment to national needs and priorities. Resident coordinators are doing more than simply coordinating. They are utilizing their convening power and bringing the system together to deliver more than the sum of its parts. A total of 92 per cent of host country governments expressed appreciation for the work of resident coordinators in leveraging partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. Collective action during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has evolved into support to build more robust health systems. Joint action on social protection helped an additional 147 million people in 39 countries and territories to gain temporary and permanent coverage. The Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance demonstrated our ability to deliver “development in emergency mode”. In response to the mandate for environmental protection in the quadrennial review, the United Nations development system has supported climate mitigation and adaptation, while also supporting biodiversity conservation through sustainable development.

10. The United Nations system has started to step up in its ability to help countries to leverage financing at unprecedented scale. The United Nations is now at the forefront of important debates on ways to enhance access by the developing world to affordable long-term finance to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate agreements. With the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and regional commissions leading the charge, the system is making progress. But the transformation in this area must accelerate as a matter of urgency. Around 70 per cent of host countries reported that the support they have received on integrated national financing frameworks is adequate. This confirms that the United Nations development system is reasserting its historic roles in the financing landscape, but it remains the lowest satisfaction rating across all areas of support provided by the development system. Our performance varies greatly according to sectors, and this must be harmonized. In health, for instance, only 66 per cent of host governments report receiving support on financing for health, compared with 91 per cent who received support on improving health coverage.

11. The repositioned United Nations development system is generating significant efficiencies. In 2022, the system reported efficiency gains of \$405 million. The significant majority of host and contributing governments report that resident coordinators reduce duplication among entities and improve coordination.

12. Progress on meeting the commitments of the funding compact remains insufficient. Core funding has increased, and development system accountability measures have been enhanced. The capitalization of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, however, has declined by 75 per cent. Development funding generally remains highly dependent on a handful of government donors. We must find ways forward. I call for country-level dialogues between Member States, resident coordinators and country teams to seize back the momentum towards achieving the ambition of the funding compact.

13. I am particularly concerned by the fact that the resident coordinator system has a funding gap of \$85 million. The resident coordinator system is the anchor on which the wider system sits as it strengthens its support to the 2030 Agenda. An underfunded system will hamper our ability to continue to make progress. It will impede the reform delivering its full potential. Ultimately, it will reduce the prospects of a more impactful United Nations development system. Time has come to put this issue to rest. I am recommending that Member States reconsider the alternative funding

models I had put forward in the review of the resident coordinator system in 2021, with an increased component of assessed funding.

14. This is a time for action and resolve. The Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September 2023 will be a crucial moment to raise ambition and invest in the necessary transformations to accelerate progress. We must take this opportunity to restore momentum towards our shared goals. The United Nations development system will exert every effort to make this transformation a reality. Billions of lives across the world depend upon it. Let us keep this in mind.

## **II. Changing the game: leveraging the repositioned United Nations development system architecture to support countries in accelerating efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda**

### **A. Maximizing the impact of the new generation of United Nations country teams and the reinvigorated resident coordinator system**

15. Resident coordinators who are empowered, impartial and independent are the cornerstone of the repositioned United Nations development system. They provide the necessary leadership and impartiality required for an integrated policy and programmatic response by United Nations country teams, focused squarely on country needs and priorities. In General Assembly resolutions [72/279](#) and [75/233](#), Member States asked me to ensure that resident coordinators bring the most out of the collective resources of the United Nations and drive cohesive country teams. The General Assembly reaffirmed this direction in its review of the resident coordinator system in 2021 (resolution [76/4](#)).

#### **1. Successful leadership by resident coordinators**

16. The leadership of resident coordinators is pivotal to the success of our collective efforts. I am therefore very encouraged by the continuously positive feedback on their performance. Over 88 per cent of host Governments reported that resident coordinators provide effective leadership in respect of strategic support for national plans and priorities. This proportion has remained steady – it was 89 per cent in 2021 – and the annual average since the new resident coordinator system was established in 2019 is 86 per cent.

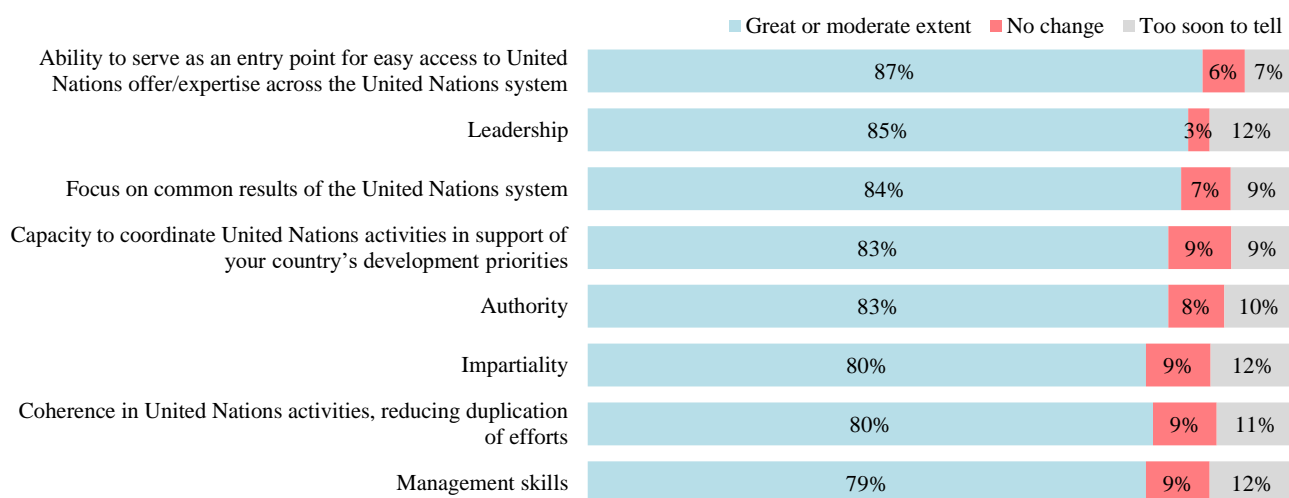
17. When asked to compare the current performance of resident coordinators to the situation before the repositioning, host countries also reported positive changes (see figure 1). Indeed, 87 per cent of host countries reported that the resident coordinators had become a more effective entry point to United Nations country support.

18. The perspective of contributing countries is also favourable. Among those countries, 88 per cent agreed that the resident coordinator system had stepped up collective and coherent action and helped to leverage the comparative advantages of individual entities (see figure 2). Those results are improvements on the previous year, which was the first year of the survey of contributing countries, when only 75 per cent of contributing countries felt that the resident coordinator leveraged the comparative advantages of all entities.

19. Our expectation from the outset was that empowered resident coordinators would be better placed to lead the country team in ways that reduce duplication and generate synergies. There are encouraging signs that this has been the case. Over 77 per cent of host country Governments agreed that the resident coordinator helped to minimize duplication of efforts among United Nations entities and ensure efficient

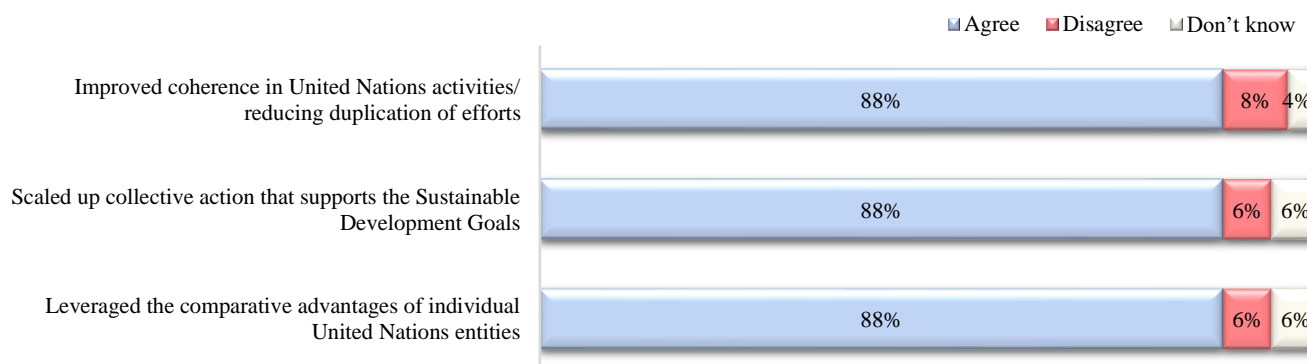
use of resources, reflecting an increase from 71 per cent in 2021. Meanwhile, 70 per cent of contributing countries reported that there has been a reduction in duplication or overlap among United Nations activities, compared with 68 per cent reporting likewise in 2021.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1  
**Host country Government responses on resident coordinator strengthening following the repositioning of the United Nations development system**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of Governments.

Figure 2  
**Contributing country Government responses on improvements through the new resident coordinator system**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of Governments.

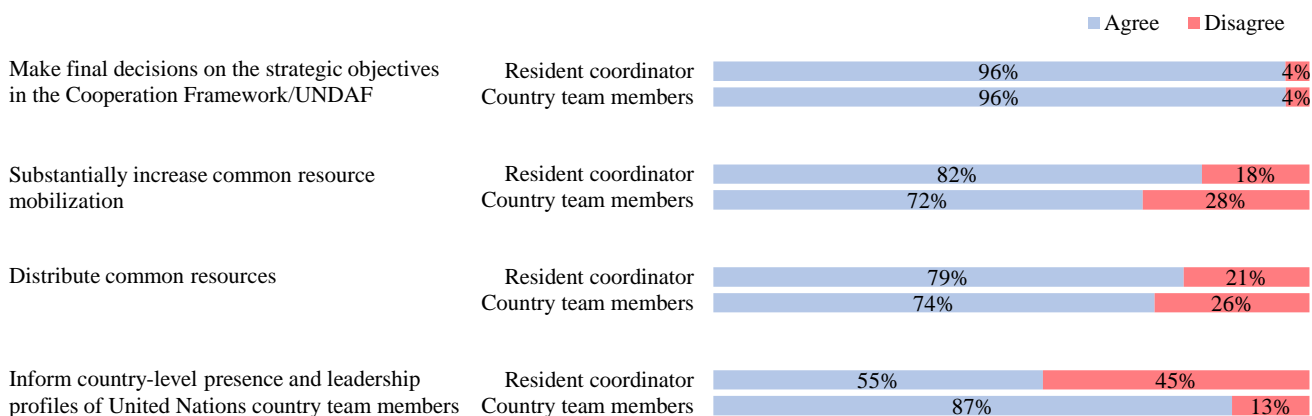
20. Of course, resident coordinators can only live up to the high expectations placed on them if they are appropriately capacitated and empowered. Survey results suggest that this has generally been the case. Most host country Governments agreed that resident coordinators had a sufficient prerogative to fulfil their mandate (82 per cent), up from 76 per cent in 2021. Country team members generally concluded likewise (see figure 3). Nevertheless, some specific areas remain problematic. In particular, only 55 per cent of resident coordinators reported that they are sufficiently

<sup>2</sup> Restricted to valid responses, excluding responses of "don't know".

empowered to help shape the composition and leadership profiles of country team members. This is also feedback we receive regularly from resident coordinators. This ratio was also low last year, at 58 per cent, which was the first year in which the question was asked in the survey; but we expected improvements this year. In addition, few agencies consult resident coordinators when selecting their representatives, as required by the Management and Accountability Framework. These findings require the attention of principals in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group because they suggest that resident coordinators are being constrained in their ability to ensure that the United Nations offer at the country level is suitably tailored to national needs and priorities. I am asking the Group to work together to ensure that entities fulfil their commitment to consult with resident coordinators when appointing country-level representatives.

21. Efforts to enhance the talent pipeline, the recruitment process and the continued professional development of resident coordinators are already generating results. As examined more fully in the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (E/2023/62), over 90 per cent of surveyed host Governments agreed that the resident coordinator has the right profile and skill set to support the development priorities of their country, the same level as in 2021. Similarly, 91 per cent agreed that the United Nations country team has the right mix of capacities and skills to deliver the required support, which was an improvement from 85 per cent in 2021. More detailed analysis of the leadership by resident coordinators and additional survey results are presented in the report of the Chair of the Group.

Figure 3  
**Resident coordinator and United Nations country team member responses on the empowerment of resident coordinators**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.

## 2. Effective support from resident coordinators' offices

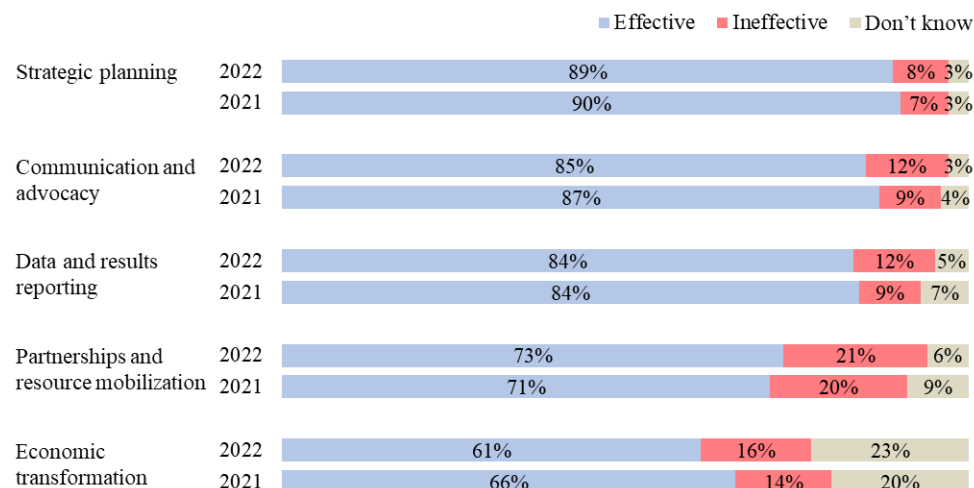
22. Adequate support by resident coordinator offices is critical to help resident coordinators to drive collective results at the national level and leverage global and regional expertise in support of the host country. The strengthening and harmonization of core capacities across resident coordinator offices has been a key feature of the new resident coordinator system – replacing the previous system in which most resident coordinator offices were widely understaffed and ad hoc structures proliferated according to local arrangements with donors. The survey of United Nations country teams has identified the strengths of these offices, as well as areas for improvement (see figure 4). The report of the Chair of the United Nations



Sustainable Development Group provides more detail on efforts to enhance capacity in resident coordinator offices and priorities going forward.

Figure 4

#### Resident coordinator office support to United Nations country teams



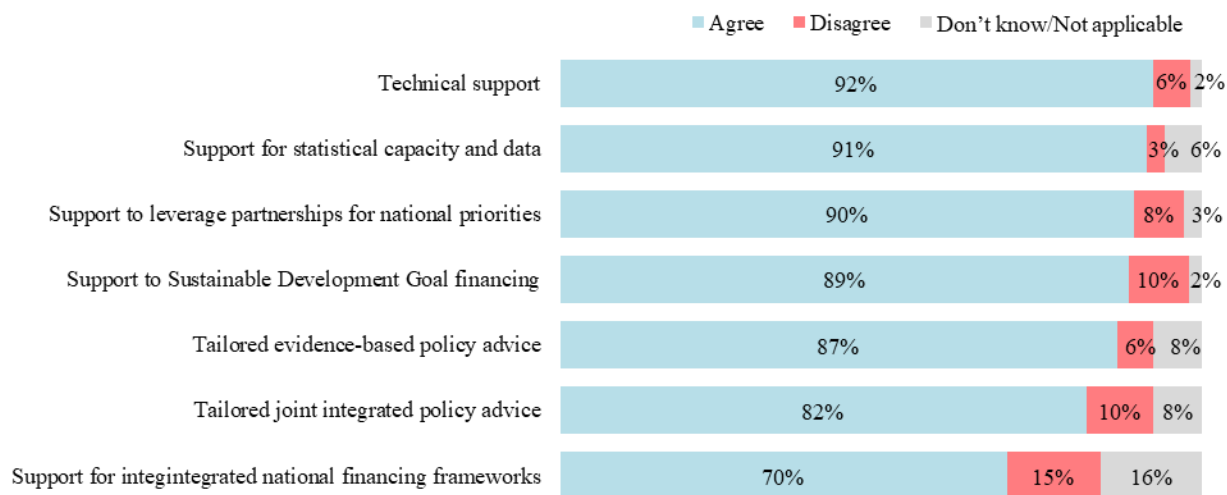
Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of United Nations country teams.

### 3. Integrated support aligned to country needs and priorities

23. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks set the development system offer at the country level, in response to national needs and priorities. In the survey of host Governments, 93 per cent reported that these frameworks are now closely aligned with country development needs and priorities. In addition, 94 per cent of Governments agreed that the United Nations development system's country-level activities adequately reflect the content of the Cooperation Framework, while 78 per cent of Governments agreed that the United Nations at the country level is more focused on common results. Among resident coordinators, 98 per cent stated that they saw improvement in common results over the past 12 months. As detailed more thoroughly in section IV.B.1 below, countries in special situations report particularly high levels of alignment.

24. Host country governments also provided positive assessments of United Nations support provided to them. Technical support, support for capacity and data and support to leverage partnerships for national priorities were all reported as adequate by at least 90 per cent of host governments (see figure 5). The support provided on integrated national financing frameworks was, however, rated lower – at 70 per cent – which shows that we still have some road ahead in reasserting the role of the United Nations development system in supporting countries to leverage financing for efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. I address these efforts in greater detail in section III.A.

Figure 5  
Government responses to the statement that the provision of United Nations support is adequate in the following areas



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of host country Governments.

25. For greater impact and coherence, United Nations entity country programmes should be directly derived from the Cooperation Framework. This is the main distinction between Cooperation Frameworks and the predecessor framework, the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. Progress has been made in this regard, as over 88 per cent of United Nations country team members stated that their country programme document is derived from the Cooperation Framework. Difficulties in ensuring full derivation remain, however, and the picture varies greatly from country to country. The United Nations Sustainable Development Group is taking steps to correct course. In addition, the System-wide Evaluation Office will conduct an evaluation on this matter. The new checklist for the governing bodies of entities (see sect. II.A.5 below) will also support Member States in monitoring this important element. I expect to provide greater insight and to identify improvements in my next report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

26. The survey responses give indications as to which country-level measures implemented as part of the repositioning process are perceived to be most transformative (see figure 6). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the new Cooperation Frameworks and strengthened resident coordinator offices were both considered as essential in improving the United Nations offer by more than 80 per cent of both country team members and resident coordinators.

Figure 6  
Extent to which different measures improved the United Nations country offer to countries over the past year

Measure	Resident coordinator responses				Country team member responses			
	Great or moderate extent	Small extent	No change	Don't know	Great or moderate extent	Small extent	No change	Don't know
Cooperation Framework	91%	7%	2%	0%	79%	9%	9%	2%
Strengthened RC office	84%	11%	4%	0%	64%	18%	12%	6%
Common country analysis	83%	12%	4%	0%	71%	12%	13%	5%
Joint workplans	82%	13%	4%	0%	49%	23%	17%	11%
More resources managed by RC/UNCT	78%	11%	11%	0%	39%	33%	18%	11%
System-wide reporting	76%	15%	9%	1%	51%	23%	19%	7%
Results groups	72%	17%	10%	1%	56%	20%	18%	6%
Business operations strategy	66%	27%	7%	0%	48%	29%	11%	13%
Resource mobilization collaboration	53%	34%	13%	0%	35%	38%	21%	7%
Strengthened MAF implementation	53%	29%	16%	2%	42%	23%	20%	15%
Increased common premises	50%	25%	24%	0%	37%	25%	28%	11%
Resource mobilization transparency	50%	29%	21%	0%	32%	34%	23%	10%
Strengthened MAF provisions	50%	28%	20%	2%	38%	22%	19%	21%

Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of resident coordinators and of United Nations country teams.

Abbreviations: MAF, management and accountability framework; RC, resident coordinator; UNCT, United Nations country teams.

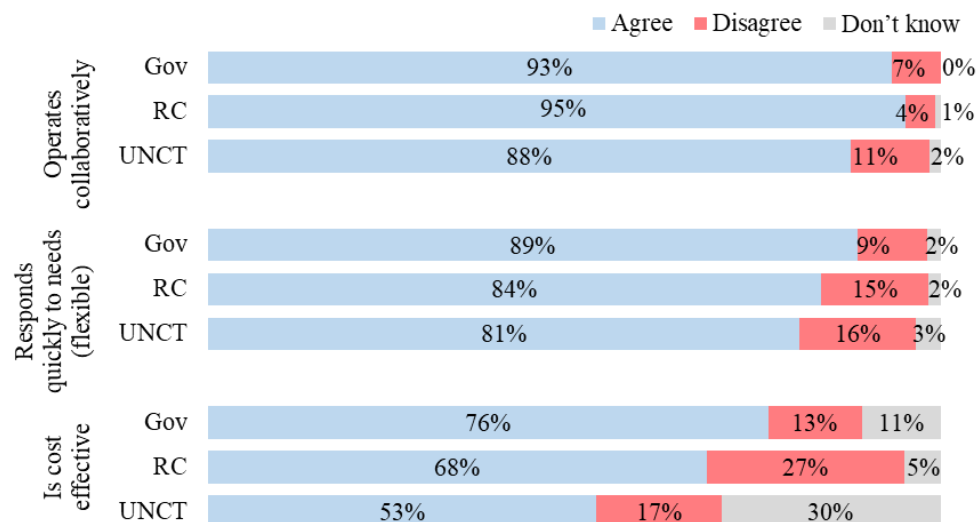
#### 4. Tailored United Nations country team configuration

27. Sustainable development is not amenable to a one-size-fits-all approach. The United Nations offer must be needs-based with a country team that is configured to best respond to the demands made by the host Government.

28. A capacity assessment methodology, devised by the Development Coordination Office, was rolled out in 2022, as promised in my previous report (A/77/69-E/2022/47). By the end of the year, over half (56 per cent) of country teams had conducted configuration exercises that were informed by the methodology.

29. Among host country Governments, 87 per cent considered the configuration of United Nations country support to be adequately tailored to meet their challenges and needs, reflecting an improvement from 81 per cent in 2021. A lower proportion of resident coordinators (81 per cent) and United Nations country team members (85 per cent) agreed with that assessment. In addition, 96 per cent of host country Governments reported satisfaction with their engagement in dialogues on configuration. Most Governments also agreed that the United Nations country team operates collaboratively (93 per cent) and is flexible (89 per cent), with each of those assessments being slightly reduced compared with 2021, in line with slightly lower rates from resident coordinators (see figure 7).

Figure 7  
**Government, resident coordinator and United Nations country team responses on in-country presence and configuration**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of Governments, resident coordinators and United Nations country team members.

Note: Governments were asked about the United Nations in-country presence, while resident coordinators and United Nations country team members were asked about the current United Nations configuration, one component of which is entity presence.

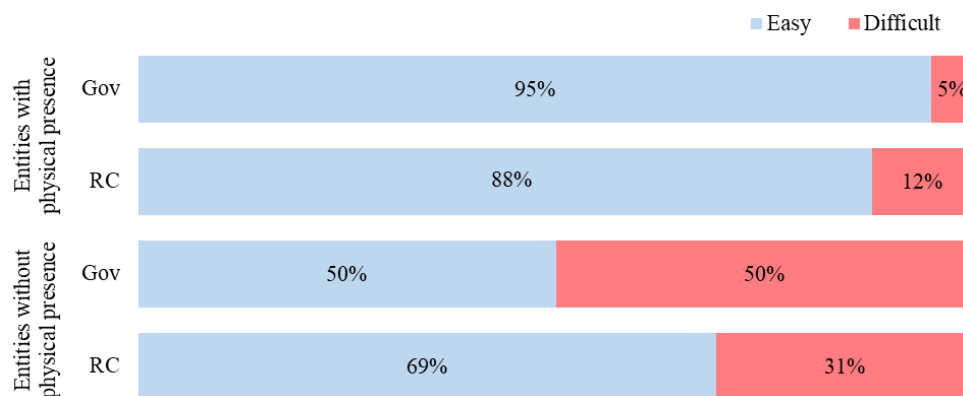
Abbreviations: Gov, Governments; RC, resident coordinators; UNCT, United Nations country teams.

30. Frequently, countries require specialized development expertise that may not be available among entities in a given country, as recognized in the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Our reforms have indeed endeavoured to ensure that the development system is able to leverage regional and global assets in order to scale up country impact. Important steps were taken in this regard and the resident coordinator system has now established connections with specialized entities and regional entities in ways that had not happened before. We continue to see a trend of growth in the average number of specialized agency signatories to Cooperation Frameworks without a physical presence – in the past year, the average increased from 5.0 to 5.4. The share of United Nations country teams with members from regional commissions and the World Bank as Cooperation Framework signatories has also increased. For example, only 38 per cent of country teams had regional commissions as members in 2020, but that figure grew to 48 per cent in 2021 and 60 per cent in 2022. The development system also further strengthened the development offer to countries and territories served by multi-country offices, as detailed more fully in the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (E/2023/62).

31. Nevertheless, host country Governments and resident coordinators continue to find it more difficult to gain access to expertise from United Nation entities without a physical presence (figure 8). Only 50 per cent of host Governments reported that it was easy to gain access to expertise outside their country – a surprising reduction from 61 per cent in 2021. With Governments facing unprecedented and multidimensional challenges and a finite set of resources to meet these needs, it is imperative that the United Nations development system better leverage the contributions of entities that do not have a physical footprint in-country. I expect the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to accelerate the development of global and regional rosters of expertise (see sect. II.B. below), while we also continue to develop specific agreements between Development Coordination Office and specialized agencies for targeted

support. I will report on proposed measures at the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

Figure 8  
**Perspectives of Governments and resident coordinators on accessing technical expertise from entities with and without a physical presence**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of host country Governments and resident coordinators.

Note: Governments responded to the question of whether in general, it was easy or difficult for the country to gain access to technical expertise from United Nations entities. Resident coordinators responded to the question of difficulty for the resident coordinator to gain access to the technical expertise available within the United Nations development system to address national needs, priorities and challenges.

Abbreviations: Gov, Governments; RC, resident coordinators.

## 5. Reinforcing transparency and mutual accountability

32. Transparency and accountability are critical drivers of an effective development system. At the global level, the General Assembly, in its resolutions [75/233](#), [76/4](#) and [75/290 A](#), reaffirmed the primacy of the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment as the accountability and oversight forum of the United Nations development system. The present report and the report of the Chair of the United Nations Development System Group play a key role in enabling the segment to perform this function and monitoring the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

33. In a system that remains marked by fragmented governance, it is imperative that we continue to work together with governing bodies across all entities of the United Nations development system to keep the reforms on track and fully respond to the expectations of Member States. There is good momentum. All governing bodies have regularly held dedicated sessions on the engagement of the respective entity in the United Nations development system repositioning – I am grateful to them. The Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group has now provided the governing bodies, through their presidents, with a checklist on United Nations development system reform. The checklist will facilitate the oversight by governing bodies of entity-specific efforts and will help ensure a harmonized approach across entities. The checklist is fully aligned with General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on reforms. It complements other oversight tools that governing bodies already use to assess entities' implementation of their mandates and obligations. I invite the members of all governing bodies and the heads of respective entities to make full use of the checklist and provide regular updates on implementation to the Economic and Social Council at the operational activities for development segment.

34. Accountability at the global level needs to be well articulated with accountability at the regional and national levels – it is at the country level, in particular, that our main accountability lies. At the national level, there are two primary accountability mechanisms. First, national joint steering committees co-chaired with host Governments enable collective country-level oversight of the implementation of the Cooperation Framework. Among countries with Cooperation Frameworks, 84 per cent (76 of 91) have established such committees and 76 per cent of those committees (58 of 76) met in 2022. In addition, country teams are required to account for country-level results in the implementation of the Cooperation Framework to host Governments in annual reports coordinated by the resident coordinator office. In 2022, all country teams produced a report on results achieved in 2021 to their host Governments, while 99 per cent had produced reports in 2021 on 2020 results.

35. Second, country teams are now accountable to resident coordinators in terms of their support for efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, through the management and accountability framework. The direction of travel on this framework is sound and most resident coordinators (84 per cent) and country team members (80 per cent) agreed that the implementation of the framework has improved over the past year. Resident coordinators and country team members also confirmed that most country team members report to the resident coordinator on entity results and activities (see figure 9). On the other hand, over half of resident coordinators (57 per cent) reported providing formal inputs to the performance assessments of fewer than one third of entity heads. This is consistent with feedback from country teams, with 38 per cent of entities reporting that the resident coordinator is included in their performance appraisals. On the positive side, 74 per cent now report that their job description includes provisions related to their relationship with the resident coordinator. I ask United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities to continue to monitor and ensure full compliance of the management and accountability framework. I also encourage governing bodies to remain appraised, including through the reform’s checklist.

36. Regional-level results are reported annually to Governments through the regional collaborative platforms, including through the system-wide regional results report. Such reports had never been produced before the reforms and are an important milestone in ensuring a more transparent system-wide effort at the regional level. The results are discussed more fully in section II.B. below.

Figure 9  
**United Nations country team member reporting to the resident coordinator to meet coordination needs**

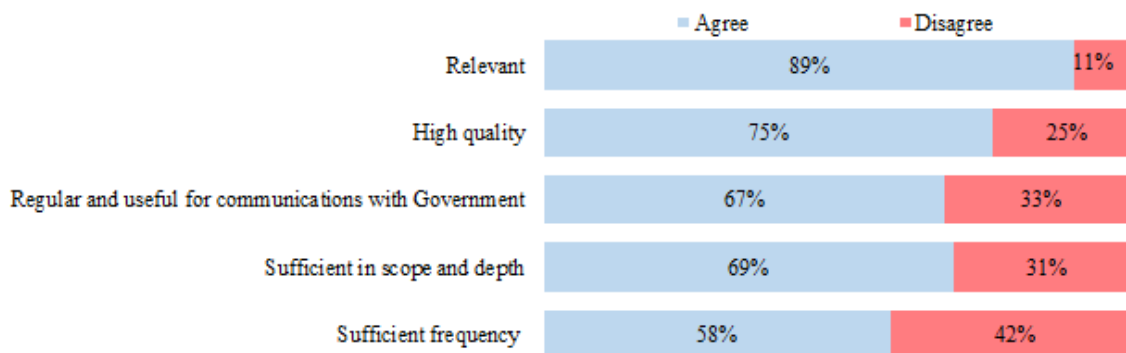
Reporting on	Resident coordinators				United Nations country team members	
	All	Most	Few	None	Yes	No
Collective results based on the Cooperation Framework	24%	60%	12%	4%	87%	13%
Entity-specific activities relevant to Cooperation Framework results	14%	57%	28%	1%	89%	11%
Entity-led Cooperation Framework programme implementation performance	15%	57%	24%	5%	87%	13%
Resource mobilization	7%	33%	51%	8%	65%	35%

Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of resident coordinators and of United Nations country teams.

Note: Resident coordinators responded to a question regarding whether all country team members report to the resident coordinator regularly to meet coordination needs; United Nations country team members responded to a question regarding whether they reported regularly to the resident coordinator.

Figure 10  
Quality of reporting by United Nations country team members to the resident coordinator

Resident coordinators responded to the question: In general, the reporting that the Resident Coordinator receives from United Nations country team heads is:



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of resident coordinators.

## B. Ensuring regional support for accelerated progress towards achieving the Goals

37. Regional collaborative platforms are designed to deploy regional assets in support of country action, supporting and reinforcing an integrated response by the country teams. The platforms also play a key role in helping country teams to address cross-border development issues, upon request by respective governments. The platforms are now well established. Exchanges between the regional and country levels, as well as collaboration among platform members, around collective priorities have become more systematic, and increasingly focused on ensuring regional assets are deployed in support of country teams. A key aspect of the support related to mobilization for, and follow-up to, commitments made at global high-level events such as the Transforming Education Summit and the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

38. Annual reports are now produced systematically by regional collaborative platforms and provide a comprehensive picture of the work of the United Nations development system in each region. A brief overview of key activities in each region is set out below.

39. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa advanced four agreed regional priorities: data and statistics, climate action, macroeconomic transformation, and energy and digital transitions. The platform worked closely with the African Union, simultaneously advancing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. On climate, the platform supported Member States on just energy transitions in the African context and the adoption of the African Common Position on Energy Access and Just Energy Transition. Members of the platform also supported the operationalization of the outcomes of the Transforming Education Summit through national consultations and monitoring under the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025.

40. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Arab States supported a focus on the transition from learning to work for adolescents and young people. A regional high-level meeting, facilitated by the platform, allowed the exchange of best practices and national commitments to boost employment opportunities for young people. A key outcome from the meeting was the sharing of joint recommendations from the Arab region to the Transforming Education Summit, and channelling support for follow-up

at the country level. The platform also rolled out a social protection capacity development programme for policymakers and practitioners.

41. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific provided analysis and guidance to resident coordinators and country teams in the lead-up to the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Transforming Education Summit. In Papua New Guinea, the issue-based coalition on resilience provided tailored training to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation into the new Cooperation Framework. In Maldives, the issue-based coalition conducted a capacity diagnosis to inform the country's disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategy. Similarly, country teams in Nepal and the Philippines were supported in the area of digital transformation.

42. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Europe and Central Asia, through the issue-based coalition on environment and climate change, lent support to resident coordinators and country teams on water cooperation in Central Asia. The platform also prepared a mapping of projects to support inter-agency coordination at the regional and country levels.

43. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean supported country teams through the provision of technical expertise in the formulation of Cooperation Frameworks in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The issue-based coalition on climate change and resilience facilitated a coherent, country-level approach to address the increasing intensity of wildfires. The issue-based coalition on human mobility issued regular reports that compile and analyse key trends on human mobility flows, including profiles, routes and the risks faced by persons on the move, and supported the formulation of targeted policy responses.

44. There is no doubt that some progress has been achieved compared with the duplicative and somewhat opaque structures that existed before the reforms. All the regional collaborative platforms have gradually demonstrated their potential in driving greater integration and expertise in support of United Nations country teams. For instance, the proportion of resident coordinators who report that the platforms have supported the country team in terms of the monitoring of, and reporting on, efforts to achieve the Goals increased from 41 per cent in 2021 to 54 per cent in 2022.

45. Such progress notwithstanding, we are not yet at a stage where we can consider our regional architecture as optimal. It is worrying to me that only a small majority of resident coordinators respond to the effect that their country team has benefited from the technical expertise (57 per cent) and normative and policy expertise (48 per cent) of the regional collaborative platforms. It is also concerning that the United Nations country team perceptions of support from the platforms deteriorated compared with 2021,<sup>3</sup> and that while 75 per cent of resident coordinators reported that their country team had benefited from the support of the platforms in policy discussions and in terms of the exchanging of experiences, only 61 per cent of country team members reported moderate or great benefits.<sup>4</sup>

46. As we are nearing the halfway point towards the target date for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, more action will be required from all members of the regional collaborative platforms to continue to identify entry points at the regional level to collectively connect global instruments and advocacy with country-

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<sup>3</sup> The proportion of country team members who reported that they benefited to a great or moderate extent in terms of technical expertise fell from 45 per cent in 2021 to 40 per cent in 2022. These ratios fell from 43 to 40 per cent over the same period in respect of normative and policy support.

<sup>4</sup> In 2021, 71 per cent of resident coordinators and 62 per cent of country team members reported likewise.



level reality, by enabling and supporting transformative action that accelerates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Between February and April 2023, the Deputy Secretary-General engaged with regional directors in all regions, as Chair of the regional collaborative platforms, to discuss corrective measures and accelerate alignment with the expectations of countries as channelled by country teams and resident coordinators. This year will be a litmus test for the new regional architecture and whether it is indeed fit for purpose to deliver the impact we need to meet the 2030 objective. Deploying our regional assets in an optimal way, including through the consolidation of regional rosters of expertise, remains a key priority on which the United Nations development system is yet to make headway.

### **C. Boosting sustainable development as humanity's ultimate prevention tool: strengthening humanitarian-development collaboration and linkages to peace**

47. Development gains are usually among the first casualties when conflict breaks out. The number of conflicts has spiked over the past decade. One quarter of the global population now lives in conflict-affected areas. Some 100 million people have been forcibly displaced by conflict, violence, persecution and human rights violations – more than three times the number of victims recorded in 2012 – including 31.5 million people forced to leave their countries.<sup>5</sup> Humanitarian needs are skyrocketing, with an estimated 339 million people worldwide expected to require emergency aid and protection in 2023, which is an increase of 65 million people compared with 2022.

48. Inclusive sustainable development is the only comprehensive solution to prevent – or accelerate the transition out of – conflict and emergencies. That is why the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review recognized the importance of greater cooperation and coherence among development efforts, humanitarian action and peacebuilding.

49. Thanks to the repositioning of the United Nations development system, we are better positioned to respond to this important call. The new resident coordinator system, in particular, has created significant opportunities for greater synergies, resulting in a more impartial development coordination function, at the heart of the Secretariat, that has established a clear interlocutor to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the peace pillar for collaboration at all levels. Better equipped resident coordinator offices have allowed for cross-fertilization with humanitarian and peace activities, in specific country contexts where these challenges intersect. The Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP, has continued to provide dedicated attention to crisis settings, with sustainable development as the ultimate objective.

50. Our survey results are encouraging. Between 90 and 95 per cent of host countries see United Nations entities as working in close collaboration across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actions (see figure 11). Some 95 per cent of host Governments agreed that, in 2022, resident coordinators had contributed to building stronger synergies across these interventions. The share rises to 100 per cent in countries with a humanitarian response plan. These assessments represent steady increases over the past two years.<sup>6</sup> In countries engaged in peacebuilding in

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<sup>5</sup> Data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Available at [www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html).

<sup>6</sup> In 2021, 93 per cent of host country governments agreed that resident coordinators have contributed to building stronger synergies across these interventions, while 94 per cent of host country governments with humanitarian response plans thought so. In 2020, these ratios were 88 per cent and 100 per cent, respectively, in 2020.

recent years, 93 per cent of respondents positively assessed United Nations efforts to ensure a continued focus on longer-term development and sustaining peace, up from 91 per cent the previous year.

51. Resident coordinators offered a similar assessment of collaboration across humanitarian and development initiatives, as well as on development and peacebuilding actions. Collaboration on humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions is weaker, although a positive trend is observed. The assessment of United Nations country teams is less favourable (figure 11), which may signal an increased appetite for greater collaboration at a time where the world faces multiple crises. The headquarters of United Nations development system entities need to be prepared to seize this momentum and respond effectively. I have therefore asked the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to continue to work with United Nations principals in identifying ways to strengthen support in this field, including through a review of the working modalities of the Joint Steering Committee. As a matter of priority, we must identify ways to deliver surge capacities to support coordinated planning and joint programming by United Nations country teams in a flexible and fast-tracked manner.

Figure 11

**Ongoing work to bridge humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities – percentage of Governments, United Nations country team members and resident coordinators reporting close collaboration**

Survey	Year	Development – humanitarian	Development – peacebuilding	Humanitarian – peacebuilding
Host country governments	2022	93%	91%	90%
	2021	..	..	..
Resident coordinators	2022	94%	90%	80%
	2021	89%	84%	76%
United Nations country team members	2022	80%	66%	72%
	2021	83%	75%	75%

Source: 2022 and 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of resident coordinators and of United Nations country team members.

52. Assessing the structural bottlenecks to collaboration between different pillars and activities, I am encouraged to observe reductions in difficulties in all five areas assessed by the survey (figure 12). However, significant challenges remain, many of which are systemic in nature, including the lack of financing incentives and insufficient investments in sustainable development to prevent or respond when crises erupt.

53. In our survey of the headquarters of United Nations entities, 85 per cent of respondents reported significant difficulties in ensuring appropriate financing. There is good news in this regard. Funding to inter-agency pooled funds focused on peace and transition has increased, from \$184 million in 2015 to \$546 million in 2021. The Peacebuilding Fund, in particular, continues to make a crucial contribution to greater coherence across the United Nations system. In 2022, it approved its highest ever budget, \$231.5 million for 37 countries, representing an 18.7 per cent increase from 2021. At the same time, I am concerned that the new contributions provided to the Peacebuilding Fund declined by 12 per cent in 2022, to a total of \$171 million, which may signal that the current positive trend is unlikely to be sustained over time.

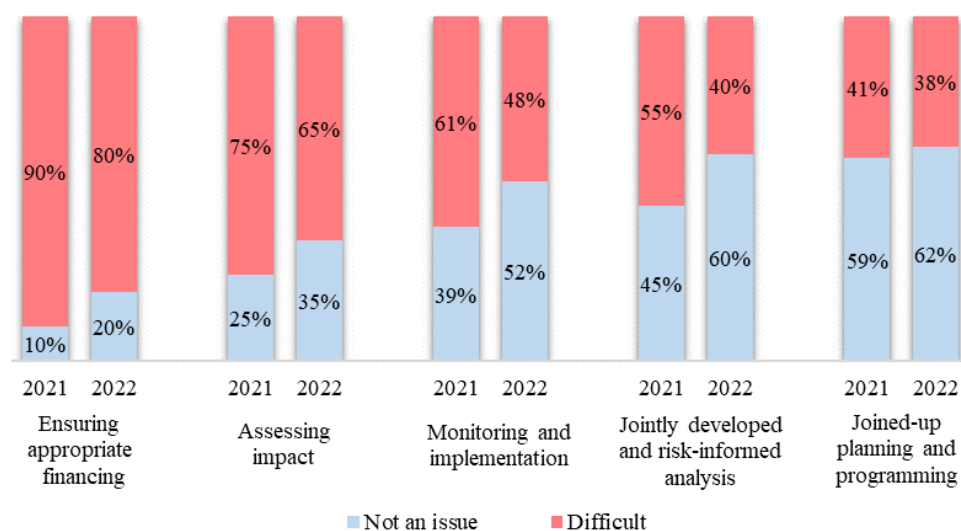
54. Difficulties in assessing impact with a sufficient degree of precision were also identified as a persistent hurdle. The combined effect of humanitarian, development

and peace interventions to meet needs, reduce vulnerabilities and mitigate risk bring many variables across different actors and different reporting frameworks together, in contexts of great risk and uncertainty. Assessing impact is a complex and uncertain endeavour; nonetheless, we must find ways to improve reporting in this regard. There are ongoing efforts to ensure better alignment of analysis, planning and monitoring tools across pillars and this offers a good entry point for tangible improvement moving forward.

Figure 12

### Ongoing work to bridge humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities

*Question: please assess the level of difficulty with each of the aspects below*



Source: 2022 and 2021 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of United Nations headquarters entities.

55. I also count on continued leadership by Member States to identify opportunities to strengthen the intergovernmental emphasis on issues that require collaboration between the humanitarian and development pillars, and stronger linkages with the peace pillar. In this regard, joint work by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission remains essential to strengthening coherence across the pillars. I am also pleased that the reconfigured meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the transition from relief to development now allows for a dedicated discussion of United Nations system support to countries affected by conflicts and facing humanitarian crises. It can also build on the annual meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Working together, we can accelerate progress and make sure the United Nations development system is able to leverage assets across all pillars to help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In doing so, we will be a step closer to our joint aspirations for a world of peace, dignity and prosperity.

## D. Accelerating the transformation of business operations

56. We have come a long way together. The collective efforts of Member States and United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities to reform the business operations of the United Nations development system have achieved a great deal. We have created a powerful platform to share resources and staff more easily in ways that realize tangible business efficiencies. Our latest estimates, as detailed further below,

identify realized efficiency gains of \$405 million.<sup>7</sup> This is a 47 per cent increase from 2021 efficiencies (\$275 million), applying the revised, more comprehensive United Nations Sustainable Development Group methodology.<sup>8</sup> These are encouraging numbers. While efficiencies are not an end in themselves, every dollar saved through more efficient operations translates into an additional dollar allocated to development activities, which is why these efforts are so critical.

57. The improvements in business operations have primarily been achieved in four areas: business operations strategies, establishing common premises, global shared services and common back offices.

58. The implementation of country-level business operations strategies saw efficiency gains of \$84 million in 2022 (up 14 per cent from \$73.6 million in 2021), with administrative services continuing to generate the largest efficiency gains. This includes, for example, the consolidation of security services for staff and premises at the country level (\$5.5 million); joint travel services (\$9.2 million); and collaboration on accommodation services (\$13.3 million). The United Nations country teams in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen account for the 27 per cent of the total efficiencies generated through business operations strategies, resulting in \$4.9 million, \$12.3 million and \$5.6 million in efficiencies, respectively.

59. As of March 2023, 30 per cent of United Nations premises are common premises, accommodating 55 per cent of the United Nations personnel, as compared with 26 per cent of common premises accommodating 45 per cent of staff in 2021. The progress made to date includes an increase in the colocation of offices in a common premise (as in Barbados, Belize, Lebanon, United Republic of Tanzania), as well as the creation of new common premises, as along with 25 ongoing projects, including several Government-provided rent-free buildings (as in Egypt, Fiji, Gabon, Micronesia (Federated States of), Senegal). Together these efforts yielded a total of \$1.6 million in efficiencies (compared with \$1.3 million in 2021).

60. The establishment of common premises is also a powerful enabler for other efficiency-related initiatives, such as the business operations strategies and the common back office. In Viet Nam, for example, the common premises hosted by UNDP, which accommodates 15 entities, enabled additional integrated information and communications technology support functions and facility management services to be shared among several entities, further creating a culture of collaboration within the team. A fundamental challenge to accelerating progress in this area remains the lack of resources for significant infrastructure improvements. Moreover, progress has been achieved in increasing accountability and transparency of results through a new common premises platform and dashboard (containing information for over 3,500 premises worldwide, spanning 3.8 million m<sup>2</sup> and accommodation for 120,000 United Nations personnel).

61. System-wide progress in terms of the implementation of common back offices remained slow, however, with regard to the original ambition to set up such offices for all United Nations country teams. Progress was made primarily with respect to the common back office design methodology being agreed within the United Nations

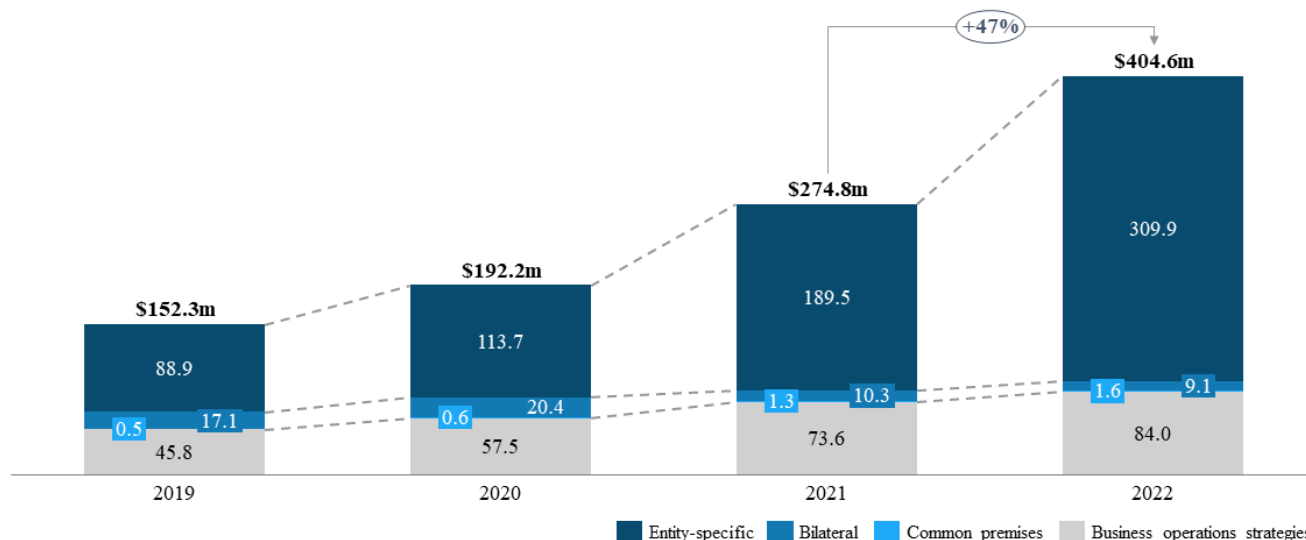
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<sup>7</sup> United Nations development system repositioning, explanatory note no. 10, 29 March 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Last year's report presented a total of \$195 million in efficiency gains, against a projection of \$310 million. A comprehensive review of the methodology used to calculate efficiency gains was undertaken by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Business Innovations Group, which found that the 2021 data did not fully capture the impact of initiatives that had begun before 2018 but that still continue to deliver efficiencies today (for example, accommodation services in the Syrian Arab Republic and travel services in Ethiopia). Accordingly, a revised and more accurate methodology was developed, which recalculates efficiency gains for 2021 to be \$275 million. The 2022 estimates apply this revised methodology.

Sustainable Development Group and the governance and support mechanisms needed to effect potentially fundamental changes in business models at the country level. Progress on global shared services was primarily (99 per cent) from entity-specific efficiencies of \$156.4 million, as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) among others, rather than system-wide savings.

Figure 13  
Comparison of efficiencies (2019–2022), using revised methodology



62. With a view to accelerating progress across all workstreams, informed by implementation experience to date, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group prepared a revised efficiency road map for 2022–2024, retaining the original ambition but prioritizing areas with the highest potential for efficiencies and introducing quantified, measurable targets. Concrete timelines are now set for the implementation of business operations strategies, with a focus on expanding shared services in conflict and high-risk settings. There is a focus on the scaling up of the move to common premises in 66 of the highest cost locations globally. For common back offices, the road map prioritizes their implementation in 50 of the highest volume, non-crisis settings. The road map focuses greater attention on global shared services, estimating that these could account for 40 per cent of total efficiency gains during the 2022–2024 period.

63. As a result, there has been visible progress with respect to common back offices in a first set of countries (Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam), where the work will be completed in the course of 2023. As a next step, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group agreed in January 2023 on further acceleration measures for these countries, identifying lead entities to provide services for each: the United Nations Office at Nairobi in Kenya; WFP in the United Republic of Tanzania; UNICEF in Jordan (together with UNOPS) and in Senegal; and UNDP in Brazil and Viet Nam. The lessons learned from these countries will inform continued adjustments and simplification to enable progress so as to cover a much larger number of countries going forward.

64. In order to enable momentum across the system, beyond those gains that are internal to different entities, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group has also agreed to invest additional resources for dedicated capacities to be hosted in the

Development Coordination Office. In 2023, there will be a focus on initially scaling up services that show the highest potential and readiness, including the United Nations fleet focused on vehicle leasing, United Nations booking hub focused on accommodation and medical services, UN Web Buy Plus focused on procurement services and vehicle procurement. For example, the United Nations fleet service (managed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP) offers field-ready standard vehicles through flexible leasing arrangements, vehicle tracking and vehicle disposal, and the solution was agreed for use by WFP, UNHCR, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF in 2022.

65. We have said it before, mutual recognition of policies and procedures across United Nations entities is a key enabler to advance system-wide efficiencies, by removing obstacles posed by differences in entity-specific policies and procedures. Despite the mutual recognition principle statement having been signed by all United Nations Sustainable Development Group principals in 2021 (except by the World Intellectual Property Organization, which joined the Group more recently), it remains severely underutilized. I am calling on principals to make more systematic use of this transformative tool.

66. Another key enabler is the methodology to capture and report on efficiencies, and 2022 also saw a consolidation of our efforts in this respect. According to the 2022 survey by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the headquarters of United Nations development system's entities, 44 per cent of entities now have policies in place to measure efficiency gains, an improvement from 33 per cent in 2020. A total of 125 United Nations country teams updated their business operations strategy in 2023 to inform this report, compared with only 26 last year. The new efficiency dashboard is now publicly available<sup>9</sup> and includes the results presented in the present report as well as in previous years, in addition to the new common premises platform and dashboard.

67. Despite these achievements and the increasingly tangible commitment demonstrated by United Nations Sustainable Development Group members, there is room for more ambition. The survey found that 30 per cent of development system headquarters do not have internal structures to support the development and implementation of the business operations reform initiatives. I have directed the Chair of the Group to work with entities of the Group to address this gap.

## **E. Delivering global priorities for United Nations development system operations**

68. The 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review placed a focus on several areas related to United Nations performance against critical corporate commitments.

### **1. Walking the talk – system-wide accountability on gender**

69. In the resolution on the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, Member States called upon the United Nations development system entities to continue to promote gender equality and women's rights by enhancing gender mainstreaming. Those efforts included the full implementation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and its United Nations country team performance indicators (United Nations country team gender equality scorecard). Progress on the System-wide Action Plan is generally encouraging. Reporting was done through a dedicated online platform, with quality assurance provided by the United Nations Entity for Gender

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<sup>9</sup> See [https://data.uninfo.org/home/\\_Effstatus](https://data.uninfo.org/home/_Effstatus).

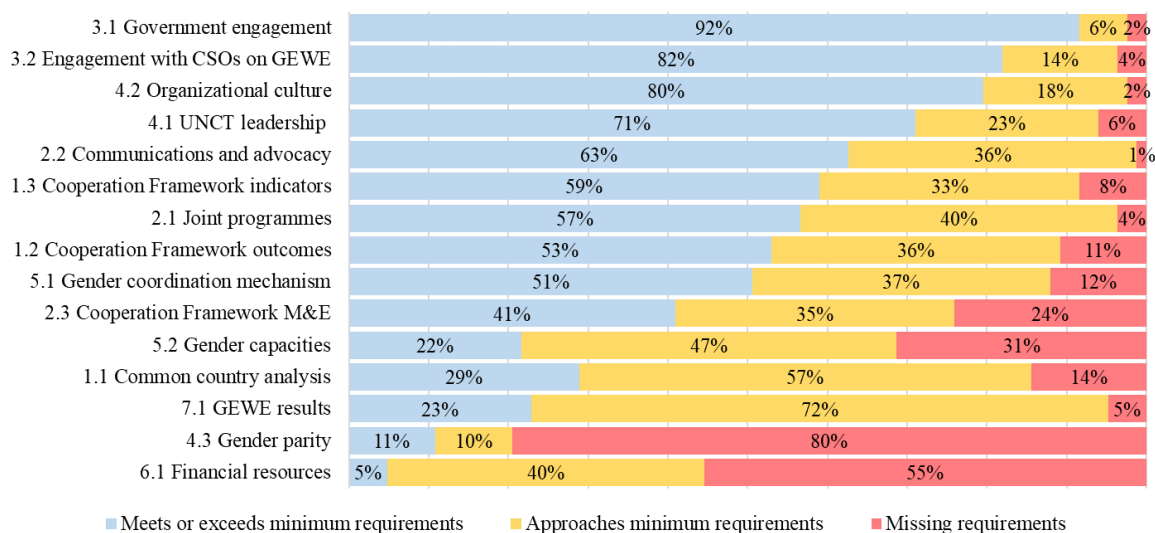
Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) as part of its secretariat support for the System-wide Action Plan and United Nations country teams.

70. The System-wide Action Plan analysis also reveals enhanced system-wide coherence. Some 51 entities paired up for peer review, mutual learning opportunities and other forms of collaboration. Financial resource tracking and allocation has progressed, with 30 entities using the gender equality marker, 17 on their entire budgets and 13 on specific sources, and 41 establishing a benchmark. Remarkably, 12 entities reported exceeding their benchmarks.

71. That progress is mirrored by advances at the country level. Some 76 country teams implemented the gender equality scorecard (United Nations country team gender equality scorecard). Some 70 per cent of entities met at least 75 per cent of all System-wide Action Plan indicators (a five percentage point increase from 2021). A total of 58 entities now have a gender policy in place, and 32 have placed a high-level gender-related result in their strategic plan.

72. Across the country teams, three indicators registered the strongest performance: collaboration and engagement with the government on gender equality; an organizational culture that is supportive of gender equality; and collaboration and engagement with civil society organizations dedicated to gender equality. Indicators on advancing gender parity, ensuring financial resource allocation and tracking, and capacity development for gender mainstreaming registered the weakest performance. While it is encouraging to see greater engagement with government and civil society in advancing gender equality, and greater collaboration internally, without dedicated resources and capacity we will not advance at the pace needed to achieve this goal.

Figure 14  
**United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan performance, 2019–2022**



Source: UN-Women, 2022.

Abbreviations: CSOs, civil society organizations; GEWE, gender equality and women’s empowerment; M&E, monitoring and evaluation; UNCT, United Nations country team.

73. Our Common Agenda spells out a vision for placing women and girls at the centre of renewed, inclusive multilateralism. In order to achieve this, the United Nations must be fit for purpose to advance women’s rights and gender equality as a key global priority across all areas of operations. To inform the reforms needed towards this goal, in 2022 I commissioned an independent review of United Nations



capacities on gender equality across all pillars. The report was concluded at the start of 2023 and will now be taken forward by the system to address the findings and recommendations.

74. Gender parity remains a work in progress and I remain committed to the goal of achieving parity at every level in every entity by 2028. A critical step towards gender parity is transforming our organizational culture.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, I commend the improved parental leave policy adopted by the General Assembly in December 2022 (resolution 77/256). While progress has been significant towards gender parity over the past five years, imbalances persist, particularly in the field. This will be an area of focus for my office in the coming period, and I encourage the United Nations development system and every entity to fast-track action to achieve the goal of parity at all levels, in particular among staff in the field.

## **2. Consolidating efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations development system**

75. Resident coordinators bear the primary responsibility for prohibiting, deterring and responding to sexual misconduct. This is set out in the management and accountability framework. My Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the Victims' Rights Advocate regularly brief resident coordinators on their role in, and accountability for, preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. Among United Nations country teams in 2022, 89 per cent (117 out of 131) had an action plan for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse; 54 per cent had a coordinator for action on this issue, up from 24 per cent in 2021; and 99 per cent had inter-agency task forces, coordination mechanisms and/or focal points. These are critical steps towards achieving 100 per cent implementation of all these measures by 2024.

76. Our approach to addressing sexual abuse operationally, including in mainstreaming victims' rights throughout the system, is an essential part of ending sexual exploitation and abuse. I appreciate the leadership of the Victims' Rights Advocate in integrating a victims' rights approach in policies and procedures across the United Nations system. In 2023, consultations on a draft victims' rights statement will be completed and new methodologies piloted to gather victims' feedback on the quality and appropriateness of assistance. Training packages for staff are also being rolled out and will help enhance familiarity with new measures for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and reporting mechanisms.

## **3. Accelerating the environmental sustainability of United Nations operational activities for development**

77. The Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System, 2020–2030 guides the environmental sustainability of our operations. The “Greening the Blue” reports for 2021 and 2022, which include data from 29 United Nations development system entities, showed that the United Nations system's carbon footprint decreased from approximately 1.5 million tons CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2020 to 1.2 million tons CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2021. The waste generated per person fell from 184 kg/person to 110 kg/person, and the share of entities implementing sustainable procurement policies rose from 64 per cent in 2020 to 74 per cent in 2021.<sup>11</sup> As of 2021, only 4 per cent of the water consumed by the United Nations system was recycled. In 2023, guided by the United Nations common approach to biodiversity and nature-based solutions, we will pilot entity-level reporting related to biodiversity

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<sup>10</sup> SG/SM/21627.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, “Greening the Blue” reports (Geneva, 2021 and 2022).



and nature-based solutions, in procurement, operations, facilities, staff awareness, meetings and events.

78. United Nations entities should accelerate efforts to establish environmental management systems while making real-time improvements. Our latest data indicate that out of 27 United Nations development system entities, only 2 have an environmental management system that met the minimum requirements of the Strategy for Sustainability Management, and 12 are approaching the requirements. Furthermore, 11 entities have greenhouse gas reduction targets integrated into their environmental management system, and 15 entities, down from 17 in 2020, have integrated environmental and social safeguards into policies, programmes and projects. We must stay focused and achieve our goal of implementing environmental and social safeguards across the United Nations by 2030.

#### **4. Mainstreaming disability inclusion**

79. In the resolution on the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, Member States also called for the United Nations development system to accelerate the full and effective mainstreaming of disability inclusion, utilizing the comprehensive system-wide framework and associated indicators established in the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

80. I am not satisfied with our progress on disability inclusion. Entities and country teams are not yet achieving 70 per cent of the benchmarks set by the Strategy. Progress must move at a greater pace through a coordinated and cross-functional approach. The mainstreaming of disability inclusion in strategic planning processes by entities and country teams is steadily increasing, with 49 per cent of entities and 43 per cent of country teams reporting that they were meeting or exceeding requirements. That progress notwithstanding, consultation with persons with disabilities remains stagnant. Such consultations are foundational to achieving disability inclusion, yet only 30 per cent of entities and 29 per cent of country teams are meeting or exceeding requirements in this regard.

81. In relation to accessibility, 44 per cent of entities are developing and implementing action plans to address physical and digital accessibility. Among country teams, 46 per cent of have adopted disability-inclusive common services in their business operations strategies.

82. Enhancing staff knowledge with respect to disability inclusion is vital to mainstreaming disability inclusion across both programmes and operations. Staff training programmes on disability inclusion were developed with the United Nations System Staff College for use across entities. Networks are now in place to support information exchange, collaboration and learning at the entity and country team levels.

83. The multi-partner trust fund of the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities launched 26 joint programmes in 2022, which are being carried out jointly by governments, organizations of persons with disabilities and United Nations entities. Two thirds of the 35 joint programmes on integrated social protection under the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund also provided specific attention to persons with disabilities.

### **III. Scaling up support to advance means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda**

#### **A. A significant boost in financing for development**

84. Upon the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, all actors recognized that achieving the transformative vision embodied in the 2030 Agenda would require an unprecedentedly high level of resources. More than seven years have passed, and the shift “from billions to trillions” is yet to materialize. It remains imperative, and not too late, to deliver on this promise.

85. It is against this background that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review requested the development system to continue supporting countries to leverage robust partnerships with development partners, including international financial institutions and the private sector, in order to achieve the scale and pace of progress required to meet the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations has worked at every level – from the global to the local – to this end.

86. At the global level, I have called for a Sustainable Development Goal stimulus of at least \$500 billion per year for sustainable development. The stimulus contains three areas for immediate action within the existing international financial architecture: (a) tackling the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress; (b) massively scaling up affordable long-term financing for development; and (c) expanding contingency financing to countries in need. In parallel, longer-term efforts are needed to reform the international financial architecture. We need a system that better provides equitable, affordable and stable financing for investment in productive capacity and long-term sustainable development.

87. At the country level, resident coordinators have deployed their convening power, systematically, to help countries leverage financing at scale. There are encouraging signs – including regarding cooperation with multilateral development banks. In the survey responses, 97 per cent of host Governments agreed that country teams engaged meaningfully with international financial institutions, an increase from 90 per cent in 2021, while 66 per cent of host Governments indicated a noticeable improvement in collaboration since 2018. Engagement with international financial institutions in preparing common country analyses increased from 54 per cent to 62 per cent from 2021 to 2022. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN-Women have projects with international financial institutions in over 110 countries.<sup>12</sup>

88. Despite these improvements, only 38 per cent of United Nations country teams reported having a formal relationship with international financial institutions and 31 per cent reported joint initiatives with these institutions in 2022, a decrease of 11 per cent since 2021. Some 89 per cent of host country Governments agreed that the United Nations provided adequate support to financing for the Sustainable Development Goals, but that proportion has to come closer to 100 per cent if we are to realize the step change in finance needed to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. Our performance also varies across sectors. In health, for instance, only 66 per

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<sup>12</sup> The joint update disseminated in January 2023 provides an overview of this engagement, which includes 24 projects in the least developed countries, 41 in landlocked developing countries and 21 in small island developing States. It highlights that there is scope to deepen collaboration at all levels, harnessing financial and non-financial entry points, particularly in areas such as global public goods, gender equality and support to the least developed countries. Report available at: [www.unfpa.org/session-and-informals/joint-update-undp-unfpa-unops-unicef-and-un-women-engagement-international](http://www.unfpa.org/session-and-informals/joint-update-undp-unfpa-unops-unicef-and-un-women-engagement-international).

cent of host Governments report receiving support on finance for health, compared with 91 per cent who received support on improving health coverage

89. Moreover, as noted in section II.A, the support provided by the United Nations on integrated national financing frameworks has room to improve. The frameworks are a critical tool that facilitates collaboration between United Nations entities, the government, international financial institutions, public development banks, civil society and the private sector to develop robust, holistic strategies for financing sustainable development. Well-designed frameworks can guide the allocation and use of scaled-up international financing through the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus.

90. The first two integrated national financing frameworks were launched by Mongolia and Nigeria in 2022. Such frameworks are being developed in 86 countries, including 33 in the least developed countries, 18 in small island developing States and 32 in countries in fragile contexts. The World Bank is engaging in over 40 framework processes, the International Monetary Fund in more than 25 countries, and regional development banks and other international financial institutions in some 30 countries.

91. Demand from host Governments for United Nations assistance to develop these frameworks has increased from 83 per cent to 90 per cent between 2021 and 2022. A total of 82 per cent of host country Governments agreed that the United Nations adequately provides support for these frameworks. These numbers need to increase so the development system can provide support to all countries that request it. More than 20 United Nations entities are involved in the integrated national financing framework process at the country level and the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund supports joint programmes mobilizing integrated national financing frameworks activities in more than 60 countries. These numbers need to grow as well.

92. The development system approach must work at two levels: (a) it should provide immediate breathing room and support to countries that were devastated by the crises of the past several years, by working within the existing international financial architecture, including through the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus; and (b) it should work with Member States to take concrete steps towards meaningful, long-term reform of that architecture. At the country level, I also encourage all stakeholders to make greater use of integrated national financing frameworks to create long-term financing strategies that can accompany national policies and plans, while ensuring their full alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **B. Catalysing partnerships to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

93. In addition to leading country teams and making the most of our collective assets at the country level, resident coordinators are expected to bring constituencies together and build multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development. I am pleased to report that 92 per cent of host country Governments appreciated the value of resident coordinators in leveraging partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This suggests that resident coordinators are asserting their convening role.

94. Catalysing partnerships is not, however, the sole prerogative of the resident coordinator. Out of 29 United Nations development system entities, 22 reported that they had capacities to promote innovative partnership arrangements in 2022, which was an increase from 18 out of 27 in 2021.

95. I am pleased to see continued progress by United Nations country teams in adopting shared strategies for partnership and resource mobilization to advance joint

efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The percentage of teams with such strategies rose from 24 per cent in 2021 to 39 per cent in 2022. We need to continue this rapid pace of adoption until all teams have such strategies in place, using the opportunities that arise in developing new Cooperation Frameworks. Formal working groups have proven to be valuable in supporting the implementation of shared strategies.

96. After some years with modest progress, 2022 brought a noticeable increase in monitoring partnerships at the regional and country levels. Among the 28 United Nations development system entities surveyed, 20 have monitoring in place at the global level, 23 at the regional level and 22 at the country level. This is an increase from 2021, when 16 of 24 entities had monitoring in place at the global level, 20 of 26 at the regional level and 18 of 25 at the country level.

97. Governments continued to give United Nations country teams high marks for working with civil society, women's groups and youth. High proportions of host Governments agreed with the statement that United Nations country teams are meaningfully engaging with civil society (99 per cent of host Governments), women's groups (100 per cent) and youth (98 per cent). United Nations country teams have made incremental, consistent gains in pursuing a structured engagement with civil society across different stages of planning and programming. While the overall improvement is encouraging, more concerted action is needed in establishing ongoing feedback loops and putting in place remedy mechanisms.

98. The United Nations Global Compact increased its geographical coverage from 69 to 96 countries in 2022. As the world's largest corporate social responsibility initiative, it engages nearly 22,000 participating companies through local networks at the country level. Together with a number of other United Nations partners, the Global Compact will convene the second annual Global Africa Business Initiative, a solutions-oriented global platform connecting leaders to drive and invest in Africa's economic growth. The Global Compact is deepening its collaboration with the resident coordinator system and will work in the coming year to implement updated guidelines for enhancing cooperation between resident coordinator offices, country teams and local business communities. Only one third of United Nations development system entities have specific policies or guidelines to cooperate with Global Compact networks. I strongly encourage entities to increase such efforts.

99. South-South cooperation is another critical asset for countries to exchange not only resources, but also best practices, know-how and technologies. It should never replace, but it is a critical complement to traditional development assistance. Nearly three quarters of United Nations development entities have integrated South-South and triangular cooperation as a specific implementation modality in their global strategic plans. The same number of entities stated that they had incorporated South-South cooperation results into corporate reporting. This is an important recognition of the value of sharing knowledge on the strides that many developing countries have made in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. The revamped South-South Galaxy platform, a United Nations system-wide knowledge sharing and partnership platform, connects 500 registered organizations and offers a digital repository of over 900 development solutions. I expect accelerated implementation of the United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation and its action plan by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

100. In the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review it was recognized that volunteerism is a powerful, cross-cutting means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Nearly 12,000 United Nations Volunteers served with 55 United Nations entities in 2022, including 229 in resident coordinator offices. They represented 177 nationalities, with 84 per cent from the global South. The United Nations Volunteers

programme deployed over 200 volunteers with disabilities in 86 countries; 49 per cent were women. Among the 2022 Cooperation Frameworks, 38 per cent integrated volunteerism, particularly on work relating to the Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to poverty, health, youth and partnership. This a promising step towards greater use of volunteerism in support of Cooperation Frameworks.

### **C. Harnessing science, technology and innovation to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals**

101. Science, technology and innovation hold great potential to unlock development progress and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In the years ahead, we intend to strengthen modern expertise across the United Nations family to better assist Member States in navigating the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century.

102. The 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review placed renewed emphasis on supporting countries to leverage science, technology and innovation, tailored to national needs and priorities. I am therefore pleased that 82 per cent of host Governments reported receiving such support. In addition, 76 per cent of Governments in lower-middle-income countries received support to map, evaluate and document science, technology and innovation solutions from the global South.

103. In our survey of the headquarters of United Nations development system entities, 24 out of 28 of entities reported that they had provided advice to countries on the transformative potential of technology and innovation. A United Nations inter-agency team, under the auspices of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, provided tailored capacity-building support at the country level. A global pilot programme on science, technology and innovation for Sustainable Development Goal road maps<sup>13</sup> was successfully piloted in six countries in 2021, supporting mainstreaming in national development processes. The programme provides an opportunity for scaling up support to Member States in this important area. The Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries has also continued to provide valuable support, which I detail further in section IV.B.

### **D. Improving the United Nations development system's offer on digital technologies**

104. Technology is shaping our future. The 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review emphasized the importance of addressing barriers to digital inclusion and closing the digital divide. While the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the uptake of digital connectivity, this growth is not equal among and within countries. Many who experience the digital divide live in rural areas and in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Despite improvements, a large gender gap in technology persists, which is particularly evident in lower-middle-income countries.<sup>14</sup>

105. A large majority of Governments (89 per cent) agreed that United Nations country teams supported countries in improving digital inclusion, a noticeable improvement from 78 per cent in 2021. Nonetheless, several Governments

<sup>13</sup> European Union and United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team, *Guidebook for the Preparation of Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development Goal Road Maps* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021).

<sup>14</sup> Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, *The State of Broadband 2022: Accelerating Broadband for New Realities* (Geneva, 2022).

highlighted the need to scale up support in the digital sphere, including in digital literacy and skills. Among resident coordinators in lower-middle-income countries, 80 per cent reported that their host country had requested support on digital technologies and cooperation, which was higher than the average across all resident coordinators (73 per cent). Part of our effort to tackle barriers to digital inclusion and leverage technology for accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals should include deliberate actions to support research and development and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms. This would help to enhance job opportunities in science and technology sectors across different regions and help countries to capitalize on other efforts such as education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and labour force reskilling.

106. The United Nations development system took concrete steps at the global level to operationalize the Road Map for Digital Cooperation (A/74/821). In 2022, it launched a set of aspirational connectivity targets for 2030 to provide benchmarks and galvanize efforts to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity. The development system also facilitated an important step forward towards integrating environmental sustainability in digital transformation. At the international meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity” in June 2022, the Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability<sup>15</sup> kicked off an “Action Plan for a Sustainable Planet in the Digital Age”, structured around nine global impact initiatives.

107. Following the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence framework adopted by 193 member States in 2021, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed a readiness assessment methodology in 2022 to check countries’ preparedness to implement the recommendation, and an ethical impact assessment to identify, monitor and assess the benefits and risks of artificial intelligence systems. These tools will have a strong focus on human rights, data protection and privacy; selected countries will pilot them in 2023.<sup>16</sup>

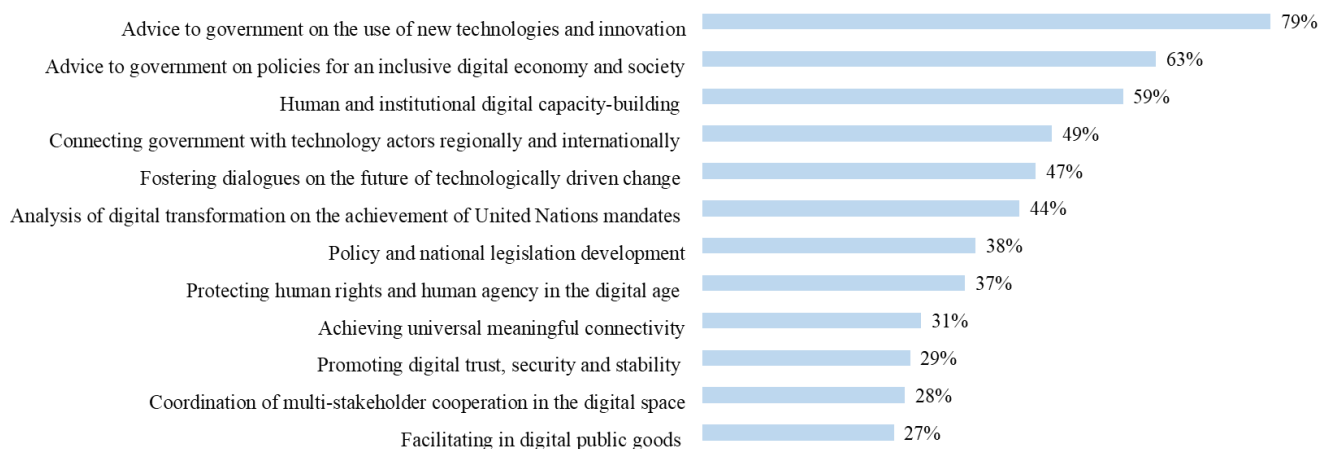
108. In 2022, a large majority of respondents from entity headquarters provided advice to Governments on the use of new technologies (26 out of 28 entities) and on an inclusive digital economy (24 out of 28 entities). Examples at the global level are promising. UNCTAD offered expertise on competition and consumer protection policies for an inclusive digital economy and society. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations recently launched the “Agro-informatics” platform for digital transformation in agriculture. The UNDP digital strategy for the period 2022–2025 is tailored towards supporting Governments to adopt digital solutions across sectors.

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<sup>15</sup> A multi-stakeholder alliance founded in March 2021 by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Science Council, German Environment Agency Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability, the Ministry of the Environment, Climate Change and Forestry of Kenya, and Future Earth.

<sup>16</sup> Countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Morocco and Saudi Arabia have initiated a process to set up their national steering committees on ethics of artificial intelligence to oversee the piloting of the capacity-building tools under development.

Figure 15

**Resident coordinator responses on areas of work by United Nations country teams**

Source: United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system, 2022.

109. Looking forward, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund will launch a digital transformation window in 2023 to provide further support to countries on digital transformation. The Office of the Envoy on Technology is coordinating consultations with stakeholders towards a Global Digital Compact, as envisioned under Our Common Agenda. Once endorsed at the Summit of the Future to be held in 2024, the Compact will provide a solid framework to scale up support, increase synergies and strengthen our integrated offer on digital transformation.

## **E. Strengthening national data systems and supporting voluntary national reviews**

110. Our collective pursuit of the 2030 Agenda continues to be plagued by gaps in data. This is compromising our ability to make progress. To fulfil the transformative promise of the Sustainable Development Goals and identify critical actions to deliver for those furthest behind, we must increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data (target 17.18).

111. In the resolution on the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, Member States called upon the United Nations development system to strengthen its support for developing national capacities for development planning and the collection and analysis of disaggregated data. In 2022, 96 per cent of United Nations country teams provided support to national statistical capacity. Among Governments and resident coordinators, 97 and 99 per cent, respectively, reported that the United Nations has contributed to strengthening institutional statistical capacity (up from 89 per cent and 96 per cent, respectively, in 2021). Government agreement that the United Nations has contributed to strengthening national capacities for data disaggregation rose from 86 per cent in 2021 to 92 per cent in 2022.

112. In line with my vision of building a whole-of-United Nations data ecosystem that unlocks our full data potential, it is encouraging that 79 per cent of United Nations country teams provided support to national statistical capacity through an inter-agency effort (up from 54 per cent in 2021), exceeding our goal of 70 per cent by 2024. The United Nations development system will continue to vigorously support countries' efforts to accelerate progress in closing data gaps as critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

113. Voluntary national reviews enable Member States to take stock of national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They facilitate the sharing of successes, challenges and lessons learned. The 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review reiterated the call for the United Nations development system to continue to support countries in this endeavour. By July 2023, 89 per cent of host countries will have presented at least one voluntary national review at the annual meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Nearly all Governments (99 per cent) who have conducted a voluntary national review agreed that the process strengthened coordination within the country and increased cooperation among different sectors, compared with 90 per cent in 2021. We are seeing equally positive responses, with 88 per cent of resident coordinators reporting that voluntary national review processes were effective in strengthening implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

114. The United Nations development system remains a strong partner in preparing voluntary national reviews, with 93 per cent of Governments reporting benefits from such support in 2022, up from 83 per cent in 2021. Governments reported that the United Nations provided support for the voluntary national review process through providing advice (69 per cent), report drafting (68 per cent), review and validation processes (64 per cent) and data collection or compilation (64 per cent). Notably, United Nations support for data dissemination nearly doubled, increasing from 25 per cent in 2021 to 46 per cent in 2022.

115. In terms of follow-up actions after the presentation of voluntary national reviews, 88 per cent of Governments reported having taken further action, with 62 per cent requesting United Nations assistance in implementation. A recent report launched by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs found that resident coordinators and United Nations country teams continue to play an important bridging role between ministries, United Nations entities and other stakeholders. The report also shows that the strong engagement of resident coordinator offices with national Governments and wider stakeholders often leads to a more integrated, inclusive and holistic voluntary national review process.<sup>17</sup> Under the leadership of resident coordinators, I count on United Nations country teams to continue their sustained efforts to support Governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through a whole-of-society approach.

116. I look forward to the high-level political forum in July 2023, which will feature the presentation of 41 voluntary national reviews. In preparation for the Sustainable Development Goals Summit to be held in 2023 under the auspices of the General Assembly, we must continue to support Governments in developing and following up on ambitious voluntary national reviews to deliver the transformative change envisioned in the 2030 Agenda.

#### **IV. Helping countries to bolster policy and action that accelerates the 2030 Agenda**

117. We have reached the halfway point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our pace of progress is too slow. Acceleration is demanded. Business as usual must be replaced by transformative action. The United Nations development system is directed squarely at this objective, in line with the mandate of the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

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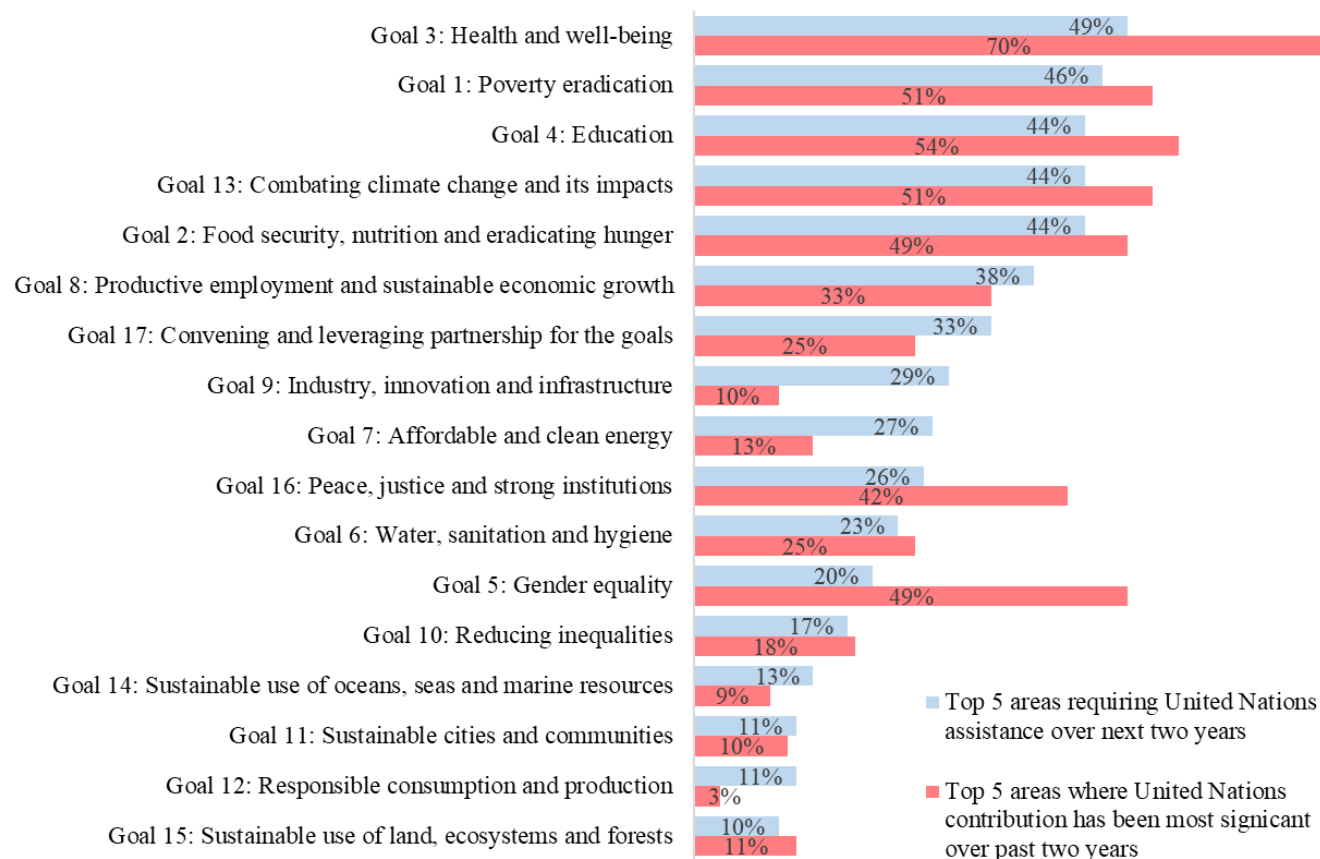
<sup>17</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Enabling transformation: the role of United Nations resident coordinator offices and country teams in support of the voluntary national reviews on the 2030 Agenda”, April 2022.



118. Figure 16 provides a bird’s eye view of support on policy and action that has been provided by the United Nations development system. Host countries consider that the most significant support in the last two years was provided on health and well-being (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4).

Figure 16

**Government responses on the top five areas where United Nations contributions have been most significant over the past two years and the top five areas requiring United Nations assistance over the next two years**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of host country Governments.

119. Looking forward, Member States identified poverty and health as the two areas where they expect to require the most assistance from the United Nations development system. On poverty, there was almost universal recognition in 2022, that the revamped United Nations development system had assisted Governments in assessing the situation of the poorest (96 per cent, compared to 90 per cent in 2021). Meanwhile, 87 per cent of host countries reported that they had seen improvements in how the United Nations system addresses the needs of the poorest, although this ratio falls to 79 per cent in countries where the programme size is very small. On health, almost all host Governments (98 per cent) continued to express satisfaction with how resident coordinators had ensured a coherent United Nations response to the pandemic.

120. As we approach the 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, I have commissioned an independent assessment of the functions and capacities of the United Nations development system to ensure that we meet the expectations of Member States and live up to our promise of unlocking transformative action.

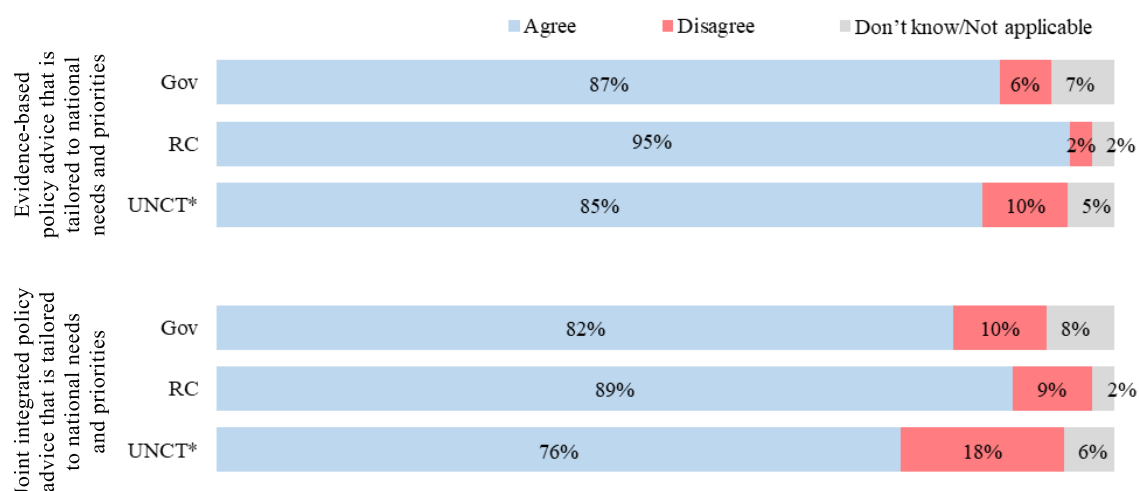
## A. Revamping the United Nations collective offer and business models to accelerate transitions and transformations for the Sustainable Development Goals

### 1. Leveraging reforms to deliver integrated policy support

121. The 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandated the United Nations development system to provide evidence-based, integrated policy advice. The system is delivering on that request. Further to our analysis of integrated support more generally (sect. II.A.3 above), it is encouraging to see that this form of support – policy advice – is well perceived by host Governments, resident coordinators and the country team (see figure 17). Among resident coordinators, 89 per cent affirmed that United Nations country teams provide joint integrated policy advice to countries, an improvement from 2021 (79 per cent). Several resident coordinators noted that the latest global summits on education and food systems had encouraged a more integrated approach.

Figure 17

#### Government, resident coordinator and United Nations country team assessments of the adequacy of United Nations country team support



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs surveys of Governments, resident coordinators and United Nations country team members.

\* The question posed to the United Nations country teams was in relation to one year ago.

122. The United Nations development system continued to be the preferred partner for evidence-based and integrated policy advice. Some 66 per cent of host country Governments listed the United Nations development system as one of their top two preferred partners in terms of providing evidence-based policy advice; 61 per cent did likewise in terms of integrated policy advice. This represents a marginal decrease from 70 per cent and 63 per cent respectively in 2021.

123. A foremost policy challenge facing Member States in 2022 has been the impact of our ongoing crises on labour markets. Increasing informality, decent work deficits and high rates of youth unemployment, among other challenges, placed great pressure on governments to respond, despite fiscal challenges and uncertain economic conditions. These effects were most acutely felt by the 4 billion people without access to social protection.

124. The United Nations responded to this need on several levels. The Global Crisis Response Group demonstrated our ability to deliver development in emergency mode. The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions supported Member States to generate virtuous cycles of revenue generation and long-term human development outcomes through the design, financing and implementation of integrated national employment and social protection policies. The technical support facility of the Accelerator partnered with the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative to support 49 countries to commit to place jobs at the centre of ambitious climate action and to promoting a just transition for all.

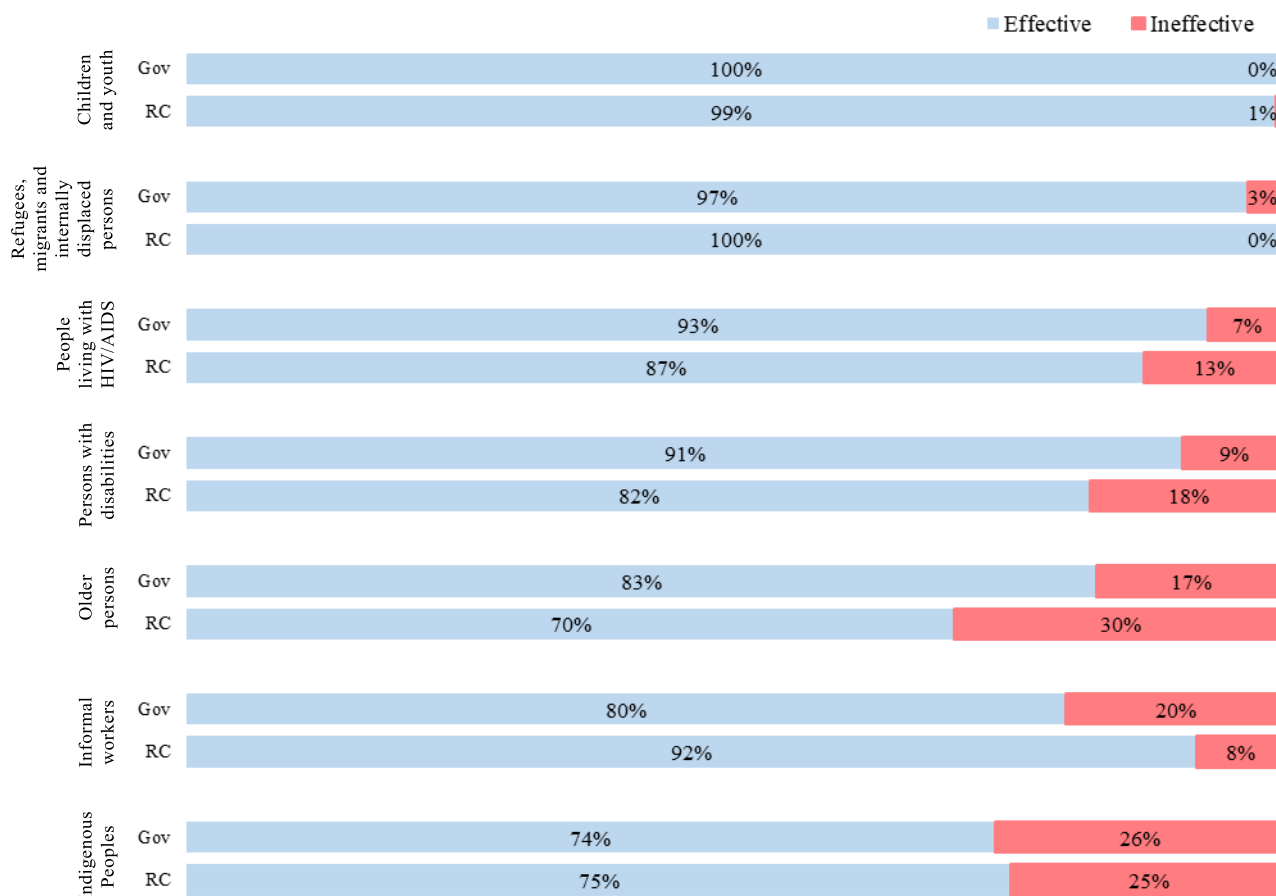
125. Encouragingly, a sweeping majority (96 per cent) of Governments who requested support on social protection expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of United Nations country team responses. Nearly half of these Governments rated the support as very effective. While all Governments agreed that support to expand targeted social protection measures to children and youth was effective, only 74 per cent agreed this was the case for Indigenous Peoples (see figure 18).

126. Joint programming – a key feature of our enhanced development offer – has also supported Member States in responding to the challenge. By the end of 2022, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund had already enabled an additional 147 million people to gain temporary and permanent social protection coverage, covering 39 countries and territories.<sup>18</sup> All 35 joint programmes were implemented with a rights-based approach and were designed to promote gender equality. The fund catalysed at least \$211 million in additional financing for social protection systems. An evaluation of the Fund by the System-wide Evaluation Office concluded that the Fund plays a valuable role in empowering resident coordinators to coordinate country teams and engage stakeholders on social protection and innovative financing. Greater efforts will be needed, however, to ensure that the window – and the Fund – receive a sufficient level of capitalization and contributions from a broad and diversified range of donors. Going forward, the Fund will also deliver under a special window on decent jobs and universal protection.

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations, Development Coordination Office, Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, *Catalysing United Nations Action to Rescue the Sustainable Development Goals: Final Report on the Social Protection and Leave No One Behind Joint Programmes*, 2022.

Figure 18  
United Nations country team support to host Governments in expanding targeted social protection measures\*



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of Governments and resident coordinators.

Abbreviations: Gov, Governments; RC, resident coordinators.

\* Excludes not applicable/don't know.

## 2. Supporting social and economic transformation in times of crisis

127. As we seek breakthroughs to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, our attention must turn to key transformations that have multiplier effects across the Goals. I called for the development system to strengthen support to Member States on such transformations in my previous report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (A/77/69-E/2022/47). Our attention in 2022 coalesced around three major areas – food, energy and education.

128. The transformation of food systems is central to reducing poverty and realizing human rights. The 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review recognizes the important role of food security and nutrition in accelerating poverty reduction and achieving the 2030 Agenda. Following the United Nations Food Systems Summit, the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub was established to catalyse coordinated and country-driven transformations of food systems in order to make them more resilient to climate change, achieve sovereign food security and meet targets for nutrition. As of December 2022, 117 countries had developed national pathways to sustainable food systems.

129. A new Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund thematic window on food systems transformation will be launched in 2023 with the goal of allocating \$350 million for joint programmes over the next five years. Plans are also under way for a national food systems budgeting tool for Governments. The stocktaking moment of the United Nations Food Systems Summit, in July 2023, will be an opportune forum to review progress, share best practices and provide solutions for current impediments to the achievement of food security.

130. The transformation of our energy systems is also paramount. The United Nations worked closely with Member States on the development of inclusive, just energy transitions in several parts of the world. Energy compacts, a key vehicle to translate the global road map for Goal 7 into concrete actions and partnerships, grew in 2022 from \$400 billion to \$600 billion in new finance and investment in clean energy. Of the 50 Member States that have energy compacts, 28 reported on their progress in the first annual progress report on energy compacts, released in September 2022. The UN-Energy plan of action towards 2025, launched in 2022, aims to facilitate access to electricity for 500 million more people.

131. The transformation of our education systems was also a major priority in 2022, which the revamped business models of the United Nations development system played a key role in advancing. United Nations country teams provided crucial support in preparing the Transforming Education Summit, which I convened in September 2022. Country teams and resident coordinators used their convening power to support Governments in analysis, national consultations and prioritization leading towards a shared vision for the future of education. Before the summit, 163 national consultations took place, which informed national statements of commitment that were announced by 133 Member States during the summit. United Nations entities also worked with Governments and other partners to mobilize support for accelerated action in critical areas, including foundational learning, education in crisis settings, the education of girls, digital learning, the greening of education and education financing.

132. A large majority of host Governments (94 per cent, compared with 95 per cent in 2021) confirmed that United Nations country teams supported countries in expanding access to inclusive and equitable quality education. A similar proportion (93 per cent) of resident coordinators thought likewise, which was a noteworthy improvement from 81 per cent in 2021.

133. The critical task facing Governments and the United Nations development system is to translate this new momentum into concrete improvements in classrooms, in teaching and in the learning outcomes of students. The Goal 4 High-level Steering Committee, co-chaired by UNESCO and Sierra Leone, has a critical role to play in this regard, including in monitoring the implementation of global initiatives and national commitments.<sup>19</sup>

134. At the country level, resident coordinators and country teams are supporting countries to advance their national commitments and to integrate education transformation into cooperation frameworks. At the regional level, peer-learning and capacity development will be organized through the regional coordination mechanism for Goal 4. Looking ahead, my Special Adviser for the Transforming Education Summit will follow-up on work to prepare a policy brief on transforming education to inform preparations for the Summit of the Future, building on the vision statement I presented at the Summit. Efforts are also under way to further boost the priority focus on

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<sup>19</sup> See the guidance note for translating national commitments into action in follow-up to the Transforming Education Summit, available at: [www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/tes\\_follow-up\\_guidance\\_note\\_-\\_eng.pdf](http://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/tes_follow-up_guidance_note_-_eng.pdf).

transforming education in the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund. I count on the full support of all United Nations entities and development partners to ensure that these efforts lead to strengthened contributions from the United Nations in this area.

### **3. Accelerating environmental protection through a whole-of-system development approach**

135. Our pursuit of the 2030 Agenda is doomed to fail until we end our war with nature. Sustainable development requires exactly that – sustainability. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review requested evidence-based policy advice and programmatic support on environmental protection. The United Nations development system has been working from the global to the local on this request

136. Our global community has rallied together around several significant moments recently. One landmark was the creation of a loss and damage fund at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework brought renewed ambition to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030. Most recently, agreement was secured to protect marine biological diversity in over 70 per cent of global oceans under the draft agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdictions.

137. We have followed this up with action at the country level. Nearly all (98 per cent) of host Governments reported receiving climate policy advice from the United Nations, an increase from 83 per cent in 2021. Among resident coordinators, 90 per cent confirmed that country teams had supported country capacity and integrated policy approaches to address climate change impacts and build resilience to disasters and extreme climate events.

138. Mainstreaming climate- and environment-responsive approaches into programmes and strategic plans, including in Cooperation Frameworks, was an important requirement of the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review. We have made progress in this area across the system, but more is needed. The share of Cooperation Frameworks with actions to implement environment agreements rose from 19 per cent to 27 per cent in 2022. This is a step in the right direction, yet most of this progress was limited to climate action only and did not include other environment-related objectives. Moreover, 69 per cent of United Nations country teams, a decrease from 75 per cent in 2021, agreed that environmental considerations have been mainstreamed into programming and policy advice. Several noted that mainstreaming environment is often siloed and that more intersectoral approaches are needed.

139. Part of the challenge may lie in the starting point for Cooperation Frameworks – common country analyses. An internal review by the United Nations Environment Programme of a sample of 28 common country analyses and 20 cooperation frameworks found that the mainstreaming of environmental issues in common country analyses was weak, which contributed to the limited uptake of these issues in Cooperation Frameworks.

140. On biodiversity, the number of United Nations development system entities identifying measures to address the drivers of biodiversity loss in their strategic plans increased from 13 out of 28 to 19 out of 29 in 2022. Those who included the drivers of climate change remained about the same, at 26. I expect all entities to coherently identify and present a plan to address the socioeconomic and governance-related drivers of biodiversity loss and climate change.

141. Part of the solution is ensuring that all experts are at the table, which requires inclusive country teams that have full participation and that agree on coherent and

integrated approaches. While 75 per cent of host Governments acknowledged that the climate policy advice they had received was integrated, several mentioned that further engagement and better coordination would enhance results. Most resident coordinators, 87 per cent, an increase from 76 per cent in 2021, agreed that there is close collaboration among country team members on climate action.

142. Looking forward, we have several upcoming milestones that will require the follow-up of the United Nations development system. The midterm review of the Sendai Framework and the Climate Ambition Summit, among others, present crucial opportunities for the global community to take charge of our precarious relationship with our only planet. Nothing more than life itself is at stake.

#### **4. Keeping the promise to leave no one behind**

143. The 2030 Agenda is an agenda that leaves no one behind. Sustainable development is not development at all if it excludes women, youth and Indigenous Peoples. Our collective efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals must be anchored in human rights for all. Recent impartial evidence has emerged on what leaving no one behind means in practice. An independent evaluation conducted by our System-wide Evaluation Office<sup>20</sup> concluded that the United Nations system-wide response to COVID-19 was strongly anchored in human rights, gender equality and leaving no one behind as guiding principles. United Nations country teams took ownership and responsibility for these principles and supported Governments to ensure that national responses addressed the needs of the most marginalized populations.

144. The demand for human rights support for sustainable development was strong in 2022, with 87 per cent of resident coordinators confirming that host Governments requested human rights policy support in 2022, as compared with 79 per cent in 2021. The perceptions regarding the quality of support provided were also generally positive. Among host Governments, 90 per cent considered that the support from United Nations country teams in meeting obligations under international human rights treaties was adequate, which was an increase from 84 per cent in 2021.

145. Leaving no one behind includes not leaving women and girls behind. Governments ranked gender equality as among the top six most important areas receiving significant United Nations support over the past two years, and 92 per cent of host countries requested assistance in this area in 2022. The vast majority (96 per cent) of host countries in 2022 reported that the support of the United Nations in strengthening institutional mechanisms and legal frameworks to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls was effective. The Spotlight Initiative, a flagship effort led from my office, exceeded expectations with its contributions to an eightfold increase in national budgets to address violence against women and girls. In 2021, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to the development or strengthening of 198 national laws across 41 countries and the strengthening of 43 national action plans to eliminate violence against women and girls. The initiative has allocated \$179 million to civil society groups, which represents half of its programmable funding.

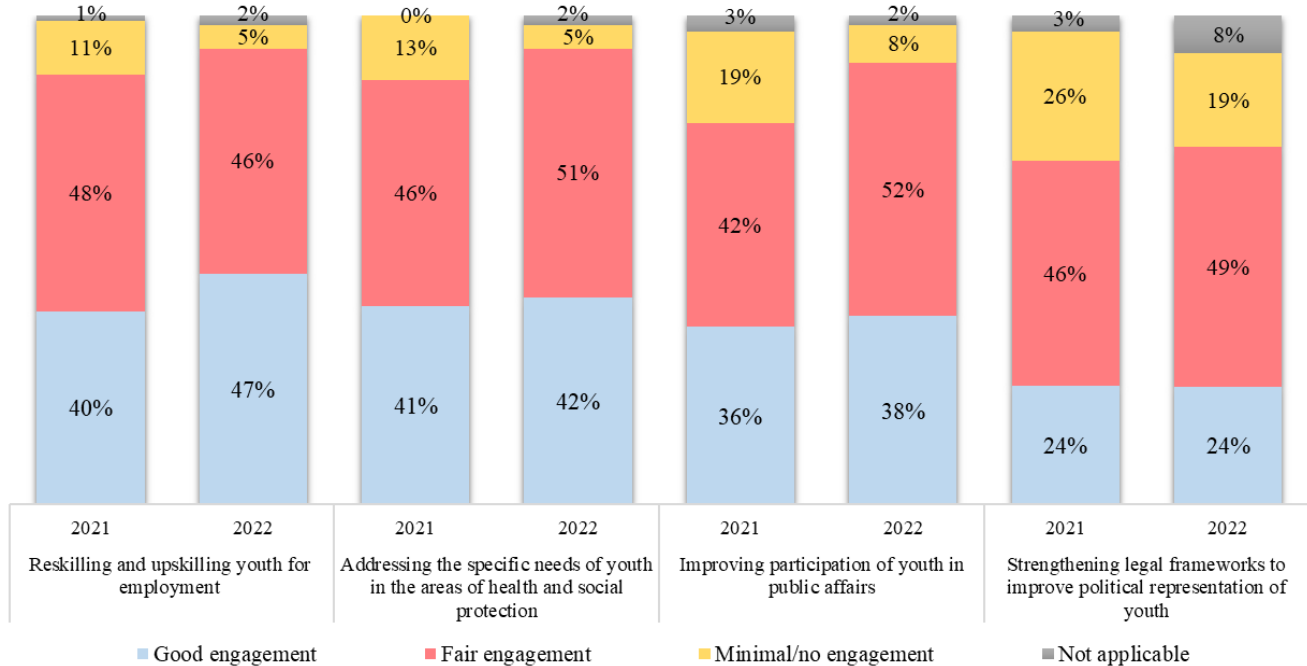
146. Young people are also essential, as highlighted in my previous report, with 85 per cent of resident coordinators reporting that their host countries had requested support on youth matters. This was an increase from 76 per cent in 2021. Resident coordinators indicated encouraging improvements in their engagement with the country team on youth matters (see figure 19). I am pleased to report that 25 out of

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<sup>20</sup> See <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/system-wide-evaluation-unds-socio-economic-response-covid-19-final-report>.

27 entities confirmed that they have new policies to step up their work for, and with, youth in line with the United Nations Youth Strategy.

Figure 19  
**Resident coordinators' assessment of United Nations country team engagement on youth**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of resident coordinators.

147. I was pleased that the General Assembly, through its resolution [76/306](#), decided to establish a dedicated United Nations Youth Office to systematically integrate youth voices across the United Nations system. I am confident that the Office will strengthen system-wide advances on youth issues and place youth at the centre of sustainable development. In keeping with my policy brief on meaningful youth engagement in policymaking and decision-making processes, I urge United Nations country teams to support Governments in expanding opportunities for youth to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

148. Leaving no one behind also means recognizing the needs and rights of Indigenous Peoples, as called for in the 2020 quadrennial review. I am concerned that Indigenous Peoples continue to be among the groups with which United Nations country teams are the least engaged. In the past four years, only 23 per cent of United Nations country teams supported Governments in formulating policies or programmes to address structural inequalities facing Indigenous Peoples. Only 15 per cent of United Nations country teams consulted Indigenous Peoples in developing their current programming instrument. A total of 39 per cent have a Cooperation Framework or equivalent document that includes the realization of Indigenous Peoples' rights as part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

149. I am concerned about the declining number of United Nations country teams establishing or strengthening consultative mechanisms for dialogue on national development processes (57 per cent in 2022, down from 68 per cent in 2021) as well as establishing Indigenous Peoples' advisory boards (9 per cent in 2022, down from 12 per cent in 2021). I am counting on all entities to reverse this trend. I have directed



heads of entities to ramp up implementation of the system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including in promoting consultative mechanisms and platforms, towards the full realization of their rights.

150. Finally, the United Nations development system has stepped up our collective offer to people on the move. Over the past four years, in keeping with the recent agreement of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, 75 per cent of United Nations country teams supported Governments in formulating policies to address structural inequalities facing migrants, 63 per cent have provided support for policies to address the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, and, to a lesser extent, 37 per cent have provided support for policies to address the needs of internally displaced persons. In the development of current programming instruments, 21 per cent of United Nations country teams consulted migrants, 15 per cent consulted refugees and asylum seekers and 8 per cent consulted internally displaced persons.

151. Addressing the record numbers of internally displaced persons is an urgent priority, with development at the centre as we tackle the root causes of displacement. I appointed my Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement to advance my Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. I expect this agenda to fast-track our efforts to find solutions to displacement, better prevent future displacement crises from emerging, and ensure more effective protection and assistance. Country teams are already working towards Government-led and development-supported solutions with the aim of placing at least 10 million internally displaced persons on “solutions pathways” and developing new approaches to this urgent challenge. Several Governments have already set such pathways in motion or are at the final stages of doing so. I encourage Member States to continue supporting this agenda by scaling up efforts, including by developing and rolling out solutions strategies and organizing national dialogues with internally displaced persons, civil society and the international community to help shape solutions to internal displacement in line with the wishes and rights of internally displaced persons.

## **B. Tailoring support to each country context**

### **1. Bridging Sustainable Development Goal gaps in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States**

152. Countries in special situations bear the least responsibility for several global crises, including climate change. Yet they usually bear the highest cost. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review called for attention to be given to the development needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The review also called for a strengthening of partnership and support in Africa.

153. I am encouraged to see a robust recent increase in resources for operational activities in countries in special situations (see figure 20).<sup>21</sup> The share of total expenditure for operational activities for development in the least developed countries reached 50.5 per cent in 2022. Resources for landlocked developing countries reached a similar level in per capita terms. In terms of spending on operational activities, small island developing States saw the largest growth rate of any group of countries. The survey of contributing countries identified that the least developed countries, African

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<sup>21</sup> The list of countries under each category is on the website of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Countries may feature in one or more categories. See [www.un.org/ohrlls/](http://www.un.org/ohrlls/).

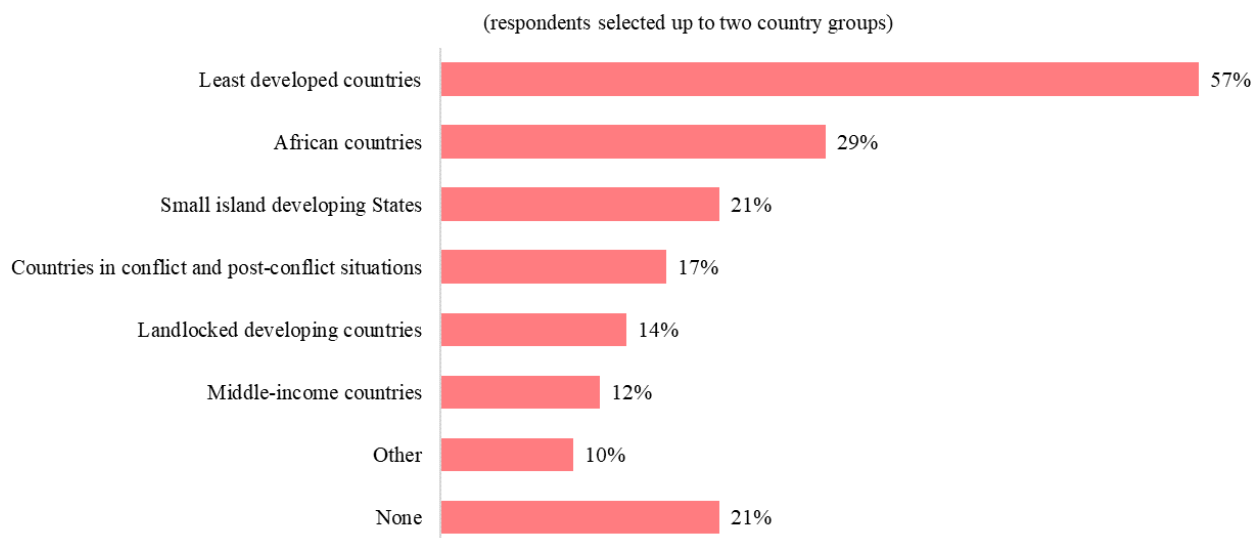
countries and small island developing States are the three country groups that are most prioritized when making funding decisions (See figure 15).

Figure 20  
**Expenditures on operational activities for development, including humanitarian assistance, by country group**

Country group	Number of countries	Total 2021 expenditure (millions of United States dollars)	Average expenditure per country (millions of United States dollars)	Expenditure as a share of the total (percentage)	Five-year trend in expenditures	Expenditure per capita (United States dollars)
Least developed countries	46	17 628	383	50.5	+66%	16.03
Small island developing States	55	1 313	24	3.8	+121%	18.24
Landlocked developing countries	32	9 157	286	26.3	+43%	16.62
Africa	54	15 038	278	43.1	+39%	10.80
Middle-income countries	109	18 128	166	52.0	+51%	3.12
All host countries	162	34 338	212	100	+57%	5.22

Source: Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Figure 21  
**Country groups that contributing countries prioritize the most when making funding decisions**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of contributing countries.

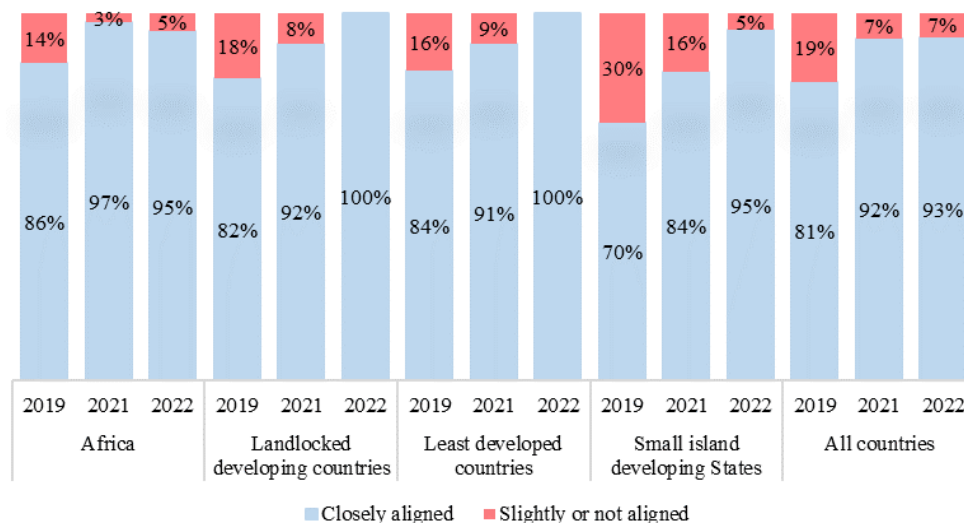
154. Countries in special situations generally report favourably on progress made through the repositioning of the development system. All small island developing States agreed that United Nations system entities are working more collaboratively than they were before the reforms, and 82 per cent of African countries, as well as 79 per cent of both the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries concluded likewise.

155. I am pleased to highlight consistent improvements in the alignment of the United Nations development system to the needs and priorities of countries in special situations (see figure 22). All the least developed countries and landlocked developing

countries consider that development system activities are closely aligned with their needs and priorities; 95 per cent of African countries and 94 per cent of small island developing States perceive likewise (see figure 22).<sup>22</sup>

Figure 22

**Alignment of activities with national development needs and priorities**



Source: 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of host country Governments.

156. This alignment is driven through several mechanisms. Effective cooperation frameworks are one key mechanism. Similar to 2021, over 95 per cent of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries reported that cooperation frameworks enable Governments to ensure that United Nations development system activities effectively address national priorities, including on the Sustainable Development Goals. Appropriate country team configuration is also important for ensuring alignment with national priorities. All the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries surveyed considered the United Nations configuration adequately tailored for meeting their specific needs and challenges in 2022, up from 92 and 89 per cent the previous year. This sentiment was shared by 79 per cent of small island developing States, up from 61 per cent the previous year.

157. Countries in special situations highlighted that they have received support on several Sustainable Development Goals. The least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries identified health and well-being (Goal 3), education (Goal 4) and climate change (Goal 13) as among the top five areas in which they received United Nations support in the past five years. The remaining top areas of support received were poverty eradication (Goal 1; least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and African countries), food security, nutrition and eradicating hunger (Goal 2; least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries), and gender equality (Goal 5; landlocked developing countries and small island developing States).

158. When asked to assess the adequacy of United Nations support provided to them, countries in special situations generally responded favourably (see figure 23). Nearly

<sup>22</sup> A total of 30 least developed countries, 26 landlocked developing countries, 22 small island developing States and 39 African countries responded to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs questionnaire for host country Governments.

all countries (100 per cent of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and African countries, and 90 per cent of small island developing States) agreed that the support provided on statistical capacities and data collection, analysis and management was adequate. High proportions (97 per cent of the least developed countries, 96 per cent of landlocked developing countries, 95 per cent of African countries and 90 per cent of small island developing States) considered that technical support in line with national needs and priorities was adequate. Similarly, nearly all (95 per cent of small island developing States, 93 per cent of the least developed countries and 92 per cent of landlocked developing countries and African countries) rated the support on evidence-based policy advice to be adequate. The positive results among small island developing States are especially welcome because they demonstrate that course correction measures are working after I noted concern in this area in my previous report ([A/77/69-E/2022/47](#)).

Figure 23  
**Extent to which groups of countries agree that the United Nations adequately provides advice and support (by category)**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Middle-income countries</i>	<i>Least developed countries</i>	<i>Landlocked developing countries</i>	<i>Small island developing States</i>	<i>Africa</i>
Evidence-based policy advice that is tailored to national needs and priorities	97%	93%	92%	95%	92%
Joint integrated policy advice that is tailored to national needs and priorities	93%	86%	85%	95%	83%
Technical support in line with national needs and priorities	96%	97%	96%	90%	95%
Support to financing for the Sustainable Development Goals	91%	87%	88%	80%	89%
Support for integrated national financing frameworks	84%	88%	83%	71%	88%
Support to leverage partnerships in support of national development priorities	95%	90%	92%	86%	89%
Support for statistical capacities and data collection, analysis and management	99%	100%	100%	90%	100%

*Source:* 2022 Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of host country Governments.

159. There is heterogeneity in satisfaction levels between groups. While 95 per cent of small island developing States agreed that they receive adequate support on joint integrated policy advice, only 86 per cent of least developed countries, 85 per cent of landlocked developing countries and 83 per cent of African countries shared the same view. Some 71 per cent of small island developing States, 83 per cent of landlocked developing countries, 88 per cent of the least developed countries and 88 per cent of African countries agreed that they receive adequate United Nations support for integrated national financing frameworks, which is similar to all countries (83 per cent). This further suggests there is room to lift the offer of the United Nations development system on finance for sustainable development, as discussed in more detail in section III.A. above.

160. The Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, which covers the decade 2022–2031, contains a call for United Nations development system entities to actively support its implementation. A road map for the United Nations development system to implement the Programme of Action is under preparation. This will ensure coherent and coordinated action, buttressed by effective monitoring and implementation. It will draw upon effective mechanisms and assets of the system, such as the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries. The Technology Bank continues to provide valuable contributions to strengthen the science, technology and innovation capacity towards structural transformation. In 2022, the Technology Bank piloted a new model for designing technology transfer projects that

it will apply in 2023 to initiatives on health care, sustainable housing, food systems and digitalization in the Gambia, Malawi, Mozambique and the Niger.

161. The United Nations development system has continued to provide support for countries graduating from the least developed country category, in particular those that will graduate in 2023 (Bhutan) and 2024 (Angola, Sao Tome and Principe and Solomon Islands). The Sustainable Graduation Support Facility brings together country-specific and integrated advisory and capacity-building services across the United Nations system. The inter-agency task force on graduation also continues to provide support to graduating countries.

162. With regard to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, it is encouraging that annual spending on operational activities for development in the 32 landlocked developing countries increased by 43 per cent between 2016 and 2021, surpassing \$9 billion. The third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in 2024, will comprehensively review the programme's implementation and formulate a course of action for the years ahead. Resident coordinators and United Nations country teams will be fully involved in preparations for the event.

163. Mainstreaming the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and issues relating to small island developing States was a further clear priority of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. It is encouraging that United Nations spending on operational activities for development in small island developing States nearly doubled between 2020 and 2021 to an average of \$33 million per country. United Nations development support to small island developing States on COVID-19 was well regarded.<sup>23</sup> The fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in 2024, will be a good opportunity to assess progress and to adjust course as needed.

164. African countries have been hit by a confluence of shocks, including weaker external demand, increases in global inflation and higher borrowing costs, as well as adverse weather effects, hikes in food and energy prices and other crises linked to the war in Ukraine. This makes our joint work with the African Union all the more timely and necessary, organized under the African Union–United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. United Nations development system expenditure in Africa amounted to \$15.5 billion in 2021, more than any other region, accounting for over 44 per cent of total country-level expenditures. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa (discussed in further detail above) and the inter-departmental task force on African affairs enhanced United Nations coordination in support of African countries, particularly on energy, which is a key driver for socioeconomic recovery in Africa.

165. Looking forward, countries in special situations shared several of the same top five priority Sustainable Development Goals to receive United Nations support in the next five years. The least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries identified poverty eradication (Goal 1), food security, nutrition and eradicating hunger (Goal 2), health and well-being (Goal 3), climate change (Goal 13) and education (Goal 4). The least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States also identified productive employment and sustainable economic growth (Goal 8), while small island

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<sup>23</sup> The United Nations development system's support to COVID-19 response was assessed by 95 per cent of small island developing States as timely and by 89 per cent as comprehensive, similar to all host countries (95 and 91 per cent).

developing States added sanitation and hygiene (Goal 6, small island developing States). African countries also identified partnerships (Goal 17) as a top priority.

## **2. Supporting middle-income countries to invest in the necessary transitions to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals**

166. Middle-income countries are home to approximately two thirds of the world's population, including some 62 per cent of the world's poor. Many face the same vulnerabilities as low-income countries, including from external debt, volatile exchange rates and capital flows, overdependence on commodities, weak health, education and social protection systems, and the adverse effects of disaster risks and climate change. Yet their challenges are often seen as less urgent than those of poorer countries.

167. The United Nations development system continues to provide targeted support to middle-income countries considering their varying development needs, as called for in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Middle-income countries rated the adequacy of this support highly (see figure 23 above). This was particularly the case with regard to evidence-based policy advice tailored to their needs and priorities (97 per cent) and leveraging partnerships in support of national development priorities (95 per cent). Similar to other country groups, there is room for improvement on support for integrated national financing frameworks, with 84 per cent of middle-income countries agreeing that support in this area is adequate.<sup>24</sup>

168. Middle-income countries selected health and well-being (Goal 3), combating climate change (Goal 13), poverty eradication (Goal 1), education (Goal 4) and gender equality (Goal 5) as areas in which the United Nations contribution has been most significant in the past two years. They prioritized four of these goals (Goals 3, 4, 1 and 13) as well as the goal on productive employment and sustainable economic growth (Goal 8) as the top five areas in which middle-income countries will require United Nations assistance over the next two years.

169. To revive progress towards the Goals, however, it is crucial to develop new measures of progress that go beyond gross domestic product (GDP). This is one of my priorities towards gaining a full understanding of countries' vulnerabilities and needs. I also look forward to the report of the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, expected to be launched in June 2023.

170. A mapping exercise with a detailed overview of support available to the middle-income countries, as mandated by General Assembly resolution [76/215](#), is being completed. It includes information from the latest quadrennial comprehensive policy review surveys conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, information on financial support from the United Nations development system for host countries, and other quantitative and qualitative sources. The results will be included in my report on development cooperation with middle-income countries, which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. I am confident that this exercise will help us to further enhance coordinated and inclusive support to middle-income countries based on their specific challenges and diverse needs.

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<sup>24</sup> In total, 75 middle-income countries responded to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs questionnaire for host country Governments.

## V. Continuing to fortify the United Nations development system's accountability and oversight

### A. Results-based management and reporting built on evidence

171. We have said it from day one – the litmus test of the repositioning of the United Nations development system is whether it is able to deliver better results on the ground. Collective and transparent reporting on system-wide results at the country, regional and global levels is therefore essential. We are strengthening reporting year after year. The annual report on system-wide results and support for the Sustainable Development Goals requested in resolution 72/279 is provided to Member States (see E/2023/62). The resident coordinator system results framework requested in resolution 76/4 has been finalized in consultation with Member States and the first set of results is published in the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. In addition, annual regional results reports are prepared through regional collaborative platforms and presented at regional sustainable development forums.<sup>25</sup>

172. All United Nations country teams have prepared annual country results reports covering 2022, in line with the commitment no. 4 in relation to the funding compact. Feedback from Governments showed satisfaction with the quality of the reports. Over 79 per cent of Governments who responded noted that sufficient financial data are included in annual reports, up from 58 per cent in the previous year.

173. Progress has also been made on advancing common standards for system-wide financial reporting. In 2022, all United Nations entities submitted financial data to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which ensures strong comparability of system-wide data that are then made available publicly on its website (<https://unsceb.org/financial-statistics>). A total of 36 out of 46 United Nations entities reported on their programme expenditure against the Sustainable Development Goals in 2022, compared with 24 entities in 2021.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, a significant share of entities do not yet publish project documents and lists of projects (15 out of 28 and 11 out of 29, respectively). This must be addressed urgently so that Member States have a clear picture of the support provided by the system at large to accelerate action towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

174. Some 61 per cent (17 out of 28) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities surveyed report that they publish financial data that meets the International Aid Transparency Initiative or equivalent standard, up from the funding compact baseline of 36 per cent in 2017. Over the past year, the Secretariat has begun to ensure its departments can boost their reporting quality and reach this standard. We must accelerate this shift, and I expect the High-level Committee on Management to monitor to make sure the Secretariat will meet this mark by 2024.

175. At the global level, the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goal output indicator framework allows Sustainable Development Group entities to measure the contribution of the United Nations towards the Goals. Building on the shared methodology developed during the COVID-19 response, the framework draws on existing indicators from Sustainable Development Group entities, reducing

<sup>25</sup> The regional forums for sustainable development in 2023 were held in Africa (28 February–2 March); the Arab region (14–16 March); Asia-Pacific (27–30 March); Europe (29 and 30 March); and Latin America and the Caribbean (25–28 April).

<sup>26</sup> The total number of United Nations entities included in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for the purposes of financial reporting includes entities across the United Nations system and differs from the total of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.



transaction costs for entities of the Group and building a system-wide picture of the United Nations development system contribution to the Goals. The first results are published and showcase contributions from 19 United Nations country teams as early adopters.

## **B. Putting system-wide evaluation on a firm footing**

176. The United Nations Sustainable Development Group System-wide Evaluation Office is now established. This was a commitment that I made in my previous report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (A/77/69-E/2022/47), in which I reiterated the mandate of this office and proposed a lean structure, headed by a Director at the D-2 level, supported by a small team reporting directly to me. A Director ad interim has been appointed through a temporary job opening until a director is appointed to a fixed-term post. The post was advertised in December 2022 and the recruitment process is nearing completion.

177. The office has the prerogative to share reports directly with the Economic and Social Council. The Member States expressed their support for my proposal in resolution 72/279 and reiterated their backing in subsequent resolutions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 35/217, I sought and obtained the concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for the extension of a post of Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group System-wide Evaluation Office at the D-2 level for one year, from 1 January to 31 December 2023, utilizing extrabudgetary resources.

178. In order to finance the office using extrabudgetary resources, I have established a trust fund to receive extrabudgetary contributions in support of the office's activities, and the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group wrote to all Member States to invite contributions. At the report drafting stage, two Member States had provided resources. The funds received are limited to covering the cost of hiring the Director for one year and the office space expenses, which has limited the capacity of the office to be functional. I therefore welcome the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see Committee memorandum AC/2193) that the office be funded through the regular budget. I intend to put forward a request for funding of the office in the upcoming regular budget proposal with a total cost of approximately \$2.5 million per year. I consider having stable funding through regular resources for the System-wide Evaluation Office to be critical for learning, transparency, accountability and improvement of the United Nations development system.

179. Even in its inception phase, the System-wide Evaluation Office has made important, foundational progress in fulfilling its mandate to strengthen oversight, transparency, accountability and collective learning among the United Nations development system entities. The office has already completed system-wide evaluations on the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund (discussed in sect. V.B below) and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

180. The evaluation of the United Nations development system's socioeconomic response to COVID-19 made several forward-looking recommendations to strengthen aspects of reform, including greater integration of reform actions in entities' strategic plans.<sup>27</sup> A management response has been completed and is publicly available. The United Nations Sustainable Development Group has initiated actions that aligned

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<sup>27</sup> Available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/system-wide-evaluation-unds-socio-economic-response-covid-19-final-report>.



with the recommendations, including a review of the management and accountability framework and the distribution and follow-up on the reform checklist for the governing bodies of entities of the Group.

181. The System-wide Evaluation Office is now midway through an evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative. In addition, at the recommendation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the office will also launch a system-wide evaluation of country programme derivation from and alignment with Cooperation Frameworks. I look forward to this evaluation, which should provide invaluable insight into programming at the country level and opportunities to further enhance the alignment of the development system's offer to meet the needs and priorities of Member States.

182. Two crucial design features of the System-wide Evaluation Office are its independence and its transparency. All system-wide evaluations are published online and freely available. The office also applies United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards to ensure impartiality in the design and conduct of its evaluations. I am confident that the office will continue to grow in its ability to deliver invaluable system-wide evaluative evidence on the contribution of the United Nations development system towards implementing the 2030 Agenda.

183. More broadly, there has been further progress in shifting towards a culture of joint and system-wide evaluations wherever possible. Evidence from 2022 surveys shows that 19 responding entities (66 per cent) had completed at least one joint evaluation with another United Nations entity in 2022, up from 59 per cent in 2021. That level is still below the funding compact target of 75 per cent. In survey feedback, entities highlighted hurdles related to such evaluations in the form of capacity and budgets, mandate differences, accountability requirements vis-à-vis governing bodies and quality assurance mechanisms. I expect joint evaluations to grow in tandem with increases in joint programming and pooled funds as they did under the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

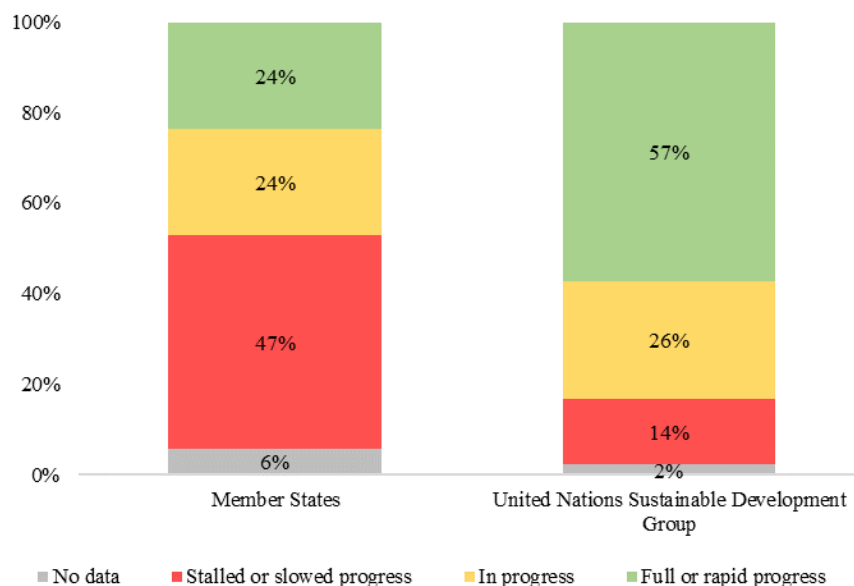
184. With the establishment of the System-wide Evaluation Office, I have asked the Acting Director to finalize the system-wide evaluation policy in collaboration with the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and evaluation offices throughout the system. I anticipate that the policy will be completed shortly.

185. Feedback from entities confirmed that system-wide networks such as the United Nations Evaluation Group provide a strong incentive for more joint evaluations and better standards for independence. Most entities (23 out of 29) noted that their evaluation unit meets the group's standards for independence, up from 22 in the previous year. Half of the entities ensure that all evaluations include a management response. Nearly two thirds (18 out of 28) now make all evaluations publicly available.

## **VI. Funding compact: unfinished business**

186. The funding compact is built on the premise that adequate, predictable and sustainable funding, combined with enhanced transparency and accountability, enables the United Nations development system to deliver more collaboratively, effectively and efficiently. Both Member States and the United Nations development system have made important progress in meeting the compact. Nonetheless, several commitments have not been met (figure 24). Four years after its adoption, with some targets now expiring, it is important to review how the funding compact is driving commitments from Member States and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group towards better results for countries, and what steps can be taken to further accelerate progress in this regard.

Figure 24  
**Progress on funding compact commitments**



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

### A. Progress of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group

187. The United Nations Sustainable Development Group has met, or is experiencing rapid progress on, 57 per cent of the funding compact targets. The Group is making progress towards a further 26 per cent of targets. The remaining 14 per cent are stalled or experiencing insufficient progress.

188. The leadership and commitments of United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities and country teams has enabled a step change in system-wide reporting, linking resources to results in terms of the Goals, and in improving the transparency of our operations. All country teams produced an annual country results report in 2022. A large majority of country Governments agree that there is an improved focus among country teams on common results and the provision of integrated policy advice. Targets for business efficiency gains have been realized as discussed above.

189. I am concerned, however, that progress has been slower, or stalled, on some important commitments. Less than half (48 per cent) of country teams have conducted a gender scorecard exercise in the past four years. Only 42 per cent of United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities report at least 15 per cent of development-related expenditures on joint programmes and only 68 per cent of United Nations country teams have a common and updated budgetary framework.

### B. Improvements in the funding mix for sustainable development

190. Core funding is crucial and a critical component of the funding compact. It allows entities to generate efficiencies and enhance impact with a greater ability to deploy funds where they are most needed. Entities can take a more calculated, coherent approach by investing in strategic action that is not blown off course by immediate needs.

191. A higher share of development funding went to core resources in 2021 compared with 2020. When assessed contributions are included, the core share of development funding exceeded the target of 30 per cent for the first time since the funding compact was adopted (see figure 25). This is an encouraging development. Yet, acceleration is still required on core funding from voluntary sources and the increases in core funding may not be an indicator of a wider positive trend. In fact, the growth in core funding was partly due to a 2021 increase in the assessed budget of WHO. Member States have demonstrated their commitment to improve the funding model of WHO with the target of ensuring that its assessed contributions constitute 50 per cent of the approved programme budget of WHO within the next eight years.<sup>28</sup>

192. The higher reported core funding figure for 2021 also results from new multi-year pledges made by Governments to the voluntary core budgets of UNDP and UNICEF.<sup>29</sup> Multi-year commitments constitute valuable investments in the United Nations development system, improving the predictability of the funding base and the sustainability of programmes.

193. More worryingly, two thirds of net-contributing countries surveyed (10 out of 16)<sup>30</sup> indicated that they had no plans to increase the amount or share of their core funding by the end of 2023, with respondents highlighting continued concerns over limited visibility as to how core resources are spent and the results achieved.

194. It is critical that we keep placing a spotlight on core contributions as we move ahead with the funding compact. I am confident that Member States will continue to rise to the challenge of meeting this commitment.

Figure 25

### Funding compact: Member States commitment 1

#### To increase core resources for the United Nations development system

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Latest value	Trend
MS. 1.1. Core share of voluntary funding for development-related activities	19.4% (2017)	30% (2023)	21.4% (2021)	
MS 1.2. Core share of funding for development-related activities (including assessed contributions)	27.0% (2017)	30% (2023)	30.7% (2021)	

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

Note: trend colours: red is stalled or slow progress; yellow is in progress; green is full or rapid progress.

## C. Action needed on pooled funding

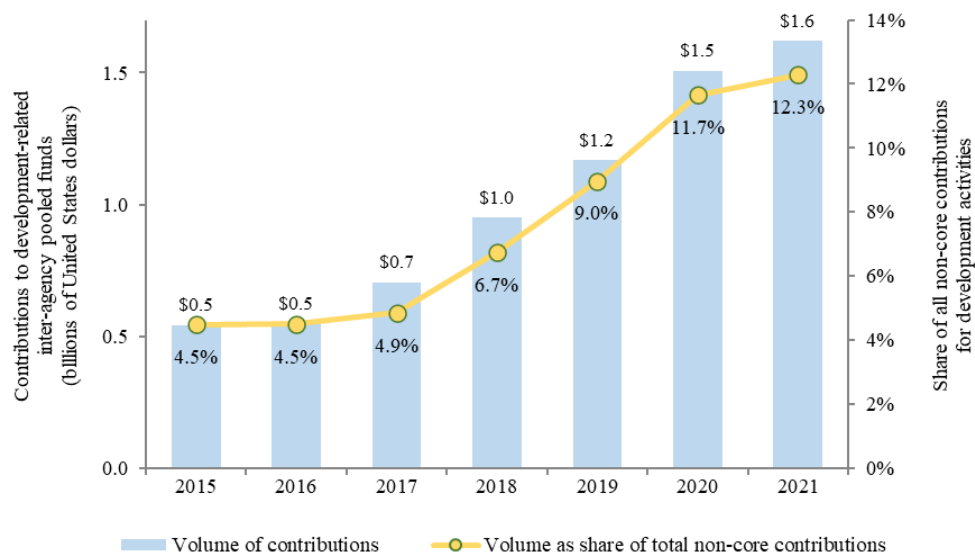
195. Total contributions to development-related inter-agency funds grew to \$1.6 billion in 2021 from \$1.5 billion in 2020. These funds now account for 12.3 per cent of all non-core funding for development activities and exceed the funding compact target of 10 per cent for the second straight year (see figure 26). This is a noteworthy result. Pooled funding brings entities together to deliver more.

<sup>28</sup> In the budget for the biennium 2020–2021, assessed contributions accounted for 16 per cent share of the total budget.

<sup>29</sup> Data presented in the present report originate from the CEB financial database and reporting system, which is based on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), meaning that revenue is recognized at the time of an agreement, even in cases of a multi-year agreement. Individual entities may apply a different standard when constructing their annual financial statements.

<sup>30</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs survey of financially contributing Governments.

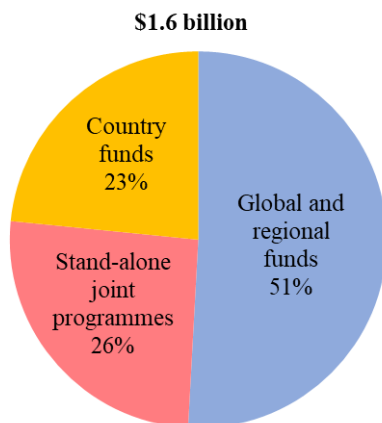
Figure 26  
**Volumes and shares of development-related non-core funding channelled through inter-agency pooled funds, 2015–2021**



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

196. From a geographic perspective, contributions to global and regional funds increased to \$824 million in 2021. This was an increase of 19.3 per cent from 2020. The rate of growth is lower than that in the previous year (2019 to 2020), of 72 per cent. In total, global and regional funds accounted for 51 per cent of all resources to inter-agency pooled funds in 2021, compared with 46 per cent in 2020 (see figure 27).

Figure 27  
**Funding of development-related inter-agency pooled funds, by type, 2021**



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

197. Contributions to country-level development pooled funds decreased by 5 per cent, from \$401 million in 2020 to \$379 million in 2021. This is a concern because these funds enable country teams to deliver integrated policy support in areas that are critical to countries' development, such as food systems, social protection, education and energy.

198. The United Nations development system has made noteworthy progress in developing common management features across inter-agency pooled funds (funding compact commitment 14). In 2021, some 73 per cent of development-related inter-agency pooled funds had implemented common quality management features, up from 61 per cent in 2020.

199. Despite the overall growth in inter-agency pooled funds, some of our most critical global funds are underfunded. I note with particular concern that capitalization of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund decreased by 75 per cent between 2021 and 2022, dropping from \$79 million to only \$20 million. This trend not only falls far short of the funding compact target of \$290 million a year but jeopardizes a vital propeller of reform. The existing level and nature of capitalization put the strategic intentions of the Fund at risk.

200. Despite being underfunded, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund has demonstrated its value by catalysing an estimated \$2.3 billion since its creation in 2019.<sup>31</sup> A new 2023–2026 strategy positions the Fund as the flagship financing mechanism for transformative action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Under this strategy, the Fund will now allocate catalytic resources to support seven transformational areas<sup>32</sup> that are critical to acceleration towards the achievement of the Goals while also ensuring cross-cutting results for gender, youth and leaving no one behind, as well as on data for the Goals. The strategy is informed by an independent evaluation completed by the System-wide Evaluation Office. The evaluation makes recommendations on governance, management and the design of projects. It highlighted the need for improved clarity in value proposition and synergy with other pooled funds. The management response is under preparation.

201. Contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, another vital funding instrument for integrated United Nations support to Governments, decreased by 12 per cent, from \$195 million to \$171 million in 2022. This is far below the funding compact target of \$500 million annually and a reason for concern given growing peacebuilding needs across the world.

Figure 28

### Funding compact – Member States commitment 2

#### To double the share of non-core contributions that are provided through development-related pooled funds and single-agency thematic funds

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Latest value	Trend
MS 2.1. Percentage of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled through inter-agency pooled fund	5.0% (2017)	10.0% (2023)	12.3% (2021)	Green
MS 2.2. Percentage of non-core resources for development-related activities channelled through single-agency thematic funds	2.6% (2017)	6.0% (2023)	5.4% (2021)	
MS 2.3. Annual capitalization of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund	\$43 million (2018)	\$290 million (2020)	\$20 million (2021)	Red
MS 2.4. Annual contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund	\$129 million (2018)	\$500 million (2020)	\$171 million (2021)	

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

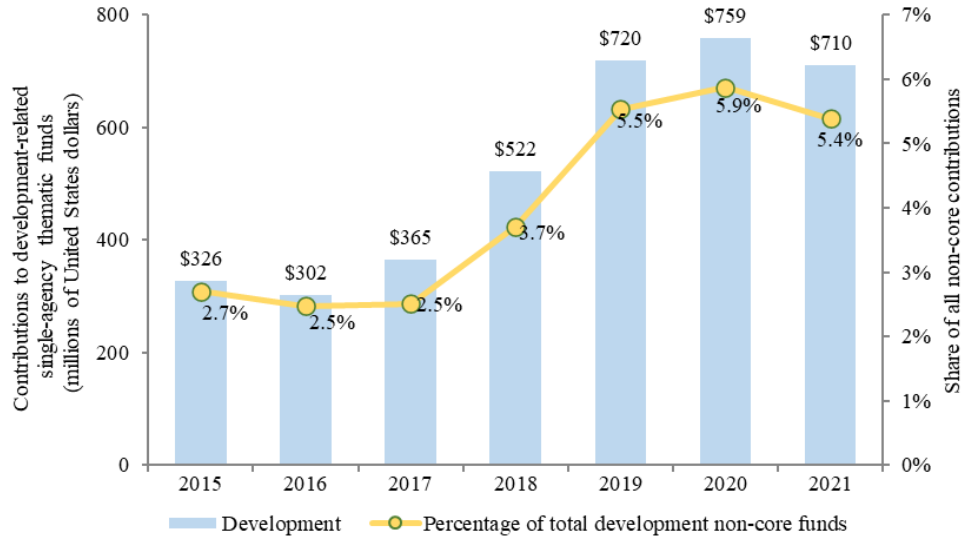
Note: Trend colours: red is stalled or slow progress; yellow is in progress; green is full or rapid progress.

<sup>31</sup> The figure is as at 28 February 2023 and includes \$99.2 million in co-funding mobilized for joint programmes, \$1,693 million catalysed through innovative financing solutions, and \$484 million catalysed for scale-up through the Fund's integrated policy services and demonstrative impact.

<sup>32</sup> These are food systems, climate action and energy, digital transformation, decent jobs/social protection, Sustainable Development Goal localization, internal displacement and transforming education.

202. Single-agency thematic funding, which enables a stronger alignment of funding with the strategic objectives of entities, declined by 6 per cent in 2021 compared with the previous year, falling to \$710 million. Such funds account for 5.4 per cent of total non-core funding for development activities (see figure 29). This is short of the funding compact target of 6 per cent.

Figure 29  
**Volumes and shares of development-related non-core funding provided to single-agency thematic funds, 2015–2021**



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

203. More action on pooled funding is needed. Country-level pooled funds and single-agency thematic funds both experienced funding decreases. Meanwhile, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund and the Peacebuilding Fund remain underfunded and increasingly so. A reversal of these trends is required if we are to realize the ambition of the funding compact.

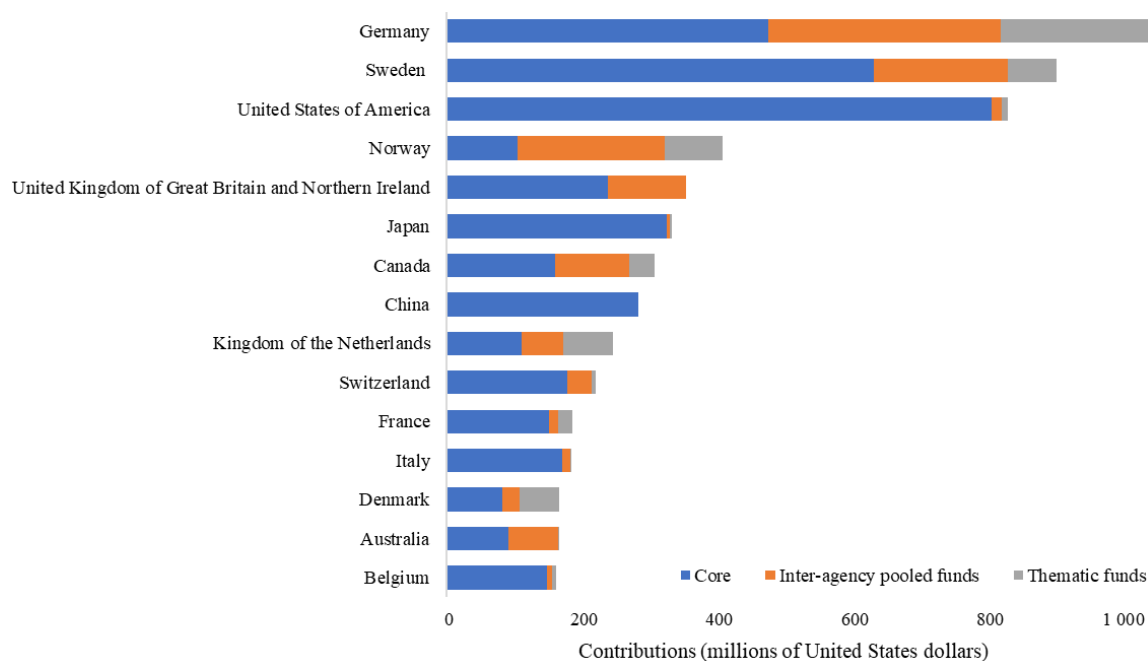
#### D. Funding sources require diversification

204. Member States committed to broadening sources of funding to the United Nations development system under the funding compact. This has not yet transpired. In 2021, the top five contributors of funding for development activities accounted for nearly half, or 48 per cent, of total funding received from Governments (compared to 46 per cent in 2017), and the top 10 accounted for 65 per cent of the total (66 per cent in 2017).

205. Core and flexible pooled funding remain heavily dependent on a few Member States. The five largest contributors of core funding account for 50 per cent of total core funding received from Governments. Flexible pooled funding mechanisms remain even more heavily dependent on a few contributors. The five largest contributors of inter-agency pooled development funds and agency-specific thematic development funds account for 73 per cent and 83 per cent of total government contributions to these funds, respectively.

206. Germany contributed over \$1 billion in core and pooled funding combined and was the largest contributor of United Nations inter-agency pooled funds and agency-specific thematic funds. Figure 30 shows the top 15 providers of these types of resources.

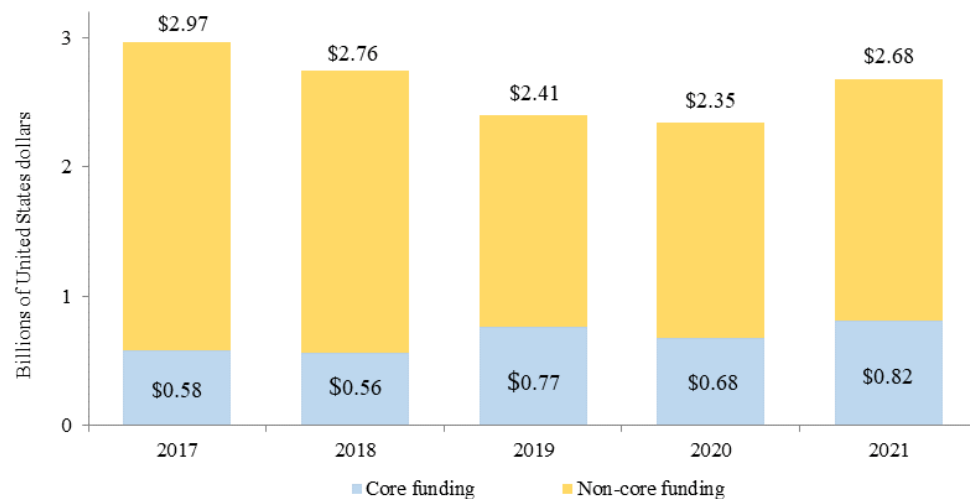
Figure 30  
Top government providers of core and pooled resources for development activities, 2021



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

207. I am pleased to report that funding received from host countries for development activities increased by 14 per cent from 2020 to 2021. This includes a 20 per cent increase in core contributions. These increases occurred despite the fact that many host countries were facing the full brunt of effects of multiple and overlapping crises.

Figure 31  
Funding for development activities from host countries, 2017–2021



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

208. There were some positive trends in funding received from sources other than Governments in 2021. Non-governmental donors accounted for one third of all United

Nations funding for development-related activities. Increased engagement with the international financial institutions, including on financing for COVID-19 recovery, helped boost development funding received from this channel to \$504 million in 2021, up by 36 per cent over 2020. Funding from the private sector grew by 32 per cent to \$1.1 billion, alongside ongoing work by the United Nations development system to deepen oversight and due diligence processes.

Figure 32

**Funding compact – Member States commitment 3**

**To broaden the sources of funding support to the United Nations development system**

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Latest value</i>	<i>Trend</i>
MS 3.1. Percentage of United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities reporting an annual increase in the number of contributors of voluntary core resources	67% (2017)	100% (2023)	53% (2021)	
MS 3.2. Number of Member State contributors to development-related inter-agency pooled funds and to single-agency thematic funds	59 and 27 (2017)	100 and 50 (2021)	48 and 38 (2021)	
MS 3.3 Number of Member State contributors to the resident coordinator system budget	28 (2019)	100 (2021)	45 (March 2023)	

*Source:* Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023.

*Note:* Trend colours: red is stalled or slow progress; yellow is in progress; green is full or rapid progress.

**E. Continued funding gap for the resident coordinator system becoming a risk to the consolidation of the United Nations development system repositioning**

209. Since the establishment by the General Assembly of the hybrid funding model for the resident coordinator system, I have deployed significant efforts to ensure adequate and more predictable funding. Many Member States have also stepped up. Despite these efforts, voluntary funding for the resident coordinator system remains below ambitions. In 2022, 27 contributors provided \$69 million in total. This led to a funding gap of \$85 million (see figure 33). The funding gap would have been larger had the 1 per cent levy and cost-sharing contributions not met their targets. The cost-sharing arrangement put in place by United Nations development system entities is indeed working well and meeting expectations. The 1 per cent levy on tightly earmarked voluntary funding has generated over \$50 million in 2022 and is playing its part, even if it remains well short of the \$80 million initially envisaged in 2018.<sup>33</sup> I commend those contributors making voluntary contributions to the special purpose trust fund, in particular the members of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and those 14 Member States that provided more than their assessed contribution benchmark.<sup>34</sup>

210. Yet, almost two years after the commitment made by Member States in General Assembly resolution 76/4 on the review of the reinvigorated resident coordinator

<sup>33</sup> The vast majority of Member States have opted for the agency-administered option. Iceland, Sweden and the European Union, however, have selected the donor-administered option providing predictability, as originally envisaged when the levy was created.

<sup>34</sup> Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Timor-Leste contributed more voluntary funding to the resident coordinator system in 2022 than they would have if it was an assessed funding stream instead of voluntary (based on \$154 million benchmark).



system, the voluntary contributions have stalled – in fact, the only significant change has been the cut in voluntary contributions by one of the main donors to the resident coordinator system, raising more questions as to whether the current model is sustainable. At this point in time, just as the resident coordinator system is helping to maximize the dividends of the reforms, the continued funding gap threatens the gains we have made and jeopardizes our ability to help countries accelerate efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the next seven years.

211. We have reached a point where the continued underfunding of the resident coordinator system is set to weaken its now robust operations – undermining the coordination required for a more effective and accountable development system; undermining our ability to attract the talent that resident coordinator leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals requires; and undermining the resident coordinator system’s capacity to maximize the contribution of the United Nations development system just as countries face difficult prospects of recovery from a large-scale human crisis and a make-or-break moment on implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

212. In the past, we have been asked if the budget of the resident coordinator system could be reduced. I reiterate my conviction that this cannot be done without diluting your ambition for a transformed United Nations development system working more effectively together to deliver for your specific sustainable development needs.

213. The resident coordinator system continues to represent an efficient and lean operation, with benefits that extend way beyond its small size and the fact that it represents a small fraction of the multi-billion dollar overall spending by the United Nations development system.

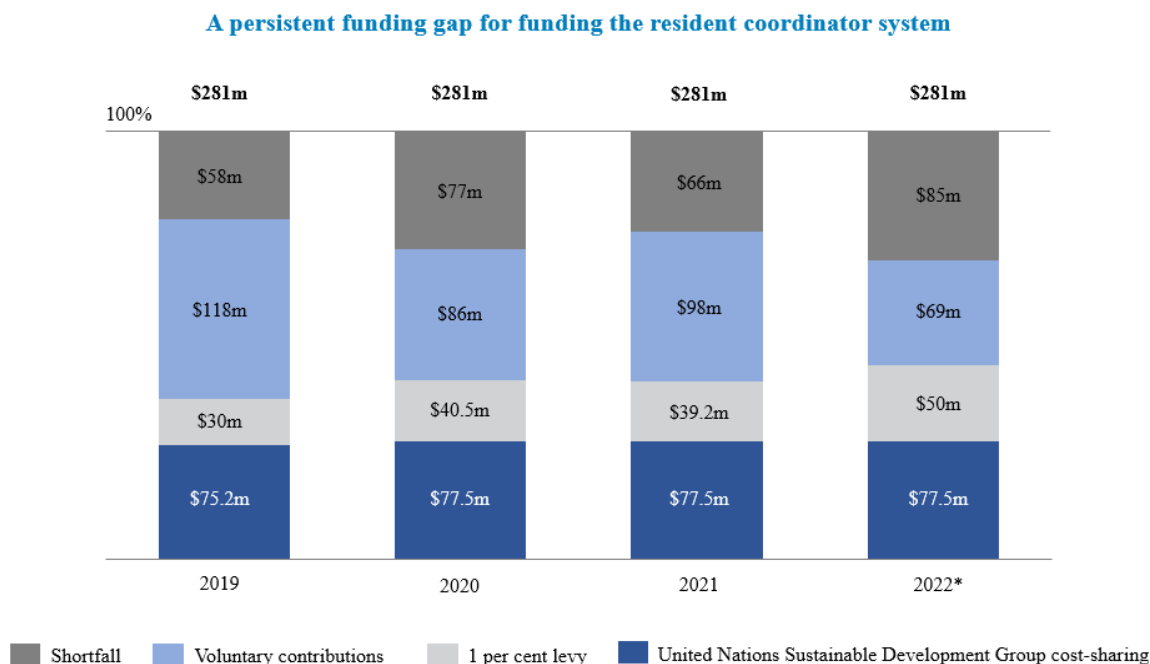
214. Over the years, we have heard all the arguments on how we could strengthen reporting and transparency to help build the case – and it is our humble belief that we have met these demands. Yet, the funding situation remains unchanged.

215. The time has come for a definite solution. In response to the request from Member States for me to report to the General Assembly with recommendations for its consideration should the proper functioning of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system not be enabled through the generation of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding, I intend to request the General Assembly, in a dedicated report in the second half of the year, to reconsider the options I had put forward in my 2021 report entitled “Review of the functioning of the resident coordinator system: rising to the challenge and keeping the promise of the 2030 Agenda” ([A/75/905](#)).

216. Specifically, I will reiterate my recommendation for the establishment of a “hybrid 2.0” funding model. This model would see an increase in the share to be funded through the regular budget, while maintaining the cost-sharing arrangement and potentially the 1 per cent levy, projected at \$50 million a year. I remain convinced that the most logical and principled solution to the issue we face is to fund the resident coordinator system – this core development function – through a greater share of assessed contributions under the United Nations regular budget. This hybrid 2.0 model would, I believe, greatly strengthen the funding foundations of the resident coordinator system. In the coming months, I will be launching a transparent and inclusive consultation process with Member States to ensure that all views are heard before a formal proposal is submitted to the General Assembly.

Figure 33  
**Overview of resident coordinator system funding (2019–2022)**

(United States dollars)



Source: Development Coordination Office, 2023.

\* For 2022, the levy amount represents a projection, pending finalization in May 2023; variance in voluntary contributions may occur owing to exchange rates when contributions were received.

## F. The way forward on other aspects of the funding compact

217. In addition to the imperative of addressing the funding of the resident coordinator system, we must take steps to re-energize other dimensions of the funding compact and better achieve our collective objectives.

218. A new round of dialogue on the future of the funding compact between Member States and United Nations Sustainable Development Group entities is timely, with some targets expiring shortly and with the benefit of four years of experience to draw on. Let us work together to identify those commitments that are most critical to building trust and to fortifying the business case for effective funding that delivers more.

219. While the funding compact has gained some traction in New York and at United Nations headquarters in general, dialogues<sup>35</sup> and studies<sup>36</sup> on the compact have revealed low awareness of the funding compact in capitals, where funding decisions are often made, as well as among funding partners on the ground. In order to address that disconnect, the United Nations development system should initiate informal country level dialogues on the funding compact. I direct resident coordinators to lead country teams in inviting host Governments to engage in national dialogues on how to best move forward with our funding compact and realized our shared ambition.

<sup>35</sup> For example, at the system-wide informal consultations convened by the Development Coordination Office.

<sup>36</sup> Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, “The way forward: fulfilling the potential of the funding compact at the country level”, November 2021.

220. We must also track implementation of the funding compact through solid indicators that measure real impact. Practice has shown that several indicators are either unmeasurable or difficult and costly to measure, and some process-oriented indicators lack a proper measure of impact at the country level.

221. I am asking the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to launch the dialogue with Member States following the operational activities for development segment of the Economic and Social Council. It should build on the modalities of the dialogue process that led to the original funding compact. My report to the operational activities for development segment next year will present the outcome of these discussions for consideration by Member States.

## VII. Conclusion

222. There are reasons for Member States to be proud of the results achieved by the United Nations development system. Resident coordinators have used their convening powers to drive national discussions on key transitions for accelerating development progress, such as the energy and digital transitions. Country teams have worked together more collaboratively to deliver evidence-based policy advice that is tailored to national needs and priorities and organized by a new generation of cooperation frameworks. Programmatic support is better coordinated and more efficient. The impact of the system has grown. Meanwhile, our collective commitments have generated \$405 million in efficiencies.

223. Yet the Sustainable Development Goals remain on life support. The impact of the United Nations development system must grow further. Our support on access to finance has been immensely valuable. It has also fallen short. Funding is not flowing to where it is most needed. Member States facing crippling debt burdens are struggling to meet the needs of their people. We have made a big push at the global level through the Sustainable Development Goals stimulus and initiatives to reform the financial architecture. We must simultaneously lift our offer at the country and regional levels.

224. At a moment of complex and intersecting crises, the United Nations development system has kept up the pace of reform and made steady progress to respond to the mandates from Member States. We are delivering more together. We are rising to the immense challenges of our times. We need to continue this momentum. There is no other option. We do not have a planet B. There is no alternative pathway to prosperity than through sustainable development. I will continue working with all entities hand in glove to continue growing our United Nations development system into the best that it can be.